

Institution: University of Cambridge		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 28		
Title of case study: Partition, Migration and Communities in Britain		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2006-2016		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Joya Chatterji FBA	Professor of South Asian History	01.10.2007-14.12.2019
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013-present (ongoing)		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The connections between the partition of India and migration to Britain have been poorly understood in the public domain. This is also true of migration from ancient to contemporary times. Chatterji has helped develop two projects questioning the narrative of 'our island story' through a focus on human migration: 1) <i>Our Migration Story</i> (OMS), a website that seeks to embed the goal of decolonising the curriculum in schools by making the world's interconnectedness, and its links to Britain, more visible and intelligible to young people. 2) The <i>Freedom and fragmentation</i> exhibition displayed rare photographs and provided an intimate view of India's partition uprooted in the largest mass migration in human history.</p> <p>These projects have had an impact upon school pupils, teachers, curators, archivists, photographers, and the public in the UK and India, encouraging them to reflect upon the history of migration and how it has shaped society today.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>OMS draws upon Chatterji's conceptual innovations in the understanding of migration, which in turn draw on her empirical research on the long-term consequences of the partition of India. [R2] Her research has also helped to explain a major conundrum: why South Asia produced so many migrants – far more than other regions partitioned or affected by violence and nation formation – and why so many of these migrants came to Britain. [R3] She concludes that the distinction between 'forced' and 'economic migration' was largely spurious [R1]; that so many Indians moved as refugees after 1947 because they were already bound up in networks of mobility (largely for work) long before then. They moved in both instances, along the same 'grooves'. [R1, R3] She also points to both the dynamism and fragility of migrant networks. [R6] Together with Claire Alexander (Manchester), she underlines the extent to which migrants experience and perform their identity differently in different settings, revealing the local and affective dimensions of place in community formation. [R3]</p> <p>The AHRC supported the <i>Bengal Diaspora</i> project (2006-10), the first stage of this research. Chatterji worked as PI in collaboration with a leading sociologist at the LSE, and later at Manchester, Professor Claire Alexander (Co-I). The research thus forged powerful and enduring links across disciplines and institutions.</p> <p>Pathways to impact specified collaboration with schools, young people at Key Stage 3, their parents and teachers, and community groups. Alexander and Chatterji worked closely with the Swadhinata Trust, a community group in London, activists and NGOs in Bangladesh and</p>		

across Britain. The Runnymede Trust, with which Alexander was linked, helped develop the successful **Bangla Stories** website.

OMS, also funded by the AHRC, 'scaled up' the impact of the **Bangla Stories** project to a whole new level, by drawing on the research expertise of many more historians of migration across the UK.

To better understand the very different challenges of migrations across time, Chatterji and Alexander put together a new team of research assistants: Sundeep Lidher, a Cambridge PhD student of post-war migration to Britain, and Drs Malachi Macintosh and Debbie Weekes-Bernard of the Runnymede Trust. This core team gathered a group of over 90 people: academic and community historians, museum curators, archivists, web-designers, filmmakers, teachers, examination boards, teacher-trainers and textbook writers. The 'Contributors' included a large group of scholars, all leaders in their fields, whose expertise spanned AD 43 to the present day. Where their language was too complex for Key Stage 3 or GCSE audiences, **OMS** built a structure of simple ideas that 'undergirded' these case-studies. A handful of scholars were also invited to give mini-lectures on their specialisms, which were filmed for the website.

Both the **Freedom and Fragmentation** exhibition and **OMS** drew on thirty years of Chatterji's research on India's partition and migration within and from the subcontinent. **[R2, R3, R6]**

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[R1] Chatterji, J. (2013). Dispositions and Destinations: Refugee Agency and "Mobility Capital" in the Bengal Diaspora, 1947-2007. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 55, 273-304.

[\[DOI\]](#)

[R2] Chatterji, J. (2007). *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India 1947-1967*. Cambridge University Press. [\[DOI\]](#)

[R3] Alexander, C., Chatterji, J. and Jalais, A. (2016). *The Bengal Diaspora. Rethinking Muslim Migration*. Routledge. ISBN 9781138592971.

[R4] Chatterji, J. (2017). On being stuck: Immobility in the Age of Migration. *Modern Asian Studies*, 51(Special issue 2), 511-541. [\[DOI\]](#)

[R5] Chatterji, J. (2012). South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1972. *Historical Journal*, 55, 1049-1071. [\[DOI\]](#)

[R6] Chatterji, J. (2013). The Nation State and the Management of Migration: Rethinking the "Post-Colonial" Immigration Order. In J. Chatterji and D. Washbrook (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora*. Routledge. [\[DOI\]](#)

All items above have undergone peer review and therefore meet the minimum 2* requirement.

