

'It's not Cricket': Colonial Legacies and Contemporary Inequalities

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Abstract Cricket has been historically significant in defining notions of English national identity and continues to feature in debates over the inclusion/exclusion of immigrants in British society. British-African-Caribbean players are well represented in the English game but participation appears mediated by ethnic group membership. This contemporary pattern can only be understood when contextualized within the historical development of cricket in the Caribbean and, in particular, the struggles between whites and blacks and between the white elites. Over-representation in certain cricketing roles has been an ever-present feature of this negotiation; contemporary inequality is, therefore, largely a consequence of the legacy of British Imperialism.

Cricket, Englishness and Imperial Relations

While there are many British-African-Caribbean athletes in a wide range of sports (in particular soccer, athletics and basketball) cricket provides a more illuminating example of the inclusion and exclusion – the integration and separatism – of this minority ethnic group than perhaps any other single sport. As Eitzen (1989: 305) notes, the social significance of the entry of blacks into baseball was greater than that for other sports because of baseball's status as America's national game. Whilst, currently, soccer might be said to be the national game of England, cricket is the game which, more than any other, is widely held to express English national identity. Consequently, it is cricket which has witnessed more regular and more frequent 'racial' controversy than any other sport in the United Kingdom (U.K.).¹

Cricket was first referred to as the 'national game' by Lord William Lennox in 1840 (Sandiford 1998: 22), but a more revealing account of the interdependence of cricket and national identity is provided by Thomas Hughes in his classic book, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857). Cricket 'is more than a game. It's an institution' states Tom. 'Yes' his friend Arthur agrees, 'the birthright of British boys old and young, as *habeas corpus* and trial by jury are of British men' (cited in Brookes 1978: 86). Playing the game, it was widely believed, helped inculcate many of the qualities fundamental to Victorian gentility and manliness and the widespread acceptance of this ideology served to concretize the game's cultural significance. As a measure of this ideological predominance, we can see that a variety of cricketing

phrases – such as ‘playing with a straight bat’ (meaning honest, upright and steadfast), and ‘it’s not cricket’ (unfair play or action) – became, and remain, part of the *lingua franca*.

Just as cricket was used to inculcate notions of gentility and manliness to boys in Victorian English public schools so, it was argued by educators and leading cricket administrators alike, could it be used to ‘civilize’ the people of the Empire and strengthen the bonds between the colonized and the ‘Mother Country’. Lord Harris, President of the MCC and a firm believer in the civilizing mission of the game, claimed that ‘cricket has done more to draw the Mother Country and the Colonies together than years of beneficial legislation could have done’ (cited in Holt 1990: 227). To know and understand cricket, though initially a signifier of Englishness, came to be a signifier of inclusion into the British Empire more widely. As Pelham Warner, a white Trinidadian who went on to captain the England cricket team and become Secretary of the MCC stated:

Cricket has become more than a game. It is an institution, a passion, one might say a religion. It has got into the blood of the nation, and wherever British men and women are gathered together there will the stumps be pitched. North, South, East and West, throughout the Empire, from Lord’s to Sydney, from Hong Kong to the Spanish Main, cricket flourishes (cited in Bradley 1990: 15).

Conversely, a failure to understand cricket led to exclusion and derision. The use of the terms ‘French Cut’ and ‘Chinese Cut’ to describe miss-hit shots served to reinforce the notion that only British people (in the widest Imperial sense) could play the game (Cashman 1998: 122). Similarly, ‘French Cricket’ is a term used to describe a simplified, less formal version of the game. At a time when many *international* sports governing bodies were being formed (the International Olympic Committee, 1894; the Fédération Internationale de Football Associations, 1904; the Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur (swimming), 1908; the International Amateur Athletic Federation, 1912) an international ruling body for cricket was established under the name the *Imperial* Cricket Conference (ICC) in 1909. The ‘Mother Country’s’ dominance of the world game was clear; the President and Secretary of the then British governing body of cricket, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), were installed as *ex-officio* Chairman and *ex-officio* Secretary of the ICC respectively.² Although in 1965 the ICC changed its name to the *International* Cricket Conference, it remains dominated by member states which have, at some time, belonged to the British Commonwealth or former British Empire. All the current nations with ‘test-match’, that is full international, status were formerly part of the Empire: England; Australia; South Africa; West Indies; New Zealand; India; Pakistan; Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh.³

Although the game has become far more 'global' during the 1990s, ex-Empire nations still account for 39 of the 74 current member states.⁴

The interdependency of English identity and the Imperial experience is appositely summarized by Maguire and Stead (1996: 17):

in the habitus of male upper class Englishness, cricket *embodies* the qualities of fair play, valour, graceful conduct on and off the pitch and steadfastness in the face of adversity. Cricket is seen to represent what 'England' is and gives meaning to the identity of being 'English'. The sport fixes 'England' as a focus of identification in English emotions. Cricket reflects and reinforces the tendency in English culture and identity to hark back to past glories. The 'golden age' of cricket is at the high point of Empire.

Cricket and Contemporary 'Race' Relations

So central is cricket to notions of British and, more particularly, English national identity that, in recent years, images of the game have often been cited during wider debates over national sovereignty and independence. Maguire has illustrated how cricket became a central reference point in debates about the U.K.'s changing relationships with Australia (Maguire 1993) and during debates over the country's place and role in the European Community (Maguire 1994). Marqusee (1998: 15) has argued that, 'For the English it is a point of pride that Americans cannot understand cricket . . . for the Americans, everything they took, until recently, to be "English" – tradition, politeness, deference, gentle obscurantism – seems to be epitomised in "cricket"'. Central to all these discussions is the question of what it means to be English, part of the British Empire, or an outsider to these groups.

As the vast majority of post-Second World War British immigrants have been drawn from the nations of the former Empire, cricket has come to be highly significant for many of the people who form the minority ethnic communities in the U.K. It was for this reason, no doubt, that Norman Tebbit, a senior Conservative politician, introduced his so-called 'cricket test' in 1990. Tebbit argued that if a British immigrant, or one of his/her descendants, chose to support a team such as India or the West Indies when that team was playing against England, this could, and indeed *should*, be used as a gauge of his/her level of assimilation into English society. Talking specifically about British Asians (though Tebbit viewed the 'test' as more generally applicable) Tebbit asked, 'which side do they cheer for . . . were they still harking back to where they came from or where they were?' (*The Times*, 21st April 1990, cited in Maguire 1993: 298).

