
THREE STRATEGIC SECTORS

- REVISITING THE AGRARIAN QUESTION IN CUBA (1959–2018): A PEASANT ALTERNATIVE IN THE GLOBAL ERA?

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- CUBAN TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS: ANYTHING BEYOND SUN, BEACHES AND SON MUSIC?

Mario Raúl de la Peña, David Martín-Barroso, Jacobo Núñez, Juan A. Núñez-Serrano, Jaime Turrión and Francisco J. Velázquez

- COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF ENERGY INDICATORS IN CUBA AND SPAIN FROM 1990 TO 2016

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1. Introduction

In Latin America, the issue of land has been underdiscussed in academic, social and political circles, but it is essential to understanding many of the socio-economic and political transformations of the 20th and 21st centuries. The 20th was the century of land reforms in Latin America, many of whose antecedents lay in the peasant struggles of the first half of the 20th century (Martín Cano et al., 2007). But the rebirth of social movements and their transnationalisation since the end of the 20th century has once again placed the agrarian question and access to land at the heart of the political debate for left-wing governments in Latin America. Land reforms returned to the political agenda, this time from the bottom up, and later received “top-down” support from the so-called *Marea Rosa* (Pink Tide) governments. So, far from being an anachronism, the movements of landless workers and peasants in Latin America have emerged as “modern and dynamic” social actors playing key roles in contesting the dominant development agenda in various settings (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001).

Claims around access to land and the promotion of land reforms have also returned to the debate in the major international organisations. The *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development* placed agriculture back on the World Bank’s agenda. Meanwhile, the global food crisis of 2007–2008 reintroduced agriculture and peasant autonomy to political programmes. Following the FAO’s declaration of the International Year of Family Farming in 2014, the role of small-scale producers in food security in developing countries seemed to be central. Internationally prestigious academic publications such as the *Journal of Peasant Studies* also dedicated monographic sections to food sovereignty and Vía Campesina’s “*diálogo de saberes*” (dialogue of knowledge) (2010–2014). At the time of writing, the most up-to-date contribution to agrarian and rural studies in Latin America is in *Journal of Agrarian Change*, vol. 17, no. 2 (April 2017).

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the old land reform arguments of developmentalism with the new agrarian questions of the global era (Botella-Rodríguez, 2018). Is Cuba's long land reform process (1959–present) a paradigmatic and alternative case? Which elements does it combine of the old agrarian question in the region¹ and the land reforms enacted by left-wing governments in the global era? Is this a genuine process of re-peasantisation driven by the peasant movement and based on food sovereignty? These are the main questions this chapter seeks to answer. To do so, it explores the land reform process in Cuba (1959–2018) by analysing the interactions between the state and the Cuban peasant movement that have kept land claims on the political agenda since the revolution began. This positive interaction must be seen in the context of the restrictions in place in the country since the Special Period and above all since the 1993 food crisis that forced the island's inhabitants to start seeking alternatives (Vergara-Camus and Kay, 2017). First, the chapter explores the historical patterns of land distribution and the evolution of tenure systems in Cuba from the revolution's victory on January 1st 1959 to the fall of the socialist bloc in 1990. It goes on to analyse the political economy of Cuban land reform, understood as the relationship between the peasant movement and the state, and the degree of peasant autonomy in that process, as well as peasants' ability to acquire land and sustain their land claims over time, especially from 2008 onwards. The third section studies the alternatives adopted by the Cuban government, such as incorporating food sovereignty within state policy. The chapter ends with a reflection on the peculiarities of land reform in Cuba as an alternative model, and its capacity for evolution and adaptation to the economic adversity the island has faced since 1959.

2. The legacy of Cuba's historical land distribution patterns

1. Growth with equity, the limitations small-scale producers face compared to large estates and "top-down" land reforms (1960–70) that tend to simply/merely get the Alliance for Progress' funding.
2. Recent studies focus on this legacy of the agrarian structure in different Latin American countries. Piñeiro and Cardeillac (2017) explain how in Uruguay extremely fragile rural movements, coupled with a legacy of highly unequal agrarian structures since the beginning of the 20th century, led the Frente Amplio to continue promoting the interests of agribusiness. Martí i Puig and Baumeister (2017) also underline the legacy of the land reform of the Sandinista regime (1979–1990) as the basis for the subsequent agro-export model.
3. In rural areas, 200,000 families lacked access to land, there were 600,000 unemployed people and very limited access to electricity, health services and running water (Álvarez, 2004; Nova, 2006).

