"Who do 'they' cheer for?" Cricket, diaspora, hybridity and divided loyalties amongst British Asians

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This article explores the relationship between British Asians' sense of nationhood, citizenship, ethnicity and some of their manifestations in relation to sports fandom: specifically in terms of how cricket is used as a means of articulating diasporic British Asian identities. I place Norman Tebbit's 'cricket test' at the forefront of this article to tease out the complexities of being British Asian in terms of supporting the English national cricket team. The first part of the article locates Tebbit's 'cricket test' within the wider discourse of multiculturalism. The analysis then moves to focus on the discourse of sports fandom and the concept of 'home team advantage'. I argue that sports venues represent significant sites for nationalist and cultural expression due to their connection with national history. I highlight how supporting 'Anyone but England', thereby rejecting ethnically exclusive notions of 'Englishness' and 'Britishness', continues to be a definer of British Asians' cultural identities. The final section situates these trends within the discourse of hybridity and argues that sporting allegiances are often separate from considerations of national identity and citizenship. Rather than placing British Asians in an either/or situation, viewing British 'Asianness' in hybrid terms enables them to celebrate their traditions and histories, whilst also being proud of their British citizenship.

Keywords: British Asians; Citizenship; Cricket; Diaspora; Hybridity; Norman Tebbit; Racism

Sunday June 14th, 2009 saw another event to spark the growing sociological interest with British Asian communities and sport.[1] On that day England played India at Lord's, the English 'home of cricket', in the International Cricket Council (ICC) World *Twenty20* Cup. Despite England achieving a memorable victory, the contest was overshadowed by the day's earlier events off the pitch, in England's pre-match warm-up. After England's win, then Captain Paul Collingwood revealed that the team had been jeered and booed by hundreds of British Asians who had come to support the Indian team (*The Indian Express*, 2009). As this incident happened at Lord's and the majority of the perpetrators were British Asians, familiar arguments over the sporting allegiances of British Asians; their British citizenship, and whether British Asians are welcome in sport, resurfaced. Taking the events of June 14th as its point of departure, this article explores the relationship between British Asians' sense of nationhood, citizenship and ethnicity in relation to sports fandom and, more specifically, how cricket can act as a means for articulating diasporic British Asian identities.

Methodology

The data used in this paper were collected during fieldwork undertaken between June 2007 and January 2010 with two high level amateur cricket clubs in Sheffield, South Yorkshire. One club was predominantly white and the other predominantly British Asian in membership. The predominantly white club is known within the local area to be middle class and it has a reputation for its lack of ethnic minority involvement. It is run by a committee which epitomises the stereotypical white 'old boys club' image, so often criticised by those within the game who advocate the need for cricket to evolve with the times (cf. Carrington and McDonald, 2001). The ideology within the club is reflective of its 'traditional' roots. The majority of the British Asian respondents were British-born, although a small number had migrated to Britain from the Indian subcontinent – predominantly throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. They occupied diverse occupations – from management and teaching to taxi drivers and restaurateurs. Most identified themselves as Muslim, while a small, predominantly younger group, cited no religious affiliation.

Research involved a process of in-depth ethnographic fieldwork based on semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and participant observation. Matches, training sessions and, where possible, social gatherings were attended and participated in. Both clubs have been anonymised and all respondents have been given pseudonyms. The predominantly white club will hereafter be referred to as 'Sutherland' and the predominantly British Asian club referred to as 'Aylesworth'. All participants involved were encouraged to choose the name by which they wished to be recognised. This was done to encourage them to feel a sense of ownership over their voices and their part in the research. Equally important was an awareness that, applying pseudonyms randomly or comically is not necessarily appropriate for all cultural groups. Ratna (2011) for instance, describes the importance of, and complexity behind, naming children of South Asian descent, and acknowledges that names, applied and/or used incorrectly, ignoring differences pertaining to religion or gender, could cause offence.

An examination of ethnic identities in Yorkshire cricket is timely. Yorkshire cricket has a long association with racism and inequality and continues to be a bastion for a certain type of hegemonic white masculinity, which has functioned to exclude members from minority ethnic communities (Fletcher, 2011a, 2011b, In Press). The Yorkshire County Cricket Club and the Headingley ground in Leeds have been at the centre of a number of well publicised racist incidents and have faced frequent accusations of inveterate and institutionalised racism (Fletcher, In Press). Over the last two decades, northern England has also been at the centre of a number of racially motivated civil disturbances, such as the Bradford riots (1995) and Oldham riots (2001) that represented the culmination of long-standing racial antagonisms between white and British Asian communities (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005). As recent as August 2010, the West Yorkshire city of Bradford, which is well-known for the size of its South Asian communities, hosted English Defence League demonstrations. There had been fears that the demonstrations would trigger violent reactions to rival the 2001 riots (Fallon, 2010). Fortunately, only minor disturbances were witnessed, though Bradford's involvement in the demonstrations did signal the continuing salience of northern England, and Yorkshire specifically, in ethnic struggles across Britain.

