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

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**ABSTRACT**

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 article first re-examines the *guinée* cloth and its role in the western Sahel. Second, it argues that the *guinée* produced in the French factories established in French India was costly but of poor quality. Consequently, a similar type of cloth made in Europe began replacing the *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 promoted frequent changes in the trade policy on *guinée* cloth. Consequently, in addition to the traditional route from Saint Louis, Senegal, the article demonstrates that the export of Indian *guinée* began through more protected routes in northern Africa and was then distributed within the wider region of West Africa. Even the Méline Tariff opened the *guinée* producers in French India to new markets. Through the *guinée* cloth trade, this study demonstrates how colonialism and imperialism could lead to globalization.

**KEYWORDS**

*guinée* cloth; French West Africa; French India; trade policy; globalization

**1. Introduction**

It has been well established that France transported indigo-dyed cotton cloth, known as *guinée*, produced in French India to Senegal in West Africa.¹ However, the final destination for this cloth was inland West Africa, rather than Senegal; Saint Louis, an island located at the mouth of the Senegal River, became simply one of many gateways to the inland market, which increased with the expansion of areas pacified by French troops from the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. European merchants initially used the *guinée* as a means of exchange for African commodities such as slaves and gum arabic in West Africa. In his recent work, Kobayashi (2019) reshaped this history under the framework of African consumerism developed by Prestholdt (2008), sharing this history with a much wider public.

¹Numerous studies and merchants’ accounts exist on the use of *guinée* cloth in transactions. For a global perspective, see Roberts (1992, 1996b), Newbury (1968), Duchon-Doris (1842), Masaki (2015 [2018]), and Kobayashi (2019).
According to Kobayashi (2019), British shipping of Indian textiles to West Africa declined significantly just after slave trading was made illegal in 1807, while French shipping of Indian textiles to West Africa increased. As a reason for this, he pointed out that France built the industry to manufacture *guinée* cloth in Pondicherry, which was required by the Moors as a means of exchange for gum arabic and presented that the ‘West African consumer taste for quality textiles shaped a pattern of global trade’ (Kobayashi 2019, 203).

Kobayashi’s argument is very clear; however, the reality is not as simple as he believes. The first thing that confuses me in his argument is the term, a ‘taste for quality textiles’ that he emphasizes. As Golbéry, Saugnier, and Curtin pointed out, the consumers of this *guinée* cloth – the Moors living in Sahel – initially rejected the European cotton cloth in favour of the *guinée* produced in Pondicherry (Curtin 1983, 261; Golbéry 1802, 250; Saugnier 1791, 287). Therefore, France established *guinée* cloth industries in Pondicherry, the capital of French India, in the mid-1820s. However, this does not mean that the *guinée* produced by French factories in Pondicherry was of the quality the Moors desired. Unlike *indiennes* (block-printed calico), which were exported to Metropolitan France and valued in Europe, or handmade indigo-dyed cloth produced in India, unfortunately, the *guinée* made by French factories in Pondicherry was European machine-made cotton cloth, which was nothing more than baft, cheap cotton cloth, for mass public consumption.

In fact, initially, the Moors did not voluntarily choose this machine-made *guinée* cloth fabricated in factories that France built in India. With the Royal Ordinances of 18 May and 1 September 1843, France prohibited the use of *guinée*, which did not satisfy the conditions of the size, weight, and origin of the cloth (Pondicherry) for the gum arabic trade along the Senegal River. The ordinances were effective until 31 December 1852. According to Pasquier (1999, 182), the set of royal ordinances were introduced in 1843 at the request of Chaumel-Durin, a trade house based in Bordeaux that had been involved in the *guinée* business in Pondicherry. Obviously, these regulations aimed to exclude Indian handmade *guinée*, which was finer and more popular than machine-made versions, from gum arabic transactions. Nevertheless, appeasing African consumers’ frustrations, contrary to the intentions of the governments of metropolitan France and French India, the colonial government of Senegal had to reluctantly allow *guinée* not meeting the requirements determined by royal ordinances to be used in the gum trade if approved by a local committee. Despite that, handmade *guinée* was eliminated by a machine-made one. This story also implies that the colonial government was not always loyal to the national government.

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2 This ‘taste for quality textiles’, using Kobayashi’s expression, seems to give readers the wrong impression of the Indian *guinée* cloth. For example, Alka Raman (2020, 877) understood as follows: ‘Kobayashi’s research shows that high quality Indian textiles continued to be preferred over European machine-made cotton goods well into the second half of the nineteenth century, though European cottons made significant inroads into the low-medium quality segment of demand generated by the African masses after the abolition of slavery and the commencement of ‘legitimate commerce’.’

3 Refer to ‘Au sujet des guinée réglementaires’ in the Conseil d’Administration, Saint Louis, Sénégal, Session on 2 February 1849, and an extract from the minutes of the Conseil d’Administration, Session on 16 June 1849, Archives national d’outre-mer (ANOM), Senegal, IX, 26 bis a. Some pieces of this *guinée* made in Pondicherry in 1843 are also stocked in the same box and so it is easy to understand that this cloth was mediocre.

4 ‘Au sujet des guinée réglementaires’, Conseil d’administration, Saint Louis, Senegal, Session on 2 February 1849.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.
That cotton cloth was a mass-market product can be understood from two further points. First, in general, mass-produced goods enjoy high demand, whereas high-end goods receive little demand. For example, when France used *guinée* cloth to conquer areas around the Upper Senegal River in the 1880s, the most important factory in Pondicherry at the time, Savana, had produced several different types of *guinée*, distinguishing them by attributing letters such as AA, B, L X, and GP. According to Alexis Béziat, the president of the Chamber of Commerce in Saint Louis, *guinée X*, known as ‘Filature’, was the most popular among indigenous people because of its affordability (*bonne marché*).7

Second, as Kobayashi emphasizes, this *guinée* was used as money in the Sahel. In this context, African agents should be recognized not only as consumers of *guinée* but also as its users. While a commodity that functions as money should have certain conditions that someone always wants to accept, the commodity does not need to be a quality product. Otherwise, people would have preferred to keep the money rather than spend it, and the *guinée* would not have circulated extensively through West Africa. Stated otherwise, for a commodity to be used as currency, the quality has to be such that people will not hesitate to give it up as payment. Simultaneously, as issuers of money who always seek seignorage profits, the European merchants must have been motivated to supply cheap cotton cloth, as the value of cloth as a commodity should not surpass its value when functioning as money. In this regard, Marion Johnson (1980, 196) mentions that the cheapest cloth was usually used as currency in Sahel.8

Where there is demand, a market will emerge. In this sense, consumer demand was undoubtedly one of the driving forces behind globalization. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether African agents were sufficiently strong and independent to reshape the global market as they wished, as Kobayashi (2019) describes. Between producers and consumers, there are also other agents, such as merchants and transporters, as well as governments who can regulate trade through the imposition of tariffs, taxes, and regulations, and can establish orientations through subsidies. Each agent in a market is always motivated to maximize their profits and look for business opportunities. Governmental intervention can manipulate their incentives, but a distorted market often produces unexpected outcomes. Regardless of the outcomes, globalization can be shaped through these agents’ interactions if the market develops and the value chain network expands globally.

The cotton cloth industry in Pondicherry, established by France in the late 1820s, was uncompetitive from the start, and continuously required protective measures from local and metropolitan governments. However, government interventions distorted the market, creating room for participants to lobby for their profits and, as a result, various conflicting interests arose over the *guinée* cloth trade until the beginning of the twentieth century (Newbury 1968; Pehaut 2014, 261–280). Producers in French India and metropolitan France collaborated to protect their industries but were also rivals in terms of

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7A letter from A. Béziat to the Head of the Secretariat of the Chief of the Navy Administrative Service dated 11 October 1885. ANOM, Senegal, XIII, 74. On the list of 11 products in a letter from Savana to the chief of the Administrative Service dated 22 August 1885, ANOM, Senegal, XIII, 74, filature J was the heaviest (4 kg), widest (1 m) and most expensive (14 francs at Bordeaux), while X was the lightest (1.5 kg), narrowest (0.80 m), and most affordable (7.25 francs).