Similarly, the integration of British ethnic minority players into the game has been questioned. In a *Wisden Cricket Monthly* article entitled 'Is it in the Blood?', Robert Henderson argued that the poor record of the England cricket team was connected to the prevalence of players who had been born overseas and/or had spent much of their childhood living in other countries. Players who had undergone such socializing experiences, Henderson claimed, could never be truly English and thus would never possess the same level of commitment as a 'genuine' English player. Crucially in terms of race relations, however, Henderson concluded the article by making a connection between biology and culture. Whilst all players may well be trying at a conscious level, he argued, 'is that desire to succeed *instinctive*, a matter of biology? There lies the heart of the matter' (Henderson 1995: 10). The fallout in the wake of the article was considerable. Players threatened to sue Henderson for libel and the captain of the England cricket team, Michael Atherton, resigned from his position on the magazine's editorial board. Moreover the debate acted as the stimulus for the establishment of an anti-racist pressure group, 'Hit Racism for Six', which had the stated aim of 'opposing all forms of racism in cricket at all levels' (Hit Racism for Six 1996).

Henderson might be seen as a single voice standing on the periphery of the game were it not for a number of other incidents which illustrate how the role of African-Caribbeans in cricket is also questioned by some within the game. The career of Devon Malcolm is illuminating in this context. Malcolm was born in Jamaica, moved to England as a child and, in 1987, became qualified to play for the national cricket team. Malcolm's international career was characterized by displays of varying quality.⁵ There has been considerable debate over whether or not Malcolm should have played for England more often and some (e.g. Searle 1996) have argued that the player's non-selection shows elements of 'racial' bias. Furthermore, when Malcolm was publicly criticized by the England cricket team's bowling coach, Peter Lever – '(Malcolm has) pace and fitness, but that is all. The rest of his game is a non-entity' – and by the team manager, Ray Illingworth – '(Malcolm has) no cricketing brain' (cited in Searle 1996: 52)⁶ – newspaper columnists such as the *Daily Telegraph's* Donald Treford, highlighted what might be considered the 'colonial touch of the England management'. When Malcolm publicly questioned whether he might have been treated differently had he been white, the governing body threatened him with the charge of 'bringing the game into disrepute'. Moreover, no action was taken when another player in the England tour party, Dermot Reeve, alleged in his autobiography that he heard Illingworth refer to Malcolm as a 'Nig-nog' (see Marqusee 1998: 300–302).

Comments from leading players and administrators illustrate that stereotypical beliefs about biological differences have some significance within the game. In an article about British-African-Caribbean and British-Asian county cricket players which appeared in *The Sunday Times* (27/4/97), Illingworth stated: 'it is a fact that a lot of the West Indians, because of their looseness, can usually bowl quicker than white people'. Similarly, the British-Asian batsman (and now England cricket captain) Nasser Hussain stated, 'Black people are pretty loose they have loose limbs and can run up and bowl the ball at up to 100mph'.

The racial stereotyping and abuse of individuals, the questioning of the allegiance of spectators and the questioning of the 'commitment' of ethnic minority English players all illustrate the central role which cricket plays in debates about the integration and separatism of ethnic minority communities in Britain today. These debates have generally been triggered by whites but, through the continual and relatively comprehensive victories of the West Indies over their former colonial 'masters',⁷ it has become very clear that the game is a highly significant source of cultural pride for immigrants from the Caribbean and their descendants. Reflecting on West Indian batsman Brian Lara's world record 'test-match' score of 375 against an England side containing a number of black and Asian players, Chris Searle (1995: 32) wrote:

(Lara) touched the collective brain and heart of a dispersed people and fuelled their unity and hope . . . the Caribbean was unequivocally a part of English cricket too. Like the English health and transport systems, it could not function effectively without the essential Caribbean contribution. Lara's achievement had also been integrally linked to the diaspora: it was something much more than a routine meeting of two sporting nations; it transcended a historically-charged confrontation between the ex-colonizers and the decolonized. Now the Caribbean was on both sides (1995: 32-33).

The Contemporary Pattern of African-Caribbean Cricketing Participation

Having established both the historical and current significance of cricket to notions of English national identity, and the centrality of the game in discussions of inclusion/exclusion of immigrants in British society, we are now in a position to look more carefully at the contemporary experiences of African-Caribbean players in the elite level of the game. More particularly, how does membership of this minority ethnic group influence an individual's playing experiences?

The scale of African-Caribbean sports participation has led to the popular assumption that, as an area of social life, sport is relatively free from 'racial' discrimination. However, many sociologists have

questioned whether it is correct to equate this representation with an absence of discrimination. Initiated by Loy and Elvogue (1970), a series of studies has illustrated how, in a variety of team sports, there is a tendency for members of minority ethnic groups to experience 'stacking'; that is to say, sportspeople of African-Caribbean, Asian, Latin-American descent, etc., tend to be disproportionately over-represented in certain roles whilst remaining somewhat excluded from others.⁸ Further, the tendency is for sportspeople from minority ethnic groups to be 'stacked' into roles which can be classified as relatively peripheral and/or less significant to the outcome of the game whilst, concomitantly, being excluded from those positions which are deemed to be the most 'central' or tactically significant.

