

ARTICLE

“To Interfere on Their Behalf”: Sovereignty, Networks, and Capital in the Dominican Republic

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This article uses a lawsuit between British engineers and Dominican merchants over a sugar estate mortgage to examine how transnational capital networks functioned at the local level during a moment of transition in the late nineteenth-century global economy. When Dominican courts ruled against the engineers, the firm unsuccessfully sought diplomatic intervention, raising questions on the one hand about the incremental construction of Dominican sovereignty and on the other about the links between diplomatic and business networks on the ground. It is situated within calls for new approaches to the history of the Dominican Republic that utilize international archives and focus on corporate bodies, both in local and Pan-Caribbean contexts.

Keywords: Caribbean, Great Britain, 19th Century, networks

Introduction

On December 28, 1888, British engineers Alexander Alliott, Edward Manlove, and Alfred Fryer wrote, via their attorneys, to the British Foreign Office (BFO) seeking intervention in a legal battle involving sugar estate mortgages in the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic had recently ruled against them and in favor of creditors based in the city of Puerto Plata. As a result, the only way they could secure justice, they claimed, was if the British government could “interfere on their behalf.”¹ In doing so, they hoped to turn the attention of an imperial government toward one of the two independent nations in the Caribbean.

The dispute itself began in January of 1885, when the Ginebra Brothers, a merchant house in the coastal city of Puerto Plata, lent 28,510 pesos to the owners of a sugar estate called La Industria. The estate owners, Eduardo Hachtmann and Miguel Andrés Peralta, used the money to purchase sugar machinery from Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, whose engineering firm in Nottingham, England, specialized in selling sugar processing equipment to Caribbean planters. The Ginebra Brothers took out a mortgage on La Industria as security. In the event that

1. Wells and Hinds to Julian Pauncefote, 28 December 1888, FO 23/94, The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA).

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they were not repaid, they could foreclose on the estate.² What followed expanded into a protracted legal and diplomatic battle that included missing paperwork, surprise land seizures, accusations of collusion, and poorly encrypted consular correspondence.

It took the BFO three years to decide whether or not to act. In the process, it amassed four hundred pages of court proceedings, testimonies, correspondence, and commentary. These records help shed light on a series of disputes between Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, Dominican merchants, and the Ginebra Brothers, alongside a host of lawyers, advisors, notaries, landowners, and clerks from around the Caribbean, whose expertise was called upon to adjudicate the conflict. All of these documents were used by the BFO in making its decision. Although it ultimately refused, its investigation performed important work, revealing a web of transnational business relationships connecting the parties in question to a wider region and to the mechanisms of Spanish, British, and American imperialism.³

The battle over the La Industria mortgage illuminates one way capitalist transformations played out on the ground, highlighting the entanglements of different groups of actors in the decade between the rise of large-scale sugar production and the consolidation U.S. political and economic influence in the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean more broadly at the turn of the century. The mortgage at the center of the dispute was on an *ingenio*, or sugar mill. Scholars, such as Frank Moya Pons and Manuel Moreno Fragnals, have long located the ingenio as the site of some of the most significant transformations in social and economic life in both the Dominican Republic and the wider Spanish Caribbean in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴ By supplying the steam-powered machinery to retrofit the first large-scale Dominican ingenio, San Marcos (opened a decade earlier with U.S. and Cuban capital), Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer played a crucial role in these transformations as suppliers of capital and machinery.⁵ Meanwhile, the Ginebra Brothers represented another important class of capitalists in the Dominican Republic, namely local merchants who performed a double function as suppliers of credit. As a merchant house based in the country's export center of Puerto Plata, the brothers, like their peers, advanced money and goods to cash-strapped planters and merchants like Hachtmann and Peralta, who were compelled to seek out new forms of credit in response to macroeconomic changes that led to the concentration of sugar profits into fewer and fewer hands.⁶ Together, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, the Ginebra Brothers, and others involved in the sugar estate dispute reveal the breadth of characters involved in the imperial networks to which they belonged.

2. Copy of Judgement of Puerto Plata Court, 2 April 1888, TNA FO 23/94.

3. I draw from Peter James Hudson's call to analyze "power from on high" but also acknowledge that the Dominican actors in this article comprise elite voices that were more likely to seek "a both geographically and culturally bounded nation" based on their location and socioeconomic status. Turits, "A World Destroyed," 593–594. Hudson, "On the History and Historiography of Banking in the Caribbean," 25.

4. Moreno Fragnals, *El Ingenio*; Moya Pons ed., *Historia de la República Dominicana*. Earlier English-language work on business interests in the Dominican Republic includes Knight, *The Americans in Santo Domingo*, and Logan, *Haiti and the Dominican Republic*.

5. Martínez Moya, *La Caña Da para Todo*, 139.

6. Eller, *We Dream Together*, 38–39; Baud, "The Origins of Capitalist Agriculture," 136–137.

The incremental construction and contestation of sovereignty were shaped by these entanglements. Recent work on the ingenio by César Ayala and Humberto García Muñiz situates American investment in the Dominican Republic in a comparative context with Puerto Rico and Cuba, whereas Cyrus Veese contextualizes local conditions and global investment in the Dominican Republic but retains a focus on national economic policy.⁷ Building on and complicating these narratives, this article examines the roles these networks of *global* capitalists played in the incremental construction and contestation of *national* sovereignty through *local* disputes in the 1880s.⁸ Ann Laura Stoler calls networks the “marrow of empire.”⁹ These networks informed strategic attempts to sway officials but also became a source of frustration for British businessmen as they realized the degree to which interpersonal interactions could stymie their interests. Despite the importance of Stoler’s formulation, “the Latin American experience” has remained largely absent in discussion of Anglophone empire.¹⁰

More analysis of the interaction between the local and global can present new circuits of people and capital that scholars can trace to illuminate their roles in the construction of places or, as Jonathan Levy describes the contributions of recent scholarship on the political economy of “sovereignty and capital,” their roles in the “ordering and wielding of power.”¹¹ Future scholarship will be needed to piece together additional circuits and their impact. Here, the local-global emphasis, it is hoped, enriches scholarly discussions of debt in the turn-of-the-century Caribbean while also responding to the calls for Dominican scholarship to better account for the geographies of cities, land tenure, and corporate bodies through the use of international archives.¹²

The conflict over the La Industria mortgage was indeed inextricably tied to local and global networks, with national ramifications. Manlove, Alliot, and Fryer were not only engineers but also investors representing the new corporate capitalists that entered the British Caribbean sugar industry in the second half of the nineteenth century, beginning in Antigua, before expanding to the Spanish Caribbean, as well as to North America, Africa, and Asia. Like the Ginebra Brothers, they frequently traveled the Atlantic World in search of business opportunities. In doing so, they forged credit relationships through a parcel of land subject to local court jurisdiction and bureaucratic infrastructure. This capital was all the more significant in

7. Veese, “Concessions as a Modernizing Strategy,” 731–758.

8. For two recent network-based approaches, see Enstad, *Cigarettes, Inc.*, and Maggor, *Brahmin Capitalism*, as well as Lester, *Imperial Networks*, and Jones, “Finance, Ambition and Romanticism.”

