Globally connecting the facts: A history of guinée cloth exported to French territories in Western Africa via France, 1833-1925

Toyomu Masaki, Kanazawa University (Japan)

April 20, 2:00 PM, 232 Bay State Road, Rm 505

It is widely known that Indian cotton (guinée) was brought from Pondicherry to Senegal via France from the beginning of the slave trade era to the early twentieth century. Many scholars have already revealed that guinée was used as a medium of exchange for Arabic gum, as well as a medium of credit in local trade. However, few authors have written about the global trade in this blue toile. This study bridges this gap by drawing on numerous historical records and works by area studies scholars to reveal a change of destinations at the end of the nineteenth century using long-term French trade statistics. This research uncovers an aspect of global history and a dimension of French colonialism.

Credit: Boilat, David. Esquisses sénégalaises: P. Bertrand, 1853, (Bibliothèque nationale de France)