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Home is where you're born: Negotiating identity in the diaspora

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Abstract: Over 20 million Indians do not live in India, either as people of Indian origin (PIOs) or non-resident Indians (NRIs). This paper looks into the double diaspora situation of Indians who are descendants from indentured labourers in the Fiji islands but who, due to the political situation in Fiji, decided to migrate to New Zealand. The data come from a series of interviews conducted with first and second generation Fiji Indians in Wellington, New Zealand. The focus is on the discursive construction of identity in this double diaspora situation, particularly the role that 'place' plays in this process. The key concept investigated is that of HOME. Taking a dictionary definition as its starting point, the analysis of the interview data shows that none of the places construed as HOME as part of their identity is unproblematic for the community. In particular, the meaning components 'ancestral home', 'country of origin' and 'country of residence' contribute to the dynamic social realities of different members of the community. The data also reveal that there is an additional meaning component not included in the dictionary definition, namely the idea of the 'colonial country as cultural home'.

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Home is where you're born: negotiating identity in the diaspora

Marianne Hundt

1. Introduction

Colonial and post-colonial migration has resulted in the development of large diaspora communities. Initially, the term 'diaspora' referred to the dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel. In a broader reading, it is applied to the (global) dispersion of a people, usually with a similar heritage culture or homeland who (largely) maintain their cultural heritage. From a global perspective, the second largest diaspora is the Indian diaspora with over 20 million people living outside of India.¹ A large number of these live in an English-speaking country. Emigration from India started in the middle ages (phase 1); significant numbers left India during the colonial period (phase 2); post-colonial migration (phase 3) is socially quite distinct from earlier migration movements (see Lal 2006). With a different country of origin, 'place' obviously becomes an important aspect in identity construction among members of the (Indian) diaspora. Matters are further complicated in situations where there is additional migratory movement from the first to a secondary diaspora.

This paper is a case study on the secondary diaspora of Fiji Indians in New Zealand, a situation that is interesting for two reasons: First, despite having migrated to the Fiji Islands, Indians were the ethnic majority in the Fiji Islands at one point, a demographic situation that is unusual for diaspora communities, which are typically a minority in the new country. Second, the host community in New Zealand is small (i.e. a total population of just over 4 million) and relatively homogenous, making for greater visibility of the Fiji Indian secondary diaspora (see Friesen and Kearns 2008) than is the case in highly multi-cultural settings like those in the US. This study adds to the growing research on transnationalism, such as the work by Friesen and Kearns (2008: 222), who look at the development of a diaspora consciousness with its dual or multiple identities and the resulting cultural hybridisation in the Indian Diaspora in New Zealand. The present study approaches the topic from a more linguistic angle and focuses on the Fiji Indian secondary diaspora rather than looking at the Indian minority in New Zealand as a whole. Using data from qualitative interviews, it aims to investigate discursive identity construction with a focus on the role that 'place' plays in this

¹ See (see <http://indiandiaspora.nic.in/>, last accessed 27/01/2014). The Indian Ministry of External Affairs distinguishes between 'non-resident Indians' (NRIs) and 'people of Indian origin' (PIOs).

process,² i.e. this study uses a hermeneutic approach to identify narrative strategies that are used to construct identities.

In what follows, I provide some background information on the Fiji Indian Diaspora in Fiji and New Zealand (section 2), before discussing the data and methodology (section 3). The main part of this paper presents the results on discursive identity construction in the interviews (section 4) with a focus on the concept of HOME.³

2. The Fiji Indian Diaspora(s)

2.1 Indians in Fiji

Indians who migrated to Fiji are largely part of the colonial diaspora: indentured labourers were recruited to work the sugar cane plantations.⁴ The contract or ‘agreement’ that they signed came to be referred to as *girmit*, and the indentured labourers referred to themselves as *girimityas*. In *girmit* migration between 1879 and 1916, almost 61,000 people arrived from India to work on the sugar cane plantations of the newly established British colony. The majority (approximately 45,000) came from modern-day Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the north, and the remainder from the South of India. They were from different casts and represented a cross-section, socially, of Indian agricultural society (Lal 2006: 46ff.). From 1900 onwards, free Indian settlers arrived in Fiji, who were mainly of Punjabi and Gujarati origin (the former mostly agriculturalists, the latter merchants).