However, the structural and organizational characteristics of cricket mean that such theories cannot be easily and simply supplanted onto the game. Cricket is a bat and ball-based game (not unlike baseball) in which all players bat and roughly half the players bowl (pitch). However, it is common for players to be selected and therefore categorized in the following way: as batters, bowlers, all-rounders (non-specialists) or wicketkeepers (catchers). Although there is some overlap, bowlers can be further subdivided into those bowlers who, in order to defeat the batter, rely largely on pace (fast, fast-medium and medium paced bowlers) and those who rely largely on the ball spinning when it bounces (slow or spin bowlers).⁹ In contrast to baseball, fielding positions in cricket are relatively fluid in nature and, consequently, do not reflect specialist abilities. One player may occupy a number of fielding positions in a game and, as a result (although the role of wicket-keeper, which is a more-or-less permanent position, is an exception to this rule), fielding positions are not generally used to classify players. Moreover, cricket at the domestic and international level consists of two basic forms. First-class cricket is the traditional, and as the name would imply, higher status form of the game. First-class games, in which teams may bat for up to two innings each, normally take place over a period of three to five days. More recently, limited-overs cricket has developed as a shorter and commercially more profitable form of the game. In this latter form of the game each team bats for only one innings, to be completed within a set number of overs¹⁰ and, weather permitting, concluded within a single day. At the elite level in Britain, these two forms of the game are organized around competitions for 18 counties and series of matches in which national teams play each other. County playing staffs are predominantly made up of England-qualified players although, since the early twentieth century, regulations for the employment of 'overseas' (that is, non-England qualified) players have been in place. These restrictions have varied

Table 1 British-African-Caribbean Involvement in County Cricket

	1990			1995			2000		
	African-Caribbean Players		All Players	African-Caribbean Players		All Players	African-Caribbean Players		All Players
	No.	%	%	No.	%	%	No.	%	%
Batsman	3	13.0	38.6	6	16.6	35.4	3	12.5	32.3
Fast/Medium									
Bowler	16	69.6	27.8	20	55.6	24.5	12	50	25.1
Slow/Spin									
Bowler	0		11.1	1	2.8	11.3	0		8.7
All-rounder	3	13.0	12.6	7	19.4	13.0	6	25	10.8
Wicket keeper	1	4.3	9.4	2	5.6	8.1	3	12.5	10.1
Unknown			0.5			7.6			13.0
Total	23		342	36		432	24		437
	(6.7%)		(100%)	(8.3%)		(100%)	(5.5%)		(100%)

over time but currently counties are restricted to the registration of only one overseas player per season.

Within the different game forms, and the different levels of competition, African-Caribbean representation has been negotiated in various ways. In particular (see Table 1) this can be seen in terms of the positional representation of England-qualified (i.e. not overseas) African-Caribbeans in British county cricket.¹¹ Firstly we might note that, in contrast to the make-up of the British population as a whole (of which only 1.6 percent describe themselves as Black Caribbean (CRE, 1999)), this ethnic group is considerably 'over-represented' amongst professional cricketers as a whole. Secondly we can see that of those British-African-Caribbeans who play cricket for county teams, a disproportionately high number (69.6, 55.6 and 50.0 percent in 1990, 1995 and 2000 respectively) play primarily as fast/fast medium paced bowlers. In contrast, around 25% of all players filled this position between 1990 and 2000. Concomitantly, relatively few blacks played primarily as batsmen in these years (13.0, 16.6 and 12.5 percent respectively). This, then, is a clear indication that in cricket, as in many other team sports, ethnic minority players are stacked in specific positions.¹²

As Table 2 shows, this pattern is even more pronounced at the highest level of the game. Since Roland Butcher became the first African-Caribbean cricketer to represent England in 1980/81 (atypically, Butcher was primarily a batsman) thirteen other African-Caribbean cricketers have followed in his footsteps. Significantly, between eight and ten of this total of fifteen (53.3

Table 2 British-African-Caribbean involvement in the English National Cricket Team (Figures are correct up to September 30th 2000)

Name	Playing Role	Limited-overs Debut	Appearances	Test Debut	Appearances
Butcher, R.	Batter	1980/81	3	1980/81	3
Cowans, N.G.	Fast-bowler	1982/83	23	1982/83	19
Slack, W.N.	Batter	1985/86	2	1985/86	3
Small, G.C.	Fast-bowler	1986/87	53	1986	17
De Freitas, P.A.J.	Fast-bowler/ All Rounder	1986/87	103	1986/87	44
Lawrence, D.V.	Fast-bowler	1991	1	1988	5
Lynch, M.	Batter	1988	3		
Malcolm, D.E.	Fast-bowler	1990	10	1989	40
Lewis, C.C.	Fast-bowler/ All-rounder	1989/90	53	1990	32
Williams, N.F.	Fast-bowler			1990	1
Benjamin, J.E.	Fast-bowler	1994/95	3	1994	1
Headley, D.W.	Fast-bowler	1996	13	1997	15
Butcher, M.	Batter			1997	27
Tudor, A.J.	Fast-bowler			1998/99	3
Alleyne, M.	All-rounder	1998/99	10		

and 66.7 percent) have been selected primarily as fast/medium fast bowlers whilst only four (26.6 per cent) have been selected primarily as batters.¹³

Thirdly and finally, we can see that the participation of black cricketing migrants in the British county game follows a similar pattern, though perhaps one which is subject to greater and more rapid change (Table 3). The data in this regard are rather more complex than for England-qualified African-Caribbean players because there are a number of variables which need to be taken into consideration when analysing the findings. Firstly, every year a touring team from at least one of the test playing nations plays a series of matches in England which effectively excludes the top players from that country (usually a touring squad will consist of 16 players) from being available to play county cricket during that season. In 1990 England played against India and New Zealand, in 1993 against Australia, in 1995 against the West Indies, and in 1999 against New Zealand again.¹⁴ Secondly, as already noted, restrictions regarding the number of overseas players who could be registered to play for a county team have changed. In particular this accounts for the reduction in the number of overseas players since 1990. Finally, the type of overseas players sought by counties partly reflects the relative strengths of international teams over the period as well as world wide tactical trends. More particularly, there has