8However, *guinée* that was too cheap had the risk of promoting inflation and being rejected by the Moors. Merchants seemed to continuously seek balance. See several reports on the government’s procurement of a type of *guinée* in ANOM, Senegal, XIII, 74.
supplying similar products for the same market. In contrast, a group of merchants who traded cotton cloth to West Africa preferred the free trade system to avoid complicating trade. Finally, another group of merchants who had economic interests in French India supported protectionism. In the colonies, it was not uncommon that merchants from the same port town in metropolitan France would unite and compete with merchants from other port towns. The chambers of commerce in their hometowns enthusiastically lobbied the French government on behalf of their compatriots in colonies.9

Agents in the public sector were not monolithic either. Colonial governments were interested in not only the control of the indigenous people but also their colonies’ prosperity. They had a strong incentive to increase budget revenue by imposing tariffs and taxes, but they were not always interested in protecting French national products as it often reduced the colonies’ economic utility due to the rise in domestic prices.

Amid various parties’ swirling interests, several conflicts and collaborations took place over the tariff policies of the guinée cloth trade. Interestingly, the French trade policies randomly introduced for this cotton cloth led to new logistic channels and markets, a process that inevitably formed a part of globalization.

Recently, Leigh Gardner and Tirthankar Roy (2020, 43–58), presented a new perspective of ‘colonialism as an agent of globalization’. Their aim is to challenge the World Systems School and neo-Marxist accounts of world economic history that emphasize colonized territories as one-sidedly incorporated in a European dominated economic system. Instead, they focus on the mutual interactions between the colonizers and the colonized and capture an outcome of these complex interactions as globalization. The subject of their discussion is the British colonial empire, which ruled the world in the late nineteenth century, and they emphasize the importance of the role of the state in the process of British colonialism and globalization.

Unlike the British government, the French government did not clarify its colonial policies until the beginning of the twentieth century. For instance, C. M. Andrew, inspired by the sub-title of Robinson and Gallagher’s book, Africa and the Victorians (1961), stated that whereas British colonial expansion was governed during the nineteenth century by the workings of the official mind, French colonialism was never a mass movement, and the French with a continuing commitment to the empire were both small in number and chaotic; he described this French colonialist movement as the unofficial mind of imperialism (Andrew 1976, 144–145). Jacques Marseille (1985, 127) argued that the colonial question in the early decades of French colonialism (the 1880s–1914) was only a matter of secondary importance, satisfying the ambitions of the military men and nationalists, and the desires of some profit-seekers. Even considering the differences between Britain and France, this research demonstrates that the notion of ‘colonialism as an agent of globalization’, developed by specialists in British colonies, is also applicable to the French colonial empire. Furthermore, while imperialism and globalization may be often regarded as opposing concepts, this research illustrates that French imperialism, which was often fuelled by British agents, contributed to shaping globalization through the development of the new distribution channels and markets.

9For example, on the conflicts over the guinée–gum arabic trade between Bordeaux and Marseille merchants in Senegal, see McLane (1986).
2. Everything began with humble cloth from modern factories in French India

The guinée was initially nothing more than a generic French term referring to cotton cloth sent to Africa as a means of payment for African commodities. The Encyclopaedia of Diderot and D’Alembert (1757, Vol. 7, 1009) defines the term ‘guinée’ in the mid-eighteenth century as ‘white cotton cloth, rather fine than coarse, which comes from Pondicherry’. Certainly, the guinée in the mid-eighteenth century seemed to be recognized as fine cotton cloth. According to this Encyclopaedia, the pieces were 29 to 30 aunes long (about 19–20 metres) and seven-eighths wide (0.56 metres). It also tells that there was white, blue, striped guinée in other sizes and the name guinée derived from the fact that it was used for trade along the African coast. Colette Establet (2017, 103, 106–107), who compiled a directory of Indian fabrics imported to French ports before the Age of Revolution, demonstrated that in the middle of the eighteenth century, the term included cloth with square or striped patterns. White or unbleached (écru) guinée was often mentioned in the eighteenth century. Red guinée also existed and was sent to Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia) in the nineteenth century (Lefebvre, 1845, Tome II, 82). However, by around the end of the eighteenth century, guinée almost became synonymous with blue cotton cloth dyed with indigo when it was sent to West Africa (Saugnier 1791, 198). A French dictionary on trade and navigation published in 1859 also defined guinée as cotton cloth dyed blue made in French India and exported en masse to Senegal (Burnét 1859, 1436–1438). In sum, the definition of guinée has never been fixed but changed over time.

The Royal ordinances of 1843, described above, specified guinée cloth as 16.5 metres in length, 1 metre in width, and 2.3 kg in weight. This specification seems to come from the size of cotton cloth already circulating among the Moors as Ghislaine Lydon noted that blue cotton cloth with a length of 15 metres and a width of 1–1.5 m was already used as currency in the Sahel as early as in the seventeenth century (Lydon 2009, 251). This cloth was known as baysa al nila, meaning black cloth in the Moorish language (Lydon 2009, 251). Moreover, Fall Ould-Bah (2011, 178) noted that baysa became a principal means of payment in the Sahel in the eighteenth century. On the origin of the name of baysa, La Tourrasse, who was working in Senegal as a merchant in the late nineteenth century, provides interesting information:

When the Portuguese first came to Portendick and Arguin, they imported cotton cloth made in India, which they called bayempos. They traded it for gum arabic, and soon it became a kind of currency in West Africa. When the French took over Portendick and Arguin, they replaced the bayempos with a similar piece of cloth from Pondicherry, to which they gave the name guinée. (La Tourrasse 1897, 79; translated by the author)

Portendick and Arguin are located on the coast of what is now Mauritania and were initially important ports for the shipment of gum arabic before the main markets moved to the escales (gum arabic markets designated by the government) along the Senegal River due to the ecological deterioration of the desert edge and political

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10For example, in a journal created in 1763 to report traded products at French ports, Gazette du Commerce (it was renamed Gazette d’Agriculture in 1769 and existed until 1783; both volumes are consultable at Gallica, French National Library), guinées blanches and ecru are easily found, but the frequency gradually decreased.
reasons (Webb 1985, 161–163). A cotton cloth currency called bayempos or bayrempos appears in some documents about Senegal, although there are very few of them and information about the source of the name is inconsistent. In any case, the name Baysa is likely derived from this cloth.11

In a gum arabic trade, a piece of guinée cloth was exchanged for a certain amount of gum arabic, with exchange rates varying according to the market demand–supply balance (Webb 1985, 1995). In these transactions, the guinée was often offered first as credit to their business partners, including Sahel traders, and the gum arabic was later collected rather than directly exchanged on the spot. Thus, transactions often took several months to complete, and the guinée should also be recognized as a credit instrument (Masaki Forthcoming). On the other hand, Charles Cerisier – who was in Senegal as the Secretary-General of the Colonial and Maritime Research Association (Société des Études Coloniales et Maritimes) in the late nineteenth century and also a member of the Association of the Statistic in Paris (Société de Statistique de Paris) – describes how guinée cloth functioned as currency in a paper published in 1885:

Buying a cow requires a number of guinée, but the locals are paid by the cubit (elbow to hand, about 50 cm). An ounce of gold was equivalent to one guinée, about ten francs. Ivory costs three-quarters of guinée, or about 7 francs 50; a cow costs seven to ten guinée or 70–100 francs; a horse costs 50 to 100 guinée. (Cerisier 1885, 75; translated by the author)

This observation indicates that a piece of guinée was too large a denomination to be used for buying daily necessities and was sometimes cut off and then used as payment.