There has also been an historical lack of sociological inquiry into specific cricket cultures, including Yorkshire. The voices, experiences and needs of ordinary cricketers in Yorkshire have been neglected. Currently very little research exists that directly focuses on the experiences of British Asians in cricket (cf. Burdsey 2010a, 2010b).[2] Indeed, the relationship between British Asians and sport generally, remains a relatively under-researched and misunderstood area of sociological inquiry. Dominant histories of the sport in England have centralised white voices. Consequently, the experiences and stories of minority ethnic players and clubs – and in particular, how they have interacted with white spaces - remain heavily marginalised. This research goes some way to address this imbalance through its centring of both white and British Asian voices. As a white middle-class man I am writing about, and from the perspective of, people from cultural and socio-economic backgrounds very different from my own. While there are sensitivities with white researchers telling

stories on behalf of minority ethnic communities (cf. Duneier, 2004; Young Jr, 2004), I was motivated to tell these stories accurately; not out of obligation to the respondents (cf. Hylton, 2009), but of necessity to begin to level cricket's (ethnocentric) playing field. [3]

This is England: Which side do they cheer for?

The June 14th, 2009 scene was not the first time sport provided a ground for questions regarding the loyalty and citizenship of British Asians. In 1990, speaking before a Test match between England and India, Conservative MP Norman Tebbit asked, "which side do they cheer for?" By 'they', Tebbit was referring to Britain's migrant population. Tebbit had long believed that too many migrants would fail what he had dubbed 'the cricket test' – a superficial measurement of fidelity and assimilation of migrant groups in Britain. Tebbit controversially argued that, to live in Britain, migrant communities had to unequivocally assimilate into the British 'way of life'. For Tebbit, a fundamental aspect of assimilation was for any attachment to one's nation(s) of ancestry to be severed.

Tebbit's rhetoric about segregation and citizenship has become familiar within British cultural policy. Ratna (forthcoming) for instance, argues how, despite successive government policies championing multiculturalism and the celebration of ethnic difference, political commentators have continued to argue that British Asian communities tend to lead separate lives, parallel to 'white' ethnic groups in England. This view is exemplified by Trevor Phillips, the Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, who argues that, for some time, Britain has been 'sleep walking' into a state of cultural segregation (Halstead, 2009). Phillips, like many others, was worried that advocating multiculturalist principles - including the idea that ethnic minorities should cherish and preserve their 'indigenous' identities - could result in some communities leading self-contained lives in isolation from broader society. Of course, under the provisions of the cricket test, and on the basis that England frequently competes against the countries of ancestry of a vast amount of Britain's minority ethnic communities, it is inevitable that loyalties will be tested (Malcolm, 2001). Tebbit was canny in his decision to choose cricket as his marker of assimilation because, for centuries, the ubiquity of

cricket in English popular culture has made it synonymous with expressions of 'Englishness', Empire, bourgeois English nationalism and British elitism (Sandiford, 1983). C. L. R. James noted how - due to its position both as, perhaps, the cultural embodiment of the values and mores of 'Englishness', and its 'missionary' role within British imperialism and colonialism – cricket occupied a central site in many of the anti-colonial struggles between coloniser and colonised (James, 2005[1963]).

When he made his speech, Tebbit assumed that mass immigration threatened Britain's hegemonic national culture. During the early phases of their migration, South Asian communities were seen to be introducing irreversible changes to the social composition of Britain. In particular, the main threats were believed to be that they provided competition for jobs and housing, that they had excessively large families, and that they were reluctant to integrate (Anthias, 1998, 2001; Brah, 1996). Tebbit's feeling at the time was that retaining cultural attachments to their 'homeland(s)' prevented migrants' successful integration (or assimilation) which threatened Britain's long term cohesion (Lewis, 2008).

During the 1960s and 1970s, talk of Britain having an 'immigration epidemic' was commonplace (Saeed, 2007). Many people have interpreted this rhetoric of 'cohesion' to represent homogeneity. For many on the Right (which represents a number of the white respondents in this research) homogeneity is favoured over inclusive multiculturalism (Parekh, 2006). Prioritising homogeneity requires incomers to adopt their way of life to resemble that of their host culture. This is characteristic of the 'assimilationist' model of citizenship, which was popular throughout the 1960s. Within this model it is expected that the incomer – along with their culture, belief systems and practices – will be absorbed into the dominant culture (Day, 2006). The expectation of ethnic minorities within this model is for them to be 'just like us'. In contrast, the 'integration' model of citizenship, which became popular at the height of multicultural anti-discriminatory discourses from the 1980s, represents the utopian multicultural vision whereby incomers – their culture, belief systems and practices – are embraced and accepted by the dominant culture, even in spite of their

differences (ibid.). Historical debates surrounding immigration have focused almost exclusively on the dangers associated with 'coloured' immigration, while discussions of white immigration (those people from Eastern Europe for instance) have, until now, been notably absent. This suggests that issues of citizenship are surrounded by white privilege and cultural racisms.

Evidence from this research demonstrates that Tebbit's inferences remain relevant within cricket culture at the current time.[4] Much of his rhetoric around assimilation was supported by the white respondents from Sutherland. Graham demonstrated a disturbing modern day conceptualisation of Tebbitry:

> "If you're coming into this country, you've got to be seen as an English person by everyone else … Regardless of how long they [South Asians]'ve been living in England they haven't changed. They [the men] still wear their dresses [sic] and have big beards and veils and whatever else, and I just feel erm … I know it's their tradition and whatever, but they could make themselves a bit more English. And I think the English would appreciate that as well. There's nothing stopping them sticking on a pair of jeans and just, fitting in. But they don't want to, do they? They don't even support our teams do they?" (Interview, 23rd March, 2009)

Thus, according to Graham, when ethnic minorities display acts of allegiance, which transgress the expected normalised codes of 'Englishness', their way of being is heavily criticised. Arguably then, British Asians are forced to negotiate their social and national identities in order to assert their allegiance to England. Those who display allegiances to religious groupings and/or places of their ancestral origin may fail to conform to the imagined template of 'Englishness' and may be rejected by English sporting culture as a result (Burdsey, 2006; Wilby, 2006). However, Kalra *et al.* criticise these views and attribute such defensive mentalities as reactionary responses to diasporic communities on the part of "an overly coercive nation-state unable to comprehend the openness of diaspora" (Kalra, *et al.,* 2005: 36).