Table 3 Overseas Players Employed by Counties for Selected Seasons, 1990–1999

National Qualification	No.	Primary Playing Roles
1990		
West Indies	13	10 Fast-bowlers, 2 Batters, 1 All-rounders
South Africa	4	2 Fast-Bowlers, 1 Batter, 1 All-rounder
Australia	2	1 Batter, 1 All-rounder
India	1	1 All-rounder
Pakistan	1	1 All-rounder
Zimbabwe	1	1 Batter
Total	22	12 Fast-Bowlers, 5 Batters, 5 All-rounders
1993*		
West Indies	12	7 Fast-bowlers, 3 Batters, 2 All-rounders
Pakistan	4	2 Fast-bowlers, 1 Batter, 1 Spin bowler
New Zealand	1	1 Fast-bowler
South Africa	1	1 Fast-bowler
Total	18	11 Fast-bowlers, 4 Batters, 2 All-rounders, 1 Spin bowler
1995		
Australia	3	3 Batters
India	3	1 Fast-bowler, 1 All-rounder, 1 Spin Bowler
Pakistan	3	1 Fast-bowler, 1 All-rounder, 1 Spin Bowler
South Africa	3	2 Batters, 1 Fast-Bowler
West Indies	2	1 Fast-Bowler, 1 All-rounder
New Zealand	2	1 Fast-Bowler, 1 All-rounder
Sri Lanka	1	1 Batter
Total	17	6 Batters, 5 Fast-bowlers, 4 All-rounders, 2 Spin bowler
1999		
Australia	12	10 Batters, 1 Fast-Bowler, 1 All-Rounder
South Africa	2	1 Fast-bowler, 1 All-Rounder
West Indies	2	2 Fast-bowlers
Pakistan	1	1 Spin Bowler
Sri Lanka	1	1 Spin Bowler
Total	18	10 Batters, 4 Fast-bowlers, 2 All-rounders, 2 Spin bowler

* Data from 1993 are adapted from Maguire and Stead (1996).

been a shift in recent years from a reliance on fast bowlers towards the increasing use of spin bowlers in test matches. Bearing these points in mind, we can see that whilst overseas players from the West Indies were particularly prevalent in the early 1990s, since then Australian cricket migrants have become ascendant. Moreover there has also been a significant shift away from counties acquiring fast/fast medium bowlers as migrant players and a move towards the employment of overseas batters.

More pertinent for our purposes here, however, it can be seen that during the 1990s, when West Indian players have been employed in county cricket, it has predominantly been the fast/fast medium

bowlers who have been recruited. That is to say, ten out of the thirteen West Indian players in county cricket in 1990, seven out of the twelve in 1993, one out of the two in 1995 (when the West Indies toured Britain) and both of the West Indians on county playing staffs in 1999, were fast/medium fast bowlers. In total, of the twenty-nine instances of a West Indian player being employed for a season by an English county, twenty (68.9 percent) were selected because of their abilities as fast/fast medium bowlers. The pattern has been far from unilinear. When greater numbers of overseas players were allowed in the English game, in effect almost all West Indian international players were employed in county cricket and hence the pattern was less pronounced. More recently, stricter regulations have applied. However, when this trend was at its zenith (circa 1990) 'journeymen' fast bowlers (e.g. George Ferris) were employed by counties whereas internationally renowned batsmen (e.g. Viv Richards, Richie Richardson) were not.

Explaining the Pattern: the Development of Cricket in England

Emerging from these data, therefore, is a distinct pattern of African-Caribbean representation in elite English cricket. Whether in terms of the England-qualified players who make up the bulk of county squads, the elite few who play for the national side, or the international 'stars' who are hand-picked from nations around the world, players of African-Caribbean descent have played primarily in the role of fast/fast medium bowler. Whilst an important finding from the somewhat rudimentary time-series data presented above is that there has been an apparent breaking down of the pattern of stacking, it remains the case that the occupation of playing positions is heavily influenced by 'racial' group membership. This is not to say, of course, that there has been a coordinated attempt on the part of school teachers, county cricket coaches or international selectors to construct this pattern of participation; rather, what we see is an unintended consequence of the combined actions of a range of disparate people.

As noted earlier, such a pattern exists in a range of team sports and is often explained with reference to the commonly held (yet apparently false) beliefs about the different physical and mental capabilities of supposedly separate biological 'races'. What is significant and distinct about 'stacking' in cricket, however, is that a historical precedent of 'stacking' exists, namely the distinction between players from upper and lower social classes; that is, between gentlemen amateurs and professional players. Moreover, it is only with reference to this historical development that contemporary 'racial' stacking in cricket can be explained.

As Dunning and Sheard have noted, professional cricket 'started when members of the aristocracy and gentry hired players, nominally as household servants or for work on their estates, but, in fact, principally on account of their cricketing skills' (1976: 57). Such was the status security of the landed classes of eighteenth century England that, in contrast to the later development of soccer and rugby, initially at least, professionalism in cricket was viewed as neither morally suspect nor socially problematic. However, urbanization and industrialization in the nineteenth century gradually eroded the social dominance of the landed classes and, as their social status became increasingly less secure, so the issue of professionalism in cricket grew in prominence. 'While in cricket these terms [amateur and professional] had originally only indicated whether a player accepted payment for his services, they soon came to denote . . . the whole gamut of social relationships on and off the field' (Brookes 1978: 85). Until the distinction between amateurs and professionals was abolished in 1962, the social distance between the two groups was maintained by various status-emphasizing practices. Examples of such 'symbolic subordination' included the use of separate gates for entering and exiting the playing field, the listing on scorecards of the professional's initials after, and the amateur's initials before, the surname, and the use of separate, usually inferior, travel and changing facilities by the professionals. Professionals were expected to help with the preparation of the playing area and to bowl to the amateur batsman in the 'nets' (practice pitches) in order to provide him with practice (Dunning and Sheard 1976: 58–9). Before the Second World War professionals were usually expected to address an amateur as either 'Mr' or 'Sir'.

The social distance between amateurs and professionals was also maintained by a separation of playing roles. Professional players were subordinated to an amateur captain selected on the grounds of social status rather than, and often despite, playing and tactical ability. With one exception, all the captains of county sides until 1939 were amateurs. At the international level, Len Hutton, in 1952, became the first professional to captain England since the 1880s. Furthermore, as Brookes notes, 'by 1850 the pattern of amateur batsmen and professional bowlers was well established' (1978: 92). Whilst all current players are paid for playing, the legacy of the amateur/professional, gentleman/player relationship remains strong to this day. It remains the case that of the many people who have been knighted for their services to cricket, only two (Sir Alec Bedser and Sir Richard Hadlee) have primarily been bowlers.

