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ARTICLE

Stavert, Zigomala & Co.: A Transnational History of the Anglo-Cuban Textile Trade During 1860s–1914

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This article investigates how British textile traders navigated Cuban markets when Spain, Britain, and the United States competed to maintain or gain access to Cuba's commercial activity. Cuba was one of the largest textile consumers in the Americas and a loyal market for British textiles, a significance hitherto overlooked by existing scholarship on Anglo-Hispanic trading relations. The article fills this gap by examining the interplay between local dynamics and imperial rivalry through the case of the Manchester-based textile commission merchant, Stavert, Zigomala, & Co. Through the cross-examination of the company's business records, visual, material, and other archival and primary printed sources this article contends that a successful engagement with the Cuban market required a nuanced approach transcending formal trading structures, challenging traditional assumptions about commercial predominance based on forms of imperialism. The article's argument is divided into three parts: 1) it locates Stavert, Zigomala within Cuban consumer culture; 2) it examines how traders responded to Cuban demand; and 3) it situates the role of British textile merchants in the context of Cuba's international relations between approximately 1860 until1914.

Keywords: Transnational history; Cuba; textiles; Britain

> The cotton goods market of Cuba naturally belongs to the United States [but] the largest single share of these imports, nearly one-half, comes from the United Kingdom, while the American mills supply less than one-sixth and are still behind the Spanish. […] A very popular fabric on this market [Cuba] is printed drill, the best-selling English brand being called "Dril Stavert." The Americans ship in blue drills and some colored [sic] drills but few printed drills. These drills have narrow black stripes down the length of the goods and are so well printed that unless examined, they are indistinguishable from striped drills made with dyed yarn.[1]

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1. Clark, *Cotton Goods*, 6, 12.

In the above quote, an American commercial agent moaned over American cotton textiles' poor performance in the Cuban market. He believed that Cubans should prefer American cotton textiles because by 1909, the United States was not only enjoying a preferential import duty rate, but also had been influencing Cuba's internal affairs since its independence from Spain in 1899. Such intervention included what British merchants denounced as "pursuing their [American] policy of standardising production for the sake of cheapness, […] in the hope that their cheapness will overcome the preference of the Cuban buyers for a greater diversity of qualities and styles."[2] However, as this other quote notes, Cubans were prodigious and discerning consumers. Cuba was a highly lucrative market for textile merchants: "It is claimed by importers, and seems to have some basis of fact, that Havana is one of the strongest markets in the World as the cloth importers go."[3] An affluence that continued well into the 1920s when the British Foreign Office (hereafter, Foreign Office) highlighted that despite Cuba's "limited population [it] represents a purchasing power per capita second to none in the world."[4] As this article will demonstrate, Cuban consumers valued dealing with suppliers personally for the sake of trust and individualization. It argues that British merchants circumvented Spain's and the United States' preferential tariffs by nurturing personable relations and positioning their textiles as high-quality, fashionable goods to the despair of international competitors.

The opening example of the branded favorite Dril Stavert serves as a paradigmatic illustration of the United States' frustration with the established success of British textiles in Cuba, resulting from a long-lasting, complex commercial rivalry between the United States, Spain, and Britain. From the 1820s, Britain was the most successful supplier to Cuba, dominating the cotton textiles market. As this article will demonstrate, British cotton textiles thrived despite heavy tariffs imposed first by Spain and later by the United States. This success underscored British merchants' agility amidst geopolitical tensions. By entangling the microelements of a case study with broader political events, this article will illuminate the complexities of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Cuban textile trade, revealing how transnational strategies shaped broader historical contexts.

Cuba's nineteenth-century history is distinct from the rest of Latin America. Although Cuba also underwent a period of growth and stimulation,[5] Cuba's political and economic contexts were dissimilar. To begin with, Cuba's elites not only did not participate in the revolutionary movements of the rest of Latin America but, in the words of Cubanist Pérez, were "impervious."[6] Indeed, Cuba, along with Puerto Rico and the Philippines, remained under Spanish control throughout the nineteenth century. After Cuba gained independence from Spain, it fell under the control of the United States. Cuba's resources also stood out from the rest of Latin America; it was of utmost significance. The sugar industry of the "Queen of

2. "Textile Trade with Cuba," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 2, 1905.

3. Clark, *Cotton Goods in Latin America*, 16.

4. Report on the legation and consulate general at Havana, Cuba, April 5, 1920, The National Archives (hereafter cited as TNA), Foreign Office (hereafter cited as FO) 533/17.

5. On the "Belle Époque" in postcolonial Latin America, see, for example: Orlove, *The Allure of the Foreign;* Williamson, *Latin American Growth-Inequality Trade-Offs*.

6. Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 74.

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Antilles" made Cuba probably "the richest colony in the world," in relative terms.[7] As this article will show, such economic buoyancy, grounded in an export-led economy and a highly asymmetrical society, was reflected in Cuba's conspicuous consumer culture. That was particularly evident in the case of British cotton textiles whose remarkable consumption was noted by a proud British consul in 1860: "British manufacturers continue to occupy the preeminent position [in Cuba] […], and their consumption here is perhaps greater in proportion to the number of inhabitants than it is anywhere else."[8]

Britain had obvious interests in Cuba. Beyond the textile sector, Britain imported copper,[9] mahogany,[10] and up to one-third of Cuba's sugar produce.[11] British capital was used to fund Cuba's extensive sugar industry and establish Latin America's first railway in 1837,[12] which extended to 600 km across the island in 1868.[13] Indeed, from the 1860s, British investment in Cuba increased, causing several local and international disputes (and negotiations) over Cuba's hegemony, culminating in the 1899 Spanish-American War. Conversely, after the war and even well into the 1910s, to the United States' chagrin, Britain remained the leading textile exporter to Cuba. British cotton goods' prominence could be observed in consumer agency and preferences: neat British packaging, promptness in producing designs to commission, and an established association between English cottons and quality. Cuban consumers resisted the United States' cheaper, more rapidly supplied stock of cottons in favor of British textiles; although they took longer to dispatch and suffered from higher tariffs, the latter appealed more to Cuban consumers' tastes.

While scholars have recognized Britain's enduring appetite for Cuban markets and its significance as a textile purveyor, the existing literature is strikingly scattered. Marrero and Bottcher recognized British interest in Cuba from the eighteenth century, notably during the 1762 British invasion of Havana when the city was "flooded" with British and Indian textiles.[14] Textile flux only increased throughout the nineteenth century, translating into inescapable mentions in different historical areas, albeit cursorily. Economic histories examining

7. William G. Clarence-Smith. "The Economic Dynamics of Spanish Colonialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." *Itinerario* 15, no. 1 (1991): 71–90 quoted in: Luengo and Dalmau, "Writing Spanish history in the Global Age," 437.

8. Trade Report, January 7, 1860, TNA, FO 72/989, cited in: Curry-Machado, *Cuban Sugar Industry*, 17.

9. By 1837, Britain was importing up to 10,000 tons of copper from Cuba. Copper imports lasted until 1860s when Cuba's copper industry collapsed. See: Loscertales and Roldan "La minería del cobre en Cuba"; McKercher and Enjamio. "Brighter Futures, Better Times," 665.

10. Fernández de Pinedo, "Compelled to Import," 17.

11. The size of the Anglo-Cuban sugar trade during the nineteenth century is difficult to estimate. In theory, Britain had sanctioned the importing of sugar grown by enslaved people between 1817 and 1846. However, British merchants practiced "floating sales" ("*ventas a flote*"), whereby the origin of the sugar was camouflaged. In addition, a much of this sugar was reexported into Europe, further complicating the calculations. See: Moreno Fraginals, *El ingenio*, 156-158. It is worth noting that, according to the British consul J. Crowford, "the sugar exported to Great Britain being nearly one third of the whole produce of the island." Papers relating to the slave trade and growth of sugar in Cuba and Brasil from January 1845 to 1846, TNA, FO/520/4 quoted in: Fernández de Pinedo, *Comercio exterior y fiscalidad*, 85.

12. Zanetti and García, *Sugar and Railroads*, 13; Curry-Machado, "Rich Flames and Hired Tears," 39-40; Pretel and Fernández de Pinedo, "Circuits of Knowledge," 271-273.

13. Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 58.

14. Böttcher, *A Ship Laden with Dollars*; Böttcher, "Comerciantes Británicos," 214–15; Marrero, *Cuba: economía y sociedad*, 8: 222–23.

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Cuban trade quantitified the value or volume of British textiles, but barely addressed qualitative trading factors.[15] Take, for example, Platt's foundational study of British trade in Latin America in the nineteenth century. Platt described Cuba (and Puerto Rico) as "two of her [Britain's] best markets."[16] Furthermore, when Platt regretted their progressive loss to the United States during the twentieth century, he still acknowledged that "in Cuba, British manufacturers managed to maintain about half of the trade in cotton goods, [despite] a preferential tariff of 30 to 40 per cent in favour of the United States."[17] However, Platt's was a brief note and did not address the factors behind British cottons' resilience. Reber also isolated Cuba from the maladaptation of other British mercantile houses elsewhere in Latin America at the end of the century, which failed "to comply with requests for change in quality of goods and for different styles."[18] However, unlike Platt, Reber ventured to ascribe British traders' exceptional flexibility in Cuba to the island's internal factors, like its export-led economy and credit dependency. While Reber's focus was not on Cuba, her observations underscored the need to attend to Cuba's trading conditions. Scholars leaning toward material culture have qualitatively noted British textiles' impact on Cuban material and consumer cultures. However, those material culture scholars have turned to textiles to rather illustrate more general arguments. For example, to either contextualize Cuba's commercial openness during the second half of the century in the case of Curry-Machado, or examine Cuba's lavish consumer culture in Marrero or Sarmiento.[19] British traders' agility in relation to Cuba's commercial affluence and consumer culture requires further study.

From these introductory contextual and historiographical overviews, two points emerge: First, Cuba's textile consumption and British trade should be understood in a multidimensional framework. Bilateral trading relations must be expanded to incorporate international relations among the main powers, Spain, the United States, and Britain, which rivaled the Cuban markets, particularly between the 1860s and 1914. Nevertheless, I will occasionally refer to earlier and later decades when necessary to best understand the causes and consequences of this commercial competition. Second, the Anglo-Cuban textile trade requires an in-depth examination. Efforts to persuade and retain Cuban consumers unfolded at the micro-level through personal interactions. This article aims to advance the literature on the Anglo-Cuban textile trade by placing culturally dependent commercial strategies at the forefront of the discussions. To best target the actors of commerce (merchants, consumers, objects, and information exchange processes), this article uses a case study approach focused on Stavert, Zigomala & Co. (hereafter, Stavert, Zigomala), whose history is summarized in the section below. Case studies are valuable tools to examine the interlocking characteristics between businesses and international affairs. A connected analysis offers a comprehensive perspective that overcomes the current fragmented scholarship to offer the first study on the Anglo-Cuban textile trade.

15. Fernández de Pinedo, *Comercio exterior y fiscalidad*; Bulmer-Thomas, *The Economic History of the Caribbean since the Napoleonic Wars*, 113, footnote.34.
16. Platt, *Latin America and British Trade, 1806-1914*, 179.
17. Ibid.
18. Reber, *British Mercantile Houses*, 139, 141.
19. Sarmiento, "Vestido y calzado," 166,181,186; Marrero, *Cuba, economía y sociedad IV*, 12:170.

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Transnational history is the method that best facilitates the required zooming in and out across layers. By foregrounding the human scale, it analyzes the pathways of connectedness "between and through" national frontiers.[20] Applied to business history, a dynamic and adaptive lens allows us to go beyond the firm and observe it in action. Transnational history signals the intricate web of binding or reactive factors, such as cultural, economic, or managerial factors, that interplay with firms' operational environments at the local and national levels.[21] Such an approach requires mining and cross-referencing diverse primary sources, tapping into various analytical tools.[22] Therefore, it advances the call for an interdisciplinary dialogue in business history.[23] I weave together the unexplored business records of Stavert, Zigomala, along with relevant textile designs and visual materials, to examine Cuba's consumer culture and uncover business practices. Archival records at the national level ultimately help reconstruct the international map through which traders' networks navigated. In the study of nineteenth-century Anglo-Cuban relations, consular records are particularly useful. Unlike any other Spanish colony, Britain had maintained a consulate in Havana, an exceptional concession negotiated in 1825, to guarantee British defense in securing Cuba for Spain.[24]

A transnational investigation of Stavert, Zigomala will demonstrate that British textile traders leveraged their social networks and the ability to comprehend, embrace, and adjust to Cuban cultural idiosyncrasies to compensate for Spain's rule over Cuba and the looming power of the United States. This argument is structured as follows: First, I present a case study in the context of international competition for the Cuban markets, highlighting the island's significance for British merchants. Next, I inspect Cuban textile consumption's particularities from the nineteenth century to the 1910s. I will do so by examining textiles' role in the Cuban economy compared to other goods in an export-based economy, and how Cuban importers and British traders catered to Cuban tastes. A good understanding of the consumer type and culture forms the basis for examining how Britain, the United States, and Spain competed for the Cuban market, and how British merchants managed international conflicts. Let us now present the company's history and its target consumer.

Locating Stavert, Zigomala Within Cuban Consumer Culture

Stavert, Zigomala was the Manchester-based commission merchant behind the popular Dril Stavert, highlighted by the 1909 American report in the opening of this article. Besides its paradigmatic branded drill, Stavert, Zigomala is a useful case study to examine British textiles in Cuba between the 1860s and 1914 for three resons. First, scholars working on British businesses' impact on Cuba's early twentieth-century society and culture recognize

20. Saunier, "Circulations, Connexions Et Espaces Transnationaux," 111; Saunier, *Transnational History*, 117, 125.

21. Boon, "Business Enterprise and Globalization."

22. Saunier, *Transnational History*, 121–134.

23. Lipartito, "Culture and the Practice of Business History"; Lipartito, "Connecting the Cultural and the Material in Business History"; Scranton and Fridenson, *Reimagining Business History.*

24. Statement of what has taken place, since 1815, between Great Britain and Spain, France, and the United States, about securing Cuba to Spain, June 12, 1850, TNA, FO 533/17 and National Records of Scotland (hereafter cited as NRS), GD45/8/76.

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Stavert, Zigomala as an influential company.[25] Second, Stavert, Zigomala steadily focused on textile trading from its commencement in the late 1820s until the 1950s.[26] It mostly traded cottons (whites and printed), besides hosiery, and a small number of silks and woolens. In the 1870s, when other commission merchants began diversifying, Stavert, Zigomala did not. It had a short-lived venture of importing cigars into Britain, but its ledgers and history showed this to be a transient activity.[27] It only started selling in the domestic (British) market in the 1950s, following the Cuban Revolution. It was only then when the firm diversified and invested in other companies, like the shirting weaving mill P. Clegg & Co., facilitating backward integration.[28] Third and last, this case study also helps incorporate the United States into the equation because, as a business, it was also historically commercially tied to the United States, where it also traded textiles.

A summary of Stavert, Zigomala's history explains its ties to the United States.[29] Stavert, Zigomala originated in the 1850s from the reorganization and renaming of the Manchester-based American house Crafts & Stell (est. 1820s),[30] where the two main partners met. John Copeland Zigomala (Chios, c. 1816 - Manchester, 1886) and Robert Stavert (place of birth unknown, c. 1803 - Bradford, 1856) had been learning the trade while working for the house named after William Shorter Stell (Philadelphia, 1800 - Manchester, 1863) and Royal Altamont (R.A.) Crafts (Rutland, 1800 - La Tour, 1864). Crafts & Stell was a most successful textile trading company, described by Chapman as the second major Anglo-American trader of the first half of the nineteenth century.[31] However, after financial difficulties caused by the Panic of 1837, Crafts & Stell turned to the South American markets, particularly Peru and Chile.[32]

This switch launched Stavert, Zigomala's specialization in the Spanish-speaking markets. It still retained its historic ties with the United States and continued exporting there through a branch in Bradford. Furthermore, the firm often utilized this link when the United States gained control of Cuba in 1900. Yet, despite the firm's historical connection to the United States, Stavert, Zigomala's branded Dril Stavert was correlated with British success in Cuba, as per the opening paragraph. The Spanish-speaking markets, particularly Cuba, were the firm's core areas of commercial interest and expansion. The firm's internal consolidation meant that,

25. García, "La Contribución de los componentes étnicos británicos," 265.

26. de Lorenzo, "Connecting Threads."