British Asians, fandom and diaspora

The fact that British Asians are choosing to support the teams of their country of ancestry, rather than their country of birth and residence, reflects the complexity of British Asian and diasporic

identities in the twenty first century and has contributed to the emergence of new theoretical discourses around the hybridity of social identities (cf. Anthias, 1998; 2001). Debates about British Asian identities and sporting loyalties tend to draw on the notion of 'diaspora'.[5] Diaspora has conventionally referred to the transnational dispersal of a cultural community. Anthias (1998) defines diaspora as a particular type of ethnic category that exists across the boundaries of nation states rather than within them. Kalra *et al.* (2005) argue similarly that diaspora means to be *from* one place, but *of* another (cf. Gilroy, 1993). Thus, diaspora may refer to a population category or a social condition (consciousness). At the very least, 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 (Walle, 2010). The very notion of diaspora implies that the movement of the South Asian community was temporary and that they would eventually return 'home' (Ratna, forthcoming). However, many of these immigrants never made the mythical return 'home' and remained as residents of this country (Brah, 1996).

Anthias outlines how certain conceptualisations of diaspora can be criticised for homogenising populations and reinforcing primordial, or absolutist notions of 'origin' and 'true-belonging' (Anthias, 2001: 632). However, 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. Members of the South Asian diaspora, for instance, come from very different backgrounds, they have migrated at different points in time and for different reasons and therefore, how they experience belonging to the diaspora, will also vary. As Stuart Hall writes:

> The diaspora experience … is defined, not be essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew … (Hall, 1990: 235)

Diaspora should therefore, be conceptualised in terms of the *routes* by which a person has got somewhere, and the *roots* they have to a particular place (Kalra *et al.* 2005). Belonging, then, 'is never a

question of affiliation to a singular idea of ethnicity or nationalism, but rather about the *multivocality of belongings'* (ibid: 29 *author's emphasis*). To agree that the diaspora has no fixed origin, however, makes conceptualising the sporting and national allegiances of British Asians communities increasingly complex. According to Parekh (2000: 205) a multicultural society should not question the divided loyalties of people within the 'home' nation, as they should have the power and right to embrace dual and even multiple identifications.

Nevertheless, explanations of diaspora (in a sporting context at least) frequently draw upon a notion of ethnic bonds as primarily revolving around the centrality of 'origin'. In many cases, the privileging of origin is central in constructing identity and solidarity. For many members of the South Asian diaspora, there exists a continuation of ethnic solidarities and attachments to the symbols of national belonging and continuing investment, emotionally, economically and culturally in the homeland (Anthias, 1998). In his examination of Indian cricket supporters in Australia, Madan (2000) argues that, throughout times of uncertainty and ethnic struggle, one element of their identities galvanises the diaspora: their identification with 'home':

> In the same way the diasporic subjects move beyond national boundaries, the identity 'Indian' has moved beyond national ideologies, thereby challenging the modern linear link between race, nation and culture. For diasporic Indians to keep their place in the world, across time, space, and different experiences of nationality, ethnicity, and 'diasprocity', one variable remains constant … the use of the word Indian. (Madan, 2000: 27)

This 'diasporic consciousness', as expressed through cricket, may be understood as reflecting a 'homing desire' (Brah, 1996) – that is, an identity rooted in the history of a geographic origin, rather than a desire to return to a 'homeland'. At the heart of this analysis is the inter-relationship between the diaspora (as perceived to be the settler), their neighbours (who may consider themselves to be 'indigenous') and their shared habitus (Vertovec, 2000).

Central to this article is an appreciation that diasporic identities do not simply revolve around either, the reproduction of existing cultures within new settings; or the appropriation of new ones. Instead, diasporic identities must be viewed as being fluid, syncretic, and hybrid. The lives of young

British Asians 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). Yet, this balancing act is frequently understood in terms of being 'caught between cultures'. Being part of a diaspora is not necessarily about identification with a single source of cultural heritage, or about having a primordial sense of 'home'. Diaspora should be conceptualised as a state of consciousness rather than a sure sense of rootedness and belonging (Brah, 1996; Anthias, 1998). The construction of young diasporic British Asian identities emerges at the intersection of local and global dynamics. As Clifford (1994) argues, diasporas think globally, but live locally. Therefore, however settled diasporas are, they must navigate through complex loyalties. Even where individuals adopt some of the cultural traits of the 'new' society (Anthias, 2001), they may remain marginalised and be seen as strangers. For many British Asians, then, the politics of sports fandom are complex and certainly are not reducible to the common 'anyone but England' mantra.