Explaining the Pattern: the Development of Cricket in the Caribbean

The status differences attached to the respective playing roles, and the British-African-Caribbean stacking in lower status roles both have a strong historical precedent in Caribbean cricket. According to Yelvington (1990: 2), the history of cricket in the Caribbean is a tale of 'the gradual supplanting of whites by blacks on the field and in society'. However, as the following section will show, this was not a simple, linear process characterized solely by dominance and subordination. Rather, blacks negotiated their way and, at times, were also incorporated into the game by whites whilst the various groups of non-whites also sought to discriminate against each other. As Stoddart (1998: 81) notes, it is 'a complex mixture of accommodation and resistance ... (with) as many struggles over boundaries within and between the lower ranked social groupings as there were within the white elite'. Indeed, C.L.R. James's (1963) seminal book, *Beyond a Boundary*, is essentially an autobiographical discussion of the seeming contradiction between an appreciation, acceptance and love of cricket (and the values and behavioural mores associated with the game), and a lifetime of resistance against the subordination of non-whites under Imperial rule. The conflict between non-whites and between the different islands in the West Indies which served to constrain independence for the region, is a recurring theme. Significantly, however, the fast bowling of blacks features as a central aspect in this broader process of negotiation.

Beckles (1995a: 37) notes that the first references to cricket in the West Indian press appeared in the *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette* in June 1806 and January 1807. The second of these two reports was an announcement of a dinner being held at the St. Ann's Garrison Cricket Club. Two years later, the *Gazette* publicized a 'grand cricket match' to be played between the Officers of the Royal West Indies Rangers and Officers of the Third West Indian Regiment for 55 guineas a side. These, and subsequent, press reports highlight the central role of the military in the organization of the early game in the region. The St. Ann's Garrison Cricket Club in particular was prominent in this development (indeed Beckles refers to it as a 'pioneering West Indian social institution' (1995a: 37)) although, as Stoddart (1998: 79) notes, it was common for cricket fields to form the central feature of garrisons throughout the Caribbean.

Initially members of the military played between and amongst themselves. However, during the period of slavery, blacks had been encouraged to use what 'leisure time' they had 'constructively'.

Pursuits perceived as a threat (and this can be taken to mean almost any activity which was unfamiliar to whites) were prohibited. Consequently, those activities which were familiar (like cricket) formed the few permissible pastimes available to slaves. This is not to say, of course, that the slaves were entirely compliant in this adoption; many (e.g. Yelvington 1990) have argued that there may have been elements within the play of blacks which effectively sought to satirize the colonizers' ways. Gradually, however, the slaves were 'incorporated' into the leisure pursuits of the military officers, albeit on a very limited basis. As Yelvington (1990: 2) notes, blacks 'performed restrictive roles. At first they were "allowed" to prepare pitches . . . and a few were "allowed" only to bowl and retrieve batted balls during practice sessions'. Thus from this early stage, the cricketing experiences of blacks featured bowling as a central characteristic and, in this respect, they performed a similar role to that of the early professionals in English cricket.

As previously noted, people throughout the former British Empire adopted cricket as a signifier of inclusion. However, in the West Indies specifically, there were three central reasons for this. Firstly cricket allowed the white community to demonstrate their loyalty to the Crown. Secondly, performances on the field of play also served to prove that the heat of the tropics had not led to a degeneration of English stock (Stoddart 1995a: 15), and thirdly, once slavery was abolished (in 1838) cricket served to distance the elite from the "'uncivilized" indigenes' (Beckles 1995a: 34). As Beckles (1995a: 36) puts it: 'In exactly the same way that whites defined a political system in which less than 10 per cent of the population was enfranchised as democratic, a place was found for blacks within the cricket culture that enhanced the divisions of labour insisted upon by the plantations.'

These factors contributed to cricket's dramatic spread in the Caribbean during the second half of the nineteenth century. The major centres of cricket – clubs and schools – were organized on the basis of social ranking with occupation, wealth and colour, rather than playing ability, the determinants of membership. In Barbados, for instance, the sons of the white elite (and a few blacks who received scholarships) went to Harrison College, the sons of the plantocracy went to Lodge and the sons of the emergent middle class coloureds joined white pupils at Combermere.¹⁵ Once they left school, each had their respective clubs to join; old boys from Harrison joined the Wanderers club if they were white or joined Spartan if they were black; Lodge old boys joined Pickwick, and black and white Combermere old boys joined Empire and Pickwick respectively (Stoddart 1995b: 71). Similar situations existed in Guyana, where the Georgetown Cricket Club was dominated by

the Portuguese elite, in Trinidad (James 1963), and in Jamaica where the highly prestigious Kingston Cricket Club had restrictive policies preserving the club as a bastion for whites (St. Pierre 1995: 109). However, cricket clubs run by, and for, *non*-whites operated similar exclusionary policies. In Jamaica the Melbourne club, dominated by the coloured professional classes, instituted a complex fee structure which effectively, if not officially, limited membership.

Such exclusionary practices were mirrored in the game's competitive structures. The Barbados Cricket Committee (BCC), established in the late 19th century, was made up almost entirely of whites. Stoddart (1995b: 67) describes the BCC as 'a self-appointed, self-constituted, self-selected and self-perpetuated group', whose role was to organize local competitions and host touring teams. Although the BCC was superseded by the Barbados Cricket Association in 1933, such was the continuing feeling of exclusion amongst lower and working class blacks that the Barbados Cricket League was established three years later to cater for the cricketing needs of this section of the population. Similarly, where the concentration of Chinese and Indian populations was large enough, they too established leagues of their own (Stoddart 1995c: 241).