27. Ledger 1859-1864, Stavert, Zigomala & Co Company Archives, Museum of Science and Industry (hereafter cited as MSI), YA 2002.36.4.

28. In 1954, in the *Financial Times*, Stavert, Zigomala reported a serious loss. They were trying to open up sales in the home trade as the exports to Central and South America were in decline, while acquiring a weaving mill, P. Clegg & Co.; *Financial Times*, September 7, 1954, 6. This mill was used, according to Myles Cooper Jr., for the home trade markets: "One of the things that happened to us was we realized that we ought to be in the home trade as well as the export. An opportunity did arise – at least that now the firm is gone. A friend of ours, a supplier called [inaudible] came to us and said, "Would you want to buy a weaving mill? "I said, "Not particularly". I have no ambition in that direction. But I said, "There's one thing personally where this might be of use – because you manufacture very much for the home trade and we are not in the home trade". Instead of having a home trade department, we could think of having a mill which was a supplier to the home trade." Interviews between Adrian Wilson and Myles Cooper Jr (grandson of John Cooper), 1994.

29. For a deeper analysis of the company's history, see: de Lorenzo, "Connecting Threads."

30. On the establishment and evolution of American houses in Manchester, see: Buck, *The Development of the Organisation*, 154.

31. Chapman, "The Fielden Fortune," 13; Chapman, "British Marketing Enterprise," 226.

32. de Lorenzo, "Connecting Threads."

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by 1906, Stavert, Zigomala was exporting textiles to Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Peru, Spain, and Venezuela, and even the British West Indies and Haiti.[33] Throughout these decades, Stavert, Zigomala also enjoyed the support of the "Greek diaspora merchant network,"[34] whose internal solidarity and family ties provided continuity to the firm, financial support, and a cosmopolitan stance to foreign language acquisition,[35] as will be explained below.[36]

From all Stavert, Zigomala's textiles, Dril Stavert offers a lens through which to understand Cuban society and consumer behavior culture. Printed drills were among the most sought-after cotton goods in Cuba, alongside white shirtings, prints, muslins, Hollands, and denim.[37] But Dril Stavert was a best seller. The first registered designs date back to 1871, some of which are shown in Figure 1. Over plain-woven white cotton, black or black and brown dots create a series of patterns imitating checked woven twills, an effect that visually characterized the Dril Stavert. In addition to its distinctive print, this branded drill was noted for its quality and durability. Stavert and Zigomala employed a long staple type of cotton, Sea Island Cotton, which they sourced from Egypt and America, to make the firm's resistant drills: "that was a great secret of Dril Stavert. Dril Stavert had a single warp, but a twofold weft […] It does not add, in any way, to its appearance, but it adds very greatly to its durability."[38] It was a long-lasting textile with a basic design, yet equally susceptible to multiple variations. Figure 1 displays only three samples out of the twenty-four variants of the same motif presented by the company to the Board of Trade in 1871 to gain nine months of copyright protection.[39] The following year, it registered twenty-two more and,[40] finally, six more in 1875.[41] Dril Stavert's myriad design possibilities and quality helped extend the product's life well into the twentieth century. It perfectly imitated woven twills and became an example of British commercial ascendancy in Cuba.[42]

33. See: Shipping book for the years between 1904-1912, Stavert, Zigomala & Co Company Archives, MSI, YA.2002.36.28; Reports no. 4 Intelligence reports for the year 1906, Stavert, Zigomala & Co Company Archives, MSI, YA. 2002.36.51. From a court case concerning one of the partners, Thomas Williamson Gaunt, claiming not having received his share of the profits after retirement, we learn that Stavert, Zigomala made a total profit of £70,637; £48,210; £45,091 and £17,767 for the corresponding years of 1906, 1907, 1908 and 1909, respectively. See: Inland Revenue 1 (1913-1921) 7 TC 219 no. 398, In: The High Court of Justice (King's Bench Division), 29th July 1913.

34. McCabe, Harlaftis, and Minoglou, *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks*; Minoglou, "The Greek Merchant House"; Minoglou, "Ethnic Minority Groups"; Harlaftis, *A History of Greek-Owned Shipping*; Frangopulo, "Foreign Communities."

35. Sfineos, "Cosmopolitanism."

36. de Lorenzo, "Connecting Threads."

37. Clark, *Cotton Goods in Latin America*, 10.

38. Interviews between Adrian Wilson and Myles Cooper Jr (grandson of John Cooper), 1994.

39. Registered Designs by Stavert, Zigomala & Co, 1871, TNA, BT 43/311/250998; 250999; 251000; 251001; 251002; 251003; 251085; 251086; 251088; 251089; 251090; 251091; 251092; 251093 and TNA, BT 43/312/252961; 252962; 252363; 254056; 254057; 254646; 254647; 254648. On design registering and protection in Britain, see: Halls and Martino, "Cloth, Copyright"; Halls, "Questions of Attribution"; Greysmith, "Patterns, Piracy and Protection."

40. Registered designs, 1872, TNA, BT 43/315/262962; 262963; 262964; 262965; 262966; 262966; 262967; 262968 and NA BT 43/316/268000; 268001; 268002; 268003; 268004; 268005; 268006; 268007; 268008; 268009; 268010; 268010; 268011; 268012; 268013; 268014.

41. Registered designs by Stavert, Zigomala & Co, 1875, TNA, BT 43/322/292144; 292145; 292146; 292146; 292147; 292148; 292149.

42. Clark, *Cotton Goods*, 6, 12.

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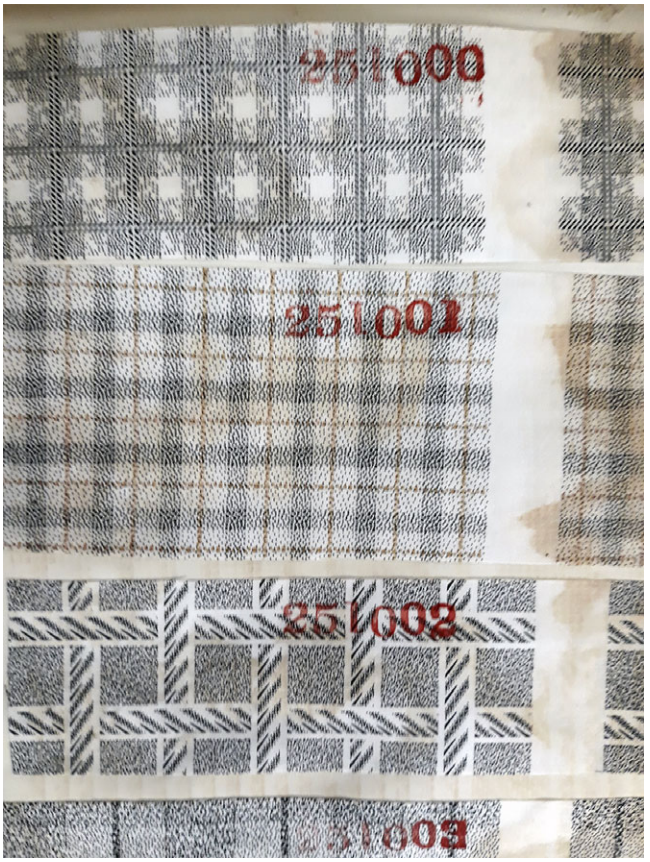

Figure 1. Stavert, Zigomala & Co, Registered Designs, 1871.

Note: Photo from TNA, BT 43/311/251000, 251001, and 251002. Used with permission

Drills were the most popular fabrics among Cuban consumers for several reasons. Cotton drills (white, colored, and printed) of different qualities were widely consumed across social classes, attaining the symbol of "Cubanism" in the aftermath of the Cuban War of Independence. For example, Sarmiento analyzed the poem "I am Cuban" by journalist and diplomat Manuel Serafín Pichardo (c. 1863–1937) to explain material culture's importance in the making of Cuban identity. However, the opening item is none other than a drill: "I am Cuban / I wear drill breeches and jacket / which I tie to my body with the belt of the machete […]."[43] References to drills in Cuban literary sources as a means of characterization provide qualitative evidence on the different classes of people (men) who wore drills and the fabric's perceptions. In the seminal novel *Cecilia Valdes* (1882), Cirilo Villaverde (1812–1894) used dress and everyday objects to denounce Cuba's contrasting inequalities. Briefly,

43. (Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the author) "Soy Cubano/ Visto calzón de dril y chamarreta;/ que con el cinto del machete entallo […]" Manuel Serafín Pichardo, quoted in: Sarmiento, *Cuba*, 318. A "chamarreta" was a type of light jacket with pockets.

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the novel tackles social injustice and Cuban slavery through an incestuous romance between a privileged young creole-white man (Leonardo) and a mixed-race woman (Cecilia), who unknowingly share the same father, Cándido Gamboa. Cándido is a wealthy, avaricious (newcomer) Spanish slave trader turned sugar planter who wishes for his son to marry a woman who can increase the family's fortune. In the attention paid to everyday life, dress mediates in shaping the characters' social backgrounds. Cándido is described as follows:

> […] sat in one of the living room armchairs, a gentleman of about fifty years, tall and robust […]. He had short hair, his beard fully shaved, he wore a fancy printed cotton full-length housecoat over a white piqué vest, *drill trousers* and suede slippers. His feet rested on a straw stool, and, with both hands, he held close to his eyes a newspaper printed on Spanish paper titled El Diario de La Habana. [Italics added for emphasis][44]

Cándido's social status and ideological position are conveyed through his attire, possessions, and demeanor. Status relies on a character's relaxed pose and appearance. The clothing's value is deduced from the garments' fabric: suede, piqué, fancy-printed cotton, and drill. Although a specific ideology could be presumed from his status, this aspect is reinforced via the newspaper, made of "Spanish paper." *Diario de la Habana*[45] was the official Spanish government publication in Cuba.[46] That is to say, Cándido supported the Spanish colonial rule.

Cándido's description is interesting for its curious resemblance to Stavert, Zigomala's trademark registered in 1873 (Figure 2). The social and ideological class that Villaverde describes verbally is visually evoked by Stavert, Zigomala. Its visual elements allow us to understand the class and ideology of the consumers targeted by Stavert, Zigomala. The trademark is a metareferential image. In it, "[…] sat in one of the living room armchairs, a gentleman of about fifty years, tall and robust […],"[47] indolently reads the announcement of the arrival of a type of a fancy perfumed cotton fabric (Excelsior) "for ladies" traded by Stavert, Zigomala. Although the fabric was intended for women's clothing, the target audience was men, as they were decision makers among the higher classes, following the highly segregated status of white Cuban women.[48] While this provides a glimpse into the status of Stavert, Zigomala's clients, and their ideology is further corroborated by the newspaper depicted in the trademark, it is none other than the conservative *Diario de la Marina* newspaper (published between 1844 and 1960), which, like the *Diario de la Habana*,

44. "[…] ocupaba una de las butacas del comedor un caballero de hasta cincuenta años de edad, alto, robusto […]. Llevaba el cabello corto, la barba rasurada completamente; vestía bata talar de zaraza sobre chaleco largo de piqué blanco, pantalones de dril y chinelas de ante. Descansaba los pies en una silla con asiento de paja, con ambas manos se llevaba a los ojos un periódico impreso y en papel español de hilo del folio común, titulado El Diario de la Habana." Villaverde, *Cecilia Valdés o La Loma Del Ángel*, 52.

45. The newspaper assumed different titles: *El Aviso* (1805-1808), *Aviso de La Habana* (1809-1810*), Diario de La Habana* (1810-1812), *Diario del Gobierno de La Habana* (1812-1820), *Diario Constitucional de La Habana* (1820), *Diario del Gobierno Constitucional de La Habana* (1820-1823), and *Diario del Gobierno de La Habana* (1823-1825).

46. Marrero, *Cuba, economía y sociedad VII*, 15:124–125.

47. Villaverde, *Cecilia Valdés o La Loma Del Ángel*, 52.

48. Martínez, "The 'Male City' of Havana."

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Figure 2. John Nild (artist), Stavert, Zigomala (copyright owner), Drawing of Stavert, Zigomala's trademark. Man seated in chair, right leg crossed, reading paper, carpet bag in the foreground, 1872 (registered in 1873).

Note: TNA COPY 1/22/295. Used with permission

defended the metropolis' interests; eventually, Stavert, Zigomala advertised their Drils Stavert in this newspaper.[49] Thus, the archetypal customer was Cándido from *Cecilia Valdés*. Stavert, Zigomala targeted members of the creole elite and parvenus of Spanish origin whose fortunes, connected to Cuba's sugar industry, controlled a vast part of the island. In the break of the Independence War, British diplomats observed that those of Spanish origin and sentiment had found in Cuba "el Dorado which offered a really satisfactory field to the Spanish soldier of fortune."[50] Exploiting stereotypes, or despite these, British diplomats concluded, "The Spaniard is not generally thought of as particularly laborious compared with his European neighbors but in Cuba his industry and temperance shine by contrast."[51] Fortune-seeking was accompanied by indulgent consumption, whose gains many "spend in display; they buy diamonds but not new machinery."[52] Although the

49. Stavert, Zigomala & Co, "Uniformes. Drill inglés. Legítimo Stavert," *Diario de la Marina*, September 26, 1926.

50. Cuba: Notes. (Mr. C. N. E. Eliot), 1899, TNA, FO 881/8602X.

51. Cuba: Notes. (Mr. C. N. E. Eliot), 1899, TNA, FO 881/8602X.

52. Cuba: Notes. (Mr. C. N. E. Eliot), 1899, TNA, FO 881/8602X.

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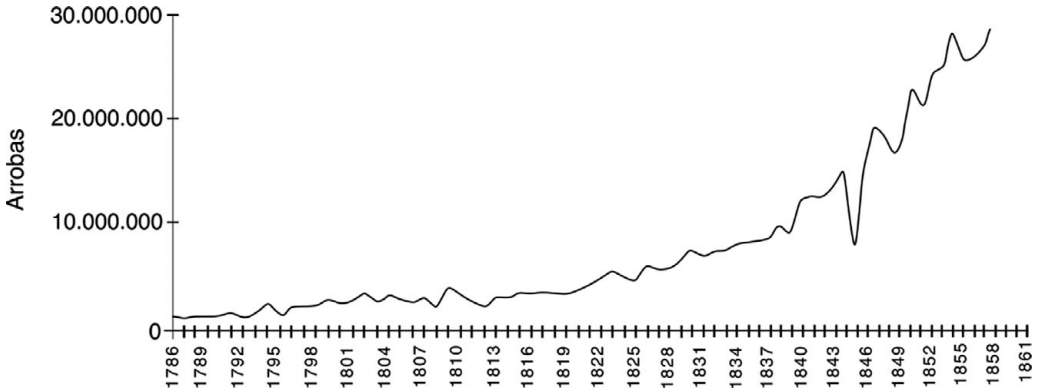
Table 1. Sugar exports in arrobas, from 1786 to 1861



Note: Graph and data compiled by Fernández de Pinedo, *Comercio y fiscalidad*, 85. Used with permission.

relationship between sugar fortune and gentry consumption has been mostly studied in relation to Britain and the eighteenth century,[53] it repeated in the nineteenth-century Cuban sugar industrial revolution.[54]

Despite its risks, the Cuban sugar trade was highly lucrative.[55] As Fernández de Pinedo and Pretel observed, nineteenth-century Cuba underwent a "sugar industrial revolution" whereby "creole planters managed to transform their small-scale slave plantations into large agro-industrial complexes."[56] Merchants, slave traders, and merchant bankers, provided the necessary credit that planters needed to maximize production and subsidize innovative machinery's acquisition anticipating the harvest, which heavily depended on the climate.[57] In many cases, these merchants assumed control of plantations due to mortgages or kinship.[58] Sweet fortunes engrossed a resulting capital that, according to Marrero, "exceeded that of any other country, proportionally speaking."[59]

Sugar capital flows had quantifiable repercussions on textile imports. Tables 1 and 2 display Cuban sugar exports' evolution (in volume) from 1786 to 1861 (Table 1) and textile goods imports (in volume) from 1803 to 1864 (Table 2). These illustrations are juxtaposed to explain several phenomena that marked the years after 1864. A significant change is clear immediately after 1818, when Spain opened Cuba to free trade: sugar exports and cotton imports both increased despite the increased tariffs imposed on customs that favored trade

53. Burnard and Riello, "Slavery and the New History of Capitalism," 240, footnote 94.

54. What I am offering is a general idea of how Cuban society was viewed. For a more nuanced examination, see: Knight, "The Social Structure"; Marrero, *Cuba, economía y sociedad V*, 13.