As in other contexts of the colonial Indian diaspora, a special, local variety of Hindi developed in Fiji through language and dialect contact, while also having characteristics of a former pidgin variety (see Siegel 1987). Fiji Hindi is the mother tongue of Fiji Indians in Fiji today, but it remains primarily a spoken variety with low prestige; in schools which teach English, standard Hindi is used alongside English (Shameem 1995: 22). Moreover, English is favoured over Hindi as a school subject and medium of instruction by the Indian community (see e.g. Geraghty 1984: 70).

² Other aspects of identity construction, such as self-labelling and comments on language use and maintenance of the heritage language are investigated in Hundt (in preparation). The relation of identity construction and use of zero articles is addressed in Hundt (in press).

³ The use of small caps indicates that the word is used as a label for a concept rather than merely as a word of the English language.

⁴ The ‘recruitment’ did not always happen on a truly voluntary basis, and working conditions on the plantations were very close to slavery (see e.g. Sanadhya ²2003). Fiji was the last country (after South Africa, Mauritius and the Caribbean) to recruit valuable workforce in this way. Interestingly, the history of the indentured Indians in Fiji does not find coverage in the local school curriculum (see http://girmitunited.org/girmit/?page_id=883)

Another important development in Fiji relates to the Hindu religion.⁵ Because caste distinctions were difficult to maintain, wandering preachers advocating a more egalitarian religious philosophy gained influence. They helped establish a new organizational form of worship, namely small groups singing from the Ramayan, a central Hindu religious epic; these groups are called ‘Ramayan mandalis’ (see introduction to Sanadhya ²2003). With respect to cultural developments in general, it is important to note that there has been no close contact with the indigenous Fijians, as Srebrnik (2008: 91) points out:

There has been little in the way of cultural borrowing or adaptation and virtually no inter-marriage between the groups. As a result, and in contrast to more integrated countries such as Mauritius or Trinidad, no ‘creolised’ culture has developed.

After the end of the indenture system, Indians often remained in Fiji, farming the land they leased from the Fijians (the original colonial land policy ensured that 83 % of all land in Fiji remained in the hands of the Fijians, making land-ownership of Indians in Fiji next to impossible). Fiji became independent in 1970, but a series of military coups (starting in 1987) and the resulting political instability as well as continuing racial tensions led to an exodus of Indians from Fiji.⁶ Lal (2006: 382) sums up the problematic situation of Indians in Fiji as follows:

After more than a century, Indo-Fijians still struggle for political equality in the land of their birth. The deeply felt but often unacknowledged need of the human soul to belong, to have a place of one’s own, to be rooted, is denied them. How long, they ask, should a people live in a place before they are allowed to call it home? ‘From Immigration to Emigration’; that may in time come to be the epitaph of Fiji’s Indo-Fijian community.

It is important that alongside political equality, the chance to purchase land in order to be able to put down roots is closely tied to the definition of *home* in this evaluation. The situation that Lal describes explains why, for well over two decades, there has been a trend for out-migration among the Fiji Indian population to countries like the US and Canada, but also to neighbouring countries in the Pacific, i.e. Australia and New Zealand. Migration in some cases led to the dispersion of families, some of whom now have personal networks extending to several countries in the South Pacific, but also to the Northern Hemisphere (particularly the US and Canada).

⁵ Note that the majority of the Indian population in Fiji are Hindus (76.7%), but there are also some Muslims (15.9%) and, as a result of missionary efforts, converted Christians of various denominations (6.1%); see <http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/> (page last visited 3/2/2014).

⁶ For the history of Indians in Fiji, see also the report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, chapter 22 (<http://indiandiaspora.nic.in/diasporapdf/chapter22.pdf>, last accessed 3/2/2014). Whether the new constitution and the elections announced for September 2014 (the first since the 2009 constitutional crisis) will substantially improve the situation of Indians in Fiji remains to be seen.

