

Institution: University of Liverpool
Unit of Assessment: 28 – Modern Languages and Linguistics
Title of case study: ‘From Bombay to Hardelot: the early history of Tata Group in France.’ An open-air exhibition and summer programme of cultural events and their legacy for EU-India trade.
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Ian Magedera’s research on French-Indian relations led to collaboration with the multinational Tata Group around a series of events linking the company’s history and that of the French resort town of Hardelot. The research took place between 2008 and 2013. Impact activities began in 2011 and are ongoing. The project benefited Tata Group by providing material for use in public relations and in consciousness-raising among its large workforce. The citizens of Hardelot benefited from the promotion of tourism, a new perspective on their history, and enhanced civic identity. The research made leaders in industry and government aware of the history of Franco-Indian economic relations, and was accepted as offering a new point of reference for future business dialogue.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Ian Magedera was appointed as Lecturer in French at the University of Liverpool with effect from 1 October 1998. He has carried out all of the research detailed in this case study while in post at Liverpool. Tata Group (TG) is an Indian multinational enterprise founded in 1868. With its UK workforce of 45,000 at Jaguar Land Rover and other companies, TG is the largest foreign employer in this country, where it has been active since 1907. TG’s first investments in Europe were made in Hardelot, around the time of the town’s foundation in 1905 as a private resort on the Channel coast.</p> <p>The research which underpins this case study began in 2008, when the hitherto unexplored presence of Tata in Europe was revealed as a result of Magedera’s research into the life of the Frenchwoman, Suzanne Brière (1880–1923). She featured in a wider project on non-English European women (‘Indian Videshini’) who have attained positions of leadership in India since the 1890s. This in turn developed out of an AHRC-funded study of Representations of India in French Literature and Culture that commenced in 2006 (item 1 in References to the research, below). Brière’s husband, R.D. Tata, was one of the four original partners of TG. With their family of five children, the Tatas played an active part in Hardelot between its foundation in 1905 and the start of the First World War in 1914. Magedera’s initial research on Suzanne Brière was carried out at Tata Central Archives (TCA) in Pune, India, in 2008. From December 2010, Magedera also made two research visits to Hardelot to evaluate local sources relating to TG.</p> <p>Among the materials found in India and France were postcards and other correspondence which threw light on the ways in which Suzanne Brière negotiated her dual French-Indian identity in linguistic and cultural terms. This became the subject of a 2013 book chapter by Magedera (item 2 in References to the research, below). A further significant finding arose from Magedera’s examination both of property deeds relating to TG’s investments and of the testimony of those who ran the Hardelot holding company. These indicate that investment by this branch of the Tata family in Hardelot extended beyond private interests to the purchase of commercial properties in the company’s name in 1905, possibly the first case of inward investment into Europe by an Indian company. New insights into the dialogue between European culture and Indian industry emerged from exploration of the links between Hardelot and the automotive and aviation industries. Driving and flying were publicized as key leisure activities in Hardelot, and these became both personal passions and important business concerns of TG. The aviator-entrepreneur Louis Blériot and his pilots landed their aeroplanes on the hard sand beach at low tide. Suzanne Brière made her maiden flight in 1913 and her son spent his childhood among aeroplanes. In 1932, he founded</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

Tata Indian Airways, which became Air India in 1953. Not surprisingly, the concentration in Hardelot of prominent business families such as the Merciers (champagne), the Blériots (aviation), and others representing manufacturing and textiles, meant that the resort functioned as a locus of technology transfer. More generally, this research contributed to the argument that Magedera developed in his book chapter (item 2 in References to the research, below), that Indian elites have maintained their position in the face of multiple challenges by strategically incorporating foreigners of a particular kind.

3. References to the research

1. The core research which underpins the case study was funded by the AHRC as part of the five-year Major Award AH/D001137/1: 'Peripheral Voices and European Colonialism: Representations of India in French Literature and Culture, 1750–1962' (September 2006 – June 2011; collaboration with Marsh).