Redistributive land reforms are processes that involve the state taking control of land, but their meanings and implementation processes vary and may be based on several processes at once (Lipton, 1973, 1974 and 1977): a) compulsory acquisition of land, normally by the state, with partial compensation for large landowners; or b) cultivation of redistributed land to increase and exceed the returns prior to acquisition. The state may give, sell or lease this land for private cultivation in smaller units of production (redistributive reform); or the land may be cultivated jointly and its usufruct shared through cooperatives, or collective or state farms (collectivist reform) (Lipton, 1977, 2009).

A particularly significant aspect of land reform in Cuba is its legacy of historical land distribution patterns. This determines the capacity of the peasant sector to re-emerge and continue as an important political actor.² Since the victory of the revolution, the agrarian elite has vanished and the Cuban state has used a combination of both the redistributive and the collective to implement land reform.

Díaz-Briquets (2000) notes the existence of two Cubas before 1959. While the city of Havana was going through a considerable process of growth and urbanisation, in rural areas agricultural workers, landless producers and impoverished farmers lived in extremely poor conditions (Gastón et al., 1957).³ The country was dominated by large estates and

sugarcane plantations that were in the hands of both US and national owners. At the end of the 1950s, 9.4% of the owners accounted for over 73% of the land, while 25% of the country's agricultural land was owned by foreign capital. On the other hand, 90% of the small landowners held little more than 26% of the area (Nova, 2001). Of these small landowners, 85% worked the land in precarious lease and sharecropping arrangements (Regalado, 1979: 220; Castro, 1953). The estates were mainly in the hands of US companies,⁴ which controlled 25% of Cuban land, with very significant investments in sugar, tobacco and livestock. Around half of the island's sugar exports accounted for a third of US sugar imports (Álvarez, 2004; Kost, 1998): a clear framework of classic dependence on a single export product and a key trading partner for the Cuban economy (Botella-Rodríguez, 2015). The result was a lack of autonomy when designing economic/industrial policy, which was contingent upon agrarian policy and the island's trade relations, above all with the United States.

After the victory of the revolution on January 1st 1959, the government sought to transform the island's rural conditions, giving the land to the peasants through two consecutive land reform laws. The first Agrarian Reform Law was implemented in May 1959 and eliminated plantations of over 402 hectares and certain precarious forms of exploitation such as sharecropping. The new law guaranteed that the land would be owned by those who worked it, and sought to ensure a better use of resources with more efficient forms of production such as cooperatives (Álvarez, 2004). Two years after the implementation of the first Agrarian Reform Law in Cuba, 58.4% of the land was in private hands and the rest, 41.6%, under state control. However, the law did not divide up the huge sugar plantations and cattle ranches expropriated from US owners, which remained in state hands (Funes et al., 2002; *Gaceta Oficial*, 1959; Rosset and Benjamin, 1994). The second Agrarian Reform Law was enacted in October 1963 and expropriated the remaining estates of over 67 hectares. This second law did not redistribute the expropriated lands (Blutstein et al., 1971). After its implementation, only 30% of the arable land and 30% of the agricultural workforce remained in the private sector, while 70% of the land was under state control (Zimbalist and Eckstein, 1987).

Originally, the two agrarian reform laws were proposed alongside the revolution's commitment to transformation, diversification and industrialisation in order to reduce Cuba's dependence on sugar exports.⁵ In the early 1960s the government began an early attempt at agricultural diversification based on the substitution of imported foods such as rice, potatoes, onions, soya beans and peanuts (all the more important after the United States suspended its sugar quota with Cuba in the late 1960s). The Cuban government decided to reallocate a large amount of land dedicated to sugar cane to other types of crops (Blutstein et al., 1971; Deere, 1992). But the consequences of abandoning sugar cane cultivation were soon apparent (Deere, 1992). High production costs in the 1959–1961 period led sugar production to fall by 30% in 1962, compared to 1961 levels. That same year, Cuba faced a huge deficit that created tensions with foreign creditors (Deere, 1992; González, 2003). The balance of payments crisis led the government to abandon its initial attempt at agricultural diversification and food import reduction, and the island's historical dependence was maintained (Thomas, 1998; Zimbalist and Eckstein, 1987).

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4. Some large estates were also in Spanish, English and, of course, national hands.

5. In the context of its neighbouring countries' attempts at import substitution industrialisation (ISI). The high dependence on traditional exports of Caribbean and Central American countries meant that as well as promoting exports this was effectively "industrialisation by invitation". See Thorp (1998) and Dietz (1986) on the alternatives to ISI in Latin America.

