

## **Cricket, the Post-Match Drink and Exclusion of British Muslims?**

### **Abstract**

Throughout history sports cultures and alcohol have been intimately linked. Being able to drink huge amounts of alcohol is a celebrated male athletic virtue. Ridicule and often exclusion is reserved for those who are unable to conform to this. Ritualised drinking is not, and cannot, be enjoyed by all. British Muslims (the majority of whom are of South Asian descent) for instance, are restricted from drinking alcohol due to the demands of Islam. This paper uses data collected from ethnographic research conducted with white and British Muslim cricketers to locate the significance of the post-match drinking ritual in both the inclusion and exclusion of British Muslims. This paper demonstrates that, in negotiating their inclusion, British Muslims have to accommodate, negotiate and challenge the various forms of inequality and discrimination in their leisure lives. We argue that consuming alcohol calls attention to the challenges of being 'normal' within this cultural context.

### **Keywords**

Alcohol, British Asians, British Muslims, Cricket, Diaspora, Identity, Racism

### **Introduction**

Throughout history sports cultures and alcohol have been intimately linked (Collins and Vamplew, 2002). Some sports are renowned more than others for their association with social activities involving alcohol. At amateur levels of cricket, for instance, the consumption of alcohol remains a fundamental part of the post-match ritual, where teams are encouraged to 'bond' by drinking together. For many, the act of drinking alcohol remains, like participation in sport, proof of masculine identity (Joseph, 2011). This ritual is not, and cannot, be enjoyed by all. Current evidence suggests that drinking in sports cultures frequently centres on the discursive subordination of 'Others', particularly women, gay men and 'teetotallers'. However, the literature has not considered the position of certain minority ethnic communities, such as British Asians (Muslims in particular)<sup>1</sup>, who, due to cultural and religious restrictions, should abstain from consuming alcohol.

Very little research currently exists that directly focuses on the experiences of British Asians in cricket (cf. Author A; Burdsey 2010a, 2010b) and research pertaining to British Asians, sport/leisure and alcohol is relatively non-existent. Dominant histories of the sport in England have centralised white voices. Subsequently, the experiences and stories of minority ethnic players and clubs – and in particular, how they have interacted with (and within) white spaces - remain heavily marginalised. The aim of this paper is to locate the significance of the post-match drinking ritual in both the inclusion and exclusion of British Muslims. This paper provides valuable insight into the cultural nuances of diasporic British Muslim identities in the twenty first century through its examination of the challenges facing British Muslims in an environment where consuming alcohol (often to excess) is sacrosanct. This paper demonstrates that, in negotiating their inclusion, British Muslims have to undertake significant identity 'work' through accommodating, negotiating and challenging the various forms of inequality and discrimination in their leisure lives (cf. Ratna, 2010). This frequently involves exhibiting behaviours that are more congruent with the expectations of their 'white' team mates.

### **Drinking, Leisure and Community**

Alcohol has always been a part of the everyday leisure lives of British people, and has dominated social and power relationships since the Middle Ages (Author B). In Western countries, where alcohol is permissible by law and tradition, and a part of popular culture, the consumption of alcohol plays a crucial role in the social construction of gender (Lyons and Willott, 2008; Thurnell-Read, 2011). Historically, drinking in bars was viewed as acceptable for men and unacceptable for 'decent' women. Women who frequented bars were deemed to be prostitutes or immoral characters of low

repute. In certain circumstances women were allowed by social conventions into these male spaces: some bars had outer and inner areas, and women could drink in the outer area if they were with their husbands. Where women were accepted into bars, often they were limited to a small range of acceptable drinks: weaker ales, for example, or mixed cocktails, or non-alcoholic (soft) drinks. For men, bars were spaces where they could be away from their wives, talk sport, play pool and drink. They could prove their masculinity by keeping pace with the other drinkers, and like the women they had a small range of acceptable drinks: beer, spirits, coffee (in some countries that had a tradition of coffee drinking), but never any other non-alcoholic drinks (Jayne, Valentine and Holloway, 2008). The structures defining acceptable and unacceptable gender roles were social, and although they have weakened in some places, drinking alcohol in bars is still viewed by many people in many countries as a male preserve (Robinson and Kenyon, 2009). However, as we shall demonstrate, despite sport characteristically representing a space where men and drinking go hand in hand, many men (for various reasons) do not conform to this 'ideal'.