2.2 Secondary diaspora: Fiji Indians in New Zealand

Obtaining accurate statistics on the Fiji Indian population in the secondary New Zealand diaspora is difficult, as the census data tend to list people as ‘Fiji-born’ and do not give additional information on the ethnic background of those who emigrated from Fiji, i.e. the figures subsume ethnic Fijians and Fiji Indians. The second-generation Fiji Indians do not appear in the statistics at all.⁷ In the self-identification part of the New Zealand census, ‘Fiji Indian’ or ‘Indo-Fijian’ are not provided as labels, either. The 2006 census gives 37,746⁸ as the figure for people of Fiji origin; a more conservative figure is given in the *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings* (see Table 1); this increase reflects the 1987 and 2000 post-coup influx of Fiji Indians in New Zealand.⁹

| | NZ | Fiji | India | Other | Total |
|------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------|
| 1981 | 5,160 44.5% | 1,617 14.0% | 3,615 31.2% | 1,185 10.2% | 11,577 |
| 2001 | 17,946 28.65% | 19,593 31.3% | 19,053 30.4% | 6,054 9.7% | 62,646 |

Table 1: Birthplace of Indian residents in New Zealand (1981, 2001)

An informant explicitly commented on the labelling issue on official forms in New Zealand as a problem for identity construction:

- (1) we had actually just before coming here/ we were at my house and uhm we was sitting down and talking uhm with my mum// and the whole Indo-Fijian/ Fiji-Indian/ uhm a lot of New Zealand forms that you fill out/ you know/ legal documents for passports for statistical data doesn't give you an option to tick whether you're Indo-Fijian or Fiji-Indian// and so you've always/ always always have to tick /other/ and put down// and so we were having a debate at home just before we were coming actually as to/ you know/ what what do we classify ourselves/ and I was/ uh my mum was/ we are from Fiji/ but we are Indians ‘cos our heritage is Indian/ so we would be Fiji-Indians// (NK, first-generation, 20s, female)¹⁰

The religious practice of the Ramayan Mandali mentioned in section 2.1 is still maintained in the secondary diaspora in New Zealand, and for the Hindus in the community it is very much a central aspect of being a Fiji Indian (as opposed to being simply an Indian) and a

⁷ See, for instance, the New Zealand census homepage at <http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/2006-census-data/quickstats-about-culture-identity/quickstats-about-culture-and-identity> [last visited 9/22/2008]

⁸ <http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/2006-census-data> (last accessed 9/22/2008).

⁹ <http://www.stats.govt.nz/datasets/population/census-of-population-and-dwellings.htm> (last accessed 8/10/2013)

¹⁰ The initials given refer to the anonymised speaker codes in my interview data. All quotations from the interviews faithfully represent the original wording and thus also reproduce lexical and grammatical features that are typical of the individual’s (spoken) language use.

means of maintaining social networks (more so for the first-than for second-generation migrants):

- (2) they don't do that in India/ they don't have uh small groups uh functioning as a religious group/ and that's a very much a Fiji's thing/ and the book we were reading which is Ramayan/ it's uh the- the way we sing we get together as a group and we read and sing the Ramayan/ that's not how they do it in India/ even though the book came from India/ it's how our grandparents when they came to Fiji/ and I suppose at that time they were all getting together in the evenings after hard day's work they would get together in the evenings an-- instead of just talking about things they had this book to read. (PN, first-generation, 49 years old, male)

In addition to the Ramayan Mandali, Fiji Indians in the Wellington area hold regular meetings at the Fiji Indian Association (FIA), and the community essentially run the Hindi school.¹¹ Despite the establishment of the heritage language school in 1995, a previous study by Shameem (1998) had established relatively high (but declining) proficiency levels in Fiji Hindi among Fiji-born teenagers in the community; more importantly still, she found evidence of a declining use of Fiji Hindi in the home and predicted the imminent loss of Fiji and standard Hindi in the community.¹² Apart from teaching the heritage language, cultural ties with India are also maintained via classical Indian dance. Finally, since 2002, Diwali (the Indian festival of light) has been celebrated publicly in Wellington (see Johnson and Figgins 2005).