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Cuba's inclusion in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) in 1972 brought the island new, favourable commercial relations via subsidised import and export prices. The Soviet Union sold oil and other raw materials well below market prices in exchange for sugar, and provided Cuba with loans on very favourable terms.⁶ It was in this context that the Cuban government embarked on an ambitious plan of modernising agriculture by developing large capital-intensive industrial farms (agricultural "gigantism") specialised in sugar and livestock production. Following the principles of the Green Revolution, these farms produced and sold sugar through Comecon at highly subsidised prices (51 cents per pound compared to international sugar market prices of 6 cents in 1986) during the 1970s and 1980 (Álvarez, 2004; González, 2003; Kost, 1998). In just three decades (from 1959 to 1989), the use of pesticides multiplied by a factor of four, tractors by nine and chemical fertilisers by ten (Sáez, 1997).

Despite the major intensification and industrialisation of sugar production, the two agrarian reform laws enabled profound transformations to take place in the country's agrarian structure. The old estates and landed oligarchy vanished and a new type of giant state plantation and large-scale production for export grew up (Machín et al., 2010). But the two agrarian reform laws also allowed small producers to obtain ownership of the land (with definitive guarantees) and the possibility was opened up to them of creating cooperatives as a new form of productive organisation. Peasant associations were initially constituted as simple associative units for obtaining political and social representation and receiving guidance. In parallel, the Credit and Service Cooperatives (CCSs) aimed to socialise the management of the main services necessary for production with each family owning their own farm. In the second half of the 1970s, Agriculture Production Cooperatives (CPAs) were created, considered to be socialist economic entities formed with the land and other goods contributed by small farmers who united to work it, promoting collective production and cooperation, which was at its peak within the Cuban peasant movement. On the eve of the Soviet Union's collapse, 78% of the cultivated area was in state hands, 10% belonged to the CPAs and the remaining 12% to the CCSs and individual farmers (see Annex II). Large state-owned companies and CPAs were considered the fundamental pillar of conventional agriculture. But despite the notable influence of this model, peasant families and CCSs preserved traditional forms of production that included elements of sustainability that would prove key to the paradigm shift that occurred during the Special Period (Machín et al., 2010).⁷

3. The political economy of land reforms in Cuba. A necessary paradigm shift (1990–2008)

Rosset (2016) writes that where substantial advances have been made in land redistribution, both the state and structured, powerful peasant movements are able to carry out land reform processes on a national scale over decades. Borrás (2007: 64) points out that rigorous analysis of land reform requires the dynamics of state–society relations to be understood. Taking the land reform process in the Philippines as a starting point, Borrás (ibid.) shows how the successful implementation of redistributive policies does not centre on politicians imposing "top-

6. Between 1986 and 1990, Cuba received Soviet loans worth \$11.6 billion (González, 2003).

7. See Annex I for a detailed and comparative explanation of the different types of non-state agrarian structures in Cuba.

down” measures on passive social actors. On the contrary, distributive land reform policies are implemented in which the state interacts with a patchwork of social actors with different interests, often in competition and conflict.

Evans (1989) describes several different types of state. “Predatory” states are able to extract large surpluses and impede economic transformation (Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, could be considered archetypical). Other states, however, while not immune to rent-seeking behaviour, succeed in promoting, rather than preventing, transformation through their joint actions. These are considered to be “developmental” states, the clearest examples being the newly industrialised East Asian economies after the Second World War. Evans (ibid.) saw Brazil as a typical “intermediate” state, where the balance between predatory and developmental activities is not clear and varies over time and according to the type of activity. The variation in the state’s effectiveness as an agent of transformation in developing countries may be related to their contrasting internal structures and their external links. But the most effective states are characterised by what Evans calls “embedded autonomy”, understood as a set of connections that closely and decisively connect the state to particular social groups with whom it shares a joint project of transformation (1995: 50–59). This autonomy is the cornerstone of the developmental (and not developmentalist) state and shapes the effectiveness of any economic policy. All of these ideas focus primarily on the state’s ability to promote real structural transformation that results in industrial take-off and significant economic development. Nevertheless, we will apply Evans’s ideas to the land reform process as a fundamental state policy that is essential to a later development process given the agrarian roots of the industrial development model.⁸ In this sense, land reform is understood as a necessary but not sufficient condition for promoting equitable economic growth.

This is the second specific issue this chapter will analyse to try and understand whether Cuba is a paradigmatic example of land reform, understanding the political economy of land reform in Cuba as the relationship between the peasant movement and the state. Characterising the Cuban experience and the state’s role in the land reform process in this way fundamentally contributes to understanding its level of success or failure, as well as the peasant movement’s room for manoeuvre, degree of autonomy, and ability to acquire land and sustain its claims over time, particularly since the 1993 food crisis. Before the revolution, the state was clearly captive to the interests of the US and major landowners, representing what Evans (1989: 562) characterises as a “predatory state”.