The drinking of alcohol is a key leisure ritual, and in sport as in any other part of leisure where sociality is important, drinking and buying drinks is an accepted part of the subcultural practice. In fact, drinking is perhaps the dominant activity undertaken to 'initiate' and prove the worth of new team members. However, male sports teams have become infamous for the misbehaviour of the athletes in those teams. Male athletes often indulge in excessive drinking and drinking games, singing songs, cross-dressing and stripping each other naked. Being able to drink huge amounts of alcohol is a celebrated male athletic virtue. Ridicule and often exclusion is reserved for those who are unable to conform to this.

Alcohol's more mundane, social function is evident in the cultural history of Europe and the United Kingdom: in the work of Mass Observation, for example, the pubs of 1930s and 1940s northern England provide spaces where men and women of similar classes are seen finding community and solidarity through rituals of buying rounds and indulging in light-hearted banter (Hubble, 2010). Drinking is part of the modern, Western quotidian – both a social lubricant and a matter of mundane habit (see the descriptions of the different drinking patterns in Newcastle in Hollands and Chatterton, 2002). In sport, especially amateur team sports, the role of the 'clubhouse' is a crucial one financially and culturally (Pringle and Hickey, 2010). Clubs need to turn a profit and the buying of drinks after matches is seen as a key source of income; but the ritual of having a drink after the match is more important for the social and cultural capital it entails, bringing both teams together in a shared activity where rivalry is replaced by a masculine discourse of *bon homie*.

The relationship between cricket, drinking and pubs is an important and enduring one (Davies, 2010). Davies identifies a number of ways in which cricket clubs, drinking and pubs are related. Firstly, the origins and development of some clubs are closely tied up with pubs and breweries; secondly, some clubs have been founded in local inns and taverns; thirdly, many clubs are located close to pubs and inns; fourthly, 'pub cricket' has been strong during certain periods where leagues would be formed in partnership with breweries; and finally, many clubs with the requisite facilities have become the equivalent of pubs themselves.

### **British Multiculturalism and South Asian Diaspora**

The South Asian communities who came to post-war Britain had numerous ways of maintaining links with 'home' even as they put down new roots. One conduit through which the interplay between old and new homes was reproduced was through the love of cricket many brought with them. Cricket provided a powerful means of creating transnational ties, but also shaped ideas of the South Asian self in the post-colony (Author A; Raman, 2012). This communitarian spirit can provide important coping mechanisms, opportunities for political mobilisation/resistance and strategies of adaptation to an unknown (and often, hostile) social environment. Reflecting on the experience of asylum seekers in Newham, Bloch (2002) reports that new migrants tended, where possible, to "actively seek out people from their own communities ... to help them with many of their needs in the early stages of settlement". This often resulted in the formation of tight-knit ethnic clusters,

which operated independently with, amongst other things, their 'native' language and customs (Bloch 2002: 160-161). This was contrary to much of the political thinking at the time. From the late 1940s through to the 1970s, the assumption of various governments was that, through the provision of English-language support in schools, ethnic minorities would learn 'to become like us' – that is, they would be 'assimilated' (Abbas, 2011: 109).

Contact with alcohol is not permitted according to Islamic faith, which means that practising Muslims are unable to participate in activities where it is consumed. These constraints are rarely respected by white Brits and the inability (often perceived as *reluctance*) of some to participate in drinking activities, would likely lead to their exclusion. Burdsey and Randhawa (2012) point to the carnivalesque atmosphere created at English professional football stadiums as an example of this. They argue that the habit of many (white male) fans to spray beer over one another during the half time interval is demonstrative of the often unpleasant and intimidating atmosphere generated at sports events where alcohol is involved. Moreover, they argue that such practices make it impossible for strict Muslim supporters to interact with these spaces when sport is being played. They urge professional football clubs to engage with British Asian communities in order to put in place measures that will create safer and more sanitized spaces; alcohol-free zones for instance, which will facilitate their long-term inclusion.

Exclusion on the basis of cultural difference is demonstrative of what Gilroy (1987) and others have termed 'new cultural racism'. In her study of British Sikh teenagers, Kathleen Hall defines such cultural racism within an ideology of British cultural purity; "a form of nationalism that associates legitimate national belonging as the pure and essential British (in fact, English) culture, heritage and communal identity" (Hall, 1995: 249). Central to this ideology, Hall argues, is the belief that individuals from minority ethnic communities are capable of cultural change and are encouraged to "reject their inferior cultures and become absorbed as much as possible in the superior culture of the British" (ibid.: 250). Hall continues, if individuals choose not to assimilate, and instead assert their cultural distinctiveness, the logic goes that "they have only themselves to blame for their inferior status within British society" (ibid.).