55. Dana, *To Cuba and Back*, 132–33.

56. Pretel and Fernández de Pinedo, "Circuits of Knowledge," 261.

57. Pretel and Fernández de Pinedo, "Circuits of Knowledge," 272; Curry-Machado, "Rich Flames and Hired Tears," 44.

58. Curry-Machado, "'Sin azúcar no hay país,'" 31; Dana, *To Cuba and Back*, 96.

59. Marrero, *Cuba, economía y sociedad V*, 13:71.

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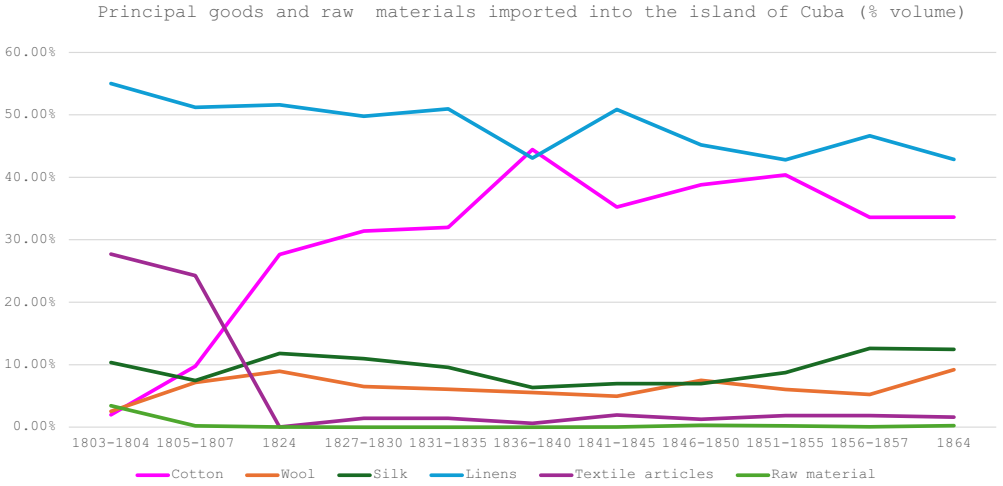
Table 2. Principal goods and raw materials imported into the island of Cuba (% volume)



Note: Graph by the author. Data compiled by Fernández de Pinedo, *Comercio y fiscalidad,* 2002, 148.

with or via the metropolis.[60] In both instances, this tendency, together with the absence of raw textile material imports, reveals the lack of local industry to manufacture textile products and the development of a monocultural economy in Cuba. More land allocated to sugar production meant less for other crops, resulting in an agricultural export-led economy reliant on imports for its basic needs, including foodstuffs and textiles. It also resulted in a distinctively asymmetrical society "with no popular classes […] only masters and slaves," as the Cuban writer Countess of Merlin (1789–1852) stated.[61]

Increased sugar demand required more enslaved people in the workforce, which reached a high of 43.3 per cent in 1841, decreasing thereafter to 26 per cent in 1861 until its definitive abolition between 1880 and 1886.[62] The need to dress enslaved people in *cañamazo* (a cheap, coarse linen fabric) contributed to maintaining linen's position in the market, as shown in Table 2. However, this is based on volume. Fernández de Pinedo observed differences between the value and volume of cottons and linens imported into Cuba. Before the 1820s, "cotton [was] absolutely neglected," according to the British Commissioner of Arbitration stationed in Cuba, Francis Jameson.[63] From the 1820s, linens continued to be in demand volume-wise, but cottons' value tripled in the following decades. From the 1820s, cottons'

60. Fernández de Pinedo, *Comercio exterior y fiscalidad*, 52–70.

61. "Il n'y a pas de peuble à la Havane, il n'y a que des maîtres et des esclaves." Santa Cruz y Montalvo. *Countess of Merlin, La Havane*, 342. I am offering an idea of how Cuban society was perceived by its contemporaries. For a more nuanced examination, see: Knight, "The Social Structure"; Levi Marrero, *Cuba, economía y Sociedad V, 13;* Sarmiento, "Cuba. Una Sociedad formada por retazos."

62. Knight, "The Social Structure," 260; Curry-Machado, "'Sin Azúcar No Hay País,'" 33. The decrease was a consequence of a fear of similar revolts to those in Haiti and the international (British) pressure to abolish slavery in exchange for their support.

63. Jameson, *Letters from the Havana*, 126.

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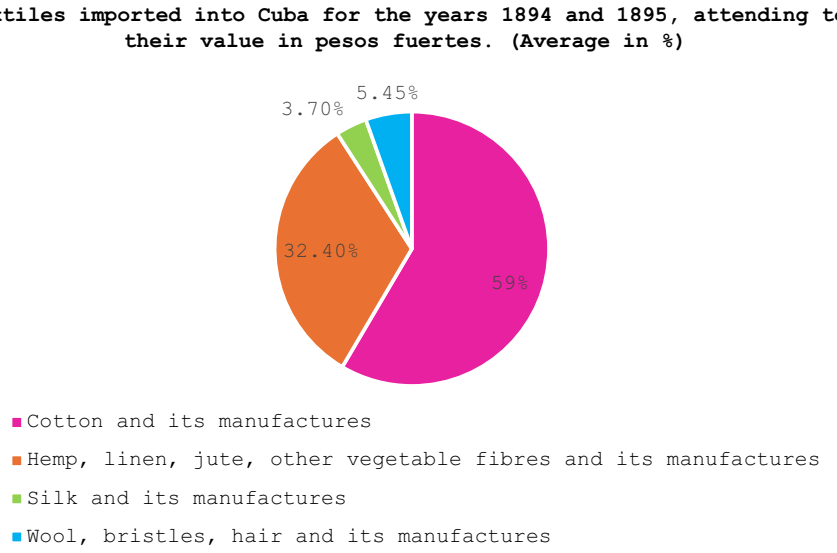
Table 3. Textiles imported into Cuba for the years 1894 and 1895, showing their value in pesos fuertes (average in %)



Note: Compiled by the author.
Source: *Estadística general del comercio exterior de la isla de Cuba en 1894* and *Estadística general del comercio exterior de la isla de Cuba en 1895*.

progressive adoption was influenced by trading apertures, fashion, and the discourse of hygiene.[64] By 1894–1895, cotton textiles represented, in value, almost 60 per cent of total textile imports (Table 3).

This trend was a consolidated reality at the dawn of the nineteenth century.[65] In 1899, cotton manufacturing represented 65 per cent of the total textile imports into Cuba, with linen reduced to 21 per cent (wool at 9 per cent and silk at 5 per cent), as evaluated in the British Consular Reports:

> A feature of the textile trade of Cuba is the largely-increased use of cotton goods of late years as concerned with linen. This is due partly to the necessity for economy, but partly also to consideration of health, as it is now very generally recognised here that cotton is far healthier for purposes of clothing.[66]

64. Poggio, *Aclimatacion é higiene de los europeos en Cuba*, 116–17.

65. This progressive increment in cotton consumption over linen, notably from the mid-1820s, coincides with Styles' observations on how linens were progressively substituted by cottons, particularly for shirting and sheeting for the majority of the population in Britian. See: Styles, "What Were Cottons for in the Early Industrial Revolution?"

66. No. 2473 Annual Series. Diplomatic and Consular Reports. Report for the year 1899 on the Trade and Commerce of the Island of Cuba. Reference to previous report, Annual Series No. 2361, volume 28 (1900), 21. The values of the different textiles imported were as follows: Cotton fabrics £963,811.00; Linen £304,861.00; Woollen £132,193.00; Silk £68,274.00.

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For an export-led economy based on monoculture, commercial statistics are highly indicative of the types of preferred commodities. However, they do not offer a complete account of the consumer culture in which Stavert, Zigomala traded.

The consumer culture in Cuba, as written sources depict it, was one of excess, with an "immoderate love for dress."[67] Store censuses and investigations into Cuban prices and salaries expenditures confirm this. Santamaría's examination of the expenditures based on market prices shows that textile items (including blankets) occupied as much as 14.5 per cent of an average Cuban consumer's shopping basket. Indeed, clothing items came second, after foodstuffs (53 per cent), but above alcoholic drinks (13 per cent), housing (10 per cent), fuel (7 per cent), and soap (2.5 per cent).[68] The increasing number of clothing- and textile-related shops and trade operations in Havana throughout this period also confirms a taste for textile consumption, which prevailed over wars and sugar-related crisis, as a commercial agent observed: "In all the wars, revolutions, and other crises […], there has been scarcely a single failure among them [textile importers]."[69] Shopkeeping and other "minor" commercial activities benefited from the injection of foreign capital,[70] notably in the aftermath of the 1869–1879 war.[71] The textile import-wholesale trade had long attracted several Spanish migrants, notably Catalans and Asturians, due to the rapid fortunes the trade offered,[72] which increased further in the postwar years. In 1881, Cuban journalist José Quintin Suzarte (1819–1888) remarked that the rapid increase in shops of all kinds across Havana, outnumbering those in Madrid, testified to Cubans' excessive consumption of imported fancy articles.[73] This was mirrored in the demand for seamstresses versed in the latest fashion, notably in Havana.[74] Between 1846 and 1862, the number of seamstresses registered in Cuba increased by almost 400 per cent, of which 69 per cent were in Havana.[75] Similarly, about 32.53 per cent of all 624 textile shops distributed across the island were in Havana.[76] A comparison of these figures with those from other profitable sectors further highlights the importance of textile consumption in Cuba. Havana had twice as many textile stores in 1862 as cigar factories in 1898 (120).[77] The blossoming demand for fancy novelties affected Cuba's labor market and Havana's urban landscape.

67. Jameson, *Letters from the Havana*, 39.
68. Santamaría. "Precios y salarios."
69. Clark, *Cotton Goods in Latin America*, 16.
70. Le Riverend, *Historia económica de Cuba*, 31.
71. Marqués, "Las industrias menores." quoted in: Santamaría, "La economía cubana," 70.
72. Marrero, *Cuba, economía y sociedad*, 13: 128. See for example: Exp. de Antonio Font y Espinal, 1829, Archivo General de Iindias (hereafter cited AGI), ULTRAMAR, 356, no. 63. Here, Antonio Font, from Barcelona, requests permission to travel to Cuba to open a textile shop in Santiago de Cuba. Amongst his referees are a textile manufacturer who confirms that Font had acquired textiles from him and that he was reliable. If we look into Stavert, Zigomala's clients, Ventura Jado was one of those Spaniards who migrated to Cuba, and became involved with the wholesaler and importing house *La Estrella*. The correspondence between Ventura Jado and his family is now preserved at the private archives of the Palacio de los Condes de Isla-Fernández, according to Rubalcaba Pérez, "Dios nos mejore."
73. Suzarte, *Estudios sobre la cuestión económica de la isla de Cuba*, 30.
74. Marrero, *Cuba, economía y sociedad VI*, 14:221.
75. In 1846, 61 whites and 1 former enslaved person. In 1862, 245 whites and 62 formerly enslaved people. Marrero *Cuba, economía y sociedad VI*, 14:221.
76. Marrero *Cuba, economía y sociedad VI*, 14:212.
77. Poumier, *Apuntes sobre La Vida Cotidiana*, 108.

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Luxurious shops clustered around the streets of O'Reilly and Mercaderes, where the higher classes gathered at night to go shopping.[78] These lavish shops, nineteenth-century commentator de Arboleya recounted, "[…] creat[ed] an immense bazaar with manufactures of all sorts […] glowing at night with the innumerable kerosene lights, and so crowded with shoppers that it certainly conveys brightly to any foreigner our richness and opulence."[79] Around the same period, almost as if American writer Richard Henry Dana (1815–1882) had taken note of Arboleya's words, the former wrote:

> Three merchants whom I call upon have palaces for their business. The entrances are wide, the staircases almost as stately as that of Stafford House, the floors of marble, the panels of porcelain tiles, the rails of iron, and the rooms over twenty feet high, with open rafters, the doors and windows colossal, the furniture rich and heavy; and there sits the merchant or banker, in white pantaloons and thin shoes and loose white coat and narrow neck-tie, smoking a succession of cigars, surrounded by tropical luxuries and tropical defences. In the lower storey of one of these buildings is an exposition of silks, cotton and linens, in a room so large that it looked like a part of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park.[80]

Foreigners were most certainly impressed. Arboleya and Dana's observations reveal a Cuban consumer culture where we can identify Stavert, Zigomala's clients. By cross-referencing the company's correspondence, newspapers, and almanacks, we can locate the shops and trading focus shops of Stavert, Zigomala's clients (see the Supplementary Materials). These were importers and importers-wholesalers, with some having confirmed Spanish origins. Stavert, Zigomala, and many other British traders targeted fortune-seeking and affluent merchants. That is, the relationship between sugar and gentry consumption can be qualitatively and quantitatively appraised in terms of textile imports and the number and opulence of textile-related trade. Thus, Cuba became an attractive market for British textile exporters. Next, I explore how British exporters and Cuban-based importers communicated, organized, and responded to demand, aiming to convert consumer whims into revenue.

Responding to Cuban Consumer Demand: Products and Networks

Product quality perception, network organization, and language were some key selling factors in catering to Cuban consumers. Let us first address product quality perception, which involves marketing textiles in English, design, and packaging strategies. The association between Englishness and quality is again exemplified in Dril Stavert. Newspaper advertisements and trademarks highlight the creation of a connection between Englishness and quality, particularly in drills. One of these advertisements announced in 1848 the arrival of a "wide range of drills, some colored and some with white stripes, new, rare, beautiful; all arrived from

78. See: Martínez-Fernández, *Fighting Slavery in the Caribbean*, 74–75, 93–103; de Arboleya, *Manual de la isla de Cuba*, 249, 330.
79. de Arboleya, *Manual de la isla de Cuba*, 330.
80. Dana, *To Cuba and Back*, 44.

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London."[81] London could have been the departure port; still, it was often employed as either a metonym for England or just as a means to convey Englishness. While consumers could locate London as a trading center, they did not necessarily know where Manchester was, or its commercial and manufacturing significance. We learn so from the Guatemalan consul in Manchester, whose explanation may be extended to Cuba. In 1894, the consul wrote the following to a Guatemalan newspaper:

> In regards to Manchester commerce, and the traffic between this city and our country, it occurs to me that it will not be useless […] to remind some facts […] perhaps unknown to the novice textile merchants. There are, in effect, many people who do not know with exactitude the value and significance of the main manufacturing cities of Great Britain. Following aged, detrimental practices now in disuse, they see London as the sole supplying market of the goods consumed here.[82]

As the consul explained above, not everyone could locate Manchester. Hence, London was preferred for its communication effectiveness. London was equated with Englishness, and eventually, Englishness with high-quality textiles. Trademarked goods reinforced this connection.[83] For example, Stavert, Zigomala registered a trademark in 1890, highlighting that its drills were finished in London (Figure 3).[84] One of Stavert, Zigomala's regular clients, Doyle & Pérez, advertised the arrival of novel French and English muslins for the summer, remarking that it sold "drills and fine linens from London."[85] A similar commercial strategy was used by clothing merchants, like Woodson & Co., London, who were in reality from Manchester but trademarked their goods as "London."[86]

Additional observations can be made regarding Stavert, Zigomala's branding preferences. The company used the surname of the British foundational partner, Stavert (only) even when the firm's management was mainly led by Greek diaspora merchants connected to Zigomala.[87] The use of "Stavert" was employed as a marker of Englishness, which appealed to its clients and, as we shall see later on, determined Stavert, Zigomala's position at the break of the American-Spanish war. The association between Dril Stavert Englishness and high quality would sustain the product's success. The fabric was popular even in times of instability.