3. Data and methodology

The data come from a series of interviews with members of the Fiji Indian community in Wellington, New Zealand between November 2007 and February 2008. People were interviewed either individually, in pairs, or sometimes in groups. Interviews ranged in length from 30 minutes to about 2 1/2 hours. A total of 23 interviews (approximately 30 hours) were recorded. Both first- and second-generation Fiji Indians are included in the sample. The youngest were 13 years old at the time of recording, and the oldest informant was 75. They come from virtually all walks of life: government officials, managers, taxi drivers, housewives, students, journalists and social workers. The majority of the informants are Hindus, but there are also some Christians and a (converted) Muslim. A few informants are married to non-Indians

¹¹ For Hindi School, see <http://www.hrc.co.nz/race-relations/te-ngira-the-nz-diversity-action-programme/participants-2013/wellington-hindi-school>. In addition to the *Fiji Indian Association*, there is a separate *Wellington Indian Association*, whose members are Gujarati rather than Fiji Indians, and who operate the community's Gujarati School.

¹² Shameem collected her data in 1991 and 1993. Even though my study did not attempt to validate her results, it was obvious that the youngest children at Hindi school, while probably maintaining a good level of passive knowledge, were struggling even with simple utterances like the Hindi equivalent of *I am a boy, my name is...*

and two second-generation informants are from a mixed marriage. It proved difficult to obtain data from male teenagers, and the final sample therefore has a somewhat skewed gender distribution (see Table 2). The fact that the sample is skewed towards the teenage population in the group of second-generation Fiji Indians reflects the local situation: with large-scale migration from Fiji starting in the aftermath of the 1987 coup, second-generation Indians from Fiji are mostly in their teenage years or even younger. The one exception in my sample is Anand Satyanand, then Governor General of New Zealand, whose parents migrated to New Zealand in 1911.¹³

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| First generation | 10s | 20s | 30s | 40s | 50s | 60s | older | Total |
| male | - | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 12 |
| female | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | - | 16 |
| Second generation | 10s | 20s | 30s | 40s | 50s | 60s | older | |
| male | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 |
| female | 7 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 7 |
| Total | 10 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 37 |

Table 2: Social background of informants from the Fiji Indian community in Wellington, New Zealand

The interviews did not follow a set agenda. Broadly, they can be conceived of as ‘topic-oriented interviews’ in the sense of Wodak et al. (1999: 3) in that they aimed at providing the informants with an opportunity to construct their identity/ies while narrating their experiences. Such interviews ‘are excellent processes through which important concepts [...] are being “co-constructed” during an ongoing discussion’ (Wodak et al. 1999: 3). According to Wodak et al. (1999: 14)

Narrative identity allows various, different, partly contradictory circumstances and experiences to be integrated into a coherent temporal structure, thus making it possible to sketch a person’s identity against the background of a dynamic constancy model which does justice to the coherence of human life.

In the interviews I conducted, the initial question usually was something like ‘What has life been like for you as an Indian from Fiji living in New Zealand?’ The aim was to facilitate narratives about people’s experience of migration and being a member of a minority, including aspects such as maintenance of transnational ties, attitude towards languages and varieties of language, religious practices (whenever participants raised this issue) as well as a reflection on what they identified as. The latter topic was addressed through the issue of self-labelling (see Hundt, in preparation). In terms of the methodology employed, this paper builds on previous work by Wodak et al. (1999: 15). In a hermeneutic-abductive approach the informants’

¹³ Apart from this case (a public figure), informants’ personal details were anonymised.

identity construction is analysed as a process of arranging, interpreting and reinterpreting events in their lives, allowing for multiple (and even contradicting) identities to evolve from the narrative. Particularly interesting will be those comments in which an informant juxtaposes his or her construal of a concept/situation against the backdrop of a discursive strand in their own community or the host community.

4. The role of ‘place’ in identity construction

One aim of the interviews was to investigate how people construe their ethnic identity (their sameness and uniqueness vis à vis their country or countries of origin and/or their host community). Obviously, identity construction is a multi-faceted process in which informants may draw on various concepts. Here, the focus is on the role that reference to ‘place’ plays in this process. More specifically, I will look into the construal of place(s) as HOME.