The French Custom Office and Ministry of Finance seemed to pay particular attention to the guinée. For instance, when revising tariffs on cloth in 1911, the French Colonial Union (Union Coloniale Française), established in 1893 to promote colonial expansion, sought a precise definition of guinée. Replying to this request, William Ponty, the Governor-General of French West Africa, finally redefined it as follows: ‘cotton cloth dyed in blue, indigo colour, with 19 or fewer threads per five square millimetres in warp and woof, and weighing 7–12.5 kilograms per 100 square meters.’12

Such a perplexing obsession with the specification of guinée is explained in 1904 in a discussion over the budget compilation for the government of French West Africa (Afrique Occidentale Française: hereafter AOF) as follows:

The special regulation for guinée was needed because these fabrics were used as currency. However, in these days, this use tends to disappear and the Chamber of Commerce of Saint-Louis have requested the abrogation of the distinction, for the advantage of simplification.13

11Maria Eugénia Mata (Nova School of Business and Economics, Lisbon) confirmed my understanding that baysa or bayempos may be related to the names of certain types of clothing in Portuguese in our email communications in June 2021.
12Rapport présenté au conseil de gouvernement de l’Afrique occidentale Française (session de Juin 1911) au sujet de l’établissement d’un tarif spécifique sur les tissus, Extrait des comptes rendus de la section de l’Afrique occidentale (Union coloniale Française), 22, Séance du 14 Septembre 1911, Archives of the Marseille Provence Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCM), MQ.4.2.6/01. About Ponty’s involvement, see Bulletin mensuel du Comité de l’Afrique française et du Comité du Maroc, March 1912, p. 109.
13Translated by the author, Le budget et le régime douanier de l’Afrique Occidentale française, Bulletin du Comité de l’Afrique française, 1905, 289.
The European products could not imitate the colour and smell of the guinée from Pondicherry, which was the preference of the Moors, the harvesters of the gum arabic. Therefore, Michel Gonfreville, who graduated from the Gobelins Manufactory (Manufacture des Gobelins) and the Conservatoire des Arts et Metier, was charged with an industrial mission by the Ministries of the Navy and of Commerce in 1827. In the report he submitted to the government in 1830, he explained that the blue cotton cloth made in Rouen was dipped lightly in indigo and finished with campêche, with alum and blue vitriol mordant, or with sandalwood, Bixa Orella, or even burnished first with a foot of sumac and dissolution of iron peroxide solutions. (Gonfreville 1830 [1845], 84). The quality of French blue cotton cloth seemed to be very different from the indigo-dyed cloth from French India, and it is not surprising that the Moors did not accept French blue cotton cloth at this point in time. As has been well established, the secret to the particular colour of Pondicherry guinée can be attributed to the minerals (aluminium) in the water (Chaudhuri 1996, 23; Lobligeois 1972, 22–23). However, little is known on the source of the smell of Pondicherry guinée. Gonfreville identified three factors in his research notes from the 1820s (Gonfreville 1830 [1845], 98–99). First, he explained that the characteristic smell of Indian blue cloth was not only due to finishing materials, as it was generally believed, but especially to the use of Cassia tora, the seed of a herb known as tagarey-verey in the local language. According to Gonfreville, this seed functions as an effective oxidizing agent (Gonfreville 1830 [1845], 92). When the seeds are boiled in water, they form a sticky liquid which acts as a catalyst for dyeing. Gonfreville noted that local dyers used to soak their hands in this water to heal the damage caused by the dyeing process (Gonfreville 1830 [1845], 18). The inhabitants of the Sahel purportedly believed that when the indigo stains the skin, it acts as a protective coating against both the strong rays of the sun and dry air (Lydon 2009, 60; Vacquier 1986, 172), a belief that may have been well-founded. Gonfreville brought tagarey-verey back to Rouen in 1830 to use it in the dying industry in metropolitan France (Mérat 1846, 685). Second, the smell has also been attributed to the characteristics of Indigofera, which did not grow naturally in Europe. The third cause the smell has been attributed to, is the Indian method that required large quantities of Indigofera for fermentation in vats (Gonfreville 1830 [1845], 86).

According to Gonfreville, 500 grams of Indigofera cost 12 francs in France, while it was only 1.80 francs in Pondicherry; 300 grams of indigo was needed to dye 23.8 metres of cotton cloth, and it cost 7 francs 20 c. in France, but only 1 franc 85 c. in Pondicherry (1829 [1845], 99). Therefore, the prohibitive cost of indigo in Europe discouraged the use of Indian dyeing methods, and it was natural that France constructed factories in French India to produce guinée cloth. When France started to re-establish Senegal and French India after the Paris Treaties of 1814–1815, the Pondicherry industries had been completely destroyed during British rule. Additionally, Pondicherry’s strength was dyeing, but it had failed to develop a weaving industry, and most of the cotton cloth that was dyed in Pondicherry was initially made in British India (Roberts 1996b, 150–151). Therefore, France decided in the 1820s to establish the modern cotton spinning and weaving industries in Pondicherry.

Weber (1988), Lobligeois (1972), Antony (1982), and Roberts (1996b) have explained this process in detail. To summarize, Eugène Panon, Comte Desbassyns de Richemont, appointed Governor of French India in 1826, committed to establishing modern spinning
and weaving industries in Pondicherry (Antony 1982, 542). He invited specialists in dyeing, engineers, and investors, including Gonfreville and Jules Poulain from France (Antony 1982, 542). Interestingly, he began this project as charitable workshops to improve local lives, reduce the number of beggars, and reconstruct industries ruined during the British occupation (Antony 1982; Diagou 1990; Lobligeois 1972). Besides the workshops, the government also introduced supportive measures (including subsidies) for private companies to promote the spinning, weaving, and dyeing industries. Jules Poulain, a French entrepreneur who initially participated in this project as a spinning machine supplier, later became a partner in a cotton spinning and weaving firm, Le Prince et Poulain, in Pondicherry. In his autobiography published in 1839, he recalled that he had been invited by Panon and considered establishing a plant in a ‘faraway land’ as a grand and benevolent idea and as a form of philanthropy (Poulain 1839, 10–15).

Finally, under the careful protection of the colonial and French governments, private spinning and weaving companies began to work in Pondicherry in the 1830s. What should be emphasized here is that the cotton cloth manufacturing industries in Pondicherry were established not through market forces but under generous government protection.

Nevertheless, the enthusiasm for building factories to produce cotton cloth in India was not always supported by French nationals. Instead, it received a barrage of criticism as unpatriotic because factories in India could take a market share from French producers (Poulain 1839, 13–15). Poulain (1839, 14) explained that European manufacturers were afraid that the establishment of a modernized textile industry in India might produce cotton cloth at half the price of that produced in France and Great Britain. In this regard, Gonfreville (1830 [1845], 3–5) also noted in 1830, a decade before the publication of the Poulain’s autobiography, as follows: ‘For a long time, the Chamber of Commerce of Rouen has coveted to prohibit the import of Indian guinée into Senegal and Bourbon [present Réunion] and replace it with their own cotton cloth.’

In such a circumstance, Poulain emphasized the importance of free trade and India’s industrialization. However, these concepts were contradictory. Contrary to Poulin’s expectations, Pondicherry’s cloth manufacturers could not survive without protection and often demanded additional protective measures rather than increasing their productivity.

In the late nineteenth century, guinée cloth made by British, Dutch, and Belgian producers began to attract African consumers. Therefore, the French government intentionally introduced a new term, ‘guinée similaire’ (imitation of guinée), to differentiate these products. Specifically, Sucréton and Roum were often reported as imitation goods, and some were dyed not with indigo but with chemicals, making them more affordable. Therefore, the producers in French India and metropolitan France continuously asked the government to introduce protective measures for guinée produced in metropolitan France and French India. However, merchants often criticized these protective measures because they did not like the customs procedures’ bureaucracy. Consequently, the

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14 For example, when a machine was exported from France to Pondicherry, 20% of its free on board (FOB) price was returned to importers as a reward (prime). Artisans who worked more than six months could also obtain prime (Ordinance of 30 January 1828, Pondicherry). This order can be found in Bulletin de Actes Administratifs des Etablissement Français de l’Inde (BAAEFI), 1828, No. 3, 69–70. Additionally, from 1829 to 1832, every guinée exported by sea became a subject of prime (Ordinance of 23 July 1828, Pondicherry, BAAEFI, 1828, 74–75; Antony 1982, 548; Duchon-Doris 1842).
former group excessively insisted that the *guinée* was used as money in Senegal and the uniformity of standards was required, and the second group tended to deny the former argument. Consequently, intricate conflicts occurred over the *guinée* among several stakeholders.