This research shows how British Asians will often use cricket, and specifically their support of the England national team, as part of a wider agenda to redefine the habitus of English cricket to be more inclusive to their needs. Brah (1996) emphasises the possibility of diasporic communities resisting the processes of exclusion through her examination of 'diaspora space'. She argues that discussions of diaspora must not isolate the experiences of the 'migrant other'; rather diaspora should be explored at the intersections of power and positionality, which invariably involves discussion of those conceived as 'indigenous'. For Brah, 'the concept of *diaspora space* (as opposed to diaspora) includes the … intertwining of the genealogies of dispersion with those 'staying put' (ibid: 209). Brah's conceptualisation recognises that one can live in a space without totalling subscribing to the dominant national discourse of that space. In so doing, the diaspora space holds transgressive and creative potential through its role in encouraging wider 'diasporic consciousness' (Kalra *et al.,* 2005). This article adopts this conceptualisation because it challenges dominant discourses about authenticity, belonging and citizenship, whilst also accounting for processes of identity negotiation and the formation of 'new' and 'hybrid' ethnicities (Hall, 2000).

Home team advantage

Sports fandom is about expressing loyalty to a certain player, team, region or nation. Fans support their 'home' team and invest a great deal of emotional attachment and creative labour in it. One's 'home' team is also synonymous with the home venue(s). Sports venues are imbued with a sense of place, pride and general affection by supporters (Bale, 1993). Some venues, particularly those of overarching cultural significance, such as Lord's in cricket, can often be linked to discussions of nostalgia, culture and heritage, as they call upon national pride derived from past glories and long histories (Moore, 2008).[6] It is the responsibility of the home fans to uphold the heritage of the sport and home team by claiming the space as their own. Home fans are ultimately responsible for making the visit of away players and fans uncomfortable; the very essence of being *away from home* is supposed to evoke palpable uncertainty. The number of home fans attending a live fixture, therefore, should invariably outweigh the number of away fans. This gives rise to the notion of a 'home advantage'. Thus, when we begin to think about fandom and its relationship with the national team, it is natural to assume the team we support would be our 'home' nation.

When England played India at Lord's on June 14th, 2009 it was difficult to ascertain who indeed had home advantage. The *Indian Express* wrote that "The [contest] … saw a packed house at the home of cricket, the 28,000-seater a sea of blue. Unfortunately for Paul Collingwood and his troops, it was the wrong shade of blue" (*The Indian Express*, June 15, 2009). Given the size of Britain's South Asian communities, it was inevitable India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh would receive significant levels of support during the tournament. The extent of support however, had been unanticipated. India's Captain, Mahendra Singh Dhoni had previously downplayed the significance of the level of support India had received throughout the tournament and prior to the match Collingwood had denied claims that the fixture would feel like an away match. Nevertheless, Collingwood's surprise at the reception of his team was hard to disguise in his post-match interview: "It hurt a few people and it was strange to get booed on our home ground" (ECB, June 14 2009).

It has previously been asked whether British Asians should be supporting England in contests involving teams from the Indian subcontinent. However, such a question presumes that a correct answer exists. By adopting the theoretical framework within this article, it is more important to ask: 'if British Asians are not supporting England, why not?' Similar questions were asked in 2001 when England played Pakistan at Edgbaston. On that occasion, England players were taunted in the practice nets by young British Asian fans that later created an electrifying atmosphere in the ground as they greeted the Pakistani team (Campbell, 2004). Although both events appear to represent the same tacit assumptions about British citizenship and divided loyalties, the difference between cheering for your team and booing the opposition, is quite significant. A point well articulated by Sutherland's James:

> "In my experience, cricket has always been different to other sports. In cricket, who you support is largely unimportant compared to the game itself. In cricket, you appreciate it if the other team does well … It's less territorial in a way. I think for them … I mean ... they were British guys weren't they? … For them, to boo our guys … their guys too … is disrespectful." (Interview, 19th January, 2009)

Within a sporting context it is not uncommon for rival supporters to boo or heckle one another. It is particularly common in relation to national anthems and, more unsavourily, during moments of silence. Crabbe (2003) suggests that booing/heckling is always done within the context of a 'carnivalesque' spirit and usually serves the purpose of acting as a precursor to friendly socialising among various supporter groups. Granstrom (2011) similarly suggests that booing/heckling could be interpreted as a *friendly* invitation to take part in a cheering competition. However, within the context of this article, both conceptualisations fail to account for politicised supporter behaviours and the role played by the sports event in galvanising and mobilising frustrated ethnic groups. In this context, it is not booing/heckling or the cricket match itself that are the decisive issues, but how the British Asians interpreted what cricket and their activities were symbols of.

The events at Edgbaston in 2001 captured headlines because the scenes were interpreted by many as a lack of patriotism shown towards England by British Asian communities and

subsequently, were used to challenge their level of British citizenship. Nasser Hussain, who was England captain at the time (and of Indian descent himself), spoke of his disappointment that British Asians cheered for Pakistan rather than their adopted homeland:

> "I cannot really understand [how] those born here, or who came here at a very young age like me, cannot support or follow England … it was disappointing to see a sea of green shirts with the names of Pakistani players instead of ours." (Campbell, 2004)

Hussain's expression of disappointment was similarly criticised by a number of prominent British Asian writers. Many accused him of forgetting where he came from and denying his mixed Asian parentage (Chaudhary, 2001). Chaudhary, for instance, challenged Hussain to "get in touch with your brown side" and suggested for him to put himself in the shoes of young British Asians of the time (ibid.). Chaudhary was challenging Hussain's assumption that by claiming British citizenship, young British Asians experienced equality and unquestioned insider status. However, as noted earlier, the long-term politics of diasporic settlement means that second and third generation British Asians frequently find themselves living 'in' Britain, but not being a part 'of' Britain (Brah, 1996: 191). Such sentiments are typified by Kaushal (2001) in *The Observer*:

> We (British Asians) may embrace Englishness, wear the national team shirt with pride, paint the cross of St. George on our cheek but when we attend cricket or football games and hear chants such as 'I'd rather be a Paki than a Turk', witness mass Nazi salutes, are spat on, and, at worst, are assaulted, it tends to make it difficult to cheer the country of our birth (England).