Much of multiculturalism (or its successes/failures) is about the political climate at the time. Abbas (2011: 121) argues that, prior to the Rushdie Affair of 1989, British South Asian Muslims were viewed as relatively 'peaceful' and 'law-abiding'; perhaps even 'inward-looking' and 'politically passive'. Therefore, how successful or otherwise the British experience of multiculturalism will depend greatly on how it deals with the current predicaments facing British Muslims in the post 9/11 and 7/7<sup>2</sup> eras. According to Ryan (2011: 1046), currently, "Public discourse on Muslims in Europe is increasingly framed around the alleged incompatibility of Islam and a generalised notion of Western values", which means Muslims in the West face a number of issues in relation to their identities, their adoption of religio-cultural norms and values and, ultimately, their citizenship (Abbas, 2011).

Debates about South Asian communities in the context of Britain tend to draw on the notion of 'diaspora'. Diaspora has conventionally referred to the transnational dispersal of a cultural community. According to Kalra *et al.* (2005) diaspora means to be *from* one place, but *of* another. The term may refer to a population category or a social condition (consciousness). Understanding diaspora necessitates we understand 'migrant' communities as existentially connected to a specific place of origin or an imagined body of people, which extend beyond the current dwelling place. Certain conceptualisations of diaspora can be criticised for homogenising populations and reinforcing primordial, or absolutist notions of 'origin' and 'true-belonging' (Anthias, 2001: 632), when, in fact, a central feature of a diaspora is the internal differences (gender, class, generation, political affiliations etc.) and struggles over how ethnic boundaries are constituted and maintained, and about how group identities are defined and contested.

Brah (1996) emphasises the possibility of diasporic communities resisting the processes of exclusion through her examination of 'diaspora space'. According to Brah one can live in a space without totally subscribing to the dominant national discourse of that space. The diaspora space

then holds transgressive and creative potential, and may encourage wider 'diasporic consciousness' (Kalra *et al.*, 2005, Gedalof, 2012). The lives of young British Muslims then, are grounded through a *combination* of the cultures and traditions of their parents and the Indian subcontinent, *and* in the culture and social practices of Britain (Sayyid, 2006). However, even where individuals adopt some of the cultural traits of the 'new' society (Anthias, 2001), in a corporeal sense, many are embodied by what is discerned as a foreign, usually Pakistani, Other.

Drinking cultures associated with many sport and leisure practises in Britain are good examples of this. Currently very little research exists documenting perceptions of alcohol amongst the British South Asian diaspora. Where there are first hand testimonies they are limited and decentralised within wider discussions of South Asians, community cohesion and citizenship (Thomas and Sanderson, 2011; Ryan, 2011). Within these studies the general consensus is that South Asian communities (mainly Muslims) perceive alcohol consumption as an immoral 'Western' pastime. The question of whether British Muslims can 'function' within the space of sport, where alcohol is consumed therefore, remains an important one.

South Asian faith groups have a history of 'adapting' to their host societies in Britain. Some have had to forsake distinct cultural and religious traditions and habits for more 'Western' ones. This included, amongst others, Muslims consuming (and often selling) alcohol, Sikh men shaving their beards and cutting their hair, thereby abandoning the turban (all of which are symbols of their religion), Gujarati and Sikh women giving up traditional dress on a day-to-day basis, and Hindus consuming (and selling) meat.

These notwithstanding, the issue of identity, and values of, in particular, British Muslims has been at the forefront of media and political discourse since the turn of the twenty first century (Thomas and Sanderson, 2011). There is a popularly held belief within certain strata of the British population that British Muslims consider themselves a 'community apart' and consequently, do not identify with 'Britishness' (*ibid.*). These views have been reflected in mainstream British cultural thinking and social policy, which has freely regressed to utterances of the Orientalism of the 'Muslim Other' who live 'parallel lives', completely lacking in shared identities (Abbas, 2011).

## **Methodology**

The data used in this paper were collected during research conducted by Author A between June 2007 and September 2011. Ethnographic fieldwork was undertaken with members of two amateur cricket clubs in a city in South Yorkshire. Both clubs and all respondents have been given pseudonyms.<sup>3</sup> The first club, 'Sutherland', is locally acknowledged to be dominated by white people, whilst the second club, 'Aylesworth', has gained a reputation for being dominated by people of South Asian descent. Sutherland was selected due to its geographic position within an area of the city with a significant minority ethnic population (37%). Given this, the lack of ethnic minority membership is conspicuous. Aylesworth was targeted because, unlike other clubs that have majority minority ethnic membership, Aylesworth was never intended to be a club exclusively for people of South Asian descent.<sup>4</sup> Aylesworth was formed in the middle of the nineteenth century and was already an established club by the time migrant communities began to settle in the region in significant numbers following the Second World War. It is only since the turn of this century that Aylesworth has begun to attract disproportionate numbers of players of South Asian descent. The common explanation for this cultural 'shift' was representative of the experiences of many South Asian migrants; that is, a combination of 'white flight' from the less desirable and economically less affluent areas surrounding the club, and the pull of the prospect of participating with members of the same ethnic background(s).