However, the isolation produced by neoliberal policies on the one hand and the pressure to feed the population on the other, particularly after the 1993 food crisis, helped a consensus form in Cuba between the peasant movements – particularly the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) – and the state. This commitment became decisive from 2008 onwards, when Raúl Castro became president and the global food crisis hit. This allows us to reflect on what type of state intervention we find in Cuba: we are not looking at a developmentalist state, but neither is it a state that is captive to the interests of the landed elites. It appears to be a state that, in the process of land reform and especially since the

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8. Kay (2002: 1073) notes three principle reasons “why the East Asian NICs outperformed Latin America: 1) state capacity and policy performance or ‘state-craft’; 2) character of agrarian reform and its impact on equity and growth; 3) interactions between agriculture and industry in development strategies”.

Special Period seems to be “developmental”, because it is obliged to connect the interests of different social groups, particularly the peasants and the state.⁹

At the lowest point in its history, the Special Period, the Cuban state was forced to consider how to sustain its population without strategic imports from the Soviet bloc.¹⁰ This “Special Period in Times of Peace” consequently involved a dramatic shift from dependent development (on the Soviet bloc) towards domestic opportunities based on demonopolisation, deregulation and decentralisation (Botella-Rodríguez, 2011). It was an attempt to diversify the economy and attract foreign investment (and the required foreign currency) to different sectors of the economy (e.g. tourism) (Álvarez, 2004; Nova, 2006). Cuba was forced to seek solutions to feed its population and continue production without the inputs and oil imported from the socialist bloc. The main changes were in production patterns, which shifted towards alternative technologies such as biological pest control and organic fertilisers. A large number of small producers, encouraged by scientists and academia (and their previous research), focussed on a type of alternative agriculture based on two fundamental pillars: a) the replacement of imported chemical inputs with local alternatives at much lower costs; and b) the return to animal traction (Rosset and Benjamin, 1994; Wright, 2005).

At the same time, the state promoted land structure changes, favouring cooperatives and family farming. One of the key measures adopted to stimulate domestic food production was the conversion in 1993 (under Decree Law No. 142) of the old state farms into new agricultural production cooperatives called Basic Units Of Cooperative Production (UBPCs). The state gave UBPCs usufruct rights on the land, replicating the size and type of production of the CPAs. This land handover process was not entirely efficient, as many UBPCs inherited the characteristics, indebtedness, size and workers of the old state farms. But the new cooperatives – along with additional measures like Decree Law No. 191/94 on the creation of free supply and demand markets for agricultural products in 1994 – opened up spaces for small-scale producers to produce food for national consumption from the 1990s onwards (Botella-Rodríguez, 2012).¹¹

As a result, the structure of Cuba’s cultivated land underwent great transformations. The state sector fell from 75% in 1992 to 23.2% in 2008, with the non-state sector (made up of UBPCs, CPAs and CCSs) increasing by 50% during the same period (ONE, 2007). UBPCs, in particular, accounted for 39.8% of the total land in Cuba in 2008. While CPAs increased slightly from 10% in 1992 to 10.2% in 2008, private/individual forms of tenure such as CCSs and other land in usufruct almost doubled over the same period. From 1992 to 2008 the most significant change in land tenure was not only the creation of the UBPCs, but the gradual expansion of land ownership (mainly in usufruct) by small individual producers (see Appendix II).

The Special Period thus forced and encouraged a paradigm shift towards an alternative and more sustainable vision of agriculture. Lugo Fonte, president of the ANAP until 2013, says that necessity brought awareness (Machín et al., 2010). The interaction in this process should be highlighted between the peasant and organic agriculture movements

9. The term “developmental” is applied only to the state-peasants-academia interaction that placed a real process of redistributive land reform on the political agenda. Our reading is that the Cuban state is approaching an “intermediate” state, in which the balance between predatory and developmental activities is clear, has varied over time and depends on the type of activity in question.

10. At the start of the 1990s, the island’s trade fell by 75%, GDP fell by 33%, net domestic investment fell by 86% and the fiscal deficit shot up to 158% (Canler, 2000; ONE, 1996). The situation worsened with the new US economic sanctions. During the 1993 food crisis, the average daily calorie intake fell from 2908 kcal/person/day to 1863.