Burdsey (2007) has since rightly observed that both Hussain and his critics have demonstrated a lack of appreciation for how cricket (and sport generally) can reproduce ethnically exclusive notions of 'Englishness', which demonstrate a lack of sensitivity to the concepts of diaspora, hybridity and multiple identities. By implication, British Asians are expected to identify as *either* British *or* Asian; a point well articulated by Kathleen Hall (1995) who suggests that for British Asians 'there's a time to act English and a time to act Indian'. This, however, represents an essentialist interpretation of both 'Asianness' and 'Britishness', which should be avoided. An alternative typology of fandom which is hybrid in nature and one which acknowledges dual ethnicities should be preferred instead. But, far

from a move towards such an ideal, I argue that the events of 2009 represent an intensified feeling of alienation and marginalisation for many British Asians.

For a lot of British Asians, to support England and to be British, is predicated on their presence being acknowledged (and approved?) by white British people. Their experience of racism and wider marginalisation means they feel like outsiders within British culture and, it is this racism and marginalisation that deters them from identifying with the England team. Aylesworth's Azzy attended the game and recalled:

> "I understand why [white English] people have got so angry about [these events] because [white English] people don't really understand what it's like to be British Asian. You guys don't really get the whole being British, but supporting India or Pakistan thing … There were a lot of frustrated [British Asian] people at that game. Frustrated that they still get called names … Paki and terrorist … and frustrated by racism. A lot of Asian people don't feel respected here." (Interview, 20th June, 2009)

Azzy's use of 'you guys' is significant. Regardless of being born in this country, Azzy used the terms "you" and "us", thereby positioned me as belonging to the wider white majority which he separated himself from. Azzy assumed that, as a white person, I was unable to appreciate the politics behind his hybrid identity. As a result, and as I reflect upon elsewhere (Fletcher, 2010), the positionality of myself (perceived as the white researcher) and Azzy (British Asian respondent) became a highly conspicuous aspect of the research process. This was no more apparent than in his references to his Muslim identity and the wider tendency within Britain at this time to conflate Islam with religious fundamentalism and terrorism (Geaves, 2005).

For a while now, much debate has revolved around the politics of multiculturalism, or in some cases, the 'death of multiculturalism' and the incompatibility of white and British Asian cultures (Modood, 2005, 2008; Halstead, 2009). Though it is clear from Azzy's testimony that ethnic relations between these communities are unstable, there was evidence in this research to suggest that there might be grounds for optimism about the future of ethnic relations between them. I do not, of course, believe Tebbit's cricket test is valid. Advocates of such an essentialist discourse are, amongst other things, guilty of failing to acknowledge the complexities of sports fandom and the interplay

between everyday practices of identity and spectacular ways of expressing them (Crawford, 2004). The ways we choose the teams we support are both political and whimsical. Being a sports fan and demonstrating allegiances can help define who a person is and says a great deal about them to other people. We should not forget that fandom is essentially a performance of identities and, with June 14th, 2009 in mind, many British Asians utilised Lord's as an arena for expressing them (Hills, 2002). The 'cricket test' is more a reflection of the politics of 'race' in Britain than an indication of British Asians' subjective sense of their own 'Britishness' (Anthias, 1998).

Cultural Spaces and British Citizenship

Sport fan communities are frequently defined on the basis of group demographics and represent discursively constructed and distinctively racialised symbolic spaces, which provide sites for practical and symbolic resistance to white sporting hegemonies (Bradbury, 2010). In England there are ever-increasing numbers of minority ethnic communities who have to negotiate between their desire to belong, whilst also maintaining an imaginary attachment to their ancestral 'home' (Anderson, 1991). In the case of British Asians supporting teams from their respective countries of ancestry over England, for instance, the cricket ground is one place where British Asians can express the love for their home country, whilst sharing the experience with other British Asians. As the *Indian Express* says, "Among the close knit Indian community here, there's a sub-community of those who run into each other at cricket grounds" (*The Indian Express*, June 15, 2009). Indeed, it is under these circumstances that Holmes and Storey (2011: 253) argue how sports events 'transform total strangers into a unified collectivity struggling against a common adversary'.

People are artistically creative and equally, people attach great aesthetic value to their creative projects; whether that is through the clothes they wear, the television programmes they watch, or the way they invest meaning in and support their team. On June 14th, 2009 British Asians consciously transformed the Lord's cricket ground into a racialised space that was more indicative of them. Madan (2000) confirmed these motives in his discussion of Indian cricket supporters in Australia

where he argues they mark their territory through common signifiers of culture (flags, drums, language and dress) thereby using sport as a space to activate political identities and nationalist sentiments.