The research involved in-depth ethnographic fieldwork based on semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews and participant observation. Where possible, matches, training sessions and social gatherings were attended and participated in. Interviews revolved around a framework covering topics such as ethnic identities, belonging, community, religion, (anti) racism and ethnic privilege. The majority of the white respondents were born and bred in the Yorkshire

region. Most were educated to university level and occupied 'skilled' occupations. The majority of the British Muslim respondents were British-born, although a small number had migrated to Britain from the Indian subcontinent. Their level of education varied tremendously. All were from a Muslim background. All participants self-identified as having a Muslim heritage, although they chose different descriptors to articulate this. The majority identified themselves as either 'British Muslim' or 'British Asian'. Many used these descriptors interchangeably. A small, predominantly younger group, cited no religious affiliation. A small minority had mixed white and South Asian parents.

The predominantly white club is where author A participated as a player throughout the research period. Gaining access to respondents at this club was therefore, relatively straightforward. In contrast, at least half of the research involved this white, middle-class, heterosexual, male researcher exploring the life-worlds of [predominantly] working-class British Muslim men. It is generally accepted that researchers who share the same cultural characteristics as their respondents (commonly: 'race', gender, class and sexuality) are in a superior position to unearth the ideas, arguments and opinions of their respondents compared to researchers who do not share these characteristics (Sin, 2007). Carrington (2008) warns against the over-simplification of one's 'insider' or 'outsider' status(es) being based solely on 'race'. The diversity within ethnic and cultural groups is often so great that it is not immediately apparent who would be 'inside' and who would be 'outside' the group in question. Researchers will invariably share some characteristics with respondents while differing on others. Therefore, to assume that only those from the same background can research one another ignores the innate heterogeneity of social identities. In any case, one is never fully aware which aspects of one's identities translate into insider or outsider status and therefore, 'managing' one's identity is rarely straightforward.

Whilst researchers may not always share a number of desirable cultural characteristics with their respondents there are other methods of gaining acceptance. Author A is a competitive cricketer. Given that he was able to participate at a high level as an active participant observer, he had easy access to this social world. His drinking habits however, complicated his status. Author A does not drink alcohol. This was an important feature for gaining acceptance amongst the British Muslims, who openly respected the author's decision not to drink. However, it was also a constant feature of his negotiated insider status with the white respondents; particularly as the majority of the off-field social gatherings where data were collected involved environments where alcohol was freely consumed.

### **'Drink it Down, Drink it Down': British Muslims, Sport and Alcohol**

Drinking, as part of a post-match routine or team bonding, has been, and continues to be, a consistent feature of cricket, at all levels. At amateur levels in particular, not only is the consumption of alcohol considered a fundamental part of the post-match team bonding ritual, it is also crucial to a club's financial survival. Bar takings from alcohol consumption account for a large proportion of most clubs' earnings and therefore, for clubs which have pavilions (or an equivalent communal space) most social gatherings revolve around events where alcohol can be consumed.

For some of the white respondents, the prospect of their gatherings being alcohol free was unacceptable and it was immediately apparent that they were not prepared to organise 'dry' events for the benefit of non-drinkers: team mates or otherwise. Sutherland's Andy (mid 30s, gardener) was indignant towards the idea:

"I wouldn't come. I want to come to socialise ... I don't just want to drink pop (soft drink) because I can drink that at home. If [names of British Muslim players] were to come, you're stopping [white] lads from drinking beer. But I find it hard to believe why they are so against it. I mean, we wouldn't be offering it to them".

Whilst spending time researching the Sutherland Club, efforts from many white players to persuade British Muslim players to engage in drinking after matches and during social gatherings were

frequently observed. As practising Muslims, however, they were insistent they did not want to participate. This had implications for how they were perceived by other members of the team. Take what Sutherland's Graham (70s, retired school teacher) said for example:

"That's the worst thing about playing with Asians or Pakistanis because, the whole idea of playing cricket, is enjoying it ... seeing friends and having a drink after the game. I know a lot of them don't drink to start with ... *that's not necessarily a problem*. But most of them won't even have a [soft drink] with you. And that's what I think is wrong with Asians ... they don't want to socialise with white people".