9. Stoler, “Intimidations of Empire,” 3.

10. Brown, introduction to *Informal Empire*, 14.

11. Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom*; García Muñiz, *Sugar and Power in the Caribbean*. Levy, “Appreciating Assets,” 1490. For two examples of the possibilities of better understanding places and processes through constructing understudied circuits of capital, see Glotzer, *How the Suburbs Were Segregated*, and Hudson, *Bankers and Empire*, 18–53.

12. Marte quoted in Eller, “‘Awful Pirates’ and ‘Hordes of Jackals,’” 92. Other historians have emphasized the importance of looking at a Pan-Caribbean history through the lens of migration and circulation; Eller, *We Dream Together*, 230; On why it is important to follow actors between islands: “The establishment of intra-island communities of refugees, exiles, laborers, imperial investigators, and opportunity-seekers across the countries suggests tremendous potential for alternative considerations of the meaning of race, gender, citizenship, empire, and Caribbean freedom.” Smith, “Footprints on the Sea,” 70.

the context of ongoing political and legal struggles over land rights in the Dominican Republic caused, in part, by the sugar industry.¹³ When Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer felt wronged by these local institutions, they first appealed to national Dominican courts, which affirmed the lower courts' decisions to turn layers of uncertainty and conflicting testimony into sharply defined rulings, unambiguous and precise in their condemnation of Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer's business practices.

As a result, the firm found it prudent to seek out the assistance of the BFO, which subsequently used its consular officials in the Dominican Republic and neighboring Haiti to aggregate and interpret information for London. As part of their investigation, the consular officials passed judgements on the legitimacy of the courts and Dominican governance, while simultaneously being deeply embedded in commercial affairs in ways that shaped what they knew and how they acted.¹⁴ This messy combination of local, national, and international entanglements shaped the BFO's ultimate decision, at least in this case, to respect the governance and laws of the Dominican Republic rather than intercede or, as Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer requested, "interfere." The very nature of case-by-case decision making, however, meant that each small episode tested the bounds of Dominican sovereignty with regard to which actions were permissible for foreign investors on Dominican soil.¹⁵

This small moment in the history of global capitalism and imperialism highlights what historian Rebecca Scott calls the importance of "small scale dynamics of larger-scale processes."¹⁶ Building on this approach, which Scott uses to examine cases in Guadeloupe and Cuba, a single episode can be used to examine the daily processes by which the Dominican Republic negotiated a place for foreign investors and finance at a formative moment in its history.¹⁷

British Machinery and Dominican Sugar

As mentioned, at the center of the episode was a mortgage on an ingenio or sugar mill called La Industria. Ingenios consisted of steam-powered sugar mills and surrounding land under cultivation. Although ingenios could be found across the Caribbean at the time of the dispute, they were relatively recent arrivals to the Dominican Republic, having been imported in the

13. Franks, "Property Rights," 125.

14. Simeonov, "With What Right," 34, 43–44.

15. Stoler, "On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty," 128. As a working concept of the processes at work in the incremental construction of sovereignty, I use the Cain and Hopkinson framing that imperialism "involves and incursion, or attempted incursion, into the sovereignty of another state." Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, 54. The added salience of an imperial framework comes from Paul Kramer's argument that "the imperial" draws attention to "power, connection, and comparison." Kramer, "Power and Connection," 1352.

16. Scott, "Small-Scale Dynamics of Large-Scale Processes," 472–480.

17. I bridge Scott's work with Peter Hudson's call for scholarship on the Caribbean to center "capitalism's institutions" by looking at "structural and institutional contexts," "institutional organization," and "structural critique." Hudson, "On the History and Historiography of Banking in the Caribbean," 25. For macro histories of British investment, see Wilkins, *The History of Foreign Investment*, and Davis and Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire*.

1860s by Cubans who migrated to the eastern half of Hispaniola during the Ten Years' War with Spain. These Cuban businessmen found the government amenable to large-scale sugar production as a brief period of Spanish annexation was ending.¹⁸

A two-decade period followed in which British and U.S. firms found new opportunities to profit from the growth of the ingenio. This included Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer. The company first sold machinery in the Dominican Republic to Ingenio San Marcos. The iron machinery and large chimneys, patented by the British engineers, were the first of their kind in the Dominican Republic and subsequently caught the attention of Dominican sugar producers, who faced stiff competition due to an increase in the number of operators. More owners of sugar estates sought out the technical assistance of Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer.¹⁹ In doing so, they contributed to the reshaping of labor relations and agricultural production across the country, as mechanized sugar production pulled in larger and larger swaths of Dominicans of disparate origins. What had been a more diversified agricultural base became so dominated by sugar production that the terms *plantation* and *sugar plantation* became synonymous during the last third of the century.²⁰

Early investment in ingenios themselves came from Cuban investors, but they were soon joined by Americans and Europeans. While it is true that British commercial activity in the Dominican Republic began to wane with the rise of the sugar industry and the concurrent decline in tobacco exports to Britain, British financial institutions continued to hold Dominican bonds. Although British investors did not comprise a significant percentage of European sugar investors compared to Germans and Italians, British technology became desirable for ingenios thanks to its early adoption by Cuban owners and its presence in nearby Puerto Rico.²¹

Although Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer first developed ties to the Caribbean as engineers, they subsequently became landowners and investors there as well. In 1837, Manlove and Alliott founded the firm in Nottingham to serve the British textile industry. Its early clients used products for bleaching and dyeing. Manlove and Alliott, however, recognized that their patented centrifuge and steam equipment could also be used in sugar production. By the 1840s, they began to establish business connections in the British Caribbean. A series of legal measures following British abolition facilitated an expansion of their enterprises. The government provided debt relief to former enslavers by facilitating land sales. Through intermediaries in Antigua, Manlove, Alliott, and their colleague Fryer purchased and consolidated sugar estates in the 1850s and 1860s.²²

Once established in Antigua, the firm bolstered their reputation using two methods. The first involved inviting planters and investors to the island to watch demonstrations. Invited

18. *Gaceta Oficial* 15, no. 735, September 22, 1888; Inoa, "La Sociedad Dominicana," 265; Whitney, "War and Nation Building," 365; Zanetti Lecuona, *Esplendor y decadencia*, 40–47; LeGrand, "Informal Resistance," 558–559.