81. "[…] surtido complete de driles de fondo de colores y listas blancas, nuevos, raros, lindísimos llegados de Londres." *Diario de la Marina*, 25 August 1848.

82. "[C]on referencia al comercio de Manchester, y especialmente al tráfico habido entre esta ciudad y nuestro país, ocúrreme que no será inútil […] la repetición de algunos hechos […] más bien tal vez ignorados por los novicios en la carrera de mercader de paños. Hay, en efecto, algunas personas que no conocen con extactitud el valor y la importancia de las principales ciudades manufactureras de la Gran Bretaña. Siguiendo prácticas caídas en desuso y adhiriéndose á convenciones añejas y nocivas ven á Londres como el único mercado de extracción para los productos que son consumidos," *El Guatemalteco*, 12 May 1894.

83. See: "Textile Trademarks: Identifiable Advertisements in the First Wave of Globalisation," in de Lorenzo, "Connecting Threads," 144-174.

84. Stavert, Zigomala & Co, Dril Stavert. Apresto Legitimo de Londres, U.S. Patent Trademark, no. 17504, filed February 4, 1890, Library of Congress (LC), Office trademarks.

85. Doyle y Pérez, Advertisement for Drills, *La Lucha*, March 23, 1903.

86. Solicitud de inscripción en Cuba de la marca Woodson & C[a], London, 1892-93, Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereafter cited AHN), ULTRAMAR, 275, Exp. 39.

87. de Lorenzo, "Connecting Threads," 65–100.

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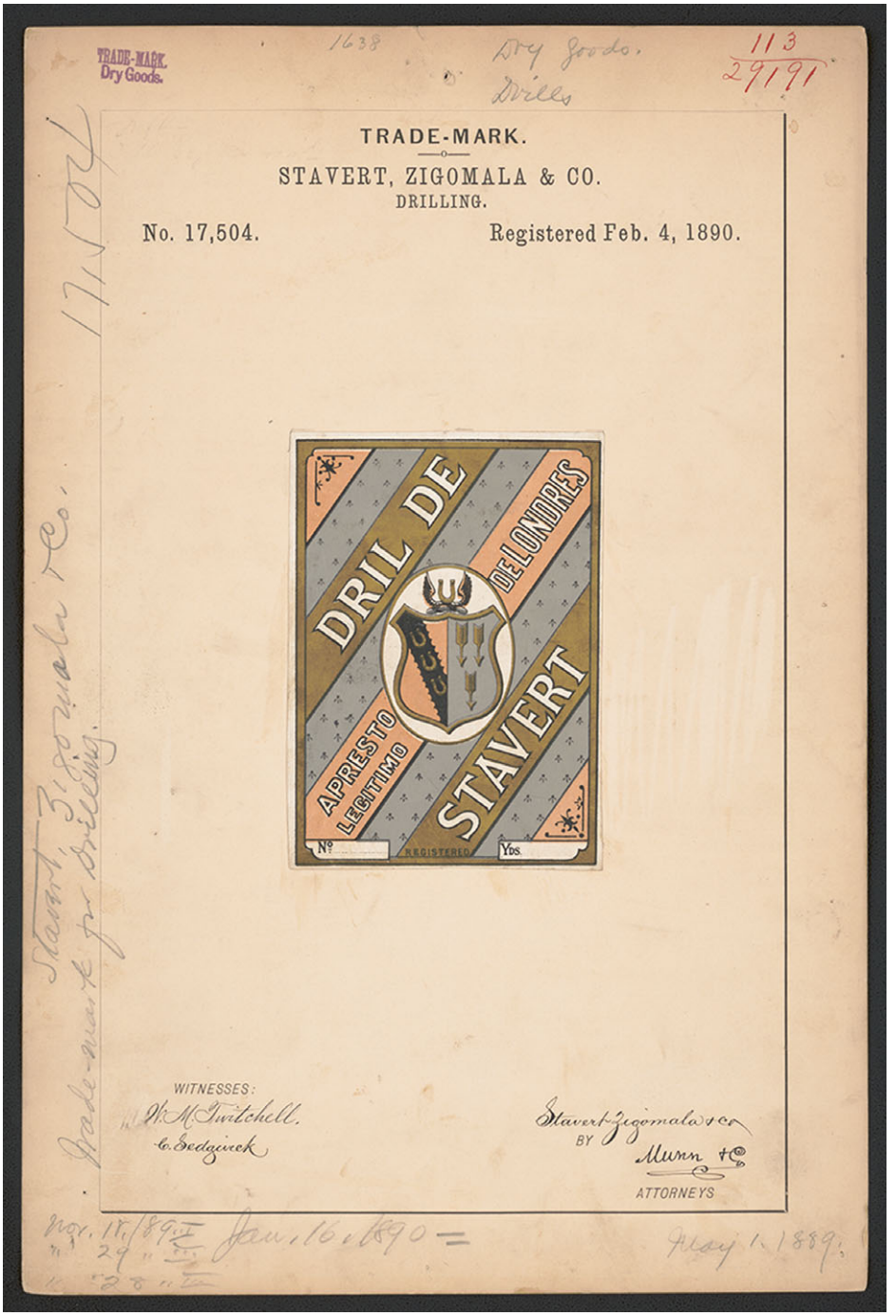

Figure 3. Stavert, Zigomala (copyright owner), Trademark, Dril de Stavert, 1890.

Note: Stavert, Zigomala, Dril Stavert. Apresto Legitimo de Londres, U.S. Patent Trademark, no. 17504, filed February 4, 1890, Library of Congress (LC), Office trademarks. Used with permission

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In 1883, Mr. Jonlinson, Stavert, Zigomala's resident agent in Havana, requested new drills as a matter of urgency: "Solis Marquez & Co herewithin an order for Drills & they ask for as quick dispatchable as possible."[88] The request contrasts with the context, "when business [was] still extremely bad"[89] due to one of the most severe sugar crises Cuba had faced. However, this demand also highlights British drills' stable position in Cuban markets. Even after the American-Spanish War, from the 1890s until the 1920s, drills remained the "most important department in the building [Stavert, Zigoamala's offices], both [in terms of] the volume of its turnover and its profitability."[90]

This emphasis on Englishness as a way to convey quality and retain ascendancy over the Cuban markets complements the existing scholarship. In his analysis of British trade with Latin America, Llorca-Jaña argued that novelty and variety in style were preferred over quality.[91] However, what the Dril Stavert posits is the appreciation of a high-quality products, at least among Cuban consumers. Moreover, the emphasis on London and "authentic finishing" in the 1890 trademark illustrated in Figure 3 further confirms Marrison's claim that the preferred characteristic in high-quality piece-cottons in Latin America, and especially in Cuba was a good finish.[92]

Englishness and quality also became connected to packaging for export, in which Britain was said to have "developed into a distinct trade."[93] Packaging had to be tailored to different markets.[94] The outer packaging of the textile cargoes preserved the quality of the textiles, and those cargoes destined for Latin America had their specific requirements, as examined by Llorca-Jaña.[95] However, for the Cuban textile importer, the aesthetics and appropriateness of the internal packaging in which individual goods were wrapped were as crucial as the quality of the fabric itself. "Importers say that in some lines the American white shirting could compete successfully with the English […] but that they refrain from buying solely on account of the packing."[96] Wholesalers and retailers preferred the careful, neat, English packaging, "with each five bolts wrapped first in white tissue paper and then stiff blue paper," to the "American goods packed in cases without this bundling."[97] Stavert, Zigomala's correspondence provides further testimony of the exacting packaging standards demanded by Cuban retailers. A good client, Autran, Salmones & Co, had not received a hosiery (*medias*) order packed as he had requested. This client "complain[ed] very much of the medias recently sent […]1470.[…] the cartons are different to what Panchito says he ordered."[98] The presentation of textile goods and their appearance were decisive.

88. Letter from Mr Jonlinson (Havana) to Merss Stavert Zigoamala (Manchester), February 10 1883, Stavert, Zigomala & Co Company Papers, MSI, YA.2002.36, Box 7.

89. Letter from Mr Jonlinson (Havana) to Merss Stavert Zigoamala (Manchester), February 10 1883, Stavert, Zigomala & Co Company Papers, MSI, YA.2002.36, Box 7.

90. Interviews between Adrian Wilson and Myles Cooper Jr (grandson of John Cooper), 1994.

91. Llorca-Jaña, *The British Textile Trade*, 106, 114.

92. Marrison, "Great Britain and Her Rivals," 311, 337.

93. Whittam, *Report on England's Cotton Industry*, 33.

94. Whittam, *Report on England's Cotton Industry*, 56–57.

95. Llorca-Jaña, "To Be Waterproof."

96. Clark, *Cotton Goods in Latin America*, 10.

97. Clark, *Cotton Goods in Latin America*, 10.

98. Letter from Mr. Jonlinson (Havana) to Merss Stavert Zigoamala (Manchester), 3 February 1883, MSI, YA.2002.36, Box 7.

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Catering to Cuban consumers also involved providing suitable designs. Besides high-quality drills, Cuban consumers also requested fancy prints in pleasing styles. Cuba had a firmly rooted association between fashionability, fancy prints, and British commerce. During the British occupation of Havana in 1762, printed or painted textiles (*zarazas*, *zarasas*, or *sarasas*) were imported in large quantities,[99] translating into long-term demand, and a correlation between fancy prints and Britain as purveyors.[100] Cuban appetite for fashionable prints was highlighted by the British Consul in Havana, who, at the end of the Spanish-American War, reported to Parliament that:

> In the dry goods line, a good business is being done in prints […] I would strongly recommend manufacturers to […] request their agents here to keep them continually supplied with samples and prices, and to follow the fashions closely, in order to indicate in time the various changes which may have become most marked.[101]

Unfortunately, no samples of the fancy prints traded by Stavert, Zigomala were found.[102] However, correspondence shows that Stavert, Zigomala did as the consul recommended and could even anticipate its clients' needs. In correspondence between Stavert, Zigomala's resident agent in Havana during the 1880s (Jonlinson) and the firm in Manchester, Jonlinson provides information about orders made by two clients who commissioned designs and patterns selected from previous samples: "Ruiz Abascak & Co. forward you an order today which is on commission. Any design that cannot be done may be replaced by the nearest to those selected. Mr. Abascal will write you. […] Maribona Suarez & Co herewith a small order. Any design may be substituted."

Such requests were common practice for British merchants. However, the confidence placed by Stavert, Zigomala's clients in the company's ability to choose alternative designs if the selected ones were unavailable points toward its in-depth knowledge of the markets and a capacity to deliver to their clients' expectations. Comparing this information with the designers and *échantillonneurs* that supplied Stavert, Zigomala with designs for prints shows that the firm invested in the best (and most expensive) French designs for that time.

During the nineteenth century, debates on taste and "good design" tended to position French design as superior to English design. Although recent investigations have challenged assumptions about French superiority in taste by unpacking its class bias,[103] French designers' education and status enhanced French designs' perceptions, attracting British-based merchants. Stavert, Zigomala listed in its ledgers some of the most renowned French designers of the period, including C. Gatiker or Kreuscher & Engel.[104] Kreuscher & Engel were originally

99. Marrero, *Cuba, Economía y Sociedad. Azúcar VI*, 14:211.

100. Sarmiento, "Vestido y Calzado," 164.

101. *No. 2361 Report on the Trade and Commerce of the Consular District of Havana for the Year 1898*, 9-10.

102. Further research should be conducted in France and at the Musée de l'Impression sur Etoffes in Mulhouse in particular. It is also probable that the designs Kreuscher & Engel (amongst others) supplied to Stavert, Zigomala were registered as the designers' property in France, rather than in Britain.

103. Tierney, "Design Quality."

104. French textile design house formed in 1857 by Emile Henry Engel (Mulhouse, 1827 – Paris, 1901) and Daniel Kreuscher (Mulhouse, 1825 – date unknown) associated as Kreuscher & Engel, a partnership which lasted until 1892 when Daniel Kreuscher retired. See: The *Annuaire et almanach du commerce, de l'industrie,*

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from the Alsace region, home to the best-known French calico printers in the nineteenth century.[105] However, like many other Alsacian designers, they also had design studios in Paris, especially in the 2nd arrondissement.[106] Testimony to Kreuscher & Engel's reputation can be found in their colleagues' praises: "First-class design studio […] The taste of these gentlemen and their knowledge of the making process assured their success amongst Alsace's best fashion and upholstery calico printers. They have also trained great students."[107] In other words, in the 1860s, Alsatian designers were assets for targeting the upper end of the market, with Kreuscher & Engel at the top. This demonstrates Stavert, Zigomala's willingness to invest in what was perceived to be the most tasteful design of the period, which they linked to British cottons' quality appreciation. These choices enhanced Stavert, Zigomala's ability to satisfy customer tastes.

Stavert, Zigomala also responded to consumers' desire for novelty by subscribing to the services of the *échantillonneurs* of Hoffmann & Herzog (based in Paris).[108] Thierry Millet defined *échantillonneur* as a type of mediator in the fashion system who benefited from the desire for novelty and acted to promote textile innovation; they were at their height of influence between 1862 and 1878.[109] *Échantillonneurs* scouted for textile trends, a selection of which they compiled and delivered to their clients in a series of sample books and reports featuring a diverse range of designs depending on the type of subscription their clients

de la magistrature et de l'administration. Kreuscher & Engel appear as "dessinateurs en impressions." The design house also worked for other textile industrialists catering for the Spanish-speaking markets, such as the Catalonian calico printer L'Espanya Industrial; Dangla, "L'Espanya Industrial," 60. According to the Industrial Society of Mulhouse, Daniel Kreuscher worked for Hartmann & Fils in Munster. Emile Engel was trained by Durot, and later by Dolfus-Mieg. Between 1854 and 1857, he worked for Hartmann & Fils in their house in Paris. In 1902, he was still active and employed 50 people. C. Gattiker was a French textile design house, listed alongside Kreuscher & Engel amongst others as the most renowned names in calico printing for their technical colouring knowledge; "Les dessinateurs français ont droit comme toujours aux éloges les plus mérités. Les noms de MM. Arthur Martin, Libert, Tétrel, Gattiker, Sins, Kreuscher et Engel, Mouton, etc., sont connus de tous les imprimeurs ou fabricants de tissus façonnés." Jules Persoz, "Procédés chimiques de blanchiment, de teinture, d'impression et d'apprêt," *Journal des sciences pures et appliquées*, 642. *Histoire documentaire de l'industrie de Mulhouse*, 2:641.

105. Sykas, "Material Evidence," 226-227.

106. Further testimony is found in a local appeal by a number of studios, including some of Stavert, Zigomala's suppliers, who wished for a change in the urban profile of their neighborhood during Haussman's renovation of Paris. Their appeal shows the concentration of textile trades around certain streets of textile trades: "[…]sur les questions […] relativement aux besoins du commerce des rues du Sentier, Mulhouse et des Jeûneurs […] le commerce des articles de Mulhouse, Roubaix, Lille, Flers, Tarare, Saint-Quentin, Reims, etc, comprenant tous les tissus de cotton, laine, de fil et de fantaisie ainsi que les toiles unies et peintes de mousselines brodées et brochées […] Considerant que le quartier de la rue des Jeûneurs est devenue le dépôt spécial de toutes ces grandes villes de fabrication et leur centre réel […] que depuis longues années, toutes les maisons de commerce les plus importantes sont venues se grouper dans ce quartier, et récemment encore les maisons du quartier des Bourdonnais sont venies s'y joindre […]" "Délibération des négociants, fabricants et entrepositaires des rues du Sentier, Saint-Fiacre, Mulhouse et des Jeûneurs, réunis en assamble génerale," *La Revue Municipale*, April 20, 1860.