Beneath Graham's quite crude testimony is the commonly held belief that South Asian communities optionally exclude themselves from activities involving white people (Thomas and Sanderson, 2011). He identifies how a refusal to drink alcohol is symptomatic of, though not the overriding factor behind, their self-segregation. Sutherland's Jeff (32, sport development officer) argued similarly that drinking alcohol is not essential for one's integration within a team. He cited a current white team mate as an example of how drinking alcohol is less important for an individual's integration compared to simply being represented at club events:

"Integrating and being part of the team is vital, but I also think that there are things off the pitch that are equally important. Like, if the lads decide as a club they want to go out into town on a massive booze-up there are going to be massive issues because the Asian guys won't come. But we've got a white club member that doesn't drink, but he still comes out and socialises. He'll drink pop instead. So what's the difference between him who chooses not to drink and those who choose not to drink because of cultural things? There is no difference!"

Jeff's comments resonate strongly with Author A. As a non-drinker the author has frequently experienced minor abuse and other forms of 'banter' from team mates. The author is regularly absent from team gatherings where a main purpose for getting together is to drink excessively. While the author's indifference towards alcohol is grounds for his Othering, the author has never felt excluded from the group. In fact, in the majority of cases, team mates and peers have respected the author's *choice* not to drink. The same however, cannot be said about the British Muslims referred to in this research. Author A's decision not to drink is purely a personal choice and one which he is entitled to change without restriction. In contrast, due to religious constraints, many British Asians are not permitted to drink. And it is this distinction, we argue, where the main difference over acceptance lies. Their non-drinking is due to being Muslim. The enduring legacy of events such as 9/11 and 7/7 has meant that, worldwide, Muslims have been perpetually characterised in blanket, homogenised and caricatured terms such as 'radicals', 'fundamentalists', 'backward' and 'terrorists'. Therefore, actions justified on the grounds of Islam are frequently interpreted as confirmation that British Muslims are backward, isolationist and uncommitted to integration.

In 2012 a report published by the University of Essex found that Muslims actually identify with Britishness more than any other Britons, but that many non-Muslim Britons still view Muslims as a potential enemy within. Findings included that 83% of Muslims are proud to be British citizens, compared to 79% of the general public; and 82% of Muslims want to live in diverse and culturally mixed neighbourhoods compared to 63% of non-Muslim Britons. The report also showed that 47% of non-Muslim Britons see Muslims as a threat; and only 28% of non-Muslim Britons believe Muslims want to integrate into British society (Moosavi, 2012).

The majority of the British Muslims were aware that white players shared similar perceptions of anti-integration, and this had a strong influence on their sense of self. Aylesworth's Addy (27, teaching assistant) reflected:

“I think that Asians not drinking and sticking around after a game is an issue ... Not from the point of view of Asian people, but from the point of view of white people. Cricket is the ‘English’ game and so the values within the game reflect that. And the English, as a culture, drink. But at the end of the day, that [not drinking alcohol] is down to our religion. It’s not anything we can adapt ... I’m not viewed equally because I don’t drink”.

Both Jeff and Addy adopted quite distinct ontological positions towards alcohol consumption. Jeff’s view (above) argues in favour of an individual’s agency to present a very conscious version of themselves to others. In this case, a willingness amongst non-drinkers to attend events where drinking is expected gains them status and ontological security within the group. Addy’s view on the other hand, was positioned firmly within an ontology of constraint. From his testimony, the rules of the Qu’ran are quite clear towards alcohol consumption and he was unwilling to disobey them for the sake of acceptance in a team.

Many of the British Muslims held generally negative views of alcohol and people who consume it. In Ryan’s (2011) examination of British Muslim women, alcohol consumption, as well as teenage pregnancy, was cited by several participants as evidence of a perceived lack of moral values in society. Scourfield et al (2012) propose that, when ethnic identities are threatened, in the context of migrating to an unfamiliar place for example, religion can provide a resource for (re)affirming one’s cultural distinctiveness. One of the clearest distinctions amongst the British Muslim respondents was the significance of religion as a source of identity. This was effectively conveyed through their attitudes towards alcohol. For instance, some, rather than feeling isolated as a consequence of not drinking, demonstrated a great deal of ethnic and religious pride through their abstinence, and actually formalised negative judgements towards drinkers for what were perceived as negative identity traits, such as drunkenness, loutish behaviour and violence. Aylesworth’s Ali (late 30s, school teacher), for instance, said:

“As English culture is so focussed around drinking and going to the pub, Pakistanis, Muslims really, have difficulty partaking. I find the whole drinking in a pub for the whole afternoon or evening such a bore and waste of time. So I can’t identify with this as part of my culture. Asians and, in particular, Muslims, want to preserve their own identities and values, and drinking is not a feature of this”.