3. The tariff wars between free traders and protectionists over *guinée* cloth

France exhibited a tendency toward protectionism throughout its history. For instance, since Colbert’s era, the *l’Exclusif* or colonial pact trade regime had forbidden the direct trade between colonies and transport by foreign ships. Although this system was not always applied to transactions among French territories in the Indian Ocean or during the British occupation period, Indian *guinée* could not be directly exported from Pondicherry to Senegal until the mid-1860s. Consequently, ships travelling from India to France could not discharge their loads in Senegal, while ships going from France to India could. Further, under the law specified during the French Revolution, *guinée* had to be stocked in public bonded warehouses (called *entrepôt réel*) in metropolitan France before re-export to Senegal. This regime increased the business costs, and some merchants attempted to lobby for a change to this principle in the early 1860s. The most tenacious negotiators were Chaumel-Durin et Cie, a Bordeaux-based firm associated with the production of *guinée* cloth in Pondicherry and actively involved in introducing the Royal Ordinances of 1843, and Gaspard Devès, a business partner of the firm and a prominent métis merchant in Saint Louis.

In 1862, Chaumel-Durin et Cie transported Indian *guinée* from Pondicherry to Sierra Leone, where the cargo was transferred to sailboats bound for Saint Louis. In the next year, Gaspard Devès did the same thing. However, the Minister of Marine and Colonies ordered Chaumel-Durin et Cie to re-export the same amount of *guinée* cloth to France, and Gaspard Devès was ordered to pay five francs for each *guinée* as a tariff on imports in addition to a two per cent local tax. At that time, as the import price of a piece of *guinée* was valued at 15–20 francs in Senegal, this order amounting to a 25–30% import tariff at the border made the plan unfeasible.

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15 For example, a report submitted to the Higher Commission of Colonies in 1879, *Le Sénégal et les guinées de Pondichéry: Note présentée à la commission supérieure des colonies by Senegalese merchants (Bordeaux 1879)*, criticizes the imposition of tariffs on *guinée*. Against this opinion, another report was submitted to the same commission in 1880 by Bordeaux merchants, emphasizing the role of *guinée* as money, *Réponse à la note présentée à la commission supérieure des colonies par quelques négociants Bordelais sous le titre, Le Sénégal et les guinées de Pondichéry* (1880). Both reports can be downloaded from Gallica, at the French National Library.

16 Regarding the *Exclusif* system for French territories in the Indian Ocean, see Weber (1999); for tariff policy transitions in Senegal, see Schnapper (1959, 1961).

17 The law of 28 April 1803 (8 Floréal an XI). In France, two types of bonded warehouses existed: public (*entrepôt réel*) and private (*entrepôt fictif*). In the former, merchandise was controlled by the government, and the latter comprised privately owned warehouses.

18 A letter sent to Minister of Navy and Colonies from J. Amalric, a business partner of Chaumel-Durin dated on 20 November 1862 mentions that Gaspard Devès is an agent of Chaumel-Durin et Cie. ANOM, Senegal, IX 26, bis b.

19 ‘Les guinées venues directement de l’Inde par le navire le Maud ont été expédiées à Bordeaux’. Le 27 Décembre 1862. ANOM, Senegal, IX, 26 bis b.

20 A petition from Chaumel-Durin et Cie to the Minister of Marine and colonies’, 3 December, 1862, and the decision on 16 April 1863 by the Council of Administration, the government of Senegal. ANOM, Senegal, IX, 26 bis b.

21 ‘Approbation d’un arrêté qui autorise la mise à la consommation de *guinées* venues directement de l’Inde’, Session of 16 August 1863, Conseil d’administration, ANOM, Senegal, IX 26 bis b.
In response to the signing of the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty of 23 January 1860, the Ordinance of 24 December 1864 liberalized the *guinée* trade and eventually established a 4% tariff on all *guinée* imported to Saint Louis, regardless of their provenance or country of registration. Furthermore, no tariffs were imposed for imports to Gorée island. Consequently, *guinée* made in Pondicherry and metropolitan France came to be exposed to harsh competition from less expensive British, Dutch, and Belgian cloth.22

In metropolitan France, Normandy, Alsace, and the Nord Department were important cotton cloth producing regions, and these producers generally supported the protectionist policies. For example, Augustin Pouyer-Quartier, originally a millionaire cotton spinner, who was elected as a national deputy in 1857 in Rouen, the Normandy Department’s capital, is known as a strong defender of Normandy’s interests and launched a systematic campaign against the free trade system (Smith 1980, 36, 56). In the late 1860s, he formed a protectionist party with Adolphe Thiers, who later became the first President of the French Third Republic, and two deputies from Lille, Jules Brame and Charles Kolb Bernard (Smith 1980, 36, 56). Further, in 1868, when the Councils General of Martinique and Guadeloupe abolished all tariffs to open their markets to the world, Pouyer-Quartier protested these measures to protect the economic interests of home producers (Girault 1916, 72). In 1872, he instigated Rouen manufacturers to request tariff assimilation to the colonies (Girault 1916, 72). Under this system, French goods could enter French colonies without duties, whereas foreign products were subject to the same tariff rates imposed at the border of metropolitan France (Verdier 1995, 178). Although Pouyer-Quartier’s intention was not realized, in 1877 he succeeded in associating with Pondicherry producers to reintroduce a discriminatory tariff on foreign products in Senegal. They often used the pretext that the inflows of items that were similar but different from ‘authentic’ *guinée* had a risk of disrupting local transactions because it must have a uniform size and quality when used as money in the Sahel (Chaumel Durin et Cie 1879, 8–11).

The ordinance of 19 July 1877 reintroduced discriminatory tariffs. *Guinée* made in French India and Metropolitan France, 15 metres in length, 0.85 m metres in width, and at least 1.8 kilograms in weight was stamped, and 0.04 fr. per metre was applied as an import tariff, compared to 0.12 fr. per metre on cloth without a stamp. The discriminatory tariff would be 1.2 fr. for a piece; at the time, the price of 15 metres of *guinée* in Senegal was around 8 fr.; this discriminatory tariff was in accordance with 15% of the price of *guinée*.23

How did merchants react to this transition from temporary liberalization to protectionism? At least by the end of the nineteenth century, Bordeaux based merchants dominated the *guinée* cloth trade, and most Indian *guinée* transported via France transited in Bordeaux before being re-exported to Senegal, as illustrated in Figure 1. The Chamber of Commerce of Bordeaux, in particular, was diligently lobbying for business in Senegal and West Africa and worked for bids for government contracts, known as *adjunction publique* (Casey 1981, 176–181). *Guinée* used by the French to help conquer inland West Africa in the 1880s was also procured in Bordeaux.24 As a result, Bordelaise merchants involved

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22For details, refer to the documents in ANOM, Senegal, IX, 26 bis c.
23See the minutes of the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce (Chamber de Commerce de Bordeaux, Extraits des Procès-Verbaux), Session on 20 April 1880, Archives Départementales de la Gironde (ADG), BIB7 I/M1.
24Rapport au sous-secretaire d’etat, Paris, 13 June 1885, ANOM, Senegal, XIII, 74.
in the guinée business in Pondicherry supported the protective measures, while those who did not, preferred to procure the cotton cloth anywhere.\textsuperscript{25}

In January 1879, the sudden arrival of Gambetta, who supported free trade, as President of the National Assembly led to a movement to review the decree in 1877. As if to resist this trend, Chaumel-Durin sent a petition to appeal to maintain the ordinance of 1877, addressing the Senate in July 1879. Two years prior, Chaumel-Durin had acquired Savana, a cotton cloth production company that Poulain had established in the 1820s (Lobligeois 1972, 97). The petition surprisingly disclosed that Bordeaux merchants had procured guinée from British producers in the 1870s.\textsuperscript{26} Their British partner was James F. Hutton and Co. The owner, James Frederick Hutton (1826–1890), was an influential businessperson, shipping agent, and manufacturer of cotton products based in Manchester. He served as the president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in 1877 and was chair of the Joint West Africa Committee and founder of the National African Company (Anonymous 1889).