The concept of HOME is a highly complex one. A look at the entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) therefore proves a good starting point for the investigation, as it nicely illustrates the highly polysemous nature of the word: the noun alone has 13 meanings (with additional subsenses). Of particular interest here are those uses of *home* without an article or possessive,¹⁴ which OED defines as

- (a) The place where one lives or was brought up, with reference to the feelings of belonging, comfort, etc., associated with it. (*OED* s.v. *home* n. A. 2b.)
- (b) A refuge, a sanctuary; a place or region to which one naturally belongs or where one feels at ease. (*OED* s.v. *home* n. A. 4)
- (c) A person's own country or native land. Also: the country of one's ancestors. (*OED* s.v. *home* n. A. 5)

By extension, the word *home* also refers to its inhabitants, i.e. the people living in a place called *home* may contribute an important part to the meaning complex of the concept:

- (d) The family or social unit occupying a house; a household. (*OED* s.v. *home* n. A. 2d.)

Initially, we must acknowledge that the aspects of the concept HOME as described in OED very much reflect those of a non-migrant population. It is obvious that in a complex diaspora setting as the one found in the New Zealand Fiji Indian community, these dimensions of the concept HOME do not overlap to the extent they do for non-migrant populations, nor do the component parts of the individual senses. In particular the discontinuity between the ‘native land’ and the ‘country of one’s ancestors’ may pose a problem for identity construction. One first-generation informant therefore clearly distinguishes between HOME as the

¹⁴ According to OED, the use of *home* without an article ‘is prob. connected historically with such constructions as *at home*, *from home*, *to go home*, etc.; but it appears also to be connected with the generalized or partly abstract sense, in which home is conceived as a state as well as a place ...’ (*OED* s.v. *home* n. A. 2b.).

place where one is brought up and the ancestral HOME; the extract is also of interest because he openly denies the legitimacy of New Zealand being construed as HOME:

- (3) Well home is where you're born/ the way I look at it is home is where you're born and uh while India is our ancestral home we were born in Fiji and uh we can't deny that/ so we grew up there we have very pleasant and fond memories of growing up of schooling of education of our parents uh thriving/ so how can we not have also good memories of that country/ we remember the rivers we remember where we swam we remember where we used to dive from the bridges we remember swinging from the trees into the rivers/ so Fiji is home/ and anyone who says that- uh any Fiji Indian who says New Zealand is their home I think is playing around with- uh playing around with words a bit (SaS, first-generation male, in his 60s)

In his definition of the concept HOME, the informant thus privileges the notion of 'regional origin' and over 'current residence', which are combined in OED sense (a) while showing an awareness of a rival discourse in his own speech community.

For one of my informants, the ancestral home plays a central part in her identity construction; she reports about her emotional experience on her first visit to India as a tourist, recalling that she did not want to be a tourist but that India made her feel 'grounded' because of the strong sense of belonging that she had:

- (4) and just arriving in India was uh like flying over Mumbai just about the land I was crying like this is me this is me yeah and this is where I come from/ and it- it gave me a real-/ I think it just grounded me in what I was. ... / nothing nothing changed about me but there was something in my heart that- it's very very hard to explain what- what it really meant/ where it was just like I'm here I'm here and my long- my long long dream has come true now/ and um uh and- and walking around streets of India I didn't want to be a tourist at all/ I didn't want to be a tourist/ and D kept saying "I know what you want to do. I know what you- but you can't do anything else." and then he used to say to the girls "Mum just blends in so well." I- I just wanted to be me/ part of India (SN, first-generation female, in her 50s)

For this informant, the visit to the ancestral homeland thus strengthened a pre-existing emotional tie with her ancestral home. Interestingly, one young male informant from the second generation said he just happened to live in New Zealand and as HOME he gave Fiji or India, even though he had never actually been to India. In other words, for him, the 'ancestral home' aspect that forms part of OED sense (a) seemed to play an important role for identity construction, more so than the notion of HOME as the place where one lives.¹⁵ However, many Fiji Indians who had travelled to India remarked on the experience of having been perceived as outsiders by the locals:

¹⁵ On the importance of ancestral originals, see also the series of documentary films (Milaap Discover Roots) on the roots of Fiji Indian descendants of girmitiyas by Satish Rai at http://girmitunited.org/girmit/?page_id=2340.