107. "[A]telier de dessin de premier ordre […] Le goût de ces messieurs et leur connaissance de la fabrication assurèrent leur succès parmi les premières maisons de l'Alsace pour la robe et le meuble. Ils ont formé d'excellents élèves." *Histoire documentaire de l'industrie de Mulhouse* 2, 641.

108. See: de Lorenzo, "Connecting Threads," 253–259.

109. Maillet, "Les échantillons, Un vecteur d'innovations." Maillet´s investigations in the trade of échantillonage has uncovered a vast gap in the literature on forecasting, previously suggested by Mary O'Neill, and Philip Sykas. See: Sykas, "Material Evidence," 31–32; O'Neill, "La mode dans les étoffes imprimées entre 1810 et 1850."

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selected. This haptic, visual, and textual "design intelligence," as Anderson refers to it,[110] was shipped worldwide to industrial societies, manufacturers, and merchant converters.[111] In particular, Hoffmann & Herzog supplied Stavert, Zigomala, with what their ledgers listed as "designs" and "French patterns," for at least five consecutive years, demonstrating the firm's interest in accessing the market of high novelties for competitive, and not necessarily marketing, purposes.[112] Stavert, Zigomala never marketed its goods as Parisian or French, but rather as British, contrary to what Anderson has suggested: that manufacturers who subscribed to forecasting services did so to convey "the air of Paris" in their products.[113] Therefore, it can be posited that the company invested in French novelties to access the primary source of fashion information. By engaging reputable creators, the firm lowered the risk and secured sales. British suppliers' attentiveness to fashion and their readiness to produce suitable designs for commission, as Stavert, Zigomala did, was a key feature that defined British market advantages in Cuba. Another element was cultural and linguistic flexibility.

Modern language education for commercial purposes was a contentious issue in nineteenth-century Britain in comparison to continental Europe. French, German, Belgian, and Italian schools of commerce increased their modern language courses. As Passant demonstrated, "the educational content dispensed as common-core training was invariably organized around a body of required major disciplines […] These were, in order of their priority: modern languages, bookkeeping and the 'commodities composition' course."[114] For example, in the 1860s, the business department of Stuttgart's Polytechnische Schule devoted 42 per cent of its contact hours to the teaching of English, German, and French, while bookkeeping represented only 17 per cent.[115] Modern languages acquisition was increasingly seen as the wherewithal to reduce intermediaries and facilitate commercial loyalty: It reduced transaction costs and lubricated information systems.[116] However, formal training in modern languages for commercial purposes in nineteenth-century Britain did not follow the same trend.[117] According to Fauri, in Britain, "the English educational philosophy was firmly based on the study of classics and mathematics," and the conviction that practical on-the-job training and the personality traits of staff were the pathways to success.[118] This attitude delayed the establishment of modern language courses within schools of commerce in Britain. As a result, the failure to learn foreign languages was listed among the reasons why British trade was "being left behind" in the 1899 report, a British Special Commissioner delivered on Foreign Trade Competition carried out in five Spanish-speaking countries.[119]

110. Anderson, "Translating the 'French Legend,'" 3.

111. Hoffmann & Herzog, like Kreuscher & Engel, supplied other clients whose customers were in the Spanish-speaking world, such as the Barcelona-based calico printer La España Industrial. See: Medina, "'La España Industrial'"; Dangla, "L'Espanya Industrial."

112. Ledger, Printed Goods Account, 1859-1866, Stavert, Zigomala & Co. Company Papers, MSI, YA.2002.36.4.

113. Anderson, "Translating the 'French Legend,'" 3.

114. Passant, "Issues in European Business Education in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," 1125.

115. Passant, "Issues in European Business Education in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," 1125.

116. Casson, *Information and Organization.*

117. On this topic, see also: de Lorenzo, "Connecting Threads"; Hooper, *The Edwardians.*

118. Fauri, "Business Education in Britain and Italy," 28.

119. *Reports from T. Worthington, Special Com. to inquire into Conditions and Prospects of British Trade in certain S. American Countries.*

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Some businesses compensated for the scarcity of formal modern language training for commercial purposes by either implementing in-house training, like Stavert, Zigomala, or by recruiting traveling salespeople who were already fluent in various languages. For example, in a correspondence between J&P Coats and a contact in Paris, J&P Coats asked the contact to recruit an agent (in France) with "knowledge in various languages."[120] These, usually foreign, linguistically-adept merchants often raised suspicions: "The neglect of teaching foreign languages in [British] schools has given opportunities to foreigners to take situations here that ought to be filled by fellow countrymen."[121] The employment of foreigners was perceived as a threat because "they [foreign employees] had an awkward habit of going back to their countries and giving some manufacturers and merchants [there] the business connection they picked up here."[122]

In the light of this situation, learning Spanish was an intangible noneconomic business asset that, in contrast, afforded critical commercial advantage. Although scattered, evidence from the archives of Stavert, Zigomala, covering the decades between the 1860s and 1914 (and beyond), testifies to the company's continuous interest in fostering Spanish learning among its partners and employees, providing Spanish lessons and other resources.[123] The Spanish language was the glue that tied relations and accomplished deals.[124] Introductory conversations led to mutual trust, as recognized by the director of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of its Central and South American section:

> In those days you did not go bald-headed for orders. You talked about things in general, about crops, about politics, above all, about your client's family and your own. Finally, after days, sometimes weeks, you got your order, to be executed, of course, at best, and dispatched when ready. No bargaining. Just mutual confidence.[125]

In the Cuban case, the efforts merchants made to learn modern languages were recognized by *The Manchester Guardian*'s correspondent in Havana who witnessed the following:

> I have met […] some eight or ten of these gentlemen who are in Havana [….] amongst other firms, Messrs A. and S Henry &Co, Stavert Zigomala & Co. […], all of Manchester […], and without an exception, I have found them well up in Spanish and capable of convincing the Spanish-Cuban merchant of the superiority of their goods.[126]

As this excerpt suggests, Stavert, Zigomala was not the only one applying this strategy. However, Stavert, Zigomala's records further reveal the contexts and purposes of the use of the

120. Letter from J&P Coats, Glasgow, to Mr Eg[…?]chaman, Paris, October 7, 1880, University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections (UGD), J&P Coats Company Papers, UGD 199/1/2/7/2/2, ff.49-51.

121. "Chambers of Commerce," *The Morning Post*, November 28, 1893.

122. "Modern Languages," *The Yorkshire Herald*, October 30, 1899.

123. Ledger 1859-1866, Stavert, Zigomala & Co Company Papers, MSI, YA.2002.36.4; George Robert MacDonald, Pitman's Manual of Spanish Commercial Correspondence Society of Arts' first Prizeman and Silver Medallist lecturer in Spanish at the Municipal School of Commerce Manchester (London: Sir I. Pitman & Sons, 1914), Stavert, Zigomala & Co. Company Papers, MSI, YA 2002.36.

124. de Lorenzo, "Connecting Threads," 133–44.

125. Zimmern, "Lancashire and Latin America," 53.

126. "Textile Trade with Cuba," *The Manchester Guardian*, 2 January 1905.

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Spanish language. Several floating notes found in Stavert, Zigomala's ledgers, testify to the personable approach they had established with local Cuban merchants, facilitated by the use of Spanish. In 1867, Stavert, Zigomala's agent and client, Juan Autran, presumably the owner of a tailor and ready-made clothing store, *La Villa de Madrid* in Havana, exchanged informal communications about shared acquaintances and Autran's upcoming trip:

> My friend Cooper, enclosed a receipt for the 300 pesos [£60 of 1867] that I borrowed from you last night. They will be returned to you as soon as we get to Manchester. As I told you last night, and I repeat today, I have taken the liberty of borrowing money from you because I consider you a true friend, the guarantor of my trust, because it is not in my interest that this is known by Ventura or anyone else. With nothing else to add, your friend Juan Autran.[127]

Despite Autran's announcement of a trip to Manchester, for which some English language ability could be presumed, Spanish was chosen to write this informal note to Cooper. The unceremonious context of these notes is evidence of the confident attitudes communicated through the Spanish language. This ordinary note illuminates another characteristic of the Anglo-Cuban textile trade. The trip Autran planned to Manchester was neither a one-off nor Autran's exceptionality. Information on consumer demand was often mediated by British merchants on the spot. However, these resident agents were not alone in their task. Resident agents did not have to rely solely on sampling and back-and-forth correspondence (and cable) exchanges to satisfy textile wholesalers, importers, and consumers. The role of and the relationship between exporters based in Britain and Cuban importers and wholesalers differed from the market chain described in the literature.

The Cuban market chain's circumstances neither match Llorca-Jaña's in-depth evaluation of the textile market chain in the first half of the century in the Southern Cone, nor Miller's visual description of the "model of the operations of British commercial banks, merchants and companies in Latin America" in the second half of the century.[128] Both Miller and Llorca-Jaña presented a picture whereby British textile merchants either traded with another British merchant on the spot, or if a British merchant could not travel, textile samples and bills of exchange would do *in lieu*.[129] The possibility of local merchants travelling to Europe was simply out of the question. Besides assuming immobility on the part of local merchants, scholars presumed that trade was always mediated through English-speaking middlemen on

127. "Amigo Cooper, Adjunto incluyo un recibo de los trescientos pesos que te pedí anoche los que te serán entregados tan pronto como estemos en Manchester. Como te dije anoche te repito hoy si me he tomado esta libertad es porque te considero un verdadero amigo garante de la reserva pues no me conviene que nada digas ni a Ventura ni a nadie. Sin otra cosa se despide hasta luego tu amigo Juan Autran." Note from Juan Autran (Havana) to John Cooper (Havana), December 20, 1867. Note enclosed in: Ledger 1859-1866, Stavert Zigomala & Co Company Papers, MSI YA 2002.36.4. A man called Juan Autran Pereda appears to be travelling from Liverpool back into La Havana in 1878 in the steamer Guillermo. "Movimiento de pasajeros," Diario de la Marina, August 1, 1878. Juan Autran is also mentioned to be the owner of a tailor's shop named La Villa de Madrid, *Diario de la Marina*, December 12, 1857.

128. Miller, *Britain and Latin America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, 131.*

129. Llorca-Jaña, *The British Textile Trade*, 57–58; Llorca-Jaña, "Knowing the Shape of Demand"; Miller, "British Trade with Latin America, 1870-1950"; Miller, *Britain and Latin America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, 97-118.

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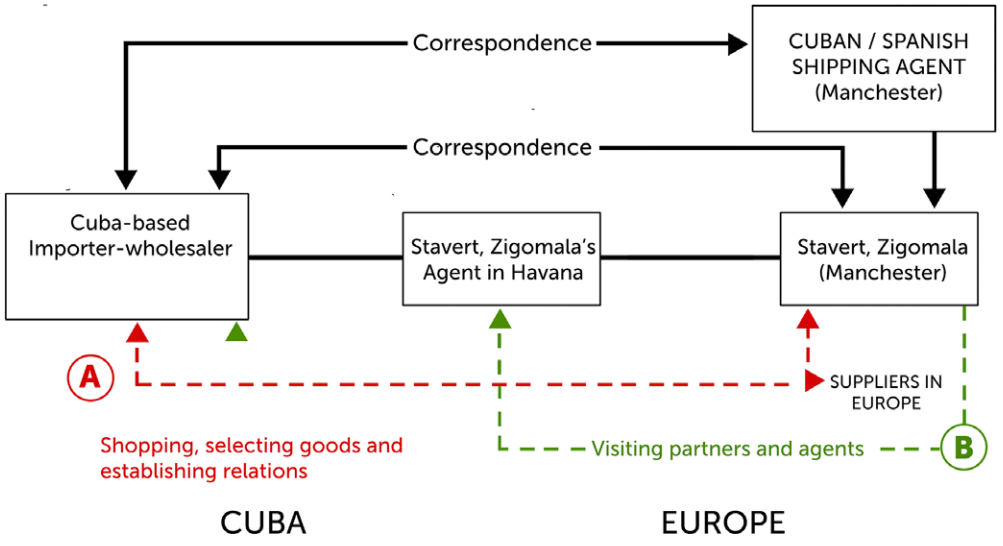
Table 4. Diagram showing the different communication patterns between Cuban Importers and British suppliers using the example of Stavert, Zigomala (author's elaboration)



the spot who, in turn, relied on bilingual local merchants. The landscapes of mid-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Cuba differed.

Cuban textile importer-wholesalers and retailers travelled twice a year to select goods and establish direct relationships with European textile suppliers. This was logistically possible because Cuba was exceptionally well-connected, with British steamships operating in Cuba earlier than in anywhere else in Latin America. Moreover, as explained above, many importer-wholesalers were migrants from the Spanish Peninsula who sought to make money quickly in Cuba. Thus, they retained their direct family connections in Europe (Spain). Additionally, the trade's profitability allowed them to invest in seasonal trips. These trips added to the usual forms of communication, including sampling exchanges and correspondence. That is, exporters such as Stavert, Zigomala continued to ship goods throughout the season. Thus, when local importers travelled to Europe, they did not return packed with full seasonal stock (see Table 4 for communication patterns between Cuban importers and British suppliers).

The purpose of these trips was twofold: They enabled importers to network, presumably to obtain better deals, and add value to their merchandise. In the letters Mr. Jonlinson (in Cuba) exchanged with Stavert, Zigomala (in Manchester), the former explains the trips' season-related aspect and their purchasing aim. Between January and February, importers sent buyers to Europe. On February 27, Mr. Jonlinson informed Stavert, Zigomala of the following: "Víctor Fernandez, one of the partners [of Zamanillo, Doyle & Co; later Doyle & Pérez] will leave next week for Europe via Spain to make their purchases. […] I enclose orders from them for as prompt dispatch as possible."[130]

130. Letter from Mr. Jonlinson (Havana) to Merss Stavert Zigoamala (Manchester), January 27, 1883, Stavert, Zigomala & Co Company Papers, MSI, YA.2002.36, Box 7.

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A fortnight later, Mr. Jonlinson complained:

> Here[,] I can do nothing as all the buyers are in Europe. Next week the buyers for Galindez & Álvarez, Sánchez leave for Manchester. Fernando López cannot say when he will go as he has a heavy stock and does not wish to leave before disposing of the greater portion […].[131]

Cuban importers mirrored British exporters' commercial approaches with agents on the ground. Besides the seasonality of these trips, some Cuban houses had a dedicated travelling buyer. In other cases, importer-wholesalers enjoyed the support of permanent agents in Manchester. This was also true for Maribona y Suárez's case (see the Supplementary Materials). The unfortunate disappearance of a Maribona y Suárez employee revealed that it relied on José Infiesta, a permanent shipping agent in Manchester, to whom Maribona y Suárez was connected because they all came from Asturias (Spain).[132]

Importer-wholesalers advertised shopping trips to add status and gain customer trust. Although not a client of Stavert, Zigomala, the example of the fur wholesaler La Granada is representative of what such advertisements sought to transmit:

> The popular fur house La Granada […] has two proprietors […] When Mercadal travels around the European and American manufacturing centres looking for novelties […] Rocha stays behind attending to the business. When the former returns, the second departs, and in constant movement, they procure and manage their house at the highest level, furnished in the latest fashions.[133]

> […] No other house is more suited to bring novelties to the public […] The trip from which its partner Mr. Rocha has just returned had no other purpose. Rocha recognises the taste and preferences of the public, what they love, and what is more convenient for them.[134]

Importer-wholesalers instrumentalized the investment, which was not insignificant, of travelling around Europe and/or America by publicizing it to their customers, thereby assuring them that their demands would be met. Overall, the numerous examples provide evidence

131. Letter from Mr. Jonlinson (Havana) to Merss Stavert Zigoamala (Manchester), February 10, 1883, Stavert, Zigomala & Co Company Papers, MSI, YA.2002.36, Box 7.