2. Ian H. Magedera, 'Désorienter l'Orient et les orientés désorientés: Said, Derrida et le paradoxe du GPS' in Jean-Pierre Dubost and Axel Gasquet (eds), *Orients désorientés* (Paris: Éditions Kimé, 2013), pp. 33–55. ISBN 978-2-84174-635-4.

4. Details of the impact

The activities detailed below enriched the cultural life of the population of Hardelot itself, of French and international visitors to the town, and of the employees of Tata Group. They enabled public exploration of a previously little-known connection between France and India, including the first case of an Indian company investing in France, prompting reflection on issues related to the future challenges of globalization in France.

1. Major public exhibition

The first and principal outcome of the collaboration was an exhibition displayed on [a series of large-format all-weather panels](#) (for confidentiality reasons this link is password-protected – user name: REF3b, password: Liverpool2014), and sited along the primary pedestrian access route from the town centre to Hardelot Beach at the height of the summer season from 24 June to 24 September 2011. Anticipating its importance for the town's prestige and future heritage tourism from India, the Mayor's office and the Hardelot Tourist Office allocated US\$ 21,000 to support the events. TG matched this funding, in the interests of its company profile in France and Europe. The Tourist Office and the Mayor decided to make the exhibition the centrepiece of Hardelot's cultural offering throughout the summer of 2011, and all official events, from public lectures and fashion shows to hands-on art workshops for children aged 4 to 6, had an Indian theme that year. A [full-colour brochure](#) publicising the exhibition and these events, and including all dates and times, was prepared by the Tourist Office. The opening ceremony on 29 July 2011 was attended by locals from Hardelot (some of whom live in the properties once owned by the Tatas), the Chief of Mission at the Indian Embassy in Paris, the Mayor of Hardelot, the regional Head of Tata Communications, and a chief archivist from TCA, Pune, India.

In the event, some 14,000 visitors, both locals and tourists from other parts of France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK viewed the exhibition. It was also covered extensively in the media. The coverage included a feature on France 3 Television broadcast as part of the evening news bulletin on 29 July 2011. This included a short interview with Magedera and with locals expressing their attachment to their town's connection with India. Two locals testify to the fact that before the exhibition they did not know who the Tatas were, how many properties they owned in the town, or how important TG had become. In India, through a copyright exchange agreement, Tata Central Archives – India's oldest company archive and a key beneficiary – has been able to enhance its collections with the material from the exhibition and make it available to people in India.

Impact case study (REF3b)**2. Public outreach and capacity building**

The research for this project also unearthed how, during the First World War, the British Indian Army set up a hospital in a Hadelot hotel to treat injured Indian soldiers (panel 11 of the exhibition was devoted to this period). Archival research done under Magedera's guidance in the UK by Dr William Leigh (a mature undergraduate student in History at the University of Liverpool), led to an illustrated public lecture on « Les soldats indiens à Hadelot pendant la Grande Guerre », delivered by Dr Leigh in Hadelot on 5 August 2011. This event was hosted in a municipal meeting room and attended by twenty-five Hadelotois and by members of the Conseil des sages, a group of senior business and public sector figures. A further demonstration of the exhibition's successful capacity building is that, through the involvement of local officials and news media, it raised awareness of the presence of First-World-War Indian war graves in the region during a commemoration visit to Hadelot by Commonwealth academics (from Australia, New Zealand, India and Canada), 15–16 September 2011 (see Sources to corroborate the impact, below).

3. Legacy impact in 2012: permanent display of exhibition panels

In February 2012, Tata Communications (a multinational telecommunications infrastructure company with 7,700 staff and a revenue of US\$ 2.6 billion in 2011) requested permission to reproduce fifteen of the exhibition panels for permanent display in the staff offices of their European headquarters in Neuilly-sur-Seine, near Paris. Fifty key personnel are employed at this site. This represents acknowledgement of the potential of the exhibition panels to support corporate identity in a multinational environment.