By accepting and drawing on their common signifiers of culture, supporters are not only contesting the game and their patriotism, but reinforcing their unity as British Asians and creating a 'local' reality in a 'non-local' place – a kind of 'resistance through ritual' (Hall and Jefferson, 1976). Spectatorship transforms the sports ground from an institutionally defined space into a space where agents can practise their politics of identity and allegiance - what Appadurai (1996: 110) referred to as a "simulacrum of warfare". Burdsey (2007) argues how spectatorship of the international game has facilitated greater opportunities for British Asians to recreate 'traditional' forms of South Asian fandom. And while he (amongst others) cites the increasingly stringent stewarding procedures at sporting venues as having a potentially damaging affect on these formations, he appreciates the agency of British Asians to celebrate the game on their terms. This is similar to Brah's (1996) conceptualisation of the 'diaspora space' highlighted earlier. The role of sports stadia in the creation of diaspora spaces was expressed by Aylesworth's Zahar who believed that the local signifiers of diasporic identities have greater impact when displayed outside one's home locality, in the cultural/racial spaces belonging to someone else:

> "It's how you get noticed isn't it? No one's gonna notice you unless you stand out …
> where better to do this than somewhere like a cricket ground? … White people don't
> expect to see us (British Asians) there do they? So, if I'm decorated like a Pakistani flag,
> they're gonna notice me aren't they?" (Interview, 22nd January, 2009)

While many British Asians prefer to support a team from the Indian subcontinent, most of the British Asian respondents in this research added how their sporting allegiances should be treated as a separate issue to their identification as British citizens and they believed they should have the freedom to embrace both their British citizenship as well as their South Asian heritage if they wish to do so (Ratna, forthcoming). Jimmy said:

"I do support Pakistan, but that's not because I hate England. I've read people saying, 'look at them Asians, living here, but hating England' and all this. That has nothing to do with it … Of course I want England to do well because most of my friends are English. When England is playing other nations, I want them to win; just not when they're playing Pakistan … I'm proud of where I've come from and I'd expect everyone to have these same values." (Interview, 9th March, 2009)

Although this type of response was commonplace, many were unable to justify why they supported a team from the Indian subcontinent. The majority attributed their allegiance to how they had been socialised. Others simply believed it was natural.

In contrast, Aylesworth's Hamza Ilyas believed the tendency for British Asians to support a team from the Indian subcontinent to be more cultural than many of the white respondents anticipated and, as a result, this pattern will continue throughout future generations. Regardless of their level of integration within British society, British Asians will always take a great deal of comfort from supporting the team of their ancestral home:

"I see England, first and foremost, as my home. And you could turn around and say, 'well, that's the case when England is playing against Pakistan', yeah? Maybe when I was growing up some of the things from my parents did wear off on me. If Pakistan was playing England and my dad's there supporting Pakistan, I'm going to support Pakistan. Now, because I'm supporting Pakistan, I think my little boy will do the same. This has nothing to do with whether we're British or not." (Interview, 3rd December, 2008)

In most cases, the allegiance of the British Asian respondents had never been questioned like this. Instead, it was taken for granted, natural and believed to be instinctive. However, many like Jimmy above were also quick to defend their choice of allegiance, which suggests that many British Asians experience dissonance over their dual ethnicities and thus, over whom they are and/or who they *feel they should be*. Both Jimmy and Hamza Ilyas show an awareness that with British citizenship come certain expectations – i.e. as discussed earlier, inherent to ethnic minorities claiming British citizenship is the political philosophy of assimilation (Day, 2006).

Experiences of diaspora vary and therefore, the context of settlement (what Brah refers to as the 'journey') will significantly influence future behaviours and actions. For Brah (1996: 182) the

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question of diaspora is not *who travels* but *when, how, and under what circumstances*? She argues how there is distinction between 'feeling at home' and declaring a place as home and, as a result, this 'situatedness' is central to their level of identification with their host country/culture and their country (or countries) of ancestry (ibid: 183). Many South Asians for instance, did not choose to leave the Indian subcontinent and were instead, forced to leave as a result of persecution and expulsion (ibid.).

Aylesworth's Addy for instance, suggests that many British Asians actively reject notions of 'Englishness' (embodied through the England team) because of historical antagonisms between white English people and South Asian communities:

> "Growing up, there's been a lot of hatred between the Asians and the whites –
> especially in cricket. Like when Pakistan are playing England, all the British Asians will
> be supporting Pakistan. Why don't they support England? They don't because many of
> us are still quite angry with English people for treating our ancestors so badly."
> (Interview, 2nd March, 2009)

Addy's testimony suggests how cricket's synonymy with 'Englishness', Empire and white racial supremacy could, in part, explain why so many British Asians are reluctant to identify with the England team. The debate does not end here. Juxtaposed with this is the question of why British Asians support a team from the Indian subcontinent, despite having little personal association with it. The answer may be that, for many British Asians, supporting a South Asian nation facilitates the construction of an imagined community, which forges a symbolic link with the Indian subcontinent, enabling for the celebration of their traditions and feelings of belonging with the nation from which their forbears migrated (Anderson, 1991). As Chaudhary (2001) writes:

> "I was born in England, but supporting India is for me, as for thousands of others, a
> reaffirmation of my cultural heritage. We are proud to be British, but we are also proud
> of our ancestry."