The petition disclosed that Bordeaux merchants procured low-grade guinée from this British producer using their strong bargaining power. According to a letter dated 23 January 1875, Bordeaux merchants informed Hutton and Co. that they would not purchase guinée that was less than 15 metres in length, 0.85 metres in width, and 1.4 kilograms in weight.\textsuperscript{27} The Bordeaux merchants likely expected Manchester producers to produce heavy

\textbf{Figure 1.} Outgoing Indian guinée from bonded warehouses at each port in Metropolitan France (1,000 pieces), 1857–1928. Source: Direction générale des douanes, Tableau général du commerce de la France avec ses colonies et les puissances étrangères, 1857-1896; Tableau général du commerce et de la navigation, 1897-1928.

Note: This figure was created only using export data from the French general trade statistics. The share of outgoing articles from other ports is too small to be illustrated in this figure.

\textsuperscript{25}The disruption among Bordelaise merchants is found in a published minutes of the meeting, Enquête sur la liberté du commerce des guinées au Sénégal. Chambre de commerce de Bordeaux. Séance du 5 Mai 1880, Gallica, French National Library.

\textsuperscript{26}Pétition adressée au Sénat pour demander le maintien du décret du 19 Juillet 1879 sur les toiles bleues dites guinées suivie de quelques observations soumises à la commission supérieure des colonies’, 1879, Supporting document No. 3, ANOM, Senegal, IX, 28a.

\textsuperscript{27}Letter from James F. Hutton & Co. to Chaumel-Durin dated on 27 January 1875, Supporting document No. 2, Pétition adressée au Sénat, ANOM, Senegal, IX, 28a.
cloth similar to that produced in Pondicherry. Hutton replied by letter on 27 January with a warning that producers would use waste yarn and chemical dye if further price reductions were requested simultaneously as the maintenance of this specification.28 In 1875, when Bordeaux merchants proposed a price of 7 fr. 25 c. to procure cotton cloth satisfying the condition,29 Hutton and Co. replied that coating or water would be added to render the cloth heavier for this reduced price.30 Subsequent letters between them reveal that Bordeaux merchants attempted to procure cotton cloth resembling Indian guinée as cheap as possible, and the agreed-upon price continued to decrease despite the threats from Hutton and Co.31 Contrary to Chaumel-Durin’s intentions, Bordeaux merchants who were not involved in the business in Pondicherry called for a reduction in tariffs on non-stamped guinée and succeeded in reducing the tariffs from 0.08–0.04 francs per metre by the decree of 17 October 1880.

Michael Smith (1980, 26), the author of Tariff Reform in France (1860–1900), demonstrates that the battle between free traders and protectionists was at its height in France between 1878 and 1892. Free traders founded the Association for the Defence of Commercial and Industrial Freedom (Association pour la défense de la liberté commerciale et industrielle et pour le maintien et le développement des traités de commerce) in 1878. To counter this, on 1 May 1879, in the Grand Hotel in Paris, protectionists held a congress chaired by Augustin Pouyer-Quertier, with over 100 delegates representing chambers of commerce, senators, deputies, and officers of the associations of French industries attending (Smith 1980, 164). Among them was Jules Méline, an elected deputy from Remirement, Vosges – a leading place for cotton fabric production – who later introduced the Méline Tariff on 11 January 1892.

The Méline Tariff was the outcome of a compromise among various stakeholder groups that included manufacturers, landowners, and farmers in metropolitan France. Its obvious aim was to protect French national producers from cheap products made in foreign countries and the colonies. Nevertheless, several considerations were included for those negatively affected by protectionism. Guinée producers in French India also succeeded in obtaining a special clause (article three) to exempt their products from tariffs. Furthermore, article five stipulates that products originating from a French colony imported into another French colony were not subject to any customs duty. Jacques Weber (2019, 763) mentioned that this clause opened the new markets of Madagascar, Reunion, and Indochina to the guinée producers in French India.

The changes in guinée trade policies throughout the nineteenth century affected the global and regional flows of this cloth. In fact, the establishment of several tariff regimes created different gateways leading to the market in western Sahel.

4. Insights from two trade statistics by French and colonial custom offices

This section examines the global and regional flow of guinée cloth using two statistics, which I call here the French and colonial statistics. The French statistics were developed

28Ibid.
29Letter from James F. Hutton & Co. to Chaumel-Durin dated on 25 June 1875, Supporting document No. 3, Pétition adressée au Sénat, ANOM, Senegal, IX, 28a.
30Letter from James F. Hutton & Co. to Chaumel-Durin and Co. dated on 28 June 1875, Supporting document No. 4, Pétition adressée au Sénat, ANOM, Senegal, IX, 28a.
31Supporting documents Nos 9, 10, 11, and 12, Pétition adressée au Sénat, ANOM, Senegal, IX, 28a.
by the French customs offices. They provide long-term trade data on principal trade items from 1825 by origins and destinations (flows 2–6 in Figure 2) in two ways: general and special trade. General trade statistics relate to the export and import of all items, including those in transit via metropolitan France. Special trade statistics relate to the values and volumes of exported items that were produced or value-added in Metropolitan France (export) and those imported for the aim of domestic consumption (import). As Indian guinée refers to the items produced not in Metropolitan France but in India, and consumption in France was unlikely; the value and volume of this item in special trade are small or often zero. Therefore, this research only used general trade statistics. Furthermore, as the data before 1857 includes Indian checked pattern cloth (carreaux) in addition to guinée cloth, only data after 1857 was used in this article. A shortcoming of the French statistics is that they do not include any transactional records about the guinée produced in areas other than India or those that did not pass through metropolitan France.

The colonial statistics refer to the Tableaux et relevés de population, de cultures, de commerce, de navigations developed by the Ministry of Navy and Colonies. The colonial statistics provide the volume and amount of trade items imported and exported by French colonies from 1839 to 1880. Unlike the French statistics, they report the movements of the different categories of guinée cloth. However, reported items were inconsistent and varied after 1869, when Indian, British, Belgian, and general guinée randomly appeared. The advantage of colonial statistics is that it provides a rough picture of the movements of all types of guinée from their points of departure to Senegal (Saint Louis and Gorée), although there is some inconsistency and missing data (flows 5, 7, 9, and 10 in Figure 2). For instance, Figure 3 shows the total value of guinée placed in bonded warehouses in Saint Louis for each departure point from which the guinée was loaded. Although the departure point does not necessarily indicate the place of production, the guinée coming from France (bonded warehouses) generally refers to those produced outside of metropolitan France and temporarily deposited in bonded warehouses in French ports. On the other hand, we can assume that almost all pieces of guinée coming from France other than Metropolitan France (bonded warehouses) were produced in metropolitan France. Although not all imported pieces of guinée were placed in bonded warehouses in Saint Louis, Figure 3 illustrates that by the 1870s, the guinée produced in metropolitan France had acquired a sufficient share of the market in Saint Louis along with that imported from foreign territories and French colonies.

Which foreign territories and French colonies are referred to in Figure 3 are not clear in the colonial statistics. However, aside from transaction items, the colonial statistics include detailed navigation records indicating the number of ships arriving at and departing from Saint Louis and Gorée, where they had come from, and where they were going. Saint Louis and Gorée hosted the ships from Europe, America, and territories under British and Portuguese control in West Africa. The statistics tell us how inter-regional trade in West Africa was very active, especially between Senegal and Gambia or the bas de la côte (from Gorée to Sierra Leone). For example, because France exported Indian guinée to Great Britain (Figure 4), it is likely that Great Britain exported Indian guinée to British

32Direction générale des douanes, Tableau général du commerce de la France avec ses colonies et les puissances étrangères from 1825 to 1896 and Tableau général du commerce et de la navigation from 1897 to 1928.
colonies in West Africa, and some pieces were re-exported to Senegal (flows 11 and 9 in Figure 2). Furthermore, as discussed, in 1862 and 1863, Chaume-Durin et Cie and Gaspard Devès transported Indian guinée from Pondicherry to Sierra Leone and re-exported it to Saint Louis from there. These pieces of guinée must have been counted as items coming from foreign territories; Figure 3 confirms that Saint Louis certainly imported guinée from foreign territories in both years.