19. Glotzer, *How the Suburbs Were Segregated*, 24, 27; Martínez Moya, *La Caña Da para Todo*, 139; Murphy, *Dominican Sugar Plantations*, 14; Gaston Descamps, "Green Bagasse Furnaces," *Sugar Cane* 24 (1892): 636; José Castillo Pichardo, "Ingenios Pioneros de Puerto Plata," *El Diario Libre*, June 12, 2009, n.p.

20. Moreno Friginals, *El Ingenio*, 467n1.

21. Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 260.

22. Glotzer, *How the Suburbs Were Segregated*, 23–24.

guests included officials from Manchester, briefly a center of British sugar refining, along with businessmen from the French, British, and Spanish Caribbean.²³ Fryer was in charge of leading as many as one hundred guests at a time to the machinery and answering technical questions. Therefore, the entry of Manlove, Alliot, and Fryer from the British into the French and Spanish Caribbean can be attributed to the mobility of planters and investors as they circulated through the Atlantic World, talking to one another, attending demonstrations, and taking news back to their home bases, either in the Caribbean or in European metropolises. Initial recognition created a second path toward gaining business. As Manlove, Alliot, and Fryer's reputation grew, the company was able to land commissions in Puerto Rico and, subsequently, the Dominican Republic, where the visibility of machinery, and the tracks and tall chimneys that accompanied it, stood out in the largely agricultural landscape. As sugar growing regions gave rise to an increasing density of mechanized sugar plantations, the optics of Manlove, Alliot, and Fryer machinery became the aspirational basis for others who considered following suit.²⁴

Among those who contacted the British engineers for equipment were two planters by the names of Eduardo Hachtmann and Miguel Andrés Peralta. In 1879, these two enterprising Dominicans founded the 188-hectare La Industria outside of Puerto Plata.²⁵ At the time of La Industria's founding, it was not yet mechanized. This soon changed, thanks to developments in the global economy. In 1884, a precipitous drop in world sugar prices paved the way for the consolidation of ownership and finance of sugar estates. The sugar crisis marked the beginning of a transition to a "large-scale, externally financed sugar industry."²⁶ As sugar prices plummeted, newly cash-poor planters cut wages and imposed harsher labor conditions on Dominican workers. In search of cost-cutting measures, and seeking to quell worker protest in the face of what Michiel Baud characterized as a response to deteriorating labor conditions, planters who had not already done so sought to mechanize production.²⁷ Although their exact motive for purchasing equipment from Manlove, Alliot, and Fryer is not explicitly stated in surviving sources, the timing of La Industria's mechanization suggests their decision was tied to global changes, and coincided with the mechanization of nearby ingenios.

In order to pay for the new equipment, Hachtmann and Peralta opted to take out a mortgage on the La Industria estate. This way of securing access to credit was typical for commercial enterprises operating across the Caribbean in the 1880s. That the planters turned to the Ginebra Brothers to finance the machinery was also unsurprising. The Spanish Ginebra Brothers ran a general mercantile house based in Puerto Plata that sold goods such as beer, clothing, shoes, groceries, and hardware.²⁸ They comprised one of many houses established by European-born merchants in what was the country's urban trade hub. By the time of contact

23. *Chemical News*, June 1868; "The Concretor," *Saint Christopher Advertiser and Weekly Intelligencer*, April 24, 1866; "Agricultural Report and Packet Summary," *Barbados Agricultural Reporter*, May 8, 1868.

24. Surillo Luna, "Moving Forward," 83, 86.

25. Inoa, "La Sociedad Dominicana," 265.

26. Baud, "Sugar and Unfree Labour," 306.

27. *Ibid.*, 309.

28. *Commercial Directory of Haiti and Santo Domingo*, no. 89 (1891): 9–10.

with Hachtmann and Peralta, the Ginebra Brothers had opened multiple branches and established connections with European and U.S. firms.²⁹ As Hachtmann and Peralta knew, mercantile houses such as the Ginebra Brothers constituted one of the major sources of credit available to the country's commercial class.³⁰

The Dispute

What is referred to here as the “dispute” began with competing claims to La Industria. In February 1885, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer accepted a mortgage on La Industria as security on what would be three deferred installment payments on machinery from Hachtmann and Peralta. According to the engineers, Hachtmann and Peralta assured them at the time that no one else had claims on La Industria, eliding the pair's previous mortgage with that of the Ginebra Brothers. Subsequently, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer hired a local lawyer, who filed the mortgage with the Puerto Plata lands registry office.

Rapid transfers of the mortgage and accompanying paperwork omissions compounded the issue of who actually held a stake in La Industria. Later, in November of that year, they transferred ownership of the mortgage to British associate William Cartwright, who, like Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, was based in Nottingham. No one updated the records in the land registry office. The exact reasoning for this transfer and the nature of the relationship between Manlove, Alliott, Fryer and Cartwright remains unclear, but all shared the same Puerto Rico-based associate and British-born mechanical engineer, Robert Graham, described by the editors of a sugar industry journal as “a humorist of a somewhat grim type” for taking both sides in a debate over the superiority of U.S. or British machinery.³¹

The next steps for the debt took the mortgage to Puerto Rico and back to the Dominican Republic, raising issues about the validity of the collection process. Cartwright authorized Graham to act as debt collector, but the latter never took steps to collect the debt or correct the error in the land registry.³² Graham instead sent a letter to Hachtmann and Peralta to document the transfer along with a document notarized in Puerto Rico that indicated Cartwright had transferred the mortgage back to Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer. It was only when Alliott visited Puerto Plata with Graham to collect the debt that he learned about the Ginebra Brothers' mortgage. After discussing the matter with the Ginebra Brothers, Alliott sold the Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer mortgage to the Ginebra Brothers for £5,701. The next two decisions would come back to haunt the Ginebra Brothers: First, the Ginebra Brothers, though creditors themselves, opted to pay Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer for the mortgage in installments rather than all at once. Second, neither Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer nor the Ginebra Brothers ensured that the mortgage transfer was recorded with the local land registry office. In lieu of this recording, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer notified Hachtmann and Peralta by letter.

