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Indian *guinée* cloth, West Africa, and the French colonial empire
1826–1925: Colonialism and imperialism as agents of globalisation

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This presentation expands on an article of the same title which appeared online in *Economic History of Developing Regions*. (<https://doi.org/10.1080/20780389.2021.1985454>) in November 2021. This study focuses on the global trade of *guinée* cloth mainly produced in French India and exported to French West Africa from 1826 to 1925. The research first re-examines the *guinée* cloth and its role in the western Sahel. Second, it provides how *guinée* cloth had been traditionally made in Pondicherry and how France attempted to reform the production. In fact, the *guinée* cloth produced in the French factories established in French India was costly but of poor quality. Consequently, a similar type of cloth made in Europe (mainly Great Britain) began replacing the Indian *guinée* in the Senegalese market in the late nineteenth century. Therefore, the producers of the *guinée* in the French empire supported protective measures, although merchants and relevant governments did not always share this opinion. Furthermore, the unstable political climate of the early French Third Republic caused tariff wars over *guinée* cloth. Consequently, in addition to the traditional route from Saint Louis, Senegal, Indian *guinée* began being exported from more protected gateways in northern Africa along with the expansion of the French controlled territories in West Africa. Through the *guinée* cloth trade, this study demonstrates how colonialism and imperialism could lead to globalization.

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