4. Legacy impact in 2013: the exhibition contextualizes trade relations between Europe and India

Magedera's research and its dissemination have opened up new channels for dialogue in international business by raising awareness of the history of interchanges between France and India. On 28 March 2013, the External Trade Commission of Brittany hosted a conference on TG, entitled [Rencontre entre Inde et Bretagne](#), which emphasized France's role in TG's early internationalization. After viewing the exhibition panels in Hadelot, External Trade Commissioner Jean-Claude Breton chose the panels to form a physical centrepiece at the conference venue. Keynote speakers at the conference included Mr Anwar Hasan (the Head of Tata UK) and Mr B. Muthuraman (Vice Chairman of Tata Steel). Impact from this research is ongoing. Although outside the census period, it is important to note that the exhibition started a nationwide tour on 14 September 2013 with a two-week display in [Morlaix](#), Brittany, followed by a one-week display in [Lorient](#), Brittany. It will subsequently visit Paris and Lille, and a number of other [major centres](#) to be confirmed.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. 'L'Inde en France et la France en Inde: De Bombay à Hadelot', A four-page feature article in *Nouvelles de l'Inde*, 403 (October–November 2011), 8–11. [Nouvelles de l'Inde](#) is the bulletin of the Embassy of India in France. The article co-opts the exhibition to comment on the longevity and depth of Franco-Indian relations.
2. [Four articles in the municipal magazine](#), *Courrier de Neufchâtel-Hadelot*. (February 2011, p.12; March 2011, p.12; July 2011, cover and p.4; August 2011, p.9). The August 2011 issue also contains a photograph of the exhibition site with visitors. These articles corroborate the benefits for Hadelot residents and for tourists visiting the resort of a themed programme of summer activities, of a new perspective gained about the resort's history, and of enhanced civic identity.
3. Three articles in *La Voix du Nord* and *La Semaine dans le Boulonnais*, two regional newspapers with distribution across northern France:

- (i) [‘Émouvant hommage aux militaires indiens morts en 1914 dans le Boulonnais’](#) (this article corroborates the involvement of local officials (shown holding the cemetery record in the photograph), and news media in raising awareness of the presence of Indian war graves in the wider region);
 - (ii) [‘Exposition Tata: une présence indienne de renom à Hardelot’](#) (this article corroborates the importance of the Hardelotois’ new perspective at a regional level);
 - (iii) [‘Une exposition pour fêter les cinquante ans de présence de la famille Tata’](#) (this article corroborates the importance at a regional level of the enhanced civic identity of the inhabitants of Hardelot).
4. ‘Tata!’ A feature report on France 3 Television, 29 July 2011. France 3 has an audience of several million across northern France. Despite various requests, it has not been possible to access an archive copy of this item, although the President of the Hardelot Tourist Office can give a summary of its content. This television report corroborates the importance and interest of the new insights into the history of the resort at a supra-regional and national level.
 5. Confidential reports or documents (internal TG publications): ‘Bombay to Hardelot’, by Rajendra Prasad Narla, was the lead story in *Tata Connect*, the online magazine for Tata’s 395,000 employees worldwide (figure for 2011). [A copy of this report can be accessed here](#) (for confidentiality reasons this link is password-protected – user name: REF3b, password: Liverpool2014). It corroborates the impact on TG’s large workforce through consciousness-raising of the ‘French connection’ in company history.
 6. The President of the Hardelot Tourist Office can be contacted to confirm visitor figures for the exhibition, the content and impact of the exhibition in the context of the Indian-themed events for various groups in Hardelot across summer 2011, and the content of the France 3 television report.
 7. The Chief Archivist at Tata Central Archives can be contacted to confirm the value that Tata Group attached to the exhibition in terms of increased profile for TG in France.
 8. A former resident of Hardelot who attended the exhibition and associated events can be contacted to testify to the value of the exhibition for her extended family, both in terms of cementing solidarity between the generations and enabling a common discovery of the full history of the family home.
 9. The Assistant to the Head of Tata Communications (Europe and the Americas) can be contacted to confirm the legacy impacts in 2012, in terms of why it was important to reproduce the panels in the company’s headquarters to increase awareness among employees of TG’s longstanding French connections.
 10. The External Trade Commissioner for Brittany can be contacted to corroborate the legacy impacts in 2013, in terms of how the panels were presented in Rennes and how they will tour France in 2013 and 2014.