29. “Remarks on the Judgment of the Supreme Court of Santo Domingo,” TNA FO 23/94; Correspondence between the Ginebra Brothers and Lanman and Kemp, Box 14, Lanman and Kemp Records 2328, Hagley Museum and Library; Escolano Giménez, “La Rivalidad Internacional,” 236.

30. Baud, “The Origins of Capitalist Agriculture,” 150n9.

31. García Muñíz, *Sugar and Power in the Caribbean*, 120.

32. Wells and Hinds to Julian Pauncefote, 28 December 1888, TNA FO 23/94.

It turned out that the credit relations between Hachtmann and Peralta and the Ginebra Brothers had been more complex. They had paid off the original debt to the Ginebra Brothers with a delivery of honey, sugar, and crushed cane that equaled the balance of their original loans on which the estate had served as security. The Ginebra Brothers had made additional loans, however, that went unpaid just as Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer advanced Hachtmann and Peralta machinery with La Industria as collateral, and the Ginebra Brothers arranged to have their debts satisfied if Hachtmann and Peralta made payments for the equipment. All in all, the timing of the claims on La Industria proved murky. However, the combination of unregistered mortgage transfers, questions about the methods of notification of the transfers, the rapid entry and exit of Cartwright, and the involvement of Puerto Rico-based notaries set the stage for each party involved to try to use the ambiguous situation to their advantage.

The Ginebra Brothers then initiated foreclosure proceedings on La Industria for nonpayment.³³ Hachtmann and Peralta waited until Alliott and Graham left the country for Puerto Rico before responding to the foreclosure notice. They then summoned the Ginebra Brothers to the local court, which annulled the foreclosure on the grounds that Hachtmann and Peralta owed payments to Cartwright and not Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer. According to the documents on file with the land registry, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer did not have the authority to transfer a title to the Ginebra Brothers because Cartwright had the rightful claims at the time on La Industria. After Graham returned to the Dominican Republic, however, he said that Cartwright had in fact transferred the mortgage back to Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, who could thus legally sell it.

Amid the growing confusion over who owned La Industria, the Ginebra Brothers sought a guarantee from Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer that the latter had valid possession of the mortgage when they sold it to the merchants. Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer refused to provide documentary evidence before the Puerto Plata courts. The Ginebra Brothers could not, therefore, foreclose on La Industria because they could not demonstrate the unbroken and legal chain of transfers that gave them possession of the debt. The Ginebra Brothers had to terminate foreclosure proceedings and pay damages to Hachtmann and Peralta for attempted land seizure, while Hachtmann and Peralta retained La Industria. The Ginebra Brothers then set their sights on Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer to recover their losses, even though they themselves had only partially paid Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer for the purchase of the mortgage.³⁴

The resulting dispute would mainly be driven by the Ginebra Brothers' attempt at compensation from Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer. Having failed to reap the profits from the purchase of the mortgage from Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, the Ginebra Brothers subsequently notified Puerto Plata court officials that they would not pay the remaining balance they owed for purchasing the mortgage, nor would they pay the fees associated with legal documents and transfers. Before the courts could rule on the matter, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer repossessed La Industria for nonpayment from the Ginebra Brothers, just as the Ginebra Brothers had attempted to do with Hachtmann and Peralta.

33. Sentence of the Tribunal of the First Instance of Puerto Plata, 1 April 1888, TNA FO 23/94.

34. Supreme Court of San Domingo Judgement in the Appeal by Manlove against the verdict of the Local Court of Puerto Plata in re *Ginebra Brothers v. Manlove*, p. 1–2, TNA FO 23/94.

The Ginebra Brothers challenged Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer again in court. The whole episode left the Ginebra Brothers, in particular, with a bad taste for doing business with Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer as international investors—a sharp contrast to the latter’s good reputation as engineers. The lawyers for the Ginebra Brothers argued that the actions against their clients were all the more egregious because they were conducted “by people with no landed property in the country” yet damaged the reputation of the Dominican-based Ginebra Brothers both “in the country and abroad.” The Puerto Plata court ruled the latest foreclosure proceedings invalid and ordered Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer to relinquish the estate and pay damages to the Ginebra Brothers.³⁵

It is here that some of the complexities that accompanied the transnational networks of capital enmeshing Dominican sugar production become clearer. The Ginebra Brothers, like other Caribbean-based merchants, depended on international relationships to conduct business. At the time of the ruling, one of brothers was away in Europe on business, as was typically the case throughout the dispute. However, such international entanglements were not without risk, particularly when they involved European-based investors like Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, who often took advantage of their status to manipulate local markets in their favor. The Ginebra Brothers’ use of local courts, which were concerned with asserting Dominican legal authority and thus sought to limit the power of international capital to dictate commerce in the island nation, worked to their advantage.

Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer appealed to the Supreme Court based in the capital city of Santo Domingo. However, here too, things worked against the British-based investors. The court began its ruling with a pro forma recitation of the state narrative of Dominican history: “In the forty-fifth year of independence [from Haiti] and the twenty fifth of the Restoration [of the Dominican Republic from Spanish annexation].”³⁶ The statement signaled the court’s commitment to upholding the sovereignty of the Dominican Republic and its citizens. During the proceedings, the justices took issue with Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer’s seizure of *La Industria* prior to the lower court’s decision with regard to the mortgage’s validity. Echoing the lower court’s ruling, the justices subsequently ruled that transfers between Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer and Cartwright were invalid because they were “made abroad” in Puerto Rico and not registered properly in the Dominican Republic through established procedures.³⁷ These procedures had been put in place in recent decades as part of a broader state-building project, which included mandating Dominican notaries or magistrates be present to record certain categories of land transfers. The court likewise derisively noted the use of private letters to notify the parties of mortgage transfers. Although absence of notaries did not automatically invalidate transfers, they potentially stood on more ambiguous ground if contested.³⁸ Overall, according to the justices, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer undermined their own case by “pretending to mend by tardy acts their gross omission” of using Dominican legal forms to notify all parties involved of the mortgage transfers in a timely manner. The court also noted that they

35. Incidental Demand of Ginebra Brothers, p. 2–3, TNA FO 23/94.

36. The court declared it twenty-five years instead of twenty-three. Judgement of the Supreme Court of Santo Domingo, 13 July 1888, p. 1, TNA FO 23/94.