Consequently, British Muslims who accept drinking as a pass time that they can be involved in (though many will not participate directly) often experience questions from other British Muslims about their ethnic and religious identities. Sutherland’s Adeel reflected on the reaction amongst certain family members towards him socialising in the bar area of the clubhouse with his white team mates:

“I do know a few Asian people who will sit down with one another and judge what white people are doing ... they’ll be like ‘look at them; they’re drunk’, and I’m just sitting there thinking ‘it’s just a bit of drink’. They say to me when I come home, ‘where have you been?’ and I’ll be like ‘I went to play cricket’ and they’ll be like ‘what did you do after the game?’ ... ‘I went into the bar afterwards, I got a Lucozade and I had a chat with the lads’. And they’ll be abusing me for sitting around when the guys are having a drink. It bugs me because, just because he’s doing it, doesn’t mean I have to. I think that, in this kind of environment, we need to show white people that we’re ok. And if sitting in the bar will help this, that’s fine with me”.

Use of the word ‘show’ suggests a conscious presentation of the self to an audience (Ryan, 2011). These ideas about self presentation reflect Nayak’s (2003: 54) conceptualisation of ‘learning to be local’. Nayak argues that, in order to integrate, visible minorities (identified as ‘coloured’) have to

develop strategies for self-preservation by adapting their behaviours and movements to suit dominant expectations. Contextualising to Goffman, Ryan (2011: 1047) argues how:

[I]n the contexts of threat and risk ... actors facing collective stigmatization make deliberate and measured choices about how to present the individual self and the wider collectivity.

These perspectives suggest that culturally and racially oppressed individuals may adopt certain behavioural strategies to 'adapt' their ethnicities to optimise their chances of inclusion in white dominated spaces. According to Hall (1995), these techniques are all constitutive of the growing 'cultural repertoire' available to young minority British people in the twenty first century.

For minority ethnic communities religion can also be an important resource for bolstering a sense of cultural distinctiveness (Scourfield et al. 2012). Addy, for instance, believed how not drinking alcohol was the mark of a true Muslim. He went on to refer to Muslims who do drink as 'hypocrites' to their faith:

Author A: "What do you think about Muslims who drink?"

Addy: "I think they're hypocrites. I think they've forgotten where their roots are and I think they're disrespectful".

Aylesworth's Immy (28, call centre worker) reflected similarly that these individuals had "lost the plot", but he also captured the fluidity and hybridity of British Muslim identities by referring to drinking as cultural "mixing":

"You can't stop people from doing it. It's against our faith, but realistically, nothing I say will change what they're doing because they probably don't see anything wrong with it. For them, they're mixing the two lives aren't they? They'll probably go and pray after a pint."

Consuming alcohol therefore, calls attention to the challenges of being 'normal' faced by British Muslims. Within the context of this study, the complexity of balancing their different life-worlds meant that the British Muslims were cultural transgressors in different forms of their lives. Their experience of living in 'both of two worlds' (Hall, 1995) emerges from their everyday experience in different cultural fields, and is largely determined by their ability to adopt normative (white British) qualities in these fields.

### **Belonging and Sports Cultures**

To gain inclusion and to succeed within the parameters of amateur cricket in Yorkshire, one has to acquire and abide by the values and regulations, i.e. the dominant 'habitus', of this field. This is harder for some individuals than others. It is usually assumed that the family environment is crucial for the passing on of religious and cultural values (Scourfield et al. 2012). In particular, Scourfield et al. identify that young Muslims are more likely to identify with the same religious labels as their parents than any other ethnic group. Therefore, British Asians (including Muslims) whose upbringings have been more 'traditional' (widely perceived as meaning not very 'Westernised') may experience greater marginalisation and exclusion because the cultural resources they possess via family socialisation are not easily converted.

In order to comprehend why some individuals are assimilated, whilst others are excluded, it is necessary to understand how these individuals are interpreted as representatives of particular codes of being. As Kathleen Hall writes:



Cultural-identity formation is not simply a matter of preserving a cultural tradition handed down by one's parents ... cultural-identity formation ... is an inherently political process". (Hall, 1995: 244).