11. The prices of Acopio, a state-owned monopoly, were very low and unstimulating at the time.

and the state, and since 1999 with the urban agriculture programme. Some of the relative success of the peasant movement in Cuba is down to the ANAP itself and its effective policy of alliances. ANAP has taken advantage of and influenced the “top-down” policies and programmes promoted by the state, while at the same time working with various external actors, never forgetting the role of peasants in the process. Academia also played a key role in this process of interaction between the state and the peasant movement.¹² To a degree, this interaction allowed them to prepare to support and promote the peasant movement from the beginning of the 1990s onwards (Botella-Rodríguez, 2015).

By 2010, the agroecology movement promoted and begun by ANAP in 1997 had managed to bring together more than 100,000 peasant families across the island – over a third of the more than 250,000 Cuban peasant family economies – to significantly change their production systems through agroecology. ANAP is a member of the most important transnational peasant movement, *La Vía Campesina*, and has coordinated its International Commission on Sustainable Peasant Agriculture (Machín et al., 2010). Since its beginnings, the agroecological movement has benefited from a set of national programmes and state policies that have facilitated its rapid evolution and contributed significantly to the achievements made.¹³ These state programmes clearly show the interaction between the peasant movement and the Cuban state to be the cornerstone of the processes of re-peasantisation, land reform and peasant production on the island. Rosset and Val (2018) see this as a process of collective transformation, based on the high level of organisation of the Cuban peasantry through the ANAP, stimulated by a process of peasant-to-peasant horizontal learning and exchange, which has helped create a national grassroots organisation and an agroecological movement among peasants.

4. A new boost for land reform (2008–2018). Adopting food sovereignty and alternatives as state policy

To understand whether Cuban land reform is really a possible and paradigmatic case, this chapter discusses a third issue: the creation of alternatives and the inclusion of food sovereignty on the political agenda, which is especially interesting in light of recent land reform experiences in Latin America (Vergara-Camus and Kay, 2017). Ecuador provides a key example in this regard. Several of the main agricultural policies implemented during the Correa administration appear to include food sovereignty or “*Buen Vivir*” (good living) in the political agenda. Nevertheless, Clark (2017) shows that they barely extended beyond the rhetorical for this part of the Pink Tide. Extractivist neodevelopmentalism and the lack of influence of social movements in practice meant agribusiness expanded and agriculture intensified. While Cuba was not one of the countries that experienced the Pink Tide, it can offer some interesting and practical reflections on the national implementation of a real food sovereignty policy.

Food sovereignty has become more decisive on the Cuban political agenda since Raúl Castro came to power, and especially since the global food crisis. Since 2007–2008 the Cuban government has implemented a

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12. In the early 1980s, a clear division emerged between younger scientists who favoured alternatives and older researchers or bureaucrats who held leadership positions in government and supported industrial agriculture (Funes-Monzote, 2008). In the late 1990s, sustainable agriculture became an official policy managed by the Cuban Association of Agricultural and Forestry Technicians (ACTAF). A more detailed analysis of the process is given in Botella-Rodríguez (2015).

13. The *Plan Turquino* in mountainous areas, the *Programa Nacional de Producción de Medios Biológicos*, the *Programa Nacional de Tracción Animal*, the *Programa Nacional de Producción de Materia Orgánica*, the *Movimiento Fórum de Ciencia y Técnica*, the *Programa Cultivo Popular del Arroz*, the *Programa Nacional de Agricultura Urbana*, the *Programa Nacional de Mejoramiento y Conservación de Suelos*, the *Programa Nacional de Lucha contra la Desertificación y la Sequía* and the *Programa Forestal Nacional* (Machín et al., 2010).

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series of transformations aimed at increasing the country's food self-sufficiency and reducing dependence on imports. These transformations include transferring usufruct rights on state lands to private producers (CCSs and dispersed peasants) and CPAs, price reforms, greater decentralisation of decision-making and gradually making the forms of commercialisation more flexible (Nova and González Corzo, 2015).

The transfer of land in usufruct approved by Decree Law no. 259 in 2008 deepened the process of decentralising and promoting peasant agriculture for food production initiated in 1993 with the creation of UBPCs. The new law distributed idle land on long-term contracts to anyone who wanted to cultivate it (especially individuals, cooperatives, small producers and even UBPCs) (*Juventud Rebelde*, July 18th 2008). Although in 2008 51% of under-exploited idle land was overgrown with sicklebush (*Dichrostachys cinerea*), this decision was an attempt to revitalise the agricultural sector in general and food production in particular. Over 170,000 peasants benefitted from Decree Law no. 259 throughout the country (MINAGRI, 2011). The suburban agriculture programme implemented on the island from 2010–2011 to improve access to food in rural areas represents another example of continuity in the land decentralisation process. Suburban agriculture sought to encourage food production by connecting rural producers with markets located within a 10 km radius of the island's capitals, municipalities and towns. Extending this to the peri-urban and suburban areas that house 75% of the Cuban population shows significant potential to reduce food imports (Rodríguez Nodals, 2008).