After the incorporation of black slaves into military cricket practice and the post-slavery establishment of cricket clubs for blacks, the next significant dynamic in this process of 'gradual supplanting' was the institutionalization of inter-island competition. The first such match (between Demerera and Barbados) was staged in 1865 but by 1896 St. Kitts, Antigua, Trinidad, Jamaica, St. Vincent and St. Lucia had all joined the regional cricketing network (Beckles 1995c: 193–194). As with intra-island competitions these games were organized and played almost exclusively by whites. Significantly, however, inter-regional fixtures came to be seen as forums in which the elites could demonstrate their superiority over their counterparts in other territories. Initially, the major consequence of this for non-whites was that an increasing amount of integration between white and non-white players *within* the various colonies took place. Whilst remaining largely excluded from the formal structure of both intra- and inter-island competitions, 'friendly' games between black teams and the white elite were organized in an effort to sharpen the skills of the white representative players. Status-emphasizing practices, similar to those used in England, were employed during this early phase of integration; for instance a degree of distance was maintained by the exclusion of black players from clubhouse refreshment breaks during and after the game. More regularly, blacks began to be employed on an individual basis with the role of the professional in English cricket as the template for their employment. As St. Pierre (1995: 108) states, 'in Barbados ... the

caste-like stratification system, based on race/colour, allotted to black Barbadians – they were known as “professionals” – the role of bowlers and fetchers of balls delivered during practice sessions in which whites batted and blacks bowled’. By 1895, Stoddart (1995a: 21) notes, the six Barbadian clubs employed fourteen (black) ground staff who performed similar bowling and pitch preparation duties to their white professional counterparts in England.

However, these regional matches plus, from 1895, the reciprocal tours to and from England, ‘signaled the beginning of the non-racial democratizing process in selection policy’ (Beckles 1995c: 197). The inclusion of black players enabled territories such as Trinidad to compete with the most powerful cricketing teams such as Barbados. Moreover, English administrators such as Pelham Warner noted that unless black players were selected for the West Indian team the region would remain far behind the ‘Mother Country’ in playing terms and when the West Indies side came to England they would risk having embarrassing defeats inflicted upon them by the English counties. Such comments had resonance for white West Indians because, as noted above, a major reason for playing cricket was to prove that the Caribbean climate had not resulted in the colonizers’ physical decline (though clearly the notion of using black players to demonstrate that the whites had not physically declined is fraught with contradictions). However, as the white elite also sought, through cricket, to distance themselves socially from the non-white population, the entry of blacks into this previously all-white domain was highly contested. The Guyanese representative side remained dominated by the members of the Georgetown Cricket Club and was always captained by a white or Portuguese player from that club. During the 1890s, Barbados refused to play Trinidad in the Challenge Cup if their team included black players (Beckles 1995c: 197) and, although the skills of the Barbadian professional, William Shepherd, were particularly influential in gaining black representation against touring teams from 1902 onwards, calls for the inclusion of black professionals in the Barbados Cup competition were consistently rejected on social, rather than ‘sporting’ grounds.

The growing desire for playing success meant that Pelham Warner’s words were heeded when the 1900 West Indian tour party to England was selected; the party consisted of fifteen players, five of whom were black. This initial tour was granted only ‘second class’ status and most of the games were lost but, interestingly, of the five black players, three were bowlers and two were all-rounders. When the subsequent tour party to England was selected in 1906, the team consisted of seven black and seven white players. This time, the MCC decreed that all games would have ‘first-class’ status. Again, the

composition of the tour party provides evidence of positional segregation of black and white players. Four of the seven whites were picked primarily as batsmen whilst four of the seven blacks were picked primarily as bowlers.

Yet despite the growing number of blacks playing at all levels of West Indian cricket, selection committees, like that in Barbados, rarely included black or 'coloured' members.¹⁶ Moreover, as Stoddart (1998: 85) notes, there were fierce debates over the selection of regional sides until well into the 1920s. James (1963: 88–103) for instance, discusses the non-selection of the black Trinidadian Wilton St. Hill for the 1923 tour to England. Significantly St. Hill was primarily a batsman. The inclusion of black bowlers was less contentious although judgements about appropriate temperament meant that some bowlers fared better than others in this regard.¹⁷ As a result of the limited opportunities for non-white players in the Caribbean, talented black players began to look elsewhere for employment. Some played for teams in North America but most came to Britain. Due in part to the stricter residency regulations in county cricket, but also to the greater status exclusivity of county cricket in England in the 1920s, cricketers from the Caribbean found it easier to obtain contracts in the Lancashire League.¹⁸ Caribbean cricketing migrants excelled in a variety of roles – e.g. George Francis as a fast bowler, Learie Constantine as an all-rounder and George Headley as a batsman – but despite this they, like their professional counterparts in county cricket, were all expected to perform bowling, coaching and ground preparation duties. Although the greater openness of the Lancashire League facilitated the early participation of migrant professionals from the Caribbean such players, whilst receiving considerable kudos and notoriety within the local community, were assimilated into British cricket in the traditional position of the professional and as such had social roles which more closely resembled lower status bowlers than higher status batsmen.

Thus, black Caribbean cricketers began to represent their home territories, the region as a whole, and even towns in the North of England but certain cricketing roles remained more open to non-white participants than did others. Whilst the employment of blacks as groundsmen and bowlers became common, batting and the captaincy remained somewhat 'out of bounds'. The inclusion of black players, it seems, was crucial to improving West Indian playing standards and, consequently, full test status was granted in 1928. St Pierre (1995) has undertaken an interesting analysis of the relative performances of whites and non-whites in early test matches which illustrates how significant the performances of blacks continued to be to the overall playing success of the side. Between

1928 and 1960 the West Indies and England played each other in ten series of matches. During this time no white West Indian made a double or single century and only on twenty-five occasions did one make fifty runs in an innings. In contrast, non-white West Indians made seven double, twenty-nine single and fifty-six half centuries. Similarly white West Indians took four or more wickets in an innings only twice whereas non-white West Indians achieved this on forty-four occasions. St. Pierre (1995: 110) concludes that, 'since whites were not normally picked as bowlers and they did not perform as batsmen, then they must have been picked for some other reason'; that is to say, as administrators and as leaders.