- (5) even though I look Indian/ oh they could spot you/ and I was wearing an Indian outfit/ they would spot me miles away and know/ I was not from there// ... (NK, first-generation female, in her 20s)

Despite her attempts at ‘fitting in’ with the population in the ancestral home by wearing what she considered appropriate clothes, the informant narrates her experience of being ‘othered’ by the locals. One first-generation informant questioned the central role played by the ancestral home on the basis that Fiji Indians no longer had family connections with India:

- (6) although people make it out that we are from India but there is nobody who knows us in India uh uh uh you know uh nobody- it's not your home (SM, first-generation male, in his 60s)

My informants also report of being ‘othered’ in New Zealand by recent immigrants from the Indian subcontinent as not ‘fully’ Indian on the basis of having been born elsewhere:

- (7) they have like a different perception of us// like you're not really an Indian/ because you're from Fiji// which/ I've gotten into some fights/ <laughs> because of that/ 'cause there was a girl on my bus/ who was from India/ who was born there and she lived in New Zealand now// and uhm she tried to tell me that I wasn't really Indian// ... uhm so she tried to tell me that I wasn't Indian// and then I told her that I could speak my language/ and I could read it and everything/ so I must be// and my parents are both Indian// and my grandparents are Indian// and like I'm fully Indian blooded and everything// and she still tried to tell me that I wasn't/ just because I was from Fiji// (AN, second-generation female, in her 10s)

Against the privileged role of regional origin in India brought forward by another migrant, the Fiji Indian informant refers to the role of language and ancestry as more important aspects for making a claim to being Indian, downplaying the role of ‘place’ for identity construction. At the same time, evidence in my data shows overlap with what Voigt-Graf (2004: 177) reports from her study across the Tasman: ‘In the wake of this secondary migration, Indo-Fijians have realised that their social and cultural distance from subcontinental Indians is too great to be narrowed by a shared ethnicity’.

For many first-generation migrants, one reason to become involved in organisations such as the *Fiji Indian Association* (FIA) is that they still feel strong ties with their country of birth; this is evident e.g. in their efforts to help people ‘back home’ in the moment of crisis. During my stay in the community, flooding had made many people in Fiji homeless, and members of FIA collected funds to help them. But Fiji Indians for obvious reasons also have a strong interest in the political developments in their country of origin:

- (8) Fiji is very much our home so what happens there it just concerns us (SM, first-generation male, in his 60s)

The construal of Fiji as HOME is not a given, however, otherwise my informants would not have had to make it explicit, e.g. in talking about how they actively worked at maintaining transnational ties in the early years after migration:

- (9) and every one and half to two years- one and a half years at least we took the girls home/ and when I say home it was Fiji and connecting with people (SN, first-generation female, in her 50s)

It is unsurprising that the first-generation migrant quoted in (3) and (9), by making use of the notion of HOME as one's native land, could construe Fiji as the only true HOME. However, other first-generation migrants point out that the connection between upbringing and a sense of belonging (one that includes all aspects of living and extends to equality with respect to political rights) is not a given, either, and that therefore Fiji is problematic as HOME:

- (10) in spite of living three four generations in Fiji we never been made to feel at home/ well/ we were made to feel at h-- home on a social level on a very local community level/ definitely/ because we worked to-- <unclear> alongside with Fijians/ we studied with them/ schooled with them/ played with them/ worked with them <unclear>/ but politically we have never been allowed to feel that we are Fijian. (SM, first-generation male, in his 60s)

In another interview, a mother and daughter co-constructed Fiji as a place from which they were alienated because of political changes that had taken place since their migration:

- (11) Daughter: when you come back from Fiji/ it feels like home now, New Zealand
 Mother: when you go to Fiji now we don't like it
 Daughter: well, things- a lot of things have changed/ since we've left we've had another cu-- coup. (KD, first-generation female in her 20s and MD, first-generation female in her 50s)

In a similar vein, two teenage second-generation informants, whose parents went back to Fiji after their daughter had been born, did not experience Fiji as their home, mainly because they were being 'othered' by the children in the school/kindergarten they attended in their parents' country of origin:

- (12) They make you feel like you're from somewhere else (CR, second-generation female, in her 10s)