37. “Mr. Hopkinson’s Memorandum,” 22 September 1891, p. 2, TNA FO 23/94.

38. Franks, “Property Rights,” 107, 110.

should have guaranteed that they could sell the mortgage. Not doing so constituted “an inconceivable mode of action, incompatible with all known rules of law.”³⁹ The court thus upheld the ruling of the Puerto Plata Court in favor of the Ginebra Brothers and affirmed the lower court’s award of damages to account for how Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer “discredited the ‘reputation’ of the Ginebra Brothers by seizing La Industria.” In this and other cases, it was not just the reputation of a single merchant at stake but, in the court’s judgement, the state itself. By failing to follow proper legal procedure, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer had called into question the legitimacy of the legal system at a time when the Dominican Republic was increasingly concerned with the growing reach of foreign capital.

In order to enforce the payment of damages, the courts requested information about any assets Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer had in the Dominican Republic.⁴⁰ At the same time, the court provided attorneys with an itemized list of damages owed the Ginebra Brothers. This was in line with standard legal practice. In this instance, however, the court also claimed fees for itself related to its role in adjudicating property disputes. It “demanded in the name of the Republic, of the Law, and of Justice,” fees for transferring the mortgage, various fees for notifying involved parties, costs for stamped paper for certificates, filing fees in register offices, costs of making copies of documents and supplying documents to different offices, and the cost of “the act of warrant of seizure” and of notifying Hachtmann and Peralta of the seizure.⁴¹ Together, the list highlights the ways the courts sought to financially benefit from the very same transnational capital transactions that they adjudicated. These administrative costs both provided state revenue and reinforced state purview over property transactions.

While all of this was going on, and while Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer were in the process of enumerating assets, the British investors revealed that a parallel set of events had been unfolding at another sugar estate called Porto Rico, owned by Puerto Rican Juan Serrallés in the vicinity of San Pedro de Macorís, east of Santo Domingo and in an area with the highest concentration of sugar production in the Dominican Republic.⁴² Serrallés had claimed and consolidated land that had been farmed by locals under traditional use rights arrangements, emblematic of another way the rise of the mechanized sugar industry was transforming social and legal relationships through attempts to formalize its institutional authority over land. Once under his control, and with the support of Dominican authorities, Serrallés established the ingenio that he then mortgaged to Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer in lieu of cash payment for machinery.⁴³ The mortgage had been transferred to Cartwright and then back again using notaries and paperwork in Puerto Rico. Upon becoming aware of this additional set of transactions, the courts placed a lien on the mortgage so that payments would first go to the Ginebra Brothers. Cartwright sued on the grounds that Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer were not the owners of the mortgage, and again, the lower courts denied Cartwright’s position on the grounds that

39. Supreme Court of San Domingo Judgement in the Appeal by Manlove against the verdict of the Local Court of Puerto Plata in re *Ginebra Brothers v. Manlove*, p. 8, TNA FO 23/94.

40. *Ibid.*

41. Jesus A. de Bonilla, 1889, n.p., TNA FO 23/94.

42. Veesser, *A World Safe for Capitalism*, xv; García Muñiz, *Sugar and Power in the Caribbean*, 206.

43. Martínez Moya, *La Caña Da para Todo*, 212; Castillo Pichardo, “La Formación,” 27.

any transfers to or from him had not taken place through proper Dominican channels. There was simply, as the court ruled, no trace of Cartwright in the local records office.⁴⁴ The absence from the local records office reflected Cartwright's role in transnational political economy. Functioning as an ostensibly independent actor, his shared Nottingham origins with Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer makes it more likely he was an associate and intermediary who sought to facilitate advantageous credit relationships for the engineers, similar to Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer benefitting from a series of rapid land transfers in Antigua decades earlier with an Antigua intermediary. Cartwright formed a central part of the dispute by operating on the edges of the law.

Networks and Influence

Over a year passed after the Supreme Court's rulings during which the BFO tried, with frequent delays, to develop an understanding of what had taken place. The office faced difficulties and delays, however, due to the structure of the British consulate on the island of Hispaniola. As of 1889, Great Britain maintained a single consular headquarters for both the Dominican Republic and Haiti in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince. It had established representation there in 1826, at a time when the entire island was run by a single government.⁴⁵ The vice-consul in Santo Domingo functioned de facto as the second most important diplomatic officer. Puerto Plata, being a major port city and on the opposite coast from the capital, had its own vice consulate.

In January 1889, the BFO in London instructed Consul James Ernest Napoleon Zohrab in Port-au-Prince to compile a report of what had occurred in Puerto Plata. Zohrab was a career diplomat who had been stationed throughout the Ottoman Empire before assuming the post in Haiti the previous year. Zohrab assumed his post in the midst of deep political conflicts in Haiti that resulted in widespread fires throughout the capital. Surveying the damage, he wrote to his superiors in London of his wish for Britain and France to "blot out a republic which is a disgrace to humanity." Haitians, he felt, possessed "base passions" that made them unfit for self-governance. It fell to Zohrab, who supported British interventions on Hispaniola in certain racial and political contexts, to recommend whether the British government should intercede in the Dominican Republic. February and March passed, with letters to Zohrab going unanswered. Officials in London grew increasingly perplexed by the silence but nevertheless expected Zohrab to be conducting research into what had occurred.⁴⁶

Rather than make his own inquiries, Zohrab relied on the vice-consul of Puerto Plata, Alfred Reimer, to gather the data and make a report. It took until June 1890 for Zohrab to reach out to the vice-consul to begin working on the report. Even after he did, consular networks, however, could only move at the speed of established infrastructural and communication networks. Progress was slow, due to the average time of two weeks it took for correspondence to travel

44. Consular Report no. 15 of 1889, TNA FO 23/94.

45. Smith, *Liberty, Fraternity, and Exile*, 6. The United States converted its mission in Santo Domingo to an embassy until 1904. Veeseer, *A World Safe for Capitalism*, 41.