132. Maribona, Suárez & Co placed an advertisement looking for Ramón Infiesta, "original de Asturias," who had disappeared in 1875, so they could inform his brother, based in Manchester, José Infiesta; *Diario de la Marina*, August 24, 1875. Jose Infiesta was a shipping agent living at 69, Piccadilly, Manchester, specialising in linens, cottons, woollens and machinery to Spain, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico; *The Export Merchant Shippers of London Manchester Liverpool Birmigham Bradford Leeds*, ([s.l], 1883), 99. For further information on the Asturian-Cuban family of Maribona, see: Garcia, "Los Comerciantes-banqueros en el sistema bancario Cubano, 1880-1910," 278.

133. "La popular peletería La Granada, Obispo esquina á Cuba tiene dos propietatios […] Cuando Mercadal recorre los centros fabriles de Europa y América buscando novedades […] Rocha se queda al frente del establecimiento, cuando regresa, aquel otro sale y así en constante movimiento procuran y consiguen siempre tener su casa a la más envidiable altura, encontrándose siempre en ella la última palabra de la moda […]." *El Diario de la Marina*, October 5, 1899.

134. "[…] ninguna casa más propicia para traer novedades para el público […] que la popular peletería La Granada. El viaje que su socio el Sr Rocha acaba de hacer por Europa y América no ha tenido otro objeto. Rocha conoce el gusto y las aficiones de este público y sabe lo que priva y lo que conviene." *El Diario de la Marina*, October 10, 1899.

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of a different relationship between importers and suppliers than that described in the literature.[135] Cuban-based wholesalers and importers related to suppliers directly traveled to buy from them when possible.

Navigating International Competition

I have shown that as an export-led economy, nineteenth-century Cuba needed a supply of various primary goods. Textiles and clothing constituted essential elements of Cuban consumer culture. Stavert, Zigomala's case enables us to understand how suppliers, including importer-wholesalers, responded to this strong demand. This section connects these aspects to the international trading competition context. It evaluates how British textile traders utilized these strategies during the Spanish-American War in 1899 and its aftermath, including the Foreign Office's reconciliation with American ambitions. This section: 1) considers how businesses lobbied against the Foreign Office through the chambers of commerce; 2) explains how some businesses, like Stavert, Zigomala, aligned with Spain's position in the Spanish-American War; and 3) further contextualizes the design, packing, and interpersonal relations skills discussed in the previous section as competitive advantages exploited by textile traders to compete against US tariffs and the Foreign Office's neglect. Through the analysis of Stavert, Zigomala's national connections and fluidity, this section untangles adaptiveness as a transnational quality.

Cuba's wealth and strategic position had long attracted British commercial interests. The ten-month British occupation of Havana in 1762, with the experience of free trade with Britain, produced a commercial impetus that, according to Böttcher, exerted a notably psychological impression on the occupiers that should not be underestimated.[136] Even this short conquest affected Cuban and British material preferences. Contact with Cuba influenced British fashion for mahogany furniture,[137] whereas Cubans' demand for textiles increased.[138] Thereafter, Britain had a key role in supplying textiles. Some textiles were imported "principally from Jamaica in Spanish bottoms," as an 1833 commercial report noted.[139] Given the significance of the Cuban markets and its strategic position, Spain, Britain, France and the United States supposedly concluded that the best workaround was as follows:

> The status quo should be preserved in Cuba; that the Spanish régime was not, it was true, much to be admired, although it had been at all times tolerably lenient with respect to Cuba, which was the mother-country's colonial spoiled child; but that on all accounts it would be desirable that Spanish supremacy should still subsist in that colony, for the maintenance of that supremacy would prevent jealousies amongst other Powers.[140]

135. M. Mercedes Botero identified a similar commercial behaviour among Antioquian-based merchants. However, unlike Cuban-based merchants, she suggested that those who travelled to Europe preferred to keep their trips secret. Restrepo, "Casas comerciales y circuitos mercantiles Antioquia: 1842-1880."

136. Böttcher, *A Ship Laden with Dollars*, 67.

137. Fernández de Pinedo, "Compelled to Import," 17.

138. Sarmiento, "Vestido y Calzado."

139. Copies of commercial reports upon Cuba, 1833, TNA, FO 133/1.

140. Statement of what has taken place, since 1815, between Great Britain and Spain, France, and the United States, about securing Cuba to Spain, June 12, 1850, TNA, FO 533/17 and NRS GD45/8/76.

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However, the agreement verbalized by the American Secretary of State in 1850 would not eliminate all tensions,[141] and most certainly did not restrain commercial competition. Conflicts of interest can be appreciated in trading statistics. In particular, the relative role of the textile trade in the Cuban economy constitutes an interesting case study for evaluating the contest for commercial supremacy. As noted before, the appetite for cottons continued rising since the 1820s (Table 2). Britain's rising role as a supplier demonstrates how demand allowed exporters like Stavert, Zigomala to flourish. Fernandez de Pinedo observed that in 1842 and 1843, Britain was the primary supplier of textiles (of all kinds) to Cuba by value, holding 37.83 per cent of the market (followed by Germany with 30.94 per cent, France with 10.68 per cent, the United States with 4.99 per cent, and the metropolis with a mere 2.78 per cent).[142] According to Fernandez de Pinedo, despite the proximity of Britain and Germany in terms of the value of their exports, the textiles each supplied to Cuba differed. Germany led the supply of cheap linens, whereas the British were dominant in cottons and woolens.[143] Considering these data in the context of sugar exports' evolution documented in Table 1, demonstrates a sharp increase from the 1840s and, as discussed above, the tendency to favor cottons. Thus, two conclusions arise. First, as Knight argued, "the more Cuba produced, the more its inhabitants consumed, and the less could its imperial metropolis supply."[144] Second, based on the first, if the metropolis could not fulfill its demand, others, notably Britain, could.

Table 5 shows the Cuban demand's rise, showing total British exports by declared value to South America using data gathered by Llorca-Jaña.[145] Although the data include textile and nontextile goods, comparing the observations by Fernandez de Pinedo on British textiles for 1842 and 1843, and declared value in the years 1833–1842 and 1847, it is reasonable to deduce that cottons and other dry goods were the major contributors to the increase in exports. Moreover, Table 5 further evidences the relative role of British exports to Cuba. Although exports to Cuba were lower than those for Brazil and the entirety of modern Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, they exceeded those to other areas intensely populated, such as Mexico, and approached the total exports destined for all British possessions, including the West Indies. This is a prelude to and outlines the chambers of commerce's claims during and after the American-Spanish War. By the 1890s, British goods had a secure place in the Cuban market and were only challenged by Spain by the end of the century. In 1890, a British newspaper commented that Catalonian manufacturers were sufficiently stimulated only in the past ten years to meet Cuban demand thanks to the 1882 revenue law, which aimed to gradually reduce tariffs on Spanish produce. Only then were "many articles at one time only to be had in Britain are now supplied by Spain."[146] This implies Britain's supremacy over the United States in textile supplies, which is further confirmed in Tables 6 and 7.

Except for silks and, to a certain extent, woolens, British manufacturers' exports surpassed those of the United States. This is notable because between 1884 and 1894, Spain shifted Cuba's trading relations to favor the United States over Britain. This change first occurred with

141. Gleijeses, "Clashing over Cuba"; Hull, *British Diplomacy*, 15–23.
142. Fernández de Pinedo, *Comercio Exterior y Fiscalidad*, 148–49.
143. Fernández de Pinedo, 148.
144. Knight, "Origins of Wealth and the Sugar Revolution in Cuba, 1750-1850," 249.
145. On "declared value" versus "official value," see: Llorca-Jaña, *The British Textile Trade*, 297–299.
146. "Commerce with Cuba," *Witney Gazette and West Oxfordshire Advertiser*, October 4, 1890.

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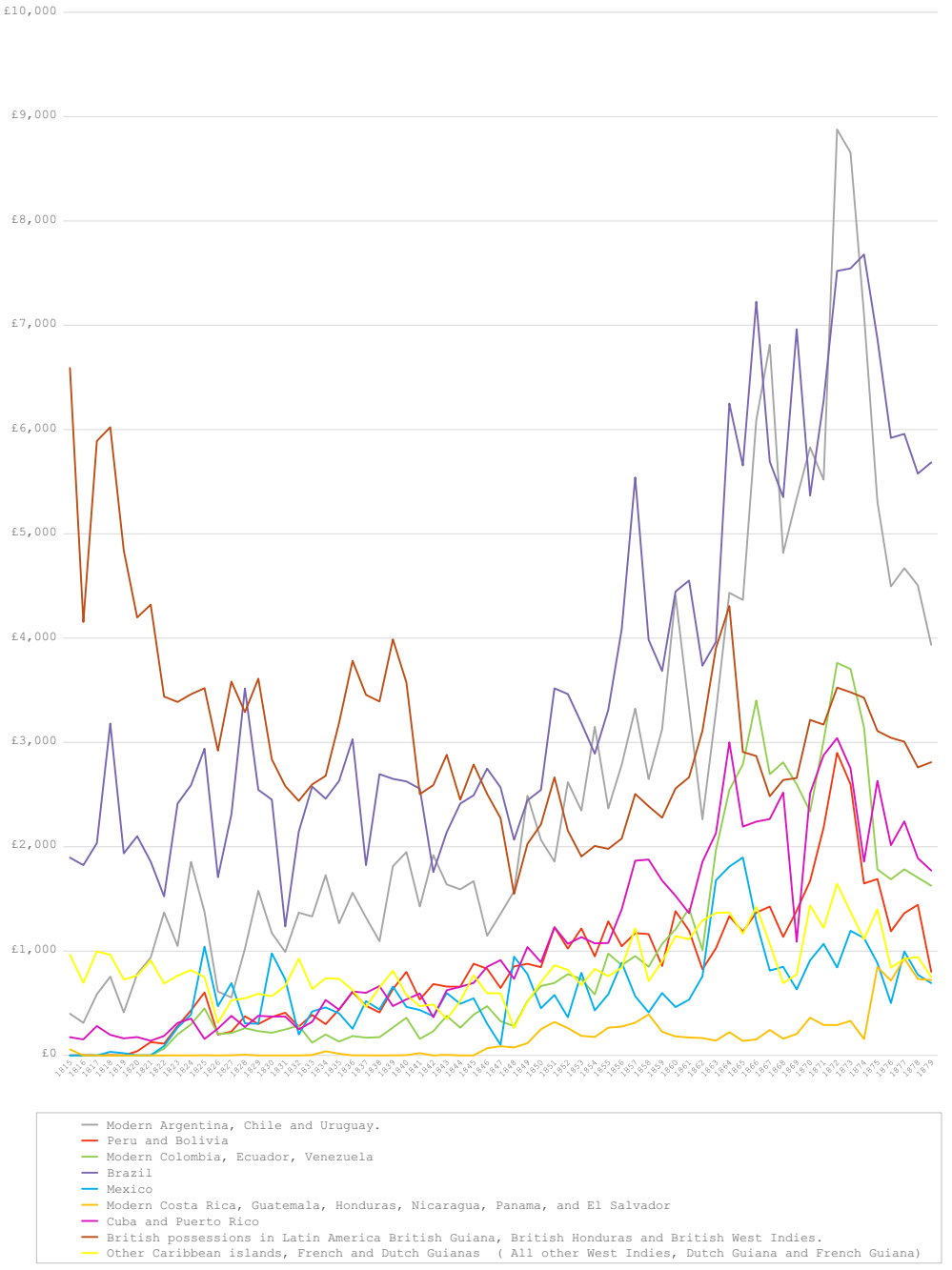
Table 5. UK Exports by Selected Destinations, Declared Value of the Produce of the United Kingdom (£000) 1815–1879



Note: Graph by the author. Data compiled by Llorca Jaña, *The British Textile Trade*, 314–315.

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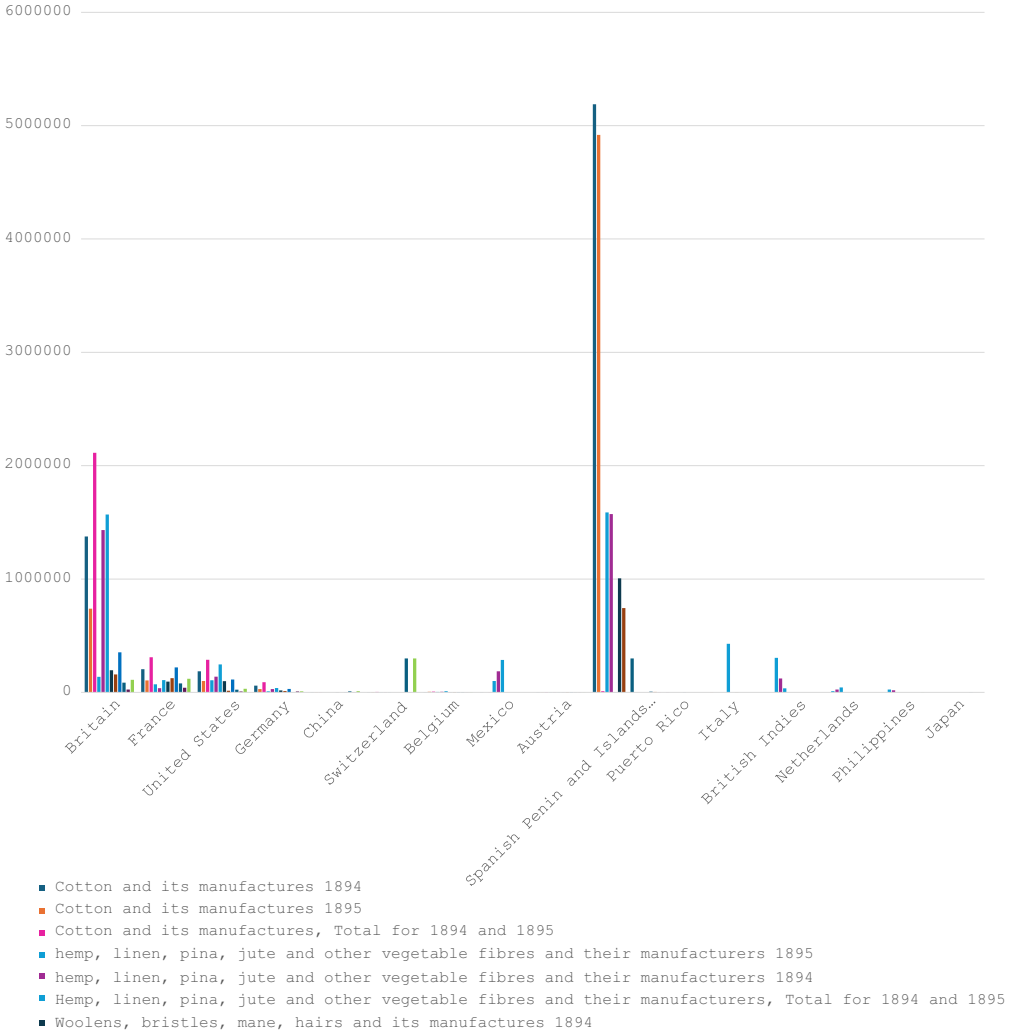
Table 6. Declared value of the various articles of British and Irish Produce and Manufactures Exported from the United Kingdom to Cuba in the years 1833 to 1842 and 1847 (£)