With the 'original' home country being problematic as a concept of HOME because of feelings of alienation, it is not surprising that quite a few first-generation Fiji Indians have made New Zealand their new HOME; for some of them, this also has to do with the fact that they spent an important part of their adult life in the secondary diaspora (see example (13)); others simply point to the length of their stay (see (14)):

- (13) I came here as a student to study. And um this is home <laughter>. This is home. I came here I ca-- I've never worked in uh Fiji. So I- um my only- the- the childhood and

schooling aspect is Fiji a-- after that New Zealand is home to me.\ (SB, first-generation female, in her 40s)

- (14) uh when somebody asks me where I am from I mean I- I don't have any problems saying that I am from Fiji/ that's where I come from/ I - uh New Zealand is my home now and I qualify that and I have lived here for you know twenty years. (PM, first-generation male, in his 60s)

For first-generation immigrants, an important aspect of making the secondary diaspora their HOME is the fact that large-scale migration from Fiji often extended to whole (extended) families rather than individuals. It is the extended OED sense (d) (the identification of HOME with the people who live there) that thus makes an important contribution to construing New Zealand as their new HOME:

- (15) when I'm there I feel Fiji is my home but once I'm here I feel New Zealand is my home <laughing>/ yeah/ It's like that/ because now we have got lots of relations here lots of friends/ It's- everything is like in Fiji/ ... (MS, first-generation female, in her 50s)
- (16) we sort of then start to uh grow roots when you- when you are in one place and- and- and now it seemed like this is really my home in the sense that not really I have a- I have a building as a home but I also have the family around I have lot of friends around and you know eh every time y-- ... I don't think I could say the same thing of Fiji if I were to go back to Fiji I know I still have a brother there and a sister there <unclear> that probably would be okay but/ not having a home not having a base uh and not having uh th-- the friends or- or uh ah mates that we used to have that time they probably all migrated/ so um I think this is more of a home than Fiji at the moment <laughs silently> (SM, first-generation male, in his 60s)

Similarly, an informant (DP, first-generation, in his 40s) for whom *back home* is a frequent collocation in the interview, talks about having had to leave relatives and friends behind when he migrated, and a more recent migrant from Fiji (AR, first-generation, in his 20s), who came to New Zealand only two years prior to participating in the study, kept referring to Fiji as *back home*.

For some second-generation members of the community, maintenance of transnational ties through regular visits to Fiji to spend time with relatives who had stayed behind plays an important role in being able to construe Fiji as HOME:

- (17) a. sometimes we've been there for like six weeks like the whole of summer/ but um yeah it's still a really big important part/ I wouldn't say it's home but kind of as home but not as much as New Zealand but I don't know/ it's kind of hard to explain
b. I probably would call New Zealand more home but it still is like a big part of me because I go there quite often/ 'cause my grandparents still live there so I go back like every two three years (SnN, second-generation female, in her 20s)

Even though first-generation informants often referred to New Zealand as (their new) HOME, putting down roots in the secondary diaspora is not unproblematic. At times, the reason for this is related to ethnic stereotyping as the following informant (18) points out – the core issue

here seems to be a hierarchy of immigrants when it comes to the right of claiming New Zealand as HOME:

- (18) Some of the people who ask this question are themselves foreigners/ ... And invariably uh they may not have lived here as long as we have but they seem to be an agency in themselves to ask that question because to a degree I believe they feel uncomfortable when somebody has lived here longer than they have. Because they would like to associate themselves as being more Kiwi than we are, simply because they happen to be white. (PM, first-generation male, in his 60s)

Against what is perceived as the dominant discourse of ‘ethnic hierarchy’, which tends to privilege whites over non-whites in their right to claim a local identity, this informant advances ‘length of residency’ as a more legitimate argument to claiming a place as a new HOME.