46. Quoted in Smith, *Liberty, Fraternity, and Exile*, 220, 236. Notes from the BFO, TNA FO 23/94.

between Puerto Plata and Port-au-Prince. When the report finally reached London in September, it included a note from Zohrab explaining Reimer's role. The report consisted of a short summary of events by Reimer and the documents the BFO had sent to Zohrab. Neither Reimer nor Zohrab offered recommendations for future action.⁴⁷

Reimer's involvement in the report proved to be a problem for the BFO. It turned out that Reimer was not only the vice-consul at Puerto Plata but a clerk for the Ginebra Brothers as well. London sent Zohrab a coded telegram noting that Reimer was a Ginebra Brothers employee and requesting Zohrab find an impartial source to make a new report. The telegram, however, was routed to Port-au-Prince via Reimer's office in Puerto Plata, where Reimer deciphered the message before forwarding it to Zohrab. He sent Zohrab a note in which he vouched for his own reliability. One official in London wished that "under the circumstances Mr. Zohrab might have managed to collect information and send us a report from a source less open to criticism than Mr. Reimer." The report, he noted, was simply "not reliable."⁴⁸ Reimer's two positions would have been typical to the BFO, whose consular appointees in Haiti often worked together with import-export merchants in a multitude of remunerative arrangements.⁴⁹

Reimer's positions may have been atypical only in terms of the degree to which they caused an issue; Hachtmann also worked for the Ginebra Brothers. He held power of attorney for the Ginebra Brothers and could sign documents in their place during their frequent trips abroad.⁵⁰ This was the nature of doing transnational business in the late nineteenth-century Atlantic World. Caribbean port cities such as Puerto Plata were teeming with residents who were highly mobile and embedded in networks whose members held competing interests across national lines.⁵¹ Who comprised an impartial or reliable actor in the dispute became a contested subject not only among members of the BFO but also among the other parties involved.

To bypass Zohrab, the BFO contacted Acting Vice-Consul A. C. Leon in Santo Domingo to make a new report. Leon was only filling in temporarily and thus had less time to become entangled in local business affairs in comparison to Reimer. It also meant, however, that he lacked his own networks on which he could rely to gather information. Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer attempted to exploit this situation in order to impede Leon's work. According to Leon, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer were travelling around Puerto Plata insinuating that Dominican judges were being bribed, though the actors doing the bribing remained unclear. Worse, according to Leon, they were bragging about how they were sure to secure British intervention in their case. Given those circumstances, it was exceedingly difficult to gather impartial information on the ground because of Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer biasing the people the consular officials could contact. Meanwhile, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer agreed to accept any decisions made by the BFO based on a new report that could ensure impartiality. However, their actions served to undermine any such effort.⁵² That they only began the strategy

47. Consular Dispatch 15, 6 September 1889, TNA FO 23/94.

48. Notes written on Dispatch 15, 26 September 1889, TNA FO 23/94.

49. Plummer, "The Metropolitan Connection," 125–126; Maurer, "Banks and Entrepreneurs in Porfirian Mexico," 335; Haber, Razo, and Maurer, *Politics of Property Rights*, 93–101.

50. Manlove, Alliott, and Co. to the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 12 November 1890, TNA FO 23/94.

51. Putnam, "Borderlands and Border Crossers," 10–11.

52. A. C. Leon to Zohrab, 1 January 1890, TNA FO 23/94.

with Leon reinforces the belief held by Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer of the necessity of being embedded in local networks to get things done. Likewise, they considered the absence of Leon's connections ripe for exploitation.

Unlike Leon, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer had established networks of associates throughout the Dominican Republic. Sensing inertia from the BFO, the British engineers set out to find their own local authority on whom they could count to vouch for them. They settled on a former minister of justice of the Dominican Republic, Domingo Antonio Rodriguez, whom they designated their "legal advisor." By securing a legal advisor through making inquiries, they affirmed the concerns of British officials about how widely they had spread news about the dispute. It is unclear if they compensated Rodriguez in any capacity, but Rodriguez agreed to write a brief to the BFO that could potentially serve as the basis for a new British report.

In their communication with the BFO, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer emphasized Rodriguez's position as someone possessing local knowledge otherwise unavailable to the government, and thus uniquely situated to offer analysis. This local knowledge did not earn the Dominican respect in all contexts. Indeed, the British engineers prefaced his brief with the acknowledgment that his statements "would be quite inadmissible" if made in any "European court of law." Still, they argued, his opinions should be given credence, taken as representative of what Dominicans thought of the case and his position as the foremost legal mind "on the island" and of the highest character.⁵³ In this sense, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer positioned Rodriguez as both representative of Dominicans and exceptional. Although described as an important ally, the British businessmen qualified his authority and words to the BFO. The involvement of Rodriguez attests to the crucial place of local intermediaries in business and politics. In emphasizing the local, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, as well as the BFO, gave the appearance of deferring to local authority even as what was at stake potentially undermined Dominican court rulings.

Rodriguez began his brief by noting his role as explaining in detail why the Supreme Court had "inflicted injustice" on Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer when ruling in favor of the Ginebra Brothers. As a result, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, in Rodriguez's words, were "compelled" to "beg for British mediation" after tirelessly fighting for their "rights and interests." The Supreme Court ruling set a "deplorable precedent" that would surely mean similar incidents would occur.⁵⁴ The broad summary of events that followed did not differ substantially from the versions presented by Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer's British attorneys. According to Rodriguez, the Ginebra Brothers had issued a mortgage to Hachtmann and Peralta for La Industria in 1885. After it was repaid, they issued additional loans. Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer then transferred the debt to Cartwright who transferred it back after missed payments. Hachtmann and Peralta and the Ginebra Brothers were informed of the transfers through correspondence. Negotiations broke down and the case entered the courts, where the transfers between

53. "Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer to the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, March 4, 1890," TNA FO 23/94. This date refers to when a translation was circulated around the BFO in London rather than when the original was produced. Based on the references to the brief in letters dated in January and February, it likely was initially sent in late 1889.