GRANTS AND RESEARCH FUNDING:

2016: 'History Matters: Creating Joined up Resources for a Diverse History Curriculum' (with Claire Alexander), AHRC, GBP93,626.42 (With FEC) (AH/N003772/1)

2014: History Lessons: Teaching Community, Heritage and Diversity in the National History Curriculum (with Claire Alexander), AHRC, GBP97,692 (with FEC) (AH/L009420/1)

2013-15: Leverhulme Major Research Award

2011 - 2012: (with Claire Alexander) 'Bangla Stories: Telling Community Histories about Migration and Belonging', AHRC, GBP93,821(with FEC) (AH/J002879/1)

2006-2009 The Bengal Diaspora (with Claire Alexander), Diasporas, Migration and Identities Programme AHRC: GBP619,386 (with FEC) (AH/E508588/1 and AH/E508588/2)

1999-2000, John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation Research and Writing Award. Amount: USD50,000. Project title: 'Exodus from the east. Bengali refugees in India'

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The overarching goal of **OMS** was to make migration more visible in the school curriculum. To grapple with the controversial and challenging social issues raised by migration, the **OMS** team believed, it is not enough simply to decolonise curricula at universities; academics had to engage the wider public in a difficult but often rewarding conversation about migration, starting with young people at schools.

Online Engagement

Since its launch in 2016, the **OMS** website has registered 317,558 page 'hits' and over 237,000 users. [E1] It has also been recipient of three national awards: the Community Integration Research Champion Award (2017), the Royal Historical Society's public history prize for Best Online Resource (2018) and a Guardian University Award for Research Impact (2019). [E1]

OMS draws on the highest-quality historical research to create an online 'hub' on the long history of migration to Britain, from AD43 to the present day. It does so through a series of 'migration stories', each based on a fascinating primary source. The site thus seeks to reframe 'British' history in more diverse and inclusive terms; to connect the local with the global; and to capture the histories of people, objects and ideas from the world over, in their different ways shaping the British Isles over the last 2000 years.

The site seeks more closely to connect the school curriculum with scholarly research. It thus contains an entire section for teachers with lesson plans, schemes of work and guidance on how to navigate 'difficult' histories in the classroom. [E2, E3]

Impact on GCSE Teaching

To achieve this, the project team worked directly with teachers across the lifespan of the project. It led a series of workshops presenting the **OMS** resource at various teacher training events including Teach First, The Prince's Teaching Institute, Historical Association and Schools History Project. At them, the team met and got feedback from hundreds of primary and secondary-school teachers who use the resource in their classrooms.

These events have had an impact. **OMS** resources support the teaching of new GCSE modules on migration to Britain launched by OCR and AQA (two of the three main English exam boards), in 2016. They are now used both at Key Stage 3 and GCSE, where 'migration' now supplements older standby topics such as 'warfare', 'crime' and 'medicine'. [E4]

Since then, the new modules have had a robust uptake. The AQA informs us that 8,199 students in 2018 and 9,315 students in 2019 took the GCSE History thematic study option, *Britain: Migration, Empire and the People: c790 to the present day*. Teacher feedback and AQA reports that resources on the website are being used in other British history topics on the AQA GCSE History. [E4]

In 2018, the team tested the resource at a secondary school in Manchester, where it developed a local migration history project, 'Making Manchester', for 60 Year 8 pupils. It ran this in partnership with the Olympias Music Foundation and enlisted the help of local journalists, archivists, musicians and artists. In 2018, **OMS** also entered into another collaboration with the 'TIDE' research project at the University of Liverpool. This led to a series of jointly-run teacher training events and workshops on migration history in London and Liverpool, and laid the groundwork for the policy report: *Teaching Migration, Belonging, and Empire in secondary schools* (Runnymede, 2019). [E1]

Informing the Public

Beyond schools, **Our Migration Story** provides a rigorous knowledge base for interested members of the public. It was covered by local and national media outlets, including *The*

Guardian and *Schools Week*, BBC radio programmes, Sky News, and numerous blogs and online publications. [E5] The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants featured **OMS** content in its social media campaigns. Playwrights, artists and community and youth groups have used the site to inform creative work. In 2018, the **OMS** co-hosted a public event on the place of Black and Asian British histories in university curricula, in collaboration with the Institute of Historical Research, which attracted an audience of almost 400 members of the general public. [E6]