Hall's reference to parents' cultural traditions begs the question of how to conceptualise British Asians of mixed parentage. It was commonly believed by both the white and British Muslim respondents that certain British Asians are better placed to survive within white dominated environments. According to Burdsey (2007), the 'Anglo-Asian', is often able to overcome the symbolic boundaries restricting the access of British Asians because, given the white Anglo influence of one parent, they have been socialised in a more conducive environment at home to facilitate long term integration. The white respondents rarely acknowledged the possibility of mixed parentage, but advocated that 'Anglicised' or 'Westernised' British Asians were more likely to possess a desirable 'entry ticket' (Back, Crabbe and Solomos 2001). As younger British Asians spend more time interacting with white people and participating in 'British' social activities, the more likely they are to take on board the values, norms and expectations of these people and spaces (Guveli and Platt, 2011). This general theory of assimilation suggests that when British Asians enter sports where alcohol consumption is common, they would be more likely to consume alcohol themselves. As Aylesworth's Jabs (27, self-employed) reflected:

"I waited until I was 18 before having my first drink. I enjoy a drink. I think it's all part of experimenting and finding out who you are. Back then, I didn't really know who I was. I grew up in a white area, went to school with white kids and had white friends. I know I'm not white, but they all did it and it just seemed normal to follow them".

When minority ethnic communities fall into the category of 'successful assimilation' they are often referred to as being 'Anglicised', or 'Westernised'. Anglicised/Westernised British Asians, or 'Anglo-Asians' (Burdsey, 2007), would be expected to behave and communicate like any other white British person. This would include displaying a favourable attitude towards 'Western' leisure activities, including drinking. This perspective was exemplified by Aylesworth's Jimmy (30, civil service) who referred to the way Western, and white culture generally, defined his identity:

"I have been Westernised; in the strictest sense. My friends actually call me a 'Bounty' ... as in the chocolate bar ... brown on the outside and white on the inside. This came about through school, playing football, playing cricket, going out with friends because I always did this with my white friends. White culture has been all around me. I made the decision to drink for myself. I shouldn't have because I am a Muslim, and I know that my parents would be outraged if they knew. But, you know, when in England, do how the English do".

The label 'Bounty' referred to by Jimmy has the same meaning as other phrases including 'coconut' referred to in other studies (cf. Ratna 2010). According to Ratna, terms such as these are used to refer to black and Asian people that may be regarded as "black" on the inside, but "white" on the outside in terms of racial identity, dress and behaviour. Jimmy inverts this conceptualisation in referring to being "brown on the outside and white on the inside". Jimmy is suggesting that, though phenotypically he is South Asian, his behaviour, choice of dress, argot, and general social practices, are more akin to white British culture. However, like many of the British Asian females involved in Ratna's research, while Jimmy demonstrated awareness of some extent of assimilation into 'British' society, he did not want to be seen to be disrespecting his 'roots': his Pakistani Muslim heritage.

For Jabs and Jimmy, living a 'normal' British life meant participating in 'British' social activities, such as drinking. Burdsey's research on British Asian footballers offers comparable analysis. He argues how, although, in most instances, skin colour and name prevent a fully covert presence

within sport, British Asians will often seek to disguise aspects of their 'Asianness', such as clothing, argot and religious adherence (Burdsey, 2007: 68). Whilst both of these accounts demonstrated the willingness of some British Asians to undermine their cultural and religious heritage, the centrality of religion within their daily lives is different. For Jabs, despite his parents (his father in particular), advocating their importance, Islam and his South Asian heritage were not currently an important part of his life. Jimmy on the other hand demonstrated how cultural influences, 'white' and 'Asian', are interwoven within the quotidian of his everyday life. Both were able to negotiate these demands, but others involved in this research possessed a fragmented consciousness, which emerged from their everyday experience of occupying different cultural fields. In a conversation with Inzy (32, civil service) he reflected on how his 'hybrid' identities had resulted in an ambiguous sense of belonging:

Inzy: "You [author A] know you're English. Your mum and dad are English and you're from this country. We [British Asians] are divided. We are in between British and Asian culture. I think most of us are British at heart and we've taken on board certain aspects of the culture. But we don't really belong to this country in terms of culture. Most white people look at us and just see Pakistanis".

### **Discussion**

The post-match environment was a place where these young British Muslims felt they had the freedom to act out their Britishness. However, this was not without caution as they demonstrated acute awareness of their Muslim identities and the attendant demands of those identities. The demands of acting out varying degrees of 'Asianness', 'Muslimness' and 'Britishness' in different environments was clearly difficult for some. Many adopted very conscious strategies for making the best of their situation. These strategies were twofold. They would either: frequent spaces where alcohol was being consumed though not participate directly in drinking; or, disavow their religious beliefs completely by drinking alongside their white counterparts. These techniques were interpreted differently amongst the research respondents. The white respondents all agreed that any obvious attempt by British Asians to adapt was a positive move towards integration (or assimilation). The view from the British Muslim respondents was more complex. They frequently expressed a feeling of being 'pulled between two worlds' (Hall, 1995: 247) – two worlds that were perceived by some to be separate and mutually exclusive, in that, behaviour expected and celebrated in one environment would be transgressive in the other.