Since 2011, the Cuban economy has been immersed in an important process of economic, political and social transformations described as "updating the economic and social model". This process encompasses all economic sectors and has key economic, social and political implications for Cuba. The transformations were included in the "Guidelines for the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution" approved at the 6th Congress of the PCC in April 2011 and ratified at the PCC Conference held in January 2012. The Guidelines constitute a profound reform with short and long-term objectives. The short-term objectives include controlling the balance of payments deficit, generating external income, and import substitution. Among the long-term objectives are sustainable development based on food and energy self-sufficiency, the efficient use of human potential, the competitiveness of traditional production, new production of goods and high value-added services (PCC, 2011). The transformations underway in the agricultural sector are the deepest of all, as the sector is economically decisive and strategic for the progressive substitution of imported food.¹⁴

In line with the Guidelines, Decree Law no. 259 was modified by number 300 in 2012, with the aim of establishing a free usufruct scheme to operationalise unproductive land initially estimated to comprise 18.6% of the country's agricultural area. The aim was to expand the number of areas available to people with working relationships with CPA and CCS. The measure was completed with a supportive credit and fiscal policy to encourage new producers to settle in rural areas in order to give national food production a clearer boost. By 2015, over 1,700,000 hectares of idle land had been given in usufruct to over 200,000 people, both by the already-repealed Decree Law no. 259 and its successor, Decree Law

14. Of the 313 directives in the Guidelines, 38 directly address agro-industrial policy, while another 138 in other chapters relate to the sector. The 2017 Guidelines contain 29 that directly relate to agro-industrial development (PCC, 2017).

no. 300 (Nova, 2013). According to the latest *Panorama sobre el uso de la Tierra* (ONEI, 2018), individual small farmers account for 40.1% of the entire cultivated area, more than the island's other agricultural structures (Nova 2013; ONEI, 2018). As Table 1 shows, farmland is distributed between four forms of organised production: UBPCs (30.2%); CPAs (9.8%) and small producers, including CCSs; individual landowners and beneficial owners (40.1%); and the state farms that in 1988 held 82% and now account for 19.9%. The significant increase in small farms stands out (Nova 2013; ONEI, 2018). The cooperatives (UBPCs, CPAs and CCSs) represent an agricultural area (depending on the form of management) of 32% compared to the 36% represented by small-scale farmers (see Annex III).

Table 1. Structure of the land in Cuba (percentage of cultivated land) (2007–2017)

Sector	2007	2017
State	35.8	19.9
Non-state	64.2	80.1
UBPC	36.9	30.2
CPA	8.8	9.8
Small-scale producers: CCSs, owners and beneficial owners*	18.5	40.1
Total	100%	100%

* Includes the beneficiaries of Decree Law no. 259 and Decree Law no. 300.

** Agricultural area: the land dedicated to agriculture in any form of production, which may be planted with a crop, either temporary and permanent, allocated to nurseries, seedbeds or natural pasture, as well as land that is unplanted and suitable for cultivation; includes cultivated and non-cultivated land. Cultivated land: the land dedicated to a crop, whether planted in preparation, resting or awaiting preparation for planting; includes roads, paths, irrigation canals, drainage and other areas that are essential for the land's use (ONEI, 2018).

Source: Nova (2013) and ONEI (2018).

It is true that all these land transfer programmes have been subject to a wide range of conditions, but the massive amount of state-owned idle land given in usufruct, mainly to small and individual producers, represents a very radical move by the Cuban state. As well as meaning food sovereignty is included within state policy, this process constitutes recognition by the government of the greater efficiency of small-scale food production in Cuba's "special conditions". It also means the state's longstanding paternalistic doctrine of the superiority of state farms based on large-scale production and mechanisation is a thing of the past (Hagelberg, 2010). In 2016, small producers and suburban farmers produced between 63% and 86% of the main crops for domestic consumption on the island, as well as 65% of the milk and 42% of the meat (ONEI, 2017).¹⁵

Concerns about insufficient food production and the growing role of small producers on the island show an increasingly unquestionable recognition of food security and sovereignty within state policy. The new Díaz Canel government declared Decree Law no. 358 on August 7th 2018 on the transfer in usufruct of idle state land was a tool for increasing agricultural yield when it entered into force in October 2018. Decree Law no. 358 replaces Decree Law no. 300 and doubles both the time periods and land areas. The maximum area to be transferred to people who own no land at all rose from 13.42 hectares to 26.84 hectares.¹⁶ This reduces the number of small agricultural areas transferred, which had been hindering the application of science and technology and the regulation of the

¹⁵. See Annex IV. More information on the substitution of imported food can be found in Botella-Rodríguez (2019).

