

Institution: SOAS University of London		
Unit of Assessment: 22A – Anthropology		
Title of case study: Putting caste discrimination on the agenda: caste in international development and UK equality law		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000–2020		
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:
David Mosse	Professor of Social Anthropology	1997–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013–July 2020		
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>Research at SOAS brings new understanding of inherited caste identity as a matter of networked power and privilege rather than religion and culture, and documents the trajectory of caste activism and Dalit NGO networks. The research led to improvements in Dalit land rights advocacy in India and influenced policy framing in the Indian Catholic Church. In the UK: (1) it raised the profile of caste-based discrimination in international aid and development by shaping policy forums, guidelines and statements; (2) it informed policy debate on inclusion of caste as a characteristic in the Equality Act 2010, through engagement with stakeholders, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Government Equality Office.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>David Mosse, Professor of Social Anthropology and employed at SOAS from 1997, undertook research on the nature of caste as a complex form of discriminatory social organisation with hereditary, economic, political and ideological-religious dimensions [3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6]. He used detailed historical and repeated village-level and regional ethnographic studies in south India to clarify the relationship among these dimensions, drawing attention to the foundations of Dalit (formerly ‘untouchable’ caste) anti-discrimination activism [3.2, 3.5], and the significance of Christianity in reproducing or challenging caste orders [3.2]. Mosse explained the rootedness of caste in land/water control, its new (ritual) forms and practices under shifting economic-political conditions in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the adaptation of caste to the modern market economy [3.1, 3.2, 3.4]. He established that caste is a matter of power, differential valuation of work and markets, social category and network effects, and discrimination, rather than ritual or (Hindu) religion. This revealed limitations in existing policy on caste inequality based on the assumption that caste is a specifically Hindu form of ritual disability (including the exclusion of non-Hindus from statutory protections and provisions as ‘Scheduled Castes’) [3.2, 3.6]. In his seminal book <i>The Rule of Water</i> (2nd edn. 2012) [3.1], Mosse demonstrated that rural commons systems were dominated by caste orders and power, which was a policy-relevant challenge to institutional-economic theories of commons management and environmental justice internationally.</p> <p>Building on his AHRC project ‘Religion, Development & Rights of Subordinated People’ (2008-10, GBP81,229), Mosse’s ‘Caste Out of Development’ ESRC-funded project (2009-2013, GBP381,024) involved co-research with civil society activists and NGOs. The research explained the implications of treating caste as a matter of (Hindu) religion and Indian culture rather than a continuing aspect of poverty, inequality and social exclusion in India’s caste-networked market economy; and specifically, how this leads to caste being excluded from national and international development policy [3.4, 3.5, 3.6]. The study then investigated how, and with what implications, a caste-focused Dalit rights-based approach to development emerged among NGOs in the 2000s. Using long-term immersive fieldwork and action-research with NGOs, it explained strategies necessary to sustain rights claims (e.g. to the commons or alienated land) or justice (following anti-Dalit humiliation and violence) against local state-backed caste power, thereby revealing NGOs working as social movements. But it also revealed the instability of the higher-order</p>		

advocacy networks involved, and the power of second-order framing that limited Dalits' 'right to have rights' [3.5]. The project as a whole (and Mosse's specific contribution) established some of the conditions for, and constraints upon, a Dalit rights approach to development in given organisational and political environments [3.2, 3.5].

In 2013–2014, Mosse co-led applied interdisciplinary research on the legal definition of caste and the formulation of secondary legislation for protection against caste-based discrimination in the UK, undertaken for the Equalities and Human Rights Commission ('Caste in Britain', 2013-14, GBP33,646). This followed from a parliamentary vote in 2013 requiring the government to implement an amendment to the Equality Act 2010 to include caste as an aspect of the protected characteristic of race. Taking an equal share of project organisation, primary and secondary analysis and preparation of outputs with Prof Meena Dhanda (Wolverhampton) and Dr Annapurna Waughray (Manchester Metropolitan) (with other co-authors playing minor roles), Mosse co-convened the largest-ever British consortium of experts, and organised the widest-ever stakeholder engagement on statutory legal change in the UK on caste, covering 60 national organisations [3.3a and b]. Mosse then showed how anti-caste activism provoked counter claims that caste in the UK is irrelevant or non-existent and that the language of caste represents prejudice against Hindus and has no place in law [3.6]. Mosse also undertook allied interdisciplinary collaborative research on the mental health harms of caste-based discrimination, especially in Indian HEIs with psychiatric practitioner Sushrut Jadhav (UCL).