Moreover, from 1928 to 1960, with one exception, every manager, captain and vice captain on tour to England was white. In 1947-48 there was much political manoeuvring in order to install the black batsman George Headley as captain of the Jamaican team to play England. The major 'breakthrough', though, came in 1960 when the black Barbadian, Frank Worrell was chosen to captain the West Indies side on a tour to Australia. Coming at a time when the case for a single, region-unifying, West Indian government was being made at its most vociferous (see James 1963: 217-243), Worrell's potential appointment assumed considerable social significance. By this time all the region's political leaders were black and exclusion from the cricket captaincy increasingly came to be seen as untenable. Pro-Worrell campaigners noted that he had regularly captained teams representing the Commonwealth and had enjoyed considerable success. As James (1963: 224) noted, 'in cricket these sentiments are at their most acute because everyone can see and judge'. It is, of course, interesting to note that Worrell was primarily a batter and, although he came from a relative humble background, he had acquired an English university degree and had become 'acceptable within establishment circles in the Caribbean' (Stoddart 1995c: 249).

The captaincy of the West Indian team by a black player, and consequently the removal of all white players from the side, signaled a new phase of selection policy guided more than ever by meritocratic principles. The side increasingly came to dominate world cricket culminating in a period from 1980 to 1994 when the West Indies won an unprecedented 79 percent of all tests played and won sixteen out of twenty-four test series, drawing seven others and losing only one (Wilde 1994: 176). More particularly the West Indies continually and comprehensively beat the England cricket team, winning all five tests in England in 1984, in the Caribbean in 1985/86 and four out of five tests in England in 1988. The West Indian team was now entirely composed of black players but, tellingly, the method by which the team dominated world cricket was through

their use of fast bowlers. There were, of course, some very talented West Indian batsmen at this time but, as Wilde's analysis of the period between 1974 and 1994 shows, the side's dominance was based on fast bowling. Of all the fast bowlers who achieved fifty test wickets (and therefore relative success at this level) over a third (nine out of twenty-six) were West Indian. Moreover, aggression, violence and injury (to the batter) are inextricably linked to fast bowling; Patterson (1995: 145) talks of 'the beautiful, sweet violence of the act' of fast bowling where, so often, 'it is "us" versus "them". "Us" constitutes the black masses. "Them" is everything else – the privileged, the oppressor, the alien, dominant culture'. In this the West Indies also dominated. In all test matches played throughout the world between 1974 and 1994, a total of 88 batsmen retired from their innings through injury (or sometimes simply because of intimidation). Of these almost half (40) retired whilst playing against the West Indies.

The reliance on fast bowling was not a specifically West Indian tactical innovation; precedents had been set by England in the infamous 'Bodyline' tour to Australia in 1932/33 whilst the modern era of fast bowling dominance is often attributed to Australia's deployment of Lillee and Thomson during England's tour in 1974/75. However, the West Indies had the personnel both to adopt and refine this method (for example, by using a battery of four as opposed to the usual two fast bowlers). Interestingly, West Indians had previously tried variants of this fast bowling tactic but had censored themselves due to actual or perceived criticisms of status violation. During the 1926 England tour to the West Indies, England bowled bouncers¹⁹ to the (white) West Indian captain, H.B.G. Austin. When the West Indies' Learie Constantine retaliated in kind and bowled bouncers at the England captain, the Hon. F.S.G. Calthorpe, he was implored by his colleagues to stop. James (1963: 111–112) recalls:

'Stop it, Learie!' we told him. He replied: 'What's wrong with you? It is cricket.' I told him bluntly: 'Do not bump the ball at that man. He is the MCC captain, captain of an English county and an English Aristocrat. The bowling is obviously too fast for him, and if you hit him and knock him down they'll be a hell of a row and we don't want to see you in any mess. Stop it!'

Constantine also recalled the 1933 tour to England during which he resented 'the blindness of some of our critics who professed to see danger in those balls (bouncers) when we put them down and not when English players bowled them' (cited in Marqusee 1998: 167). Twenty-five years later Ray Gilchrist was ostracized from the West Indian team and sent home from the tour of Pakistan and India for what was deemed, by West Indian cricket administrators, to be an inappropriate use of bouncers. These incidents illustrate that the

West Indian post-1974 dominance of world cricket, facilitated as it was through a reliance on fast bowling, signaled a final stage in the 'gradual supplanting of whites by blacks'. By 1991 the ICC had initiated rule changes which served to curb the dominance of fast bowling. However, rather than censoring themselves, the West Indian authorities actively and openly opposed the new rule changes. Clyde Walcott, President of the West Indian Cricket Board called it 'a fundamental and unnecessary change in the way the game is played'. The West Indian cricket captain, Vivian Richards, spoke of racism and hypocrisy: 'I know damn well that there are people at the top of the cricketing establishment who feel that the West Indies have been doing too well for too long' (Wilde 1994: 195).

Conclusion

This paper has outlined the central role which cricket plays in the generation of notions of English national identity and the influence this has had throughout the British Empire more widely. The game continues to feature in debates over the U.K.'s changing role within the world and in debates over the role of ethnic minorities within the U.K. However, evidence of the involvement of African-Caribbean cricketers in the English game illustrates that the process remains one of partially restricted access.

The current pattern of African-Caribbean cricketers, however, can only be understood when contextualized historically. The development of cricket in the West Indies is well-documented and illustrates a negotiated process of black 'liberation' from white 'rule'. Central to this process is a much underplayed and seldom recognized power resource, namely sporting ability. The cricketing ability of blacks was highly significant in that it allowed the subservient group to exploit divisions between the various groups who constituted the white elite. Had whites not been in competition with their counterparts on other islands, or had they not felt the need to prove themselves to the dominant groups back in the 'Mother Country', it is unlikely that blacks would have made the impact on cricket that they did. This impact, however, has always been subject to a degree of control by the white elite and the role and social status of black players exhibits many parallels to the class relations which, historically, have characterized the English game. These class relations are also well-documented but the significance of this analysis is that it serves to bring these two strands of literature together.

