Over the past few years Cuba has been implementing economic reforms permitting the sale and purchase of real estate, expanding the small private business sector and providing incentives for foreign investment. Recently there have been efforts to dismantle Cuba's dual currency system that has for the past two decades instituted unequal access to economic opportunities, resulting in exacerbated socio-economic hierarchies. Moreover, all eyes are now on Cuba with current geopolitical shifts in US-Cuba relations, AirBnB Mastercard and Netflix expanding their business operations to Cuba and a peak in tourism to the island. But what does all this mean for everyday economic life and monetary decision making in Cuba? How do these changes affect Cubans’ dependence on informal social networks to meet their basic consumption needs? What are some of the struggles and moral contradictions Cubans encounter as they get even more integrated into the global economy?

Please join Mrinalini Tankha, Postdoctoral Scholar at the Institute for Money, Technology and Financial Inclusion, University of California, Irvine and UC-Cuba affiliate for an informal talk and discussion. Dr. Tankha is an economic anthropologist who has conducted fieldwork in Cuba since 2007. She lived in Cuba for two years doing research on the socio-cultural practices of multiple currency exchange in Havana’s informal economy.