These colonial statistics reported that Saint Louis directly imported the guinée from French colonies. However, it is questionable whether Senegal regularly imported guinée directly from Pondicherry after the Ordinance of 24 December 1864. First, the colonial statistics treated Saint Louis and Goree as separate colonies; the movement of guinée from Gorée to Saint Louis was treated as an import of Saint Louis from a French colony and vice versa. Second, the navigation records show that Saint Louis and Gorée hosted ships from Europe and America, but few from Asia. From 1853–1880, Gorée only hosted ships from Pondicherry once in 1857 and once in 1865, and Saint Louis never hosted any ships from Pondicherry. Figure 3 shows that Saint Louis imported a large quantity of guinée from French colonies in 1865. This likely suggests a part of guinée which the ship transported from Pondicherry to Gorée in 1865. However, there is no substantial proof that this invited another attempt.

French merchants already had well-established logistic networks for exporting Indian guinée cloth to Senegal via bonded warehouses in metropolitan France. A manual published by the Chamber of Commerce of Bordeaux in 1868 indicated that a public warehouse in its port provided services, such as unpacking courges (a unit containing 20 pieces) of guinée, removing defective products, cutting the long cloth pieces into two, weighing and counting the pieces, and re-bundling them into groups of 80 or 100 before reloading them onto ships bound for Africa.33

Figure 2. Global flows of guinée cloth. Source: The author.

33The Chamber of Commerce of Bordeaux published the price list of the services provided at public warehouses (Chambre de Commerce de Bordeaux 1868, 9), Archives Municipales de Bordeaux, 320F11. The cotton cloth originally produced
From the late 1860s to the beginning of the 1870s, the maritime routes connecting India and Europe underwent revolutionary shifts, from sailboats to steamers and from the route via the Cape of Good Hope to the route via the Suez Canal. Even before the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the time required to navigate between Pondicherry and France was 100 days via Cape of Good Hope and 40 days via Suez, in the beginning of the 1840s (Duchon-Doris 1842, 8). In 1863, a concession company, Message Maritimes, on the Coromandel Coast was called ‘long cloth’, and its length was set at approximately 37 yards (33 m), almost twice the length of ordinary guinée cloth (Riello and Parthasarathi 2009, 490). The bonded warehouse of Bordeaux provided services for cutting this long cloth into two pieces.

Figure 3. The departure places of guinée cloth that was carried to the bonded warehouses in Saint Louis. Source: Ministère de la Marine et des Colonies, Tableaux de population, de culture, de commerce et de navigations, each volume.

Note: Local consumption ratio is the ratio of guinée consumed locally to total amount of guinée carried out from the bonded warehouses in Saint Louis.
had already established a shipping route for postal services between Marseille and the Far East via Suez and Colombo, and a branch line from Calcutta to Colombo went through Pondicherry. Although bulky items were still transported via the Cape of Good Hope, high-value products such as cotton cloth were transported via the Suez Canal (Fletcher 1958). Among the French ports, as Figure 1 illustrates, Bordeaux was the principal transit point for Indian *guinée* until the late nineteenth century, after which, it was surpassed by Marseille. As the ships coming from Asia via the Suez Canal often stopped in Marseille, it is not surprising that Marseille replaced Bordeaux as the most essential entrepôt for Indian *guinée* after the completion of the Suez Canal. From the above, the author suggests that very few *guinée* was transported directly from India to Senegal.

**Figure 4.** The destinations of the Indian *guinée* cloth exported from France, 1859–1925 (%). Source: Direction générale des douanes, *Tableau général du commerce de la France avec ses colonies et les puissances étrangères* for 1857–1896 and *Tableau général du commerce et de la navigation* for 1897–1928. Note: During the period covered, the names referring to the destinations altered. Senegal includes Saint Louis and Gorée. Other territories on the African coast include African Coast (Côte d’Afrique), West Coast of Africa (Côte occidental d’Afrique), and French establishments of the Western Coast of Africa (Etablissements français de la Côte occidental d’Afrique). These are sometimes different places or partly separate and partly overlapping due to French possession change over time.

34 *Annuaire des établissements Français de l’Inde* published annually in French India, indicates that regular ship services (*Messageries impériales, Paqueboats-poste Français*) from Marseille to Hong Kong via Suez and Ceylon (Point de Galle) had already begun in 1863. For the *Messageries* company, see Carour (1972).

35 In this regard, Kobayashi (2019, 209) mentioned, ‘In her recent work, Toyomu Masaki attempted to challenge Roberts with the claim that “there was no direct link between the colonies of Pondicherry and Senegal” throughout the nineteenth century. However, we must admit that this assertion misrepresents history’, taking up my comments in Masaki (2018) on ‘colony to colony linkages’ by Richard (1996b, 168). First, I should say that I have never attempted to challenge Richard Roberts for a claim. Rather, I tried to interpret his ideas by saying that there were indirect – and not direct – linkages between colonies. In fact, there was no regular maritime link connecting these two colonies. Second, Kobayashi does not provide enough evidence to back such a harsh comment on my work. Finally, I must clarify that Masaki (2018) was published originally in 2015 in Japanese.
The foreign guinée and similar articles began to dominate the Senegalese market in the early twentieth century, as demonstrated in Table 1. Consequently, around the turn of the twentieth century, as illustrated in Figure 4, the Indian guinée that was squeezed out of the Senegalese market likely began to be exported to Morocco, Algeria, and French settlements on the West Coast of Africa. Marseille’s rise as the transit point likely helped increase the export of Indian guinée to North Africa, although Senegal always remained the most important destination (flow 6 in Figure 2).

5. The emergences of new gateways for guinée for the inland market in West Africa

A mimeographed research report on markets in French West Africa in 1924, which is preserved in the archives of the Chamber of Commerce in Marseilles, indicates that countries exporting guinée and its imitations to the colonies in French West Africa vary greatly from colony to colony (Figure 5). In concrete terms, British cloth dominated the markets in Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, and Dahomey, while that produced in France and French colonies acquired the inland market. This section examines the causes of the changes in the logistic channels of guinée cloth after the introduction of the Méline Tariff (1892) in the process of growing colonialism and imperialism around the turn of the twentieth century.

To understand these changes, it is necessary to be familiar with the tariff system in the French colonies during that period. The Méline Tariff largely divided the French colonies into two groups: assimilated and non-assimilated colonies. The AOF colonies were categorized as non-assimilated colonies, by which each colonial government would be able to set its own tariffs on imports. In contrast, assimilated colonies and Algeria had an ‘assimilation tariff’, which permitted French goods to enter the colonies duty-free, whereas foreign merchandise was subject to a tariff determined in metropolitan France. However, the settlers in colonies generally preferred to have access to necessary industrial products at lower prices and were less interested in protection to develop industries in their home country. The members of the French Colonial Union (L’Union Coloniale Française), a lobbying group consisting of traders, industrialists, and bankers, which was established in 1893 to ensure the continuation of French colonization and support commercial interests, often criticized these protective measures (Persell 1983). In particular, the settlers in North Africa and merchants in Marseille played important roles in this union.