Furthermore, it is evident that the playing role of fast bowler is central to the development of African-Caribbean cricket. Through a monopolization of the role of fast bowler, blacks firstly acquired

representation in the West Indian team, and latterly supremacy in the world game. Given the historical precedent, and given the success which African-Caribbeans have had in this, albeit somewhat limited, role it is highly understandable that the 'stacking' of British-African-Caribbeans in cricket has taken a similar form. Whilst it is perhaps not surprising that the English class system influenced the early development of cricket in the Caribbean, its continued role in structuring the careers of British-African-Caribbean cricketers reveals much about the continued prejudice and discrimination which such players face. It may well be that British-African-Caribbean youngsters see West Indian fast bowlers as suitable role models, but it would also appear to be the case that people within British cricket use this historical pattern as a basis for the ('racial') stereotyping of contemporary players. As noted in the introductory sections to this paper, cricket has been used as a vehicle to question the extent of the integration of British ethnic minorities into 'mainstream' society. The data discussed here illustrate the limited way in which that integration has been 'allowed', by people in the cricketing world, to take place.

Some (e.g. St. Pierre 1995; Stoddart 1998) have sought to explain the West Indian dominance of fast bowling, not in biological terms, but in terms of environmental influences. However, as can be seen above, a more adequate explanation is that this pattern is largely a consequence of the cultural legacy of Imperialism. Moreover social rather than environmental explanations can be seen to be rather more adequate if one also seeks to explain the British-African-Caribbean dominance of fast bowling in county cricket. That is to say, when environmental differences are neutralized, a similar pattern continues to exist. Cross-cultural evidence is also revealing. The first black players to play for the national sides of South Africa and Zimbabwe, Makhaya Ntini and Henry Olonga, are both fast bowlers as, indeed, was the first Samoan to play for the New Zealand national side, Murphy S'ua. A final anecdote in this regard relates to the British-African-Caribbean player, Dean Headley, who made his England cricket debut in 1996 (see Table 2). Dean Headley is the grandson of the aforementioned George Headley and the son of Ron Headley. George and Ron both played for the West Indies as batsmen; Dean, however, is a fast bowler.

Notes

¹ The nation-state we refer to as the UK consists of four 'countries' - England, Scotland, Wales (which together constitute Great Britain) and Northern Ireland. Each has been held to have a more or less clearly distinguishable national identity yet Englishness, derived as it is from the

politically, economically and often sportingly dominant 'country', is often assumed (by the English in particular) to be synonymous with Britishness. Moreover, in the same way that British national identity is largely derived from the most powerful country within that group, so the identity of Englishness is largely derived from the most powerful group within that population, namely upper-middle class adult males.

² This practice continued until 1989 when a decision was made that, in future, these positions would be subject to an election.

³ The term 'test match' was coined during England's first tour to Australia in 1861-62 and is now used to describe full-length (five-day) international cricket matches between those countries whose players are deemed to have reached a sufficient standard of playing ability. The nations are listed here in the chronological order in which they were granted 'test' status which is, in itself, revealing of imperial and post-imperial relations.

⁴ Information taken from www.uk.cricket.org/ 12 October 2000.

⁵ Malcolm has played for England 40 times, taking 128 wickets at 37.09 runs apiece. This compares unfavourably with players such as Philip de Freitas (44-140-33.57), Dominic Cork (31-118-28.50), Andrew Caddick (37-140-27.34), Darren Gough (43-173-27.79) and Angus Fraser (46-177-27.32). No fast bowler who has played so many times for England in recent years has had such a poor wickets to runs average. However, Malcolm's 9 wickets for 57 runs against South Africa in 1994 was, at the time, the fourth best bowling performance in the history of international test cricket.

⁶ Interestingly both of these criticisms implicitly touch upon the stereotypical characterization of blacks as physically adept but mentally lacking.

⁷ England did beat the West Indies, however, in the summer of 2000; their first series victory over the West Indies for 31 years.

⁸ For a comprehensive overview of studies of stacking in American sports, see Coakley (1998).

⁹ In contrast to baseball, a cricket ball is usually 'pitched', that is, delivered to the batsman via the ground.

¹⁰ An over consists of the bowling of six legal deliveries.

¹¹ Data for English qualified players were gathered from the 1900, 1995 and 2000 editions of *The Cricketers Who's Who*, an annual publication featuring career statistics, personal data, opinions about the game and, perhaps most importantly, a photograph from which 'race' could be categorized – however crudely – for 'first-class' county cricketers. For a fuller discussion of the methodology and findings, see Malcolm (1997).

¹² One highly significant finding from this research, relates to the involvement of Asians in English cricket. Players from this 'racial' group are 'stacked' in the relatively high status position of batters. Malcolm (1997) argues that this pattern is related to different forms of colonization in the respective territories and, in particular, the enslavement which characterized the black Caribbean population compared to the property-owning Asian population of the sub-Continent.

¹³ These data highlight the problems in categorizing players according to playing role. All players bat, but how good a batter the bowler must be to be defined as an all-rounder is not clear. Moreover, players who might be defined as all-rounders at one level of the game, may not be at a higher level.

¹⁴ Cricket's World Cup was held in England in 1999. As this involved all the top international cricket teams for a large part of the season many countries decided to select a player who did not play in the World Cup. The West Indies toured England in 2000 so data for this year have not been used.

¹⁵ Cricket in the West Indies, like most sports in most cultures, has been

dominated by males. The academic research in this area reflects this although, for a discussion of the role of females in West Indian cricket, see Beckles, 1995b.

¹⁶ Even as late as 1985 four of the thirteen executive officers on the BCA management committee were whites (Stoddart, 1995b: 67).

¹⁷ In 1923 Herman Griffiths was arguably the finest fast bowler in the Caribbean but H.B.G. Austin (the white captain) chose instead to travel to England with George Francis because he considered Francis more docile than Griffiths.

¹⁸ The Lancashire League was, and still is, one of the premier non first-class cricket leagues in England and clubs in it continue to employ high prestige overseas international players as professionals.

¹⁹ A bouncer is literally a ball which bounces up from the pitch, towards the batter's chest or head. It is also called a bumper or a 'short-pitched' ball.

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