Years	Apparel Slops and Habersashery	Brass	Coal	Cotton Manufactures and yarn	Earthenware	Glass	Hardware and Cutlery	Iron Steel	Linen Man. and yarn	Machinery and Mill-work	Silk Man.	Tin and Pewter	Woollen Man.	Other British goods
1833	£5,212	£7,281	£663	£1,80,973	£8	£6,372	£15	£13,313	£28,027	£1,350	£5,988	£3,174	£29,866	£14,536
1834	£5,101	£14,654	£369	£2,68,884	£15,044	£8,726	£39,980	£28,828	£54,825	£1,322	£5,395	£2,157	£62,374	£19,143
1835	£7,553	£17,627	£278	£2,02,272	£13,029	£12,512	£26,423	£21,855	£49,944	£7,759	£5,000	£2,585	£40,229	£30,777
1836	£6,334	£11,340	£1,523	£3,52,897	£18,498	£6,142	£28,423	£41,669	£63,716	£10,498	£5,843	£3,180	£39,416	£23,324
1837	£3,775	£11,236	£4,336	£2,72,961	£21,786	£6,557	£25,786	£70,748	£60,717	£31,439	£12,389	£3,905	£37,139	£36,642
1838	£4,912	£18,389	£2,647	£2,82,339	£15,746	£8,922	£37,439	£63,007	£96,360	£20,348	£13,391	£7,866	£42,194	£37,642
1839	£3,746	£19,048	£2,260	£1,87,175	£11,931	£6,233	£25,106	£44,340	£77,024	£15,127	£5,361	£3,981	£34,689	£22,035
1840	£3,744	£1,304	£3,714	£1,91,660	£19,162	£8,730	£27,666	£51,423	£1,02,945	£12,853	£6,901	£4,210	£46,155	£22,295
1841	£3,743	£14,884	£6,261	£2,72,809	£16,531	£6,213	£36,766	£45,489	£1,06,897	£14,838	£6,630	£3,580	£34,195	£23,710
1842	£4,675	£5,750	£16,079	£1,04,556	£8,930	£3,042	£15,946	£30,291	£1,05,097	£12,134	£5,173	£2,609	£3,055	£18,221
1847	£3,796	£22,321	£9,318	£2,24,674	£26,344	£7,202	£80,024	£1,44,270	£2,50,722	£19,814	£15,526	£10,258	£51,214	£31,057
TOTAL	**£52,591**	**£1,43,834**	**£47,448**	**£25,41,200**	**£1,67,009**	**£80,651**	**£3,43,574**	**£5,55,233**	**£9,96,274**	**£1,47,482**	**£87,597**	**£47,505**	**£4,20,526**	**£2,79,382**
Total average percentage	**1%**	**3%**	**1%**	**43%**	**3%**	**1%**	**6%**	**9%**	**17%**	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**	**7%**	**5%**

Note: Compiled by the author.

Source: An account of the declared value of the various articles of British Produce and Manufactures exported to Cuba and the Quantities of Articles of the Growth and Manufacture of Cuba imported into the United Kingdom, during each of the ten years ending 6 January 1843 and "British and Irish Produce and Manufactures Exported from the United Kingdom to Cuba, in the Year 1847." Accounts of Exports to and Imports from the British West Indies Colonies, the East Indies, Ceylon, China &tc for the year ending 5 January 1848.

Table 7. Total of Foreign Textile Imports into Cuba for the years 1894 and 1895 (pesos)



Note: Compiled by the author.
Source: Estadística general del comercio exterior de la isla de Cuba en 1894 and Estadística general del comercio exterior de la isla de Cuba en 1895.

the 1884 *modus vivendi*, which, although it was eventually extended to Great Britain in 1886, was followed by a new treaty that favored the United States in1891.[147] Due to this new treaty, American goods benefited from exceptional tariff revenues, which immediately shifted the orbit of Cuba's economic relations from the metropolis and Europe toward the United States.[148] The United States became the major trading partner until Spain withdrew Cuba from this Treaty in 1894, prompting an outcry from Cubans. "The worst of it all is that we have to

147. Commercial Relations of United States and Cuba, 1891, TNA, Colonial Office (hereafter cited as CO) 318/281/22.

148. Le Riverend, *Historia Económica de Cuba*, 514–520.

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go against our government and take side with the Yankees," as *La Lucha* reported.[149] Despite the favorable conditions the United States had enjoyed for a decade, British textiles retained their dominant position. Examining this sector offers interesting insights into Britain and its economic competition with the United States during the outbreak of the Cuban War of Independence. Britain outperformed the United States in textile trade, railways, *ingenios* (sugar-related technology), and banking.[150] Santamaría suggested that by the end of the nineteenth century, British investment in *ingenios* doubled that of the United States.[151] Furthermore, of the total foreign investment in Cuba, 70 per cent was British and the other 30 per cent was American.[152]

The Anglo-American rivalry was mirrored by social relations between the British and Americans living on the island of Cuba. Martínez-Fernández remarked on the British perception of the Americans in Cuba: "To them [British], Yankees—a term incorrectly applied to all North Americans—were repulsive, unreliable beings, too vulgar to warrant any proper social attention."[153] Despite any subjective social superiority, Britain was not interested in going to war over Cuba when the Cuban War of Independence broke out in 1898, eventually leading to the Spanish-American War in 1899. Even before then, rumors started circulating about the United States' interest in annexing the long-coveted island.

With the war looming, British merchants and manufacturers began raising their concerns. However, they were met by an uninterested Foreign Office. In 1895, Henry Le Martin, possibly an Irish linen manufacturer or merchant, addressed a letter to Lord Chamberlain expressing his fears over the Cuban revolution, rumors of a US annexation, and Cuba's importance for British products compared with the exports made to the British West Indies:

> I beg to enclose you some statistics which may be of interest to you in comparing the commerce of the British West Indies with that of the island of Cuba alone. As you are doubtless aware, this island is at present in a state of revolution & its annexation by or cession to the US is being talked of. […] The fertility of this extraordinary island labouring under misrule is marvellous. […] I am within the limit in stating that from Belfast alone [?] £200,000 in linen was exported yearly, in conjunction with Scotch and Lancashire manufactures, a total of no less than a million sterling must have been exported per annum […] As you will readily grasp, the cession of the island to the US would be very detrimental to British interests […] It is my duty to bring the matter before practical business politicians like yourself.[154]

Indeed, the statistics that Le Martin attached supported his argument. The value of textile exports to Cuba alone for 1890 ($ 86,862,514) and 1891 ($70,608,953) were twice as much as the total value of textile exports to Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, Tobago, Bahamas, Antigua, Virgin Islads, Dominica, St Kitto, and Anguilla together ($27,639,954) in 1888. Population was not an excuse. According to Le Martin, Cuba had 1,631,687 inhabitants and the British Islands

149. *La Lucha*, December 19, 1894, quoted in: Pérez, "Toward Dependency and Revolution: The Political Economy of Cuba between Wars, 1878-1895," 139.

150. Hull, *British Diplomacy*, 50.

151. Santamaría, "La economía cubana," 83.

152. Santamaría, "La economía de Cuba al final del régimen colonial y en el inicio de la república, 1861-1913," 162.

153. Martínez-Fernández, *Fighting Slavery in the Caribbean*, 85.

154. Letter from Henry Le Martin (Belfast) to Lord Chamberlain (London), November 6, 1895, TNA, CO 318/284/48.

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had 1,150,765. The difference in 480,922 residents cannot solely explain the gap in value. However, Le Martin's anguish was disdainfully and nonchalantly dealt with. A secretary to Lord Chamberlain responded: "I am directed by Mr. Chamberlain […] in regard to Cuba he is not aware that there is any serious question of the annexation or cession of that Island to the USA."[155] This early exchange of correspondence signified a subsequently divided stance between commerce and politics.

British-based merchants and manufacturers' commercial interests collided with the Foreign Office's political visions. The Foreign Office prioritized a frictionless relationship with Washington, a position against which British firms reacted by lobbying through the chambers of commerce. In particular, Mancunian merchants protested for the inattention to their successful performance in Cuba in the years before the war.

> The last deputation on the 23rd was from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. […] They maintained that the English trading cotton goods with the peninsula is declining, and it is not of much value now, the present duties being higher than those in France or Germany, but that this trade with Cuba and Puerto Rico is valuable and should be kept.[156]

However, British diplomacy had its focus elsewhere. Since 1885, it had started shifting in its political attitude away from Cuba, Latin America,[157] and its own colonies in the Caribbean Basin.[158] British diplomacy became complacent about the United States' interests in Cuba and Latin America.[159] The policy was aimed to "actively court US goodwill […] the government and the press went out their way to express sympathy for their transatlantic cousins."[160] Britain no longer appeared worried about Cuba's sovereignty. Hull evaluated this change in Britain's diplomatic approach, suggesting that since the 1880s, Britain was effectively more concerned with its formal empire in Asia and the recently signed Anglo-American entente in China; Britain was ready to make commercial sacrifices in Latin America.[161] However, as soon as commercial discussions between Cuba and the United States evolved after the War, and a favorable treaty was anticipated, the chambers further voiced their anger. The Board of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce noted:

> Agreed to make representations to the Foreign Office to the effect that the conclusion of a reciprocity treaty between the United States and Cuba would probably lead to the extinction of the export of British manufactures to that island and requesting that such steps may be taken […] to preserve British trade with Cuba.[162]

155. Letter from Ellis Burson[?] (London) to Henry Le Martin (Belfast), November 25, 1895, TNA, CO 318/284/48.

156. Spain: Memo. Interviews between Sir C. Ford and Representatives of Chambers of Commerce, and Persons engaged in Trade with Spain and Spanish Colonies, 1891, TNA, FO 881/6132.

157. Hull, *British Diplomacy*, 23.

158. Letters received from various government offices (departments), other organizations and individuals relating to Barbados, 1899, TNA, CO 28/251, ff.261-262.

159. Ibarra, *El Tratado Anglo-Cubano de 1905*, 17, 24.

160. Gleijeses, "Clashing over Cuba," 241.

161. Hull, *British Diplomacy.*

162. "The Cuban Tariff and British Trade. Manchester Chamber of Commerce. Meeting of the Board of Directors," *The Manchester Guardian*, April 19, 1901.

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Merchants and manufacturers were openly complaining that the United States' "philanthropic purpose" to intervene in the Cuban War of Independence had turned into a desire to "monopolise the island."[163] Much was at stake. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce put it bluntly: "Cuba consumed far more textiles, in proportion, than any other part of Spanish America. [….] Much of Manchester's trade went to Spanish America, but the United States was doing all in its power to close those markets to us. We conceded advantages to the States. Their answer was to do all they could to impede our trade."[164] Their lobbying was momentous and hopeful. The Foreign Office allowed its consul in Cuba to negotiate bilateral, Anglo-Cuban commerce under the premise of doing it cautiously and refraining from irritating the United States.[165] In 1905, the Anglo-Cuban Treaty of Commerce was redacted and signed, only to be immediately foiled by the United States.[166] The diplomatic back-and-forth between the British chambers of commerce, consuls, and the United States, as examined by Hull, resulted in Cuba's dismissal by the Foreign Office: "Cuba was a peripheral consideration in the eyes of the Foreign Office. For the Chambers of Commerce, however, trade with the island was their lifeblood."[167]

In other instances, firms reacted independently of official British institutions and channels of communication, even siding with Spain. Stavert, Zigomala offered further insights. It infiltrated the Spanish patriotic assistance initiatives launched by the Spanish government. Along with many individuals and other merchants, the business used philanthropic instruments to influence a war in which commercial and political interests were at odds. In 1897, the Spanish government launched a scheme to raise funds in Britain to aid those who had been wounded, disabled, or orphaned in the Spanish military's involvement in the Cuban and Philippine insurrections. Advertised in the Spanish official Bulletin *Gaceta de Madrid*, over a hundred individuals and businesses responded to the call.[168] This revealed that Stavert, Zigomala donated £200.0.0 and its partner Myles Cooper £1.0.0. Other well-known merchants contributed, but with lesser sums. For example, Frederick Huth & Co. offered £105.0.0.[169] The difference in Stavert, Zigomala's donations and those of others, even Huth & Co, is notable. Indeed, Stavert, Zigomala, along with the celebrated patriot Marques de Misa (Manuel Misa Bertemati, 1815–1904), the affluent cherry merchant whose London home today houses the Spanish Embassy in the United Kingdom, were the only ones who donated £200.0.0.[170]

163. Memorandum "British Trade in Cuba and the United States' Reciprocity Treaty," February 1903, TNA, FO 108/4. The following chambers were represented: Liverpool, London, Manchester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Bury, Bradford, Glasgow, and Belfast, quoted in Hull, *British Diplomacy*, 41.

164. Ratification of commercial treaty with Cuba: notes of an interview between Sir Edward Grey, Sir Eldon Gorst and Algernon Law, and a deputation representing ship owners and various chambers of commerce, July 1906, TNA, FO 368/13, f.498.

165. Ibarra, *El tratado anglo-cubano de 1905*, 54.

166. On this treaty, see: Ibarra, *El Tratado Anglo-Cubano de 1905*.

167. Hull, *British Diplomacy*, 48.

168. Administración Central. Ministerio del Estado, sección de Subsecretaría, junta patriótica. El Sr Embajador de S.M. en Londres ha remitido la siguiente lista de suscriptores para socorrer á las víctimas en el Ejercito y la Armada de las insurrecciones de Cuba y Filipinas, *Gaceta de Madrid*, July 16, 1897.

169. *Gaceta de Madrid*, July 16, 1897.

170. In 1890, £200.0.0 was the equivalent of 606 days' work at a skilled tradesman's wage. The National Archives Currency Converter, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter

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Stavert, Zigomala's actions can be seen as those of transnational subterfuge. Initially, it raises questions because, as observed, it had commercial, personal, and historical ties to the United States. The United States' imperialist greed in annexing Cuba had been widely foreseen, as evidenced by the previously quoted letter from the Belfast industrialist. In the case of Stavert, Zigomala, it would have benefited from aligning with the new prospective dominant power. Conversely, it donated a non-insignificant sum of money to the Spanish government quite publicly, with the risk of jeopardizing its reputation in the United States, where the Bradford branch continued trading. Notwithstanding, in Cuba, as analyzed earlier, Stavert, Zigomala liaised with Spanish importers and targeted conservative and Spanish loyalist clients. The company's stance may be seen as a way to satisfy clients while seeking to resolve a war that challenged the status quo. Once the war ended, the business could have shifted its tactics and assumed an American image to comply with the new paradigm. However, it emphasized its Englishness. This is all the more complex because while the firm sided with the loyalist cause, it was using its Bradford branch to register trademarks in the United States aimed at the Cuban markets.[171] Meanwhile, in Cuba, the firm was reinforcing its English origins to position its goods among the Cuban markets and continue conducting business successfully "even after the Spanish-American War".

Although the conflict had diminished the Cuban economy and dwindled its population, foreign capital injection by both British and American facilitated rapid recovery and restimulated consumption.[172] At the end of the war, consular reports were published to communicate the trade situation. In 1899, reports welcomed an increase in cotton consumption and its dominance over the United States.

> A feature of the textile trade of Cuba is the largely increased use of cotton goods of the late years as compared with linen. […] About 25 per cent of the cotton goods come from the United States, and the remaining 75 per cent from the United Kingdom and Spain. In linens, Irish manufacturers hold their own against Spanish.[173]

Moreover, despite the chambers of commerce's fears, at least in the textile trade, British textile demand only increased in terms of value even after 1902, when Cuba and the United States were to sign a Treaty of Reciprocity within the Platt Amendment.[174] In a 1906 American report, a commercial agent observed that British exports to Latin America were higher "than the total American shipments to the entire World."[175] However, the American cottons did not sell in Cuba. British authorities remarked that despite American military intervention, which led to an initial increase in value of up to £267,548, in 1899, such a peak did not lead to a trend. Instead, "the following year the importation [of American textiles] dropped to £84,028, and continued to fall off during that part of 1901 for which is statistics have been

171. Stavert, Zigomala & Co, Dril Stavert. Apresto Legitimo de Londres, U.S. Patent Trademark, no. 17504, filed February 4, 1890, Library of Congress (LC), Office trademarks. See also: de Lorenzo, "Connecting Threads."
172. Le Riverend, *Historia económica de Cuba*, 523–24, 531.
173. *No. 2473 Annual Series Diplomatic*, 21.
174. On the Platt Amendment, see: Pérez, *Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934*.
175. Whittam, *Report on England's Cotton Industry*, 9.