¹⁶. See article 7.1.

Land transfer programmes have been subject to a wide range of conditions, but the massive amount of state-owned idle land given in usufruct, mainly to small and individual producers, represents a very radical move by the Cuban state.

land. The practical limitations on the application of Decree Law no. 300 have also led to an expanded, clearer definition of “usufruct” (especially for longer production cycles like tobacco, coffee and livestock).¹⁷ The new legal norm will provide incentives for the Cuban peasantry, as legal persons can request land for indefinite periods of time (the previous maximum was 25 years) and natural persons up to 20 years (previously 10 years). In addition, the period of validity can be extended successively for the same period of time (see article 8.1, *Gaceta Oficial*, 2018).

In short, despite all the problems Cuban agriculture is currently facing,¹⁸ in contrast to the global downward trend in the peasant sector, Cuba has experienced an increase in small-scale producers/peasants in the past 30 years. This is the result of a state policy focused on handing over idle land in permanent and free usufruct to natural and legal persons with an interest in working them and the possibility of doing so. The key objectives of this strategy have been to increase food production, support certain crops of economic interest, to improve the productive use of soil as a natural resource and to create employment (Machín et al., 2010). The agroecology embedded within the food sovereignty on the Cuban political agenda provides sustainability, sovereignty and food security and is adapted to the island’s specific conditions, where family farming offers more resilience against common adverse climatic conditions (hurricanes, droughts, floods, etc.), a greater capacity to repair soils degraded by the intensive use of agrochemicals, the production of healthier food, and higher land productivity, given the savings in foreign exchange, inputs and investments (Botella-Rodríguez, 2015 and 2019; Machín et al., 2010). All of this has been facilitated by the Cuban view (and of ANAP and La Vía Campesina) of food production as a social good and of food as a common good produced through collective social action, rather than a commodity (Rosset, 2006). Cuba, ANAP and La Vía Campesina are examples of what Vivero-Pol (2017 and 2018) calls the epistemological school of thought that understands common goods, in this case food, as social constructs defined by groups of specific communities, in this case peasants. This counter-hegemonic vision of food (Vivero-Pol, 2017) has permeated Cuba since the 1959 revolution (Funes et al., 2002; Benjamin et al., 1984; Enríquez, 1994; Rosset and Val, 2018).

5. Conclusions

There is no general formula to start and effectively execute major land reforms; rather, it must evolve and adapt according to the complex economic and political dynamics that characterize a particular country at a given time (Barraclough, 2007: 1).

The land reform undertaken in Cuba shows a process of evolution and adaptation to a complex economic and political reality that has experienced changes from 1959 to the present. Initially, it seemed to be a circumstantial experiment (a necessary response to the fall of communism in 1990), but the land delivered in usufruct has evolved into a consistent project that is shared by the peasantry (mainly gathered in the ANAP) and the state (through various Decree Law such as 259, 300 and 358). This process has clearly been accelerated by the need to reduce food imports. The Raúl Castro administration (2008–2018) gave priority recognition to the importance of peasant agriculture and the substitu-

17. See article 1.1. *Gaceta Oficial*, 2018.

18. Nova and González Corzo (2015) note three fundamental obstacles to increasing production and productivity in the agricultural sector that remain unresolved: 1) the need to better define the property of beneficial owners (partially dealt with by Decree Law no. 358 of 2018); 2) the recognition and acceptance of the market as a complementary mechanism of economic coordination; and, 3) the absence of a systemic approach to successfully achieving the complete agricultural production cycle.

tion of imported food, as well as the key relationship between the two phenomena (Machín et al., 2010). Díaz Canel appears to be continuing this through Decree Law no. 358 of August 2018.