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

3.1 Mosse, D. 2003 (2nd edition 2012). *The Rule of Water: Statecraft, Ecology and Collective Action in South India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780195672206. Available on request. **570 citations (270 since 2013)**

3.2. Mosse, D. (2012). *The Saint in the Banyan Tree: Christianity and Caste Society in India*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN: 9780520273498 . Available on request. **Winner of Best Book in Hindu-Christian Studies – History/Ethnography 2009–2013**

3.3a. Dhanda, M., Waughray, A., Keane, D., Mosse, D. Green, R. and Whittle, S. (2014). 'Caste in Britain: Socio-Legal Review'. Research Report no. 91. Manchester: EHRC. ISBN: 9781842064948

3.3b. Dhanda, M., Mosse, D., Waughray, A., Keane, D., Green, R., lafrati, S. and Mundy, J.K. (2014). 'Caste in Britain: Experts' Seminar and Stakeholders' Workshop'. Research Report no. 92. Manchester: EHRC. ISBN: 978184206496-2. Both 3.3a and 3.3b available on request.

Competitively funded project reports; reviewed by Dame Onora O'Neill, EHRC Chair.

3.4. Mosse, D. (2018). 'Caste and Development: Contemporary Perspectives on a Structure of Discrimination and Advantage'. *World Development*, 110, pp 422–436.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.06.003> **Since March 2020: Impact Factor 3.865 World Development's most downloaded article in the previous 90 days**

3.5. Mosse, D. and Nagappan, S.B. (2020). 'NGOs as Social Movements: Policy Narratives, Networks and the Performance of Dalit Rights in South India'. *Development and Change*, 52(1), pp 134–167 <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12614> **Peer-reviewed**

3.6. Mosse, D. (2020). 'Outside Caste? The Enclosure of Caste and Claims to Castelessness in India and the United Kingdom'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 62(1), pp 4–34. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417519000392> **Peer-reviewed**. 1,826 views (Jan-Nov 2020)

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

Research at SOAS enhanced effectiveness in addressing caste discrimination as a critical and continuing aspect of inequality in social, economic and religious life in India and the UK. In India, it (1) had an impact on NGO strategy and practice at the level of community action and regional networks, (2) empowered policy activists, and (3) influenced Indian Catholic Church policy. In the UK, the research (4) shaped international development NGO and government policy review and guidance, and (5) shaped policy debate and outcomes in relation to equality legislation.

1. Improved effectiveness of Dalit rights NGO strategy and practice in India

Mosse's collaborative action-research, 'Caste Out of Development', changed strategic thinking and action in Dalit-led NGO networks. It consolidated action-learning from 20 years' rights-based

interventions and networking among a range of Dalit and women's organisations in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The former director of the NGO NESAs and promoter of the largest regional Dalit NGO macro-network, the Human Rights Forum for Dalit Liberation, wrote that Mosse's research 'created platforms for new debate on caste, Dalit rights and development, regionally and nationally [and] gave NGO workers and others opportunities to reflect on the important issues they faced...[Mosse] has also discovered some underlying reasons for the failure of Dalit NGO networks to sustain themselves, and provided lessons for myself...and for the sector [that] have renewed relevance today in current political circumstances in India' **[5.1]**.