Furthermore, in some territories, neither tariff assimilation nor specific colonial tariffs were applied because of international agreements among European colonial powers. For example, a convention on 14 June 1898 that secured French and British colonial possessions in West Africa determined that France could not introduce the discriminatory tariff on French and British products in the coastal areas of Côte d’Ivoire and Dahomey; in exchange, the British could not do so in the Gold Coast and Nigeria. This convention was maintained until October 1936, which is probably why British cloth dominated the market, as shown in Figure 5. In the same manner, by the declarations exchanged on 8 April 1904, later known as the Entente Cordiale, Great Britain and France agreed that the transit trade across the North African territories controlled by each colonial power
Egypt or Morocco was subject to identical conditions for the products of the two countries. It is likely no coincidence that the Indian guinée began to be exported from France to North Africa just after France gained control of a vast area in West Africa by taking over Timbuktu in 1893. The establishment of the French Sudan colony enabled France to integrate two separate French business spheres in West and North Africa into one vast market, which was a long-cherished French desire since it was expressed by Governor Faidherbe in 1863 (Faidherbe1863). At a conference at the Marseille Chamber of Commerce in 1896, French explorer Ferdinand de Béhagle argued that the acquisition of territories on the south side of the Sahel enhanced the appeal of Saharan trade after 40 years of decline due to conflicts with the Tuareg and that the ‘rich and populous Sudan’ region would provide the materials required by French industry to consume its manufactured goods.  

A report by a military captain known as Ballieu, published in 1898 in a Supplément au Bulletin du Comité de l’Afrique Française, a monthly newspaper of the Committee of French Africa (Comité de l’Afrique Française) established in 1890, confirms that there were five routes leading to French Sudan at the time (Figure 6; Le Capitaine Ballieu 1898). The most important route was still along the Senegal River from Saint Louis to Kayes (Médine), whereas land transport was required in lieu of river transport during the dry season. The second route was between the Sahel and northern border towns, such as Nioro, Gumbu, and Sokolo. The Moors played a crucial role in this route. The guinée and millet brought to Taudeni or Tischit were exchanged for salt or sheep; Richard Roberts described active economic transactions in the middle Niger Valley between Maraka (Malinkized Soninke) merchants and the Moors coming from the desert-edges. The third route was the grand Sahara trail from Morocco, Algeria, or Tripolitania to Timbuktu. The fourth, less important route was upstream on the Niger River from the Niger

|                      | 1919     | 1920     | 1921     | 1922     |
|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| France               | 692,089  | 7,101,494| 2,087,166| 740,401  |
| (5.1%)               | (18.1%)  | (15.8%)  | (3.8%)   |
| French colonies      | 2,137,636| 4,865,138| 2,777,680| 1,383,194|
| (15.8%)              | (12.4%)  | (21.0%)  | (7.1%)   |
| Sub total (Within the French empire) | 2,829,725| 11,966,632| 4,864,846| 2,123,595|
| Foreign countries via France | 1,271,989| 6,448,176|           |          |
|                      | (9.4%)   | (16.5%)  |          |          |
| England              | 8,844,407| 18,771,341| 1,344,851| 12,621,552|
| (65.3%)              | (47.9%)  | (10.2%)  | (64.9%)  |
| The Netherlands      | 145,523  | 671,229  | 6,945,432| 4,445,515|
| (1.1%)               | (1.7%)   | (52.5%)  | (22.9%)  |
| Others               | 443,959  | 1,318,814| 77,701   | 249,890  |
| (3.3%)               | (3.4%)   | (0.6%)   | (1.3%)   |
| Sub total (Outside of the French Empire) | 10,705,878| 27,209,560| 8,367,984*| 17,316,957|
| Total                | 13,535,603| 39,176,192| 13,232,830| 19,440,552|

*In the original data, this is indicated as 8,367,948 francs, while it should be 8,367,984 francs because of the inconsistency of the sums.

Source: Agence générale des colonies, Bulletin de l’Agence générale des colonies, no. 169 (1922, 116) and no. 192 (1923, 1308).

37M. de Béhagle à la Chambre de Commerce, Délibérations de la Chambre Annexes 1896–1897, CCM, FM 2311/8.
38Captain Ballieu left several reports on French Sudan in the 1890s. His first name is unknown; he was a capitaine de l’artillerie de marine (naval artillery captain). See also Map 3 in Roberts (1987).
Bend to Timbuktu, Bandiagara, Jenné, and Ségou. The fifth route led to the southwest border of French Sudan along the southern rivers from the Guinea Coast via Fouta Jallon, which France had conquered in 1897. The inhabitants of this region were also known as avid consumers of indigo-dyed cotton cloth. This fifth route is perhaps inseparable from the beginning of the export of Indian guinée to ‘other territories on the African coast’ in 1898 (Figure 4).

On the third route, in January 1897, an article in Journal de Roubaix, a newspaper of Roubaix in northern France, reported that Timbuktu imported 5,000 pieces of guinée

**Figure 5.** Origins of guinée and its imitation imported by the colonies in French West Africa in 1924 (%). Source: *Importations in Afrique Occidentale française in 1924*, Archives of Chamber of Commerce in Marseille, MQ.4.2.6/01.

Note: The numbers in the circle indicate the total length of the imported guinée cloth.
annually and the Mogador (Essouira)—Trudouf—Timbuktu route was used for the importation of *guinée* and other types of cloth.\(^{39}\) The original version of this report was submitted by a collector named Vidal of the local import tariff, the *Oussourou*, to the Ministry of Colonies through Jean-Baptiste Chaudié, the first Governor-General of the AOF. At the time, Roubaix, a town located near Lille, was becoming an important cotton-cloth producing region in France. The purpose of reprinting an extract of this report in their local newspaper must have been to inform readers about the economic situation in French Sudan, a potential market of their cotton cloth. Interestingly, the report tells us that, despite the longer distance, the Mogador (Essouira)—Trudouf—Timbuktu route was more profitable than the Saint Louis—Timbuktu route. This article

\(^{39}\) Vidal, percepteur de l’oussourou à Tombouctou sur la vente des tissus au Soudan', *Journal de Roubaix*, 20 January 1897, 3–4.
provides two reasons: first, compared to Saint Louis, it was easier to obtain sufficient credit for inland trade and repay it on the due date in Mogador; second, it was easier to carry the obtained assets in the form of silver coins, ostrich feathers, ivory, and captive slaves from Eastern Sudan on the route from Timbuktu to Mogador than from Timbuktu to Saint Louis. \(^{40}\) Slaves remained an important trade item on the route from inland West Africa to Morocco because slavery continued under the Makhzen system (the monarchy and its associated institutions) until the beginning of the twentieth century, while it was illegal in French-controlled territories (Klein 1992; Schroeter 1992; Sikainga 1998; Wright 2002).

Morocco was not a French colony, but in 1912 a part of Morocco became a protectorate of France. Gustave Wolfrom, a former delegate of the French Ministry of Trade in Morocco, reported on the situation in the Moroccan cotton cloth market in 1887 as follows:

England has a monopoly of manufactured cotton cloth in all ports. In 1887, half of the imports were cotton cloth; that is, 1013 bales worth 65,265 pounds, all coming from England. (Wolfrom 1893, 18; translated by the author)

By the Franco–Moroccan agreement of 24 October 1892, a ten per cent import duty was imposed on goods coming from countries other than Germany to Morocco (Mérignhac 1925, 790). Furthermore, the Act of Algeciras, signed by 13 countries, including Morocco in 1906, determined the imposition of a uniform tariff of 12.5% on all goods imported from all sources (Saul 2016, 119). Therefore, French and British guinée cloth were assumed to penetrate the Moroccan market on an equal footing.

Nevertheless, the Oussourou, institutionalized by an order on 24 January 1891, shortly after the French conquest of Sudan, likely urged caravan chiefs to choose guinée made in the French empire. \(^{41}\) The Oussourou was initially introduced by Amadou Tall, a ruler of the Toucouleur Empire. As the Arabic name suggests, it indicates a 10% tariff of the total cargo amount. The Oussourou was collected in the form of guinée or salt at the northern border of French Sudan or in the villages nearby. \(^{42}\) Heads of caravans without any proof of an Oussourou payment could be banned from doing business within French Sudan, arrested, and their property confiscated. \(^{43}\) This Oussourou system existed until 1913, and guinée made in the French Empire and gum Arabic were exempt. \(^{44}\) A market with several logistic channel gateways provides more options for marketing strategies; the merchants must have had an incentive to bring guinée made in the French Empire to favourable gateways, and the logistic channels formed for them seemingly did not change easily after the system’s demise as illustrated in Figure 6.