In addition to this, sports fandom has a highly versatile element of resistance attached to it. Werbner (2004: 468) argues that it is within the context of resistance that British Asians are able to articulate

an 'oppositional postcolonial sensibility', whereby the primary function of disavowing their association with the England team is to emphasise (where relevant) their sense of alienation from, and disaffection with, certain aspects of British society.

'Is it really that bad supporting Pakistan?' Interpretations of 'Englishness' and 'Britishness'

Historically, both 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' have been interpreted as being exclusive ethnicities. Gilroy (1993: 27-28) specifically argues that 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' are reserved for white people and that Black (in this case South Asian) people are incompatible with either conceptualisation. If minority ethnic communities interpret either ethnicity in this way, it is understandable why they might be reluctant to identify with them. For many British Asians, the label 'English' is the very antithesis to their inclusion. Many lament the term's right-wing connotations and prefer to endorse the more liberal politics of 'Britishness'. This perspective was supported by Aylesworth's Ali:

> "I think that every person seeks his/her own identity that he/she feels confident with.
> I am happy to classify myself as British … which is an all encompassing identity … but
> I can't get on with the label, English. To be English I think I need more long standing
> historical roots." (Interview 13th March, 2009)

Ali's differentiation between being English and British is important because England and Britain are frequently '(con)fused' (McCrone, 2002). For many minority ethnic communities, these notions have very different connotations in relation to concepts of citizenship and ethnicity. As Aylesworth's Rio commented:

> "It seems to me that one of those labels is racist. To me 'British' represents who I am.
> British is for people of all colours: white, Black, brown, yellow, pink, whatever. I would
> never say I was an 'English-Asian' because to me, to be English you have to be white. I
> can't pretend to be white." (Interview, 16th March, 2009)

The ongoing fragmentation of the British Empire, coupled with rapid globalisation have made the distinction between Britain and England – particularly in ethnic terms – far more palatable.

Maguire (1993) argues how globalisation, as well as prompting a number of global integrative tendencies, has placed modern national identities in a state of flux and 'ironic dislocation'. This means that national identity is no longer the sole defining marker of one's nationalism. Aylesworth's Taz for instance, warned of the importance of upbringing and identification with one's local communities as significant markers in defining one's national identity, and suggested that overt performances of support and fandom towards English teams might be unreliable indicators of loyalty and citizenship:

> "You can pretend all you want. You can sit there and say 'I support England', but how do you support a team that you don't really support? When your dad's been supporting Pakistan and the whole house supports Pakistan, naturally you are going to support them. So no, I don't think that's the ultimate test. I don't think it shows whether you're fully mingled in. I can understand it though. We live in this country, we've been brought up here, so why don't we support England? I'll tell you why … because we're still Pakistani. Yes, we're British, and yes there are British Asians playing for England, but we're still Pakistani … so is it really that bad supporting Pakistan?" (Interview 12th December, 2008).

First and foremost, Taz considered himself to be Pakistani, but he emphasised his British 'Asianness' when that worked more in his favour. For Taz, possessing dual ethnicity was a convenient vehicle for optimising his level of integration, on the basis that, whether he is with white people or people of South Asian descent, Taz believed he could move effectively between his 'Britishness' and 'Asianness'. He displayed what Ballard (1994) refers to as 'biculturalism'. For Ballard, diasporic communities should be conceived of as being 'cultural navigators'; competent in and therefore, able to, switch between several cultural 'codes' without experiencing disorientation (ibid: 30-33). At the very least he could acknowledge his affinity with 'Britishness' without compromising other (more important) aspects of his identity; i.e., his 'Asianness'. Clifford (1994) refers to this as 'selective accommodation' and explains this as the desire to stay and be different. Burdsey (2008) argues that joining together two political discourses in this way earmarks the potential for subverting any dominant association; albeit ephemerally. Certainly, being British and Asian are not mutually exclusive, but the extent to which British Asians embrace both, are contestable. When it comes to

the type of fandom expressed by Taz above, it is clear that multiculturalism has brought about a new found flexibility of English national identities.

'Anyone but England'? British Asians and hybridity

There continues to be solidarities amongst some of Britain's minority ethnic communities in their supporting of *anyone* but England. However, this article argues that this should not be interpreted as a rejection of 'Englishness' or 'Britishness' and/or English or British people. The simplistic notion of being "for us" or "against us" neglects the complexity of social relations that shape the lived realities of young British Asians (Ratna, 2011: 118). Taking a disliking to, or refusing to identify with, the England cricket team does not make anyone less English or less a full and equal member of the community, than anyone else (Marqusee, 2006). These sentiments were well reflected by Aylesworth's Adeel:

> "I think when Pakistan come over to play England it's one of the few opportunities we've got to get our Pakistan flags out and go out and express how good and Pakistani we are. I don't think supporting Pakistan is meant to cause offence. My dad put a banner out and he's as English as Asians get." (Interview, 13th February, 2009)

Appadurai (1996) argues that cricket is of political significance in diasporas through the indigenisation of cricket in the former British colonies. He believes this is particularly the case in India, Pakistan and the West Indies, as the aesthetics of cricket have become an essential part of post-colonial self-image and national pride. Indeed, Fagerlid, like Adeel above, argues that cricket matches may be the only occasions when British Asians regard themselves as 'Indian' or 'Pakistani' (Fagerlid, 2001 cited in Walle, 2010: 206).