As a result of working with Mosse's research team, one regional Dalit-led network on the urgent land rights issue: (a) reframed and expanded their field of action (from 120 to approx. 900 villages) using statutory Annual Land Tribunals as a key forum for Dalit women to petition for the return of Dalit-reserved land **[5.2 p2]**; (b) adopted a novel and effective peaceful mode of land occupation to secure repossession of alienated land (including using religious and sport activity to signal land rights) **[5.2 p2–3]**; and (c) broadened the network across castes/communities by forming a state-wide Tamil Nadu Land Rights Federation. The latter allowed broad-based campaigns on amending the Land Acquisition laws, and advanced struggles against Dalit land alienation for industrial and other developments such as in Special Economic Zones (e.g., near Chennai) **[5.3a]**. The Convenor of the Dalit Land Rights Federation stated that, as a result of the research, 'In 5 villages, the Dalits are collectively using the [reclaimed] lands for farming as well as other agricultural activities, and ...are able to produce nearly half of their essential food needs' **[5.2 p5]**.

2. Enabled and empowered Dalit rights policy activists to bring about social change

Mosse's 'Caste Out of Development' (CoD) project enrolled Indian social and policy activists as research partners so as to empower their work to reach national policymakers and international NGOs. One research partner (at Social Watch-TN) used his analysis of the so-called 'Special Component Plan' – a 40-year faltering government commitment to allocate a population-proportionate budget to economic improvements for Dalits – to help turn this into State and National Law **[5.4a]**. Another activist research partner, Dr Nagappan went on to become Director of Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, an interface between researchers and social activists. He used expertise which he attributes to Mosse's project to conduct research for Action Aid on national-level land alienation; to provide critical inputs to landmark national legislation (September 2013) prohibiting humiliating employment of Dalits as 'manual scavengers'; and to provide leadership and undertake effective and high-profile activist research (including for NGO, private, public and UN bodies) on Dalit and informal/migrant worker rights, national/international regulations and conflict resolution **[5.3a]**.

3. Reframed policy of the Indian Catholic Church to respond to caste discrimination

'Mosse's research fed into and influenced the policy of the Catholic Church on caste, and commitment to action' says, Dr Fr Selvaraj, research partner on two of Mosse's projects, and member of the Drafting Committee of the Report of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI): 'Policy of Dalit Empowerment in the Catholic Church of India: An Ethical Imperative to Build Inclusive Communities' (Dec. 2016). Mosse's research contributed to the body of evidence behind this policy, which is 'the most comprehensive statement yet from the Church on its commitment to Dalit Christians with time-bound action plans', which Fr Selvaraj helped implement nationally **[5.3b]**. Mosse's prize-winning book *The Saint in the Banyan Tree* **[3.2]** brought a clarity to caste in Indian Christianity that influenced Church leaders and Dalit Christian activists. Following the latest in a series of ruptures and tragic violence in 2016, a senior Jesuit and policy change advocate wrote that Mosse's book 'has been my constant guide, companion and comfort. I have read and re-read it many times . . . Because of the clarity that it provides, I am able to find some balance in the midst of many pulls and pressures that come my way . . . giving space to about 30–40 Madurai Province Jesuits, who are angry but lost!' **[5.4a]**. A Memorandum sent to the Jesuit General in Rome, setting out specific recommendations on addressing caste discrimination, used Mosse's book to explain the context of present-day caste discrimination **[5.4b]**.

4. UK International development policy and practice changed, and actors empowered

An international conference on caste, inequality and development – 'Caste Out of the Shadows' (September 2015) – co-organised by a consortium of NGOs (including Dalit Solidarity Network

[DSN-UK], Christian Aid and Anti-Slavery International) brought researchers from Mosse's 'Caste Out of Development' project together with UK-based development NGOs and activists, funders and policymakers. Partners, such as DSN-UK, considered this a 'ground-breaking event' [5.6 p2]. Conference feedback showed participants enhanced their understanding of caste discrimination in development, informing dialogue between UK NGOs and their South Asian partners. An INGO policymaker covering the Asia region explained that 'to understand the context in which we work was very important'; while another indicated that '[t]he depth of observations and ideas shared will help to strengthen my understanding of the complex problems associated with caste'. [5.10 p4]. BBC World Service (Tamil) featured an interview with Mosse in its coverage of the event [5.15a].