Finally, it is worth considering why Indian guinée suddenly started being imported to Algeria in 1906, although Algeria was able to import French goods duty-free from the mid-1800s onwards. This is likely because of the decree of 1 February 1902 that exceptionally exempted guinée cloth made in French India sent to the oases of southern Morocco.

\(^{40}\) Ibid.
\(^{41}\) Oussourou, local order 24 January 1891. This local order can be consulted, for example, in a publication by the Gouvernement General de l’Afrique Occidentale Française, Budget local du Haut-Sénégal et Niger (Paris, 1903), 54.
\(^{42}\) Oussourou, local order 24 January 1891.
\(^{43}\) Ibid.
\(^{44}\) Ibid.
transiting through Algeria from customs duties. To prevent fraud, the applicable products had to be imported through Algeria’s designated ports and escorted to the designated offices at the Moroccan border (MéRignhac 1925, 791). Although France gave the same preferential treatment to British products through the Entente Cordinale in 1904, the Oussourou would have likely promoted the import of guinée made in the French empire. The price of guinée in central Algeria was quite high. Maurice Cortier, a French military man and explorer who conducted several study missions to the Sahara from 1907 to 1911, noted that a piece of guinée cloth of 40 cubits (approximately 20 metres) was worth 20–25 francs in Adrar, a trade city in central Algeria, while it was worth only 8–10 francs in Timbuktu. The export of guinée cloth from North Africa to the western Sahel reduced transportation costs to this region and likely brought more commercial margins to merchants.

In this way, both the Méline Tariffs and Oussourou, which had applied special treatments to French Indian guinée, increased the demand for guinée made in Pondicherry. In contrast, producers in other French colonies and metropolitan France complained about the tariff exemption for Pondicherry guinée at the border of Senegal. According to Jacques Weber, with the support of the cotton cloth producers in Metropolitan France, in 1900, Jules Méline and Henry Boucher, both politicians from the Vosges, demanded the taxation of Pondicherry guinée at the border of Senegal with the support of the cotton cloth producers in Metropolitan France (Weber 2019, 765). However, this attempt failed in the face of fierce opposition from merchants and colonialists who preferred cheap cotton cloth (Weber 2019, 765). In October 1901, protectionists in the colony of Indochina sought to amend Article 5 of the Méline Tariffs (Weber 1999, 28). In response, a law of 19 April 1904 imposed a quota on French Indian fibre products by limiting what could be exported to other French colonies without tariffs to two million kilograms of cotton cloth and 1.5 million kilograms of yarn. Nevertheless, in the same law, the French Indian colony succeeded in introducing a special clause exempting cotton cloth woven exclusively with yarn from Pondicherry from the application of this law. As a result, guinée exports from Pondicherry increased from 4,983 bales (balles in French) per year between 1888 and 1901 to 8,210 between 1902 and 1913 (Weber 1999, 28).

Meanwhile, the tariff wars over guinée cloth continued among stakeholders. Through the 14 April 1905 decree, which reviewed the tariff rates in the AOF, the guinée import tariff rate was fixed at 5%, and a further 7% was imposed on foreign guinée. However, this decree was revised immediately afterwards, and a specific tariff instead of an ad valorem tariff was introduced for guinée imports in Senegal through the 10 March 1906 decree. Specifically, a tariff of 2.5 centimes per metre was imposed on guinée produced in the French empire, but 8.5 centimes per metre was imposed on foreign guinée. Furthermore, by the 2 February 1911 decree, the area covered by the decree in 1906 was expanded from only Senegal to the AOF.

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45 By the decree of 17 December 1896, France had already introduced this system for some products. By the decree in 1902 the guinée made in French India was added.
46 Adrar means mountains in Berber, and the name has been given to several locations in West Africa. According to the route, in this mission, Adrar seems to refer to a town in the region Touat (or Tuat) in central Algeria (Cortier 1908, 352).
47 Henry Boucher (1847–1927) was Minister of Trade, Industry, Post and Telegraph in the government of Jules Méline (29 April 1896 – 28 June 1898). He also served as President of the Chamber of Commerce of Epinal (Weber 2019, 765).
48 Generally, one bale contained 80 or 100 pieces of guinée.
This transition aimed to simplify customs procedures and inhibit fraud on invoices because the merchants could manipulate the value of cloth under the ad valorem tariff system. From a different perspective, this was a compromise among three actors: the colonial government, which wanted to ensure sufficient tariff revenue; French producers, who needed the protective measures; and merchants, who wanted to avoid complicated procedures.

The protection for the guinée produced in French India certainly contributed to the prosperity of Pondicherry. However, distorted markets always have unexpected outcomes. Ironically, the protective measures for guinée from Pondicherry invited investments from Great Britain to begin guinée production in French India. Named after the Governor-General, François Pierre Rodier (1898–1902 in office), the Rodier Mill was established in Pondicherry as a joint venture with British capitalists in 1898. In 1910, it was renamed Anglo-French Textiles and had, as of then, twice the production of the Savana mill in Pondicherry that was initially established by Jules Poulain and acquired by Chaumel-Durin in 1877 (Antony 1982, 552; Odell 1916, 37; Weber 1988, 1951–1952, 1956; Weber 2019, 764). In other words, the large increases in exports of Pondicherry guinée were achieved through British capital, machines, and materials, although the production was accomplished by French subjects on French soil (Weber 1999, 28). This is an excellent example of how French colonialism and imperialism shaped globalization.

6. Conclusion

The history of guinée cloth that was produced in modern French factories began with some French agents with philanthropic inclinations who wanted to assist in the industrialization of Pondicherry. Consequently, the guinée produced in the modern French factories established in French India under excessive protection was costly but poor quality. In the late nineteenth century, exports to Senegal of a similar type of cloth produced in Europe led to fighting over the guinée market made in Pondicherry, especially after the liberalization of the Senegalese market in 1864. The unstable political climate of the early French Third Republic sparked frequent changes in trade policies on guinée cloth, consequently creating new logistic routes to inland West Africa and new markets for producers in French India. Colonialism or imperialism is often linked to the country that implemented the colonization, such as French colonialism or British imperialism as if it is a principle that all nationals shared. The history of guinée suggests that the chaotic conflicting and cooperating actions of agents pursuing their own economic needs formed colonialism or imperialism of a nation, as a consequence.

While the current research could not cover the perspectives of the colonized due to space limitations, African agents should not be viewed as monolithic actors, either. According to Richard Roberts, after the French conquered inland West Africa, freed slaves became weavers and dyers at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the production of local cotton cloth increased when the volume of imported manufactured cloth declined, or the prices increased (Roberts 1996a, 54, 101, 149, 198–201). This implies that Africans became producers and responded agilely to the change in the global markets. Furthermore, users of guinée as money and several different types of merchants, such as Métis, African, North African, and Moroccan Jewish merchants, were involved in the
guinée cloth business. While these African agents were also colonized, it should not be forgotten that some also helped the French colonizers.49

Both the local and global agents that engaged in the guinée cloth trade had strong interests in increasing their profits, but it was almost impossible that they would envision how the micro-level profit-seeking actions of each agent would alter the global system. Some profiteers paved the way for building the French colonial empire by raising the barriers for excluding foreign products. However, these constraints have never interfered with the profit-seeking behaviours of agents who preferred free trade, but rather motivated them to find ways to circumvent them and often invited unexpected outcomes, such as French agents positively transporting British guinée or agents aspiring to the prosperity of French India by welcoming investments from Great Britain. Although the age of imperialism is often perceived as a time of restraint on globalization, the current research suggests that individual economic agents and their profit-maximising behaviours, even in the market distorted by colonialism and imperialism, shaped globalization.

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49In this regard, see Bayart (2006).
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