Debates about, in particular, South Asian youths as the object of a 'culture clash' have been critiqued at length within literature on postcolonialism, diaspora and hybridity (cf. Brah, 1996, 2006; Kalra et al. 2005). In particular, it has been argued that to suggest there is only one 'British' and one 'Asian' culture is untenable. Similarly, to emphasise a culture 'clash' disavows the possibility of cultural interaction and hybridity. Moreover, the portrayal of young British Asians as "disoriented, confused and atomised individuals" is not supported by the evidence (ibid.: pp. 52-54). Instead, most evidence suggests that British Asians (and other diasporic communities) are constructing new and alternative identities, rather than abiding by the rather reductionist principle of either being one of 'us' or one of 'them'. Rather than being 'caught between cultures', the British Muslims in this research challenged themselves to have 'both of two worlds' (Hall, 1995). However, like the British Muslim women in Ryan's (2011) study, despite the various efforts made by many of the British Muslims involved in this research, it is apparent that they face on-going challenges to their position as 'normal' members of multicultural British society. On the one hand, those who do not drink alcohol and do not involve themselves in other post-match sporting pursuits risk being stigmatised by whites for being too 'Asian' or 'Muslim' and are excluded; on the other hand, those who do drink alcohol and do become involved in additional activities, risk being stigmatised by other British Muslims for 'not being Asian/Muslim enough', and are subsequently excluded again. Therefore,

“In contrast to the simplistic polarity of either being ‘caught’ between two cultures or moving effortlessly between them ... most young Muslims are somewhere in the middle, with ‘identity’ developed dialectically through their negotiation of the conflicts and tensions” (Thomas and Sanderson, 2011: 1040).

As Bauman (2000) observes, in late modernity identity is fluid, continually negotiated and (re)constructed in the interactions of everyday life. Such identity work is, however, subject to fractures and dissonances, where fluid notions of identity only go so far. Individuals have some agency to make sense of their own place in the wider networks of society, but all the while they are negotiating the constraints on their identity-making that others impose on them. For the British Muslim men in our research, such identity work is strongly bound by a particularly modern Muslim morality: an obligation to demonstrate to Allah - and to one’s peers - one’s commitment to the practice of Islam and also, the practice of belonging to the group. The cultural practice of drinking alcohol, a practice identified with both a hegemonic white Britishness (this is the socially-constructed ‘ordinary, everyday practice’ that the British do when they meet up to socialise) and the sporting masculinity of local, Yorkshire cricket (this is what sportsmen do to demonstrate they are sportsmen), is one that becomes for many of our respondents something impossible to reconcile with their Islamic faith.

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<sup>1</sup> The complexities involved in applying the term ‘British Asian’ and explaining relative levels of citizenship has received significant academic attention over the last two decades. There is tremendous diversity amongst British Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus and currently there is no term that sufficiently captures this heterogeneity. This paper employs the term ‘British Asian’ to refer to those British citizens who trace their ancestry back to, or who themselves migrated from, the Indian subcontinent. It is employed as a dynamic category that possesses no firm boundaries.

<sup>2</sup> On September 11 2001, four commercial planes were hijacked by al-Qaeda terrorists. Two crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York, another crashed into the Pentagon in Virginia, whilst the third crashed into suburban land. In the aftermath of 9/11, America (under a coalition with Great Britain) launched the ‘War on Terror’. The July 7th, 2005 London bombings were a series of coordinated suicide attacks on London’s public transport network. Three bombs exploded on London’s Underground trains and another on a double-decker bus. The perpetrators were three Leeds-based British Pakistanis, Mohammad Sidique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, Hasib Mir Hussain and one British Jamaican, Germaine Lindsay.

<sup>3</sup> All participants involved in the research were encouraged to choose the name by which they wished to be recognised. This was done in order for respondents to feel a sense of ownership of their voices and their part in the research. In addition, applying pseudonyms randomly or comically – as is common where writers may impose ironic names to describe certain participants – is not necessarily appropriate for all cultural groups. Aarti Ratna (2011) argues of the importance of, and complexity behind, naming children of South Asian descent, for instance, and acknowledges that names, randomly applied, and out of context could cause offence.

<sup>4</sup> See Carrington (1999) for a discussion of the cultural politics influencing the establishment of the Caribbean Cricket Club in Leeds, West Yorkshire.

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