The conference led to formation of the BOND 'Caste and Development' Interest Group in 2015, with the stated aim: 'to collaborate on advocacy, awareness-raising and capacity building to overcome barriers of caste in development' [5.11a]. BOND is the principal UK membership body for NGOs working in international development (with 420 members). In March 2019, BOND published a 42-page policy briefing report, 'Caste and Development: Tackling discrimination based on work and descent to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for all' [5.11b], substantially drawing on Mosse's work (e.g., [3.4]). The report was covered in national and regional print and television media (Reuters, Asian Independent, Global Policy) [5.15b-d]. The report built support for recognition of Dalits as a constituency in the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific mechanisms during the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development [5.5a p1].

Christian Aid wrote that Mosse's work 'has led to opportunities [for BOND] to feed into consultations by DFID and the Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI) on issues of UK Aid effectiveness [...] ensuring that UK Aid reaches the most marginalised groups' [5.5a p1-2]. ICAI Chief Commissioner has confirmed that through BOND, Mosse's research helped the ICAI identify caste as a neglected aspect in DFID's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) commitment to 'leave no one behind' [5.5b], as stated in ICAI's synthesis report covering 2015-2019 (The Current State of UK Aid, 2019) [5.5c]. The DFID official policy statement on Sustainable Development Goal 10 (March 2019) was amended to recognise caste discrimination as a barrier [5.16]. This extends the impact of Mosse's caste research earlier incorporated into DFID guidelines on water resources and World Bank country assistance strategies (India, Pakistan) pre-REF2021. Mosse's work also led to problem identification and action in UK NGO funders and their programme partners, for example, Village Service Trust (VST) who sought and took advice to research and reorganise networks of Dalit women's credit groups and address caste-based frailties [5.8].

5. Enriched public policy debate on caste and UK equality law to benefit the Dalit diaspora

Mosse's research on caste had a major impact on tackling caste-based discrimination in the diaspora through UK equality law. The research contributed to the 2014 Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Caste in Britain reports, which Mosse co-authored; and he co-led the expert and stakeholder events analysed [3.3a, 3.3b]. These events and reports on how to implement legislative change to make caste an aspect of race under the Equality Act 2010 were commissioned to inform the Government Equalities Office (GEO) [5.13], and 'to inform the contents of the Government consultation that was due to be issued in spring 2014', as Secretary of State for Women and Equalities Helen Grant stated in Parliament [5.12]. The reports informed government, prompted public debate on caste and UK law, improved understanding of deep divisions and possible consensus points among stakeholder views, and informed the GEO-commissioned feasibility study on measuring the extent of caste discrimination in Britain [5.14].

Between 2014 and 2017, the 'Caste in Britain' reports influenced perceptions on the controversial question of caste discrimination and legal protection in the UK (captured in media, blogs and published commentary), and enabled activists and parliamentarians to hold the equivocating government to account on implementing legal protections as a matter of justice and human rights [5.7]. They were cited and used in public statements, letters to the government and blogposts, including: a joint statement to the coalition government (on 10 June 2014) by 72 organisations opposing caste across ethnicity, regions and religions; statements from individual bodies such as the Dalit Solidarity Network-UK, Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA), Caste Watch UK and the Humanist UK. They informed the August 2018 House of Commons Briefing Paper on The Equality Act 2010: Caste Discrimination, and the 2015 Report of the Commission on Religion and

Belief in British Public Life: Living With Difference (chaired by Rt Hon Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss). The reports were also attacked by the anti-legislative change lobby, exemplified by a 2017 report from the National Council of Hindu Temples (UK), amidst a high-profile politicised controversy [3.6] covered in the Daily Mail quoting Mosse [5.15e].