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published."[176] Importantly, "in the same period, the importation of British cottons has increased."[177] British diplomats further noted the following in 1903:

> Cottons: 55 per cent of the total cotton goods imported into Cuba are of British manufacture. […] The importation of cotton piece-goods has increased very considerably in 1903; our principal competitors are Spain and, in a much less degree, the United States and France. […].[178]

A year later, in 1904, British diplomats reported again on:

> The increase in the already large consumption of cotton goods also calls for attention showing what the island is capable of taking in spite of its small population. There is probably no other country which imports yearly over 1 *l.* worth of such goods per inhabitant.[179]

British merchants skillfully leveraged the Cuban markets. This situation explains and is mirrored in the value of Stavert, Zigomala's exports to Cuba in 1904 (Table 8), amounting to £160,577 (along with prints, whites, sundries, and drills in Table 9). This approached one-quarter of the total value of imported British cottons in 1903 (£709,972). Table 8 does not offer sufficient evidence to assess Stavert, Zigomala's overall performance. However, it demonstrates the Cuban market's importance to the company compared with other countries during that period, including Mexico.

The success of British textiles was based on several factors: British traders' reputation for flexibility, their capacity to respond to clients' requirements, good packing, and high quality. Mercantile houses played a major role in the Anglo-Cuban textile trade. Despite the Foreign Office's inaction, they could offer what their American counterparts, focused on economies of scale, could not: a bespoke selection of goods and attention:

> The reason is that the English Textile goods sold in Cuba are always manufactured in accordance with the ascertained wishes of the merchants here, and often to their special order, and therefore fulfill all the requirements of the market as regards texture, weight, pattern, length and width of the materials etc., which American goods do not, being usually surplus stock manufactured originally for the home market.[180]

Indeed, Cubans had a "disinclination to buy what they do not like merely because it is cheap,"[181] and British and American merchants adopted contrasting strategies to address Cuba's conspicuous consumer culture. Stavert, Zigomala's practice of employing high-quality designs to accommodate demand was an issue that Americans found challenging, to their own

176. Commercial Negotiations (Cuba), 1901-1902, TNA, FO 108/9, f.136.
177. Commercial Negotiations (Cuba), 1901-1902, TNA, FO 108/9, f.136.
178. *No. 3315 Annual Series. Diplomatic and Consular Reports. Cuba. Report for the Year 1903 on the Trade and Commerce of the Island of Cuba*, 8.
179. *No. 3484 Diplomatic and Consular Reports. Cuba. Report of the year 1904 on the Trade and Commerce of the Island of Cuba*, 5.
180. Commercial Negotiations (Cuba), 1901-1902, TNA, FO 108/9, f.137.
181. Commercial Negotiations (Cuba), 1901-1902, TNA, FO 108/9, f.137.

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Table 8. Stavert, Zigomala, Shippings by Country (1904–1914) (value, £)

Season	Cuba	Mexico	River Plate	Venezuela	Colombia	Peru & Bolivia	Hayti	Porto Rico	Chili	Miscellaneous
April 1904–Sep 1904	£1,66,420	£33,356	no data	no data	£1,760	£2,216	£1,107	£1,409	£15,034	£15,794
Oct 1904–March 1905	£1,40,116	£20,131	£26,262	£21,377	£6,010	£1,950	£3,903	£900	£12,560	£11,300
April 1905–Sep 1905	£1,22,024	£30,178	£52,457	£17,951	£1,128	£2,722		£1,180	£4,346	£11,351
Oct 1905–March 1906	£1,18,100	£16,889	£25,908	£21,249					£4,890	£21,157
April 1906–Sep 1906	£1,07,615	£26,075	£53,975	£16,505					£4,589	£37,842
Oct 1906–March 1907	£1,06,190	£33,853	£30,568	£29,679					£6,881	£33,518
April 1907–Sep 1907	£1,33,015	£29,756	£48,847	£30,159					£12,406	£32,521
Oct 1907–March 1908	£1,39,882	£39,616	£31,029	£31,908					£8,732	£33,490
April 1908–Sep 1908	£1,28,693	£28,718	£47,878	£23,733					£6,902	£25,209
Oct 1908–March 1909	£97,950	£18,496	£26,788	£19,796					£3,839	£19,269
April 1909–Sep 1909	£1,43,916	£25,854							£23,259	£21,483
Oct 1909–March 1910	£99,523	£23,472							£5,114	£20,093
April 1910–Sep 1910	£72,432	£33,953							£24,509	£37,625
Oct 1910–March 1911	£61,468	£26,164							£8,152	£27,662
April 1911–Sep 1911	£80,637	£31,834							£20,109	£22,167
Oct 1911–March 1912	£1,00,671	£22,660								£33,828
April 1912–Sep 1912	£1,29,572	£26,299								£29,654
Oct 1912–March 1913	£1,04,999	£53,089								£28,557
April 1913–Sep 1913	£80,465	£31,502								£31,574
Oct 1913–March 1914	£57,398	£6,707								£18,067
TOTAL	£21,91,086	£5,58,602	£3,43,712	£2,12,357	£8,898	£6,888	£5,010	£3,489	£1,61,322	£5,12,161

Note: Compiled by the author. Data source: Shipping Book, 1904-1914, Stavert, Zigomala & Co. Company Papers, MSI, YA 2002.36.28.

Table 9. Stavert, Zigomala, Shippings to Cuba (1904–1914) (value, £)

SEASON	Prints	Whites	Sundries	Drills	Dyed	Silk	Hosiery	Y.dpt
April 1904–Sep 1904	£49,831	£34,348	£26,447	£30,678	£19,273	£5,337	£506	£0
Oct 1904–March 1905	£39,273	£36,887	£21,050	£26,239	£10,237	£5,789	£490	£0
April 1905–Sep 1905	£24,532	£27,808	£18,009	£24,270	£17,783	£8,814	£808	£0
Oct 1905–March 1906	£26,688	£28,869	£16,133	£28,290	£8,494	£6,656	£972	£0
April 1906–Sep 1906	£25,620	£22,668	£13,022	£24,496	£13,740	£7,823	£246	£0
Oct 1906–March 1907	£23,333	£26,379	£12,822	£29,766	£6,505	£7,071	£314	£0
April 1907–Sep 1907	£32,477	£38,175	£14,312	£22,036	£17,336	£8,124	£555	£0
Oct 1907–March 1908	£32,598	£40,865	£14,122	£37,685	£10,739	£3,770	£103	£0
April 1908–Sep 1908	£24,515	£31,373	£8,443	£46,473	£12,297	£5,378	£214	£0
Oct 1908–March 1909	£16,788	£31,791	£7,201	£27,836	£10,927	£3,208	£199	£0
April 1909–Sep 1909	£19,495	£40,965	£12,578	£38,143	£23,438	£8,682	£615	£0
Oct 1909–March 1910	£12,309	£21,339	£9,743	£39,993	£12,516	£3,400	£223	£0
April 1910 to Sep 1910	£7,266	£12,529	£10,616	£19,216	£15,583	£689	£353	£0
Oct 1910–March 1911	£11,630	£10,879	£7,683	£17,019	£11,780	£2,316	£161	£0
April 1911–Sep1911	£6,836	£15,088	£9,613	£24,344	£19,525	£4,958	£547	£0
Oct 1911–March 1912	£15,287	£31,246	£10,821	£25,137	£14,910	£2,984	£286	£0
April 1912–Sep 1912	£23,398	£36,373	£11,075	£32,365	£21,506	£4,583	£272	
Oct 1912–March 1913	£13,973	£38,599	£7,922	£26,890	£14,154	£3,346	£115	
April 1913–Sep 1913	£2,553	£32,841	£4,823	£18,823	£18,091	£3,079	£255	
Oct 1913–March 1914	£2,350	£19,612	£5,531	£13,624	£13,974	£2,159	£158	
TOTAL	**£4,10,752**	**£5,78,634**	**£2,41,966**	**£5,53,323**	**£2,92,808**	**£98,166**	**£7,392**	

Note: Compiled by the author.
Source: Shipping Book, 1904-1914, Stavert, Zigomala & Co. Company Papers, MSI, YA 2002.36.28.

admission. "Why Cubans do not buy American Textiles" and "British Succeded Making Goods to Order" are two unequivocal subtitles produced by Mr. E.V. Morgan, the American minister in Havana in 1906.[182] The statistics Mr. Morgan offered were blatant proof: by 1906, the United States dominated Cuban trade. As Table 10 shows, in 1904 and 1905, American exports to Cuba were valued at $34,963,592, almost three times as much as what Britain managed to sell ($13,067,014). The United States succeeded in every kind of good export, except textiles, whose sales for the two-year period ($1,352,960) were far lower than those of Britain ($7,510,279).[183]

A British correspondent in Havana during that period, who was acquainted with Stavert, Zigomala (among others), echoed British salesmen's competitive advantage over American drummers, who were:

> Utterly at sea as to what is required here […] The Spanish houses prefer to deal with the British salesmen because of their superior knowledge of the goods they handle and the requirements of the market, and their eagerness to cater for the wants of customers.[184]

Becoming acquainted with the demands of the Cuban markets was challenging. Stavert, Zigomala's case has demonstrated the efforts, or, in the words of the British consul in Cuba in 1908, the "pains" British manufacturers undertook "to meet the wishes of the Cuban

182. Report on Cuban Commerce by the United States Minister in Havana, 1906, TNA, FO 368/64/80.
183. Report on Cuban Commerce by the United States Minister in Havana, 1906, TNA, FO 368/64/80.
184. "Textile Trade with Cuba," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 2, 1905.

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Table 10. Cuban imports during the first half-years of 1904 and 1905 from Great Britain and the United States (value, $)

Article	Year	Britain	United States
Provisions and liquors	1904	$15,00,937	$52,85,018
Provisions and liquors	1905	$11,52,032	$72,14,602
Textiles	1904	$37,26,118	$5,04,428
Textiles	1905	$37,84,161	$8,48,532
Metals and manufactures	1904	$8,88,594	$21,55,842
Metals and manufactures	1905	$7,04,953	$25,31,913
Cattle	1904	$50	$12,12,592
Cattle	1905	$139	$8,18,015
Drugs and chemicals	1904	$1,88,486	$6,97,086
Drugs and chemicals	1905	$1,86,118	$8,81,384
Leather and Manufactures	1904	$13,442	$7,29,578
Leather and Manufactures	1905	$17,845	$10,04,250
Timber	1904	$56,212	$6,26,387
Timber	1905	$42,226	$7,33,524
Glass, crockery, and porcelain	1904	$72,052	$1,21,823
Glass, crockery, and porcelain	1905	$85,885	$1,42,405
Cement	1904	$3,061	$36,012
Cement	1905	$5,605	$1,43,682
Stationery and books	1904	$11,492	$2,06,277
Stationery and books	1905	$7,648	$5,08,216
Coal	1904	$32,821	$9,18,914
Coal	1905	$25,047	$9,39,772
Other articles	1904	$1,12,545	$29,22,546
Other articles	1905	$4,49,545	$37,80,759
TOTAL		**$1,30,67,014**	**$3,49,63,557**
Total textiles UK			**$75,10,279**
Total textiles United States			**$13,52,960**

Note: Compiled by the author.
Source: Report on Cuban Commerce by the United States minister in Havana, 1906, TNA, FO 368/64/80.

importer."[185] American agents recognized British adeptness as an advantage in a market that "naturally belong[ed] to the United States" but which "so far the English dominate[d]."[186] Mr. Morgan commented that "widths, weighs, colors and designs are made to suit the home trade, and unless the foreign buyer is willing to handle such 'stock' […] the [American] manufacturers prefer to let him [the Cuban importer] make his purchases abroad."[187] Such an attitude prompted fellow Americans' contempt who lamented both the Cuban consumer's capricious tastes, and "stiffness and lack of adaptability" of American suppliers: "In regard to catering to market requirements […] through our present system of manufacture it is not practicable to cater to all demands of the Cuban importer."[188] Consequently, Cubans were willing to wait and pay higher prices for goods made according to their exact tastes. From

185. *No. 4403 Annual Series Diplomatic and Consular Reports. Cuba. Report on the Year 1908 on the Trade and Commerce of the Island of Cuba*, 5.
186. Clark, *Cotton Goods in Latin America*, 6.
187. Report on Cuban Commerce by the United States minister in Havana, 1906, TNA, FO 368/64/80.
188. Report on Cuban Commerce by the United States minister in Havana, 1906, TNA, FO 368/64/80.

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receiving an order to handling, US firms took only two or three weeks to supply goods; meanwhile, goods commissioned to British firms took between three (whites) to four months (prints), at best.[189] However, the latter met the consumers' needs.

Despite the American victory, its subsequent indirect control of Cuban institutions, including tax regimes designed to favor the United States, and the Foreign Office's neglect of British merchants' pleas to oppose the American commercial policy in Cuba, British-based textile merchants like Stavert, Zigomala performed relatively well until 1914. The United States was dismayed; neither distance, customs duty, nor manufacturers' scale and scope prevailed over the ability to produce limited quantities tailored to the importer's specific needs and establish close relationships with clients in Spanish.

Conclusion

General overviews of trade are anchored in the periodization of British commercial advancement or decline in Latin America, with little attention paid to Cuba, despite its recognized significance. This article has cut across cultural and social skills to present trade as a flexible configuration that cannot be aprioristically explained; it is permanently entangled with changing circumstances. Methodologically, I have scrutinized large-scale events through small-scale evidence, mobilizing an interdisciplinary stance to set business records and material and textual evidence in motion within a case study framework to identify how businesses responded to historical changes.

Cuba depended on imports for basic needs and an influx of credit to invest in sugar plantations to produce good sugar harvests and exports. This situation created an economic bubble of wealth that materialized in a culture of lavish expenditure and an opulent lifestyle, particularly in Havana. Cuba was a magnet for merchandise. This was particularly true for cotton textiles, whose consumption progressively increased from 1818, when trade was liberalized in Cuba, proving to be detrimental to finer linens. The largest supplier of cotton was Britain.

I have argued that British textile ascendancy in Cuba relied on merchants' ability to harness soft skills based on adaptation and acculturation. The case of Stavert, Zigomala has demonstrated how catering to the Cuban consumer's tastes and establishing close relationships with importers bypassed the more formal trade structures. Design, packaging, Englishness as a quality marker, and interpersonal relationships showed British merchants' attitudes of responding effectively to customers' tastes. Likewise, Cuban consumers' capricious tastes have been emphasized, and how, despite heavy tariffs on British goods compared to Spanish or American textiles, British merchants found a way to lead the market. Before, during, and after the war, powers rivalled to retain or access the Cuban markets. A transnational approach, zooming in and out to link the particulars of Stavert, Zigomala to the general historical context, shows how British merchants responded to this international quandary. By setting Stavert, Zigomala's business records in dialogue with other primary records at a national level, I have unearthed the complex

189. Clark, *Cotton Goods in Latin America*, 15.

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intricacies that wove the nineteenth-century Anglo-Cuban textile trade. This was particularly evident when British textile traders had to lobby against the Foreign Office. To compensate for the Foreign Office's disregard, they tapped into Cuban consumers' appetite for individualization and maneuvered networks with Cuban-based merchants who frequently travelled to Europe, where they retained family connections.

This article is the first examination focused on the Anglo-Cuban textile trade in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, it should not be the last one. Given Cuba's significance as a market for British textiles and its current neglect in the literature, further examination is needed. Future research avenues may include exploring the demand across Cuban society, examining the financial tools British merchants used to facilitate remittances, or conducting a comparative analysis of British mercantile houses, such as Langworthy Brothers in the absence of Stavert, or Zigomala's direct competitor, A. and S. Henry & Co., whose business records seem to have perished.

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Supplementary material

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit http://doi.org/10.1017/eso.2025.10071.

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