54. Rodriguez memorandum, TNA FO 23/94.

Cartwright and Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer cast doubt on whether Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer had a claim to damages from nonpayment.⁵⁵

Rodriguez focused on the debt transfer to argue that the Supreme Court had committed a miscarriage of justice. Technically, he said, the notifications Cartwright sent out had no legal standing under Dominican law. However, if the BFO understood that the laws of the Dominican Republic were based on the Bourbon restoration legal code, it should thus accept that French legal precedent on the subject could be interpreted to hold that the notice was still valid evidence, proving Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer were the holders of the debt. This too constituted a claim about sovereignty in that it is an attempt to apply European law to the Dominican Republic even though the actual influence of the aforementioned legal code did not map on to contemporary Dominican law as neatly as Rodriguez described. Noticeably absent from Rodriguez's summary of the case was any mention of Graham, the validity of notarizations in Puerto Rico, and the filing errors, all of which had been subjects the Supreme Court commented on at length to assert the sovereignty of the Dominican Republic in its ruling.⁵⁶

Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer gathered support for their side. They hoped Rodriguez's physical proximity and credentials could bolster their case. In letters sent on their behalf by Graham, Graham emphasized his physical proximity to Rodriguez to try and gain the ear of British officials himself. In a follow-up letter to London, Graham mentioned a conversation he was having with Rodriguez and even included that Rodriguez going out for breakfast and returning to finish the conversation later. He tracked Rodriguez's journey through the nearby streets and described where Rodriguez sat relative to them. Once Rodriguez became involved, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer shifted tactics to argue Dominican justices did not properly consider the case. Regardless of the particulars of the case (though they speculated Hachtmann and Peralta colluded with the Ginebra Brothers), they argued that their request for British intervention was strictly due to the "illegalities" of how the Dominican courts handled their case.⁵⁷

For the most part, officials in London ignored these efforts by Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer to influence the case, preferring instead to wait for the report from British diplomats out of Haiti or the Dominican Republic, which they viewed as more definitive and reliable. Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, who counted on the local knowledge and credentials of a Dominican intermediary to carry weight, found this to be a particularly worrisome move on the part of the BFO due to the fact that the British diplomat in Santo Domingo in question was only occupying the position of vice-consul on an interim basis. Graham, again delegated by Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer to handle the dispute, equated inexperience on the island with incompetence in another letter to the BFO. Contrary to a person like Rodriguez, who came to Graham's attention through word of mouth, the acting vice-consul was a person with no connections on the island. "The result," he concluded, "is a very lame affair and the matter is confided to a temporary sub official in a way not only to be useless but to bring discredit on the claim." He requested the investigation be put in "competent" hands and requested that the British consul in Haiti see to the matter "personally."⁵⁸

55. Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer to the BFO, 4 March 1890, TNA FO 23/94.

56. Eller, *We Dream Together*, 95.

57. "Copy of Letter from Mr. Robert Graham, Ponce dated Jan. 20, 1890," TNA FO 23/94.

58. *Ibid.*

In the meantime, Graham offered to send Rodriguez to England to assist the BFO as needed. His local knowledge would, surely, be a benefit to those individuals thousands of miles removed from the events. When that offer also went unacknowledged, Graham recommended the BFO consult an independent Dominican lawyer itself. It seemed like the BFO was not considering how the courts wronged Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer as well as a Dominican could. He even could recommend by name some of the people who “had standing” and were not already directly involved. The BFO declined to work with Rodriguez.⁵⁹

By August, the acting vice-consul had been replaced by a new permanent vice-consul in Santo Domingo, one who had already spent years in the Dominican Republic working for the BFO. The new vice-consul, D. Coen, could not understand why Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer had not simply used their status as British subjects to resolve the dispute before it reached the courts to begin with. If only they had come to the vice-consul’s office at any point, he reflected, they could have been advised in ways that would have “avoided a costly lawsuit.” Instead, one of their “advisers” visited Coen after the case was already before the courts, during which time the adviser made “insinuations and promises of a character which prove very little in favor of this advisor’s honorability and all of which” Coen listened to “with the contempt they deserved.”⁶⁰

Coen did not elaborate on the nature of the advice the consulate would have given, but his remarks raise questions about what constituted “British interference,” as Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer’s attorneys had initially framed it. As the BFO weighed the request to pressure the Dominican government for pecuniary redress, Coen regretted that the matter could not be addressed by the daily expected actions of the office in Santo Domingo or Puerto Plata. He was disappointed that the dispute had snowballed into something beyond the ability of a consular office to manage on the ground. British interference, then, was potentially an ongoing matter of timing and degree rather than an action of last resort.

After generating hundreds of pages of paperwork, collecting documentation, and considering a final report from the law office, the BFO decided not to take any action on behalf of Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer. In justifying their decision, the office laid out three criteria that needed to be satisfied for it to make “formal diplomatic representation.” First, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer must have obeyed all laws, including “municipal law” in the Dominican Republic. With their singling out of municipal law, in particular, the office elevated the role of local institutions alongside national ones for the purposes of constructing Dominican sovereignty.⁶¹

Of the two remaining criteria, the BFO concluded that Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer only satisfied one. British subjects had to first prove that they exhausted all legal avenues in a country. This was indeed the case. British subjects also had to demonstrate a “clear denial or miscarriage of justice.” The British government determined that all of Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer’s Dominican legal advisors, from the start, had acted so incompetently that they could not ascertain whether justice was actually denied.⁶² By focusing on perceived Dominican

59. “Copy of Letter from Mr. Robert Graham, Ponce dated Jan. 20, 1890,” TNA FO 23/94.

60. D. Coen to the Marquis of Salisbury, 11 August 1890, TNA FO 23/94.

61. “Observations on Mr. Hopkinson’s Memo,” 13 June 1892; W. Davidson notations on letter from Alfred Hopkinson to the BFO, 11 August 1892, p. 14, TNA FO 23/94.

62. *Ibid.*

incompetence, the British government absolved Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer of conducting business poorly, despite previous assertions. At the same time, it rehearsed an argument used often by imperial powers to justify involvement in the affairs of the Caribbean: locals could not act competently. In this case, however, the British government found the institutions of the state to be functioning beyond reproach, while it was the intermediaries who poorly handled Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer's affairs.

The Ginebra Brothers remained in possession of La Industria and retained the lien on the Serrallés estate. Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer acknowledged the final decision of the BFO on January 31, 1891.⁶³ It is unclear how much Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer ever paid out in damages. As far as the BFO was concerned, its involvement had come to an end.