With the emergence of the anti-globalisation movement and the World Social Forum at Porto Alegre (since 2001), in which rural movements have played a crucial role through La Vía Campesina, academics and activists have stopped talking about “resistance to neoliberalism” and begun to speak of “alternatives to neoliberalism” (Vergara-Camus, 2017). Far from idealising the Cuban experience, this chapter seeks to characterise it as an alternative model in the neoliberal era. It is an active land reform laboratory in Latin America that is based on a clear dichotomy between the market (individual production) and collective forms of production (the state) and consumption. Little-studied from a long-term perspective, it is a process that contains elements of the old and new agrarian questions. In light of the most recent land reform processes carried out by leftist governments in Latin America, post-Soviet Cuba shows certain key and paradigmatic elements of a significant land reform process (in 2018, 31.1% of the agricultural area in Cuba was in the hands of beneficial owners) (ONEI, 2018). This reform, which began in 1959 by putting an end to the legacy of land tenure, has benefitted from the interaction between the state (partially “developmental” and compelled by the difficulties of the Special Period) and a peasant movement with the capacity to raise its demands for land and food to the country’s political agenda and keep them there. Among those demands was food sovereignty, which has gone on to become part of state policy, especially since 2008.

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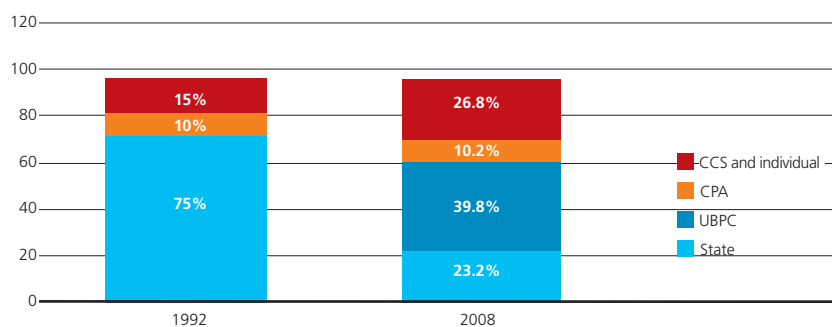
ANNEX I

Non-state sector in Cuba (1993–2018)			
	Type	Characteristics	Type of tenure
Collective farms of large, medium or small size depending on the sector/activity	UBPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former state farms Much smaller than state farms Mimic the size and family production patterns of CPAs in the 1990s Buy tools, animals, etc. 	Collective usufruct of land
Collective family farms	CPA	Voluntary associations of small producers in cooperatives to share production and technology	Voluntary association and transfer of the land to the cooperative
Private family farms	CCS, individual/dispersed small producers and beneficial owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants, agricultural employees, sharecroppers, owners who form a cooperative to organise agricultural work and obtain credits and services from the state. Plots for growing coffee, cocoa and tobacco, for example Land in usufruct since 2008 (Decree Laws nos. 259, 300 and 358) 	They own the land (private lands) in usufruct for determined periods and under specific conditions (at least ten years prior to the entry into force of Decree Laws nos. 259 and 300, which are much more specific about these conditions)

Source: Funes, 2008; Martin, 2002.

ANNEX II

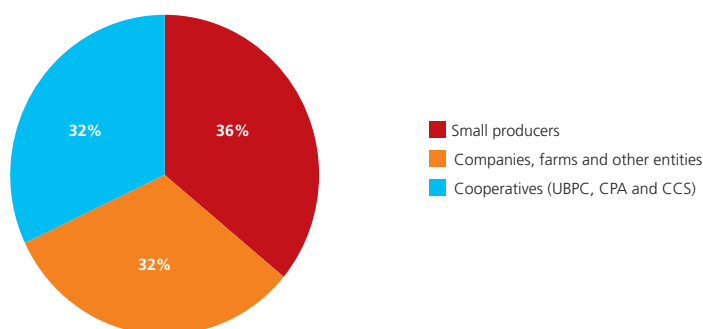
Changes in the distribution of cultivated land by type of tenure in Cuba (1992–2008) (in percentage terms)



Source: Produced by author using ONE data (1993, 2008).

ANNEX III

Percentage of agricultural area by form of management



Source: ONEI, 2018.

ANNEX IV

Production of small-scale farmers in the non-sugar sector January–December 2008–2015 (Percentages of total/1,000 metric tonnes) *

Crops	Small-scale producers: CCS and beneficial owners ** 2008	Small-scale producers: CCS and beneficial owners ** 2015
Tubers and vegetables	50.0%	74.6%
Potatoes	6.1%	6.3%
Bananas	51.1%	70.7%
Vegetables	64.1%	72.1%
Tomatoes	68.0%	83.6%
Rice	36.0%	64.1%
Maize	82.0%	86.1%
Peas	81.0%	79.6%
Citrus fruit	15.0%	29.5%
Tropical fruit	74.0%	81.2%

Source: ONEI, 2009, 2016; in Botella-Rodríguez, 2019.

* Excluding sugar, plots and patios.

** Includes CCSs and small private/individual producers.