Exciting opportunities for influencing education policy opened up as a result of the success of the **OMS** website. The project team met DfE representatives early in 2019 to present findings and to discuss how these histories could be more embedded at all levels of the History curriculum in schools. The team also met and worked with MPs Helen Hayes and Dawn Butler to inform discussions around Labour's education manifesto and to raise the profile of **OMS**'s work at Westminster. These meetings led to a Westminster Hall debate, *History Curriculum: Migration* in June 2019. [E7]

Confronting the Taboo of Partition: The *Freedom and fragmentation* exhibition

The *Freedom and fragmentation* exhibition had impact of a different, and much more intimate, kind. Targeted at the adult public in Cambridge, Leeds, and Sheffield, its goal was a) to display vivid images of the connections between India, Pakistan and Britain and b) to explain why and when people - Indian, Pakistani and British – moved as they did. The exhibition's mission was to challenge long-standing nationalist, patriotic and communal rhetoric to display – with sensitivity – how different people were caught up in these events, how differently they viewed them, and how they tried actively to survive in new settings. It made an immediate, often profound, impact upon people who saw close-up images of scared and despairing people for whom 'home', very suddenly, became a concept, rather than a place. The exhibition gave the largest migration in human history a granular, human face. Because it captured both brown and white persons uprooted at the same moment, it challenged British viewers to think in fresh ways about race and nation, home and abroad.

This theme emerged out of discussions over years with Canon Michael Roden of the Church of England, who had expressed to Chatterji his concern about the continuing impact of racial and religious tensions in Britain as a legacy of partition. In his testimonial Roden notes that while partition ranks alongside the holocaust as a topic in interfaith relations; it has become 'a really taboo subject'. [E8] He goes on to explain Chatterji's key role in informing BBC coverage of partition and in the formation of Roden's own Partition History Project, which addresses the legacy of distrust that partition has left in Britain. [E8] Chatterji was then Director of the Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge, an interdisciplinary centre. Most of the images exhibited were from the Centre of South Asian Studies' archive, and had never been displayed before, while a handful were borrowed from private collections. The exhibition was designed to both inform visitors of the lived historical reality of partition and to invoke memory and emotional responses to those events.

The exhibition's impact on visitors in Britain was profound. Some viewers, themselves partition refugees now settled in Britain, wept as they stood before certain images, returning again and again to look at them. Children of refugee parents long settled in Britain travelled to Cambridge to view the exhibition, learning much about their own history as a result. [E9] Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi diplomatic delegations all attended the launch by the Vice-Chancellor – a rare event in itself. Members of the British public found the exhibition deeply moving: one British viewer – a returnee from India - donating her entire personal collection of letters and photographs to the Centre of South Asian Studies after attending the exhibition. [E9]

The themes running through *Freedom and Fragmentation* were used prominently in a Newsnight special broadcast on 15 August 2017 that covered partition [E10] and which featured discussions with Chatterji and Roden. [E8]

The exhibition will move to New Delhi when the pandemic, and Professor Chatterji's own health, make it possible. It is to be displayed at the M. F. Husain Gallery, where it will be the subject of a round-table discussion open to the public. It will then travel to Lahore in Pakistan. The goal of this leg of its journey is to promote 'people-to-people' understanding across the tense border between India and Pakistan. In Britain, it has been a driver of the wider Partition History Project, which promotes the understanding of partition, and its impact on British society, through radio, television, and theatre.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [E1] Testimonial: Director of the Runnymede Trust and email (09 February 2021) on OMS website visitors
- [E2] Testimonial: History teacher, Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy, Lancaster
- [E3] Tweets from teachers and other users concerning *OMS*
- [E4] Testimonial: Head of Curriculum, AQA History
- [E5] Assorted media coverage relating to *OMS*
- [E6] Podcast: Institute of Historical Research. (4 December 2018). 'Where do we fit in?' Black and Asian British history on the curriculum. [\[Link\]](#)
- [E7] UK Parliament. Westminster Hall. *History curriculum: Migration*. 18 June 2019. (Hansard Vol. 662). [\[Link\]](#)
- [E8] Testimonial: Canon Chancellor of Bristol Cathedral
- [E9] Testimonials: *Freedom and fragmentation* exhibition visitors
- [E10] News coverage: BBC Two. *Newsnight: Partition 70 years on*. 15 August 2017. [\[Link\]](#)