When the delayed public consultation on 'Caste in Great Britain and equality law' opened in March 2017 (citing the EHRC research [5.14]), the question was revised to: should the government implement legislative change, or instead rely on case law, and repeal? This change arose from the judgement of a landmark employment tribunal appeal (Tirkey v Chandhok), the first-ever case won on account of proven discrimination on the basis of caste (as an aspect of ethnic identity). The legal counsel, Chris Milsom said: 'At the merits hearing in July 2015 Professors Dhanda and Mosse contributed very significantly to Ms Tirkey's success by advising on matters of anthropological and sociological understanding on crucial points during the hearing.' [5.9]

Mosse's research-based inputs into the legal case, the consultation and its fallout informed further public debate on legal reform. Lord Harries (Chair, All Party Parliamentary Group on Dalits) wrote that at 'the APPG for Dalits (to which the minister Penny Mordaunt was invited to hear from the voices of those most concerned by the decision to repeal), Professor Mosse gave a persuasive analysis of the bias in the government interpretation of the 16,000 consultation responses to the Peers and participants present. This has provided valuable input to briefing to be sent to parliamentarians in the event of repeal of the law being actively sought' [5.7 p5]. In partnership with Waughray (law) and Dhanda (philosophy and cultural politics), Mosse provided expert input and advice to the UK Stakeholder Group of anti-caste discrimination organisations, convened by the Dalit Solidarity Network UK, and gave the Government Equalities Office (GEO) advice on its anticipated 'guidance' on caste and caste discrimination to be 'issued by all public institutions' [5.7 p2]. The government's decision to repeal the duty to amend the Equality Act 2010 to include caste but instead give guidance, also resulted in the inclusion of caste by the Crown Prosecution Service in its guidance on Racist and Religious Hate Crime [5.17], a policy outcome which would not have occurred without the Caste in Britain research team input.

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

- 5.1. Letter from former Executive Director, NESA.
- 5.2. Letter from Convener, Dalit Mannurimai Koottamaippu (Dalit Land Rights Federation).
- 5.3. Activism in India: **a)** Statement from Dr Nagappan; **b)** Letter from Dr Fr Selvaraj Arulnathan.
- 5.4. Social and religious movements: **a)** Correspondence from Founder former Director Social WatchTN and **b)** Memorandum sent to the Jesuit General in Rome
- 5.5. Influencing international development: **a)** Letter from Policy Analyst, Christian Aid; **b)** Email from ICAI Chief Commissioner **c)** Report of the Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI),
- 5.6. Letter from Director, Dalit Solidarity Network UK.
- 5.7. Letter from Lord Harries of Pentregarth, Co-Chair APPG.
- 5.8. Letter from Secretary, Village Service Trust.
- 5.9. Statement from Barrister in the Tirkey vs Chandok tribunal.
- 5.10. 'Caste Out of the Shadows' (September 2015) – conference feedback.
- 5.11. BOND resources: **a)** BOND Caste and development landing page <https://www.bond.org.uk/groups/caste-and-development>; **b)** BOND Policy Briefing; Caste and Development
- 5.12. Hansard reference to EHRC reports ('Caste in Britain Study') by Mrs Helen Grant (MP), p6
- 5.13. GEO Caste in GB and Equality Law Consultation. Refers to 'Caste in Britain' pp9–10.
- 5.14. Measuring caste discrimination in Britain a feasibility study TNS BMRB.
- 5.15. Media file: **a)** Is caste oppression hindering Indian economic growth - BBC World Service, 9 Sept 2015 (Tamil, English); **b)** Addressing inequalities based on caste means stopping labour exploitation – Reuters, 28 Mar 2019; **c)** Caste discrimination is blocking progress on SDGs - Asian Independent, 24 Mar 2019; **d)** Caste discrimination is blocking progress on SDGs - Global Policy Journal, 24 Mar 2019; **e)** Modi's India on Britain's Doorstep? - Daily Mail, 2 Nov 2017.
- 5.16. Leaving no one behind: Our promise GOV.UK
- 5.17. CPS: 'Racist and Religious Hate Crime – Prosecution Guidance' (2019)