As stated above, the OED entry on *home* that I took as a starting point for this section was not written with (post-)colonial settings in mind, so it comes as no surprise that one dimension of the concept HOME is missing from the definition altogether, namely that of the ‘colonial country as cultural home’, which – through education, exposure to literature, language, etc. – can also be part of the complex tapestry of meanings associated with the concept of HOME:

- (19) actually when I was in England/ I really/ strangely enough/ e-- even though I think that England had a very evil empire/ uh I I'm not a person who has uh supported colon-- colonialism in any form/ but in a strange way *I felt at home in England*// maybe it was the English language/ maybe it was part of the fact that I was steeped in English literature/ all my education was in English/ and there were places in England that I saw that I identified with because they were part of my studies// and uhm it it it it was just amazing// (SaS, first-generation male, in his 60s)

Note that this is the same informant who feels very strongly about Fiji being the ‘real’ home of all Fiji Indians, and who denies his fellow countrymen the right to construe New Zealand as HOME (see example (3)). What comment (19) brings to the fore, however, is that aspects of cultural life can create a feeling of belonging and thus of HOME. Obviously, this also includes cultural experiences relating to the traditions that the *giritiyas* brought to Fiji with them, such as music. For members of the community, such components can evoke the concept of HOME away from their actual physical home, e.g. when travelling on a plane:

- (20) when I sat in the- in the Air India and suddenly they had this sitar music playing/ I- I thought/ my god it feels so heavenly/ just like back home (SM, first-generation male, in his 60s)

This is the same informant who insisted on India not qualifying as HOME because of the lack of family connections (see comment (6)), who still felt both a strong connection with Fiji as his former HOME and therefore a link with current local developments (as evidenced in (8)) while at the same time being aware of a strong sense of alienation because of troubled rela-

tions between native Fijians and Fiji Indians (see remark (10)). Thus, currently, New Zealand feels more like HOME to him than Fiji, mainly on account of having been able to purchase a house and the extended sense of HOME as a place one shares with relatives and friends (i.e. the ‘household’ sense of HOME), as he elaborates in (16).

5. Conclusion

Starting from central meaning components of the concept of HOME in OED, this study showed how these are used in the narrative identity construction in the secondary diaspora of Fiji Indians in Wellington, New Zealand. The analysis shows that the multi-layered meanings make up the complex concept of HOME for members of this community. They also show that none of the places construed as HOME as part of their identity is unproblematic. While the concept of HOME in OED is represented as relatively static, the social realities for twice-migrants require a more dynamic concept that allows for a discontinuity of ‘ancestral home’, ‘country of origin’ and ‘country of residence’ at different points in an individual’s life. It is therefore often impossible to unambiguously assign the OED senses to individual acts of discursive identity construction in the interview data, for instance because meaning components such as ‘native land’ and ‘ancestral home’ are discontinuous or because feelings of ‘belonging’ are complicated by processes of alienation from the ‘ancestral home’, the ‘country of origin’ and the ‘country of residence’. Moreover, the results of my analyses show that the different meaning components are of varying importance for individuals in the community (even among members of the same generation). Finally, the case study gives evidence of a meaning component of HOME that is entirely absent from the OED entry, namely the idea of the ‘colonial country as cultural home’. Despite the fact that the online entry was updated in September 2011, this shows that the dominant discourses on which the description of meanings of HOME in OED are based neglect the realities of post-colonial speakers of English.

Before I set out to do my fieldwork in New Zealand, I – rather naively, perhaps – had expected to find a pan-Indian identity, regardless of whether people came directly from India (during the colonial and post-colonial times), as migrants of the current diaspora of professionals or as members of a double diaspora (in this case from the Fiji Islands). During my fieldwork, I realised that that was not quite what was happening. Instead, people in the secondary Fiji Indian diaspora were not considered ‘real’ Indians by some more recent migrants from the subcontinent. However, in a generation or two, with language shift towards English and adaptation to the linguistic context in New Zealand, a pan-Indian identity might develop that transcends the borders between Fiji Indians, Indian Indians and New Zealand Indians. This is also supported by evidence from double diaspora Indians elsewhere, as Rajend Mes-

thrie (9/30/2008) related in a posting to a seminar on the Indian Diaspora that we taught jointly:¹⁶

From anecdotes told to me by “double diaspora” Indians in the USA and UK, it seems that SOME Indians from South Africa were looked down upon by first generation direct migrants from India. But as the diaspora in the West gets older (more than one generation) then these differences get ironed out.

We need more studies on the Indian diaspora in which different migration strands meet in order to verify whether this might be a general trend.

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¹⁶ For background on this interdisciplinary e-seminar, see Fischer-Hornung et al. (2009).

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