Circuits of Capital

Six years after the initial conclusion of the Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer case, the BFO had an occasion to revisit the file in response to an inquiry from Alliott's lawyers that reflected the increasing influence of American political and economic power in the Dominican Republic. Their client was planning a trip to New York to meet with financial associates and wanted to bring the mortgage certificate on the Serrallés estate with him. Unable to locate it, Alliott hoped the BFO might have retained a copy. British officials reported they did not. Alliott's trip to New York marked a transitional moment for the firm and for the investment decisions of its principals. Although their financial interests in Caribbean land and sugar machinery continued, and business within Britain remained strong, the engineers reoriented their business relationships toward U.S. actors.⁶⁴

Along with reorienting their business networks toward North America, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer diversified the geography of their firm's capital. The firm began with British clients but, by the mid-nineteenth century, had concentrated the bulk of its overseas attention in the Caribbean, a shift mirrored by the personal investment portfolios of its principals. As a firm, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer branded themselves as "engineers, colonial and general." As investors, however, the three increasingly concentrated on North America as shareholders in the Lands Trust Company. The Lands Trust Company, composed of British investors with American managers, sought out places likely to experience increases in population in order to buy and sell land, mortgages, and shares in the utility companies that would provide the infrastructure to support growth.⁶⁵

On July 30, 1891, six months after Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer acknowledged the BFO decision, the Lands Trust Company became the majority stakeholder in the newly founded Roland Park Company, a suburban development firm in Baltimore, Maryland. Over the next twelve years, the Lands Trust Company financed the Roland Park Company as it developed

63. Manlove and Alliott to the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Commercial Department), 31 January 1891, TNA FO 23/94.

64. Veese, *A World Safe for Capitalism*, 35, 42; Hudson, *Bankers and Empire*, 54; McCormick, "From Old Empire to New," 68.

65. *The Red Book of Commerce* (London: Dod's Peerage, 1916), 409, Goldsmiths' Library of Economic Literature, Senate House Library, University of London.

one of the first racially segregated planned suburbs in the United States. The Roland Park Company named one of its streets Fryer Avenue.⁶⁶ The global and local collided in Roland Park, with British capital from investors, including Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, fueling suburban decision-making, design, planning, and scale that differed from the development that had preceded it. While the segregated U.S. suburb and the Dominican ingenio might seem utterly disconnected, the reconfiguration of capital networks in the late nineteenth century meant investment in the ingenio comprised part of the origins of segregated suburbs. Ironically, business in the Dominican Republic thus aided in the creation of a suburban spatial form the United States later exported as part of American attempts to reorder sovereignty, corporate power, and influence around the world during the twentieth century, including in the Caribbean.⁶⁷

The attempted sale of the Serrallés mortgage further illustrated the transitions to U.S. financial networks and the terms of Dominican sovereignty. After he enclosed the land that had been subject to traditional use rights, Serrallés defaulted on his mortgage with Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer, leading the British investors to claim absolute ownership of the property. Subsequently, Alliott tried to take the mortgage and sell it in New York as part of a financial transaction. In short, the trajectory of the ingenio Porto Rico was that of a protracted land transfer from locals to Americans.⁶⁸ The mortgage had already passed through San Pedro de Macorís, Puerto Plata, and Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic; Ponce, Puerto Rico; Nottingham, England; briefly over to Port-au-Prince; and then to London. If not for a final disappearing act, the certificate would have ended up in New York to become enmeshed in an even broader circuit of people and capital linked to the rise of Jim Crow housing segregation and American imperialism. All of this goes to show how the path of a single mortgage revealed the global dynamics of local places and their national ramifications.

Conclusion

Prior to the 1890s, American capital had not yet come to dominate ingenio operations. British businesses and their networks angled for profit throughout the Spanish Caribbean during the 1880s, amid a rapidly changing imperial political economy. In the early 1880s, after several decades of doing business in and around the Caribbean, Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer entered Puerto Plata, where they quickly began commercial relationships with Hachtmann and Peralta, Serrallés, and the Ginebra Brothers, all likewise emmeshed in far-flung overlapping networks spanning the Atlantic. The ensuing legal disputes reveal the incremental ways that Dominican sovereignty was sketched out, contested, and configured, vis-à-vis private capital and multiple imperial nations in consular offices, courts, and parlors, not to mention at the gates of ingenios and in the back rooms of mercantile houses.

66. Glotzer, *How the Suburbs Were Segregated*, 15–51.

67. Grandin, *Fordlandia*; Kwak, *A World of Homeowners*; Offner, “Homeownership”; McKenna, *American Imperial Pastoral*.

68. Franks, “Property Rights,” 114. The Serrallés family retained ownership of Porto Rico into the twentieth century. Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom*, 102.

Ultimately, this minor episode involving competing claims to property—an episode that largely took place at the subnational scale—highlights the tension between Dominican assertions of sovereignty and private capital’s demands for mobility. Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer attempted to challenge Dominican sovereignty using interpersonal networks developed over the course of years doing business in the Caribbean. When confronted with their own lack of power to obtain the outcomes they sought, both in business transactions and through the courts, they surrounded themselves with people they thought could sway Dominican and British officials.

The physical remnants of the dispute stand out in the archive: Compared to similar diplomatic requests for intervention, the protracted dispute filled an entire bound volume in the BFO. Despite being bound into this one volume, it comprised a compendium of British and Dominican sources, including correspondence, consular reports, certificates, court records, and legal opinions spanning several years. Beneath the official sheen of the BFO volume, the record itself reveals the piecemeal, often conflicting information any party seemed to possess at any given moment.

One notable feature of the dispute was the importance of its materiality. The case turned on misfiled transactions, notary signatures, and the speed of mail delivery. All parties wielded the ambiguities created by the physical presence or absence of records as evidence in court. These material aspects of the case not only involved local arms of the state, such as land registry offices, but also constituted local forms of statecraft, as evidenced by the issues that arose when mortgages that the courts expected to be notarized in the Dominican Republic were instead taken to Puerto Rico. The inclusion of the quotidian materiality of the dispute provides further direction for future research that parses the daily processes of constructing and maintaining local nodes of global capital networks.

On another level, the Manlove, Alliott, and Fryer dispute foreshadows both the discourse and strategies foreign investors used to challenge Caribbean sovereignties at the subnational scale. As a case study, it provides a window into the formations of “large-scale dynamics” that would come to define the geopolitical landscape of the United States, Britain, and the wider Caribbean as a whole in the twentieth century: questions of debt and sovereignty. The ways in which the courts asserted Dominican sovereignty during this particular episode was itself an indication of the central role that different forms of debt would play in both its domestic and international affairs.

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