Clearly, the relationship of the first generation to the place migration is different from that of subsequent generations. Brah (1996) argues how each generation's experiences are mediated by 'memories of what was recently left behind, and by the experiences of disruption and displacement as one tries to re-orientate to form new social networks, and learns to negotiate new economic, political and cultural realities' (Brah, 1996: 194). There is growing suggestion within sociology that British

Asians are becoming more 'Anglicised'. In her study of female MP's and civil servants, Puwar (2004) explains this in terms of minority ethnic communities being exposed to 'white civilising spaces', such as education and the workplace. Sport may also be viewed as a contemporary 'white civilising space'. Many of the white respondents believed younger British Asians possess similar values to other white English people and therefore, they were most likely to support England rather than a team from the Indian subcontinent.

Many of Britain's minority ethnic communities want to be reminded of their heritage and attachment to their ancestors – most notably their parents. Many of the younger generations have witnessed a growing separation from their elders as their cultural hybridity and dual ethnicities forcibly come between them. As Werbner (2004: 471) argues, 'living in the diaspora is a matter of continually negotiating the parameters of minority citizenship'. This was certainly the case for Adeel, who expressed his concern that he and other members of his family had divided loyalties because of their different upbringings:

> "I support England. My dad supports Pakistan because obviously, that's where he's been brought up … I think for my dad, Pakistan is his home … it's hard to explain … he lives in England, but his home is Pakistan … When I went to Pakistan I was asked who I supported. When I said England, they were like, 'why are you supporting England, you're a Pakistani, you should be supporting Pakistan' and I was like, 'I'm not Pakistani, my dad's Pakistani, I'm English'." (Interview, 13th February, 2009)

It is crucial to stress that not all British Asians prefer to identify with teams from the Indian subcontinent. Many like Adeel have made England/Britain their home and identify themselves as primarily English/British and thus, in a crude sense, would not have failed Tebbit's 'cricket test'. Individuals like Adeel are not averse to seeing themselves as English, but they are against constructions of 'Englishness' that do not allow for their inclusion and/or demonise their cultural heritage.[7] While for many on the right, cultural hybridity seems to be a precursor to the successful integration of Britain's minority ethnic communities, for many people from minority ethnic backgrounds, the discourse of hybridity is nothing less than a denial of identity. Pieterse (1995) notes that the majority of arguments previously acknowledging hybridity have often done so with a "note

of regret and loss – loss of purity, wholeness, authenticity" (ibid: 54-55). Adeel, for instance, believed his hybridity, specifically in relation to English being his first language, had made it difficult for him to fully identify with a single culture, and he felt like this questioned his 'Asianness':

> "… sometimes family will come over [from Pakistan] and me and my brothers and sisters will be there whilst everyone's speaking in Punjabi and we're all like 'what are they talking about?' And you'll hear your name and then you're wondering 'what are they saying about me?' And it's weird not being able to understand it when the rest of the family does it as part of their life. I sometimes think that it makes me less a part of the family, you know. I'm less Asian than them." (Interview, 13th February, 2009)

Such as position is espoused well by Homi Bhabha who refers to the migrant as the voice that speaks from two places at once, and inhabits neither. This is the space of liminality, of 'no place', or the 'Third Space' (Bhabha, 1994: 38) where the migrant lacks a central cultural narrative. Nevertheless, many of the British Asian respondents in this research celebrated the flexibility and hybridity of their identities. British Asians arguably occupy a more privileged position than many white Britons because they are not defined by any singular ethnicity. They are free to explore their ethnic identities and, rather than this being interpreted as a denial of their 'Britishness' or 'Asianness', we should view hybrid identities as forming what Modood *et al.* refer to as 'complex Britishness' (Modood *et al.,* 1997: 10).

Conclusion

Sport continues to be one of the primary means through which notions of 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' are constructed, contested and resisted. For most, ethnic identity is taken for granted, part of the quotidian and iconography of everyday life (McCrone, 2002). However, those on the margins, in national or ethnic terms, provide us with greater appreciation and understanding that ethnic identities are complex and negotiable. The flags we fly, the shirts we wear and the teams we cheer for are part of our interpretation, as individuals, communities and cultures, of the connections that unite and divide us. When it comes to sport, British Asians face the dilemma of where to place their loyalties: their ancestral home, or adopted home. The fluidity, changeability and hybridity of

their identities are essential features of the British Asian experience (Anthias, 1998, 2001). Much has been made recently of the virtues of hybridity; that one can be British, whilst also being Asian and Muslim and so on. This article has shown that British Asians can be quite comfortable with more than one sense of ethnic identity and that, central to this, is the way they negotiate between their places of birth and places of ancestry. One should not, however, take these negotiations for granted or try to simplify what is a very complex process of identity negotiation. The alignment of British Asians to teams from the Indian subcontinent should not automatically be interpreted in dichotomous terms as either a statement of defiance, or as a reflection of their insularity. Instead, national loyalties in sport should be conceptualised in terms of hybridity, as contributing towards a wider narrative of the diaspora condition and integration into British society. As Werbner (2004) argues, the fact that British Asians are confident enough to show dissent through expressing their ethnic identities actually demonstrates their rootedness, rather than separation.

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[1] 'British Asian' is a very broad category and subsumes a tremendous 'plurality of identities' (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005). Though it is often the case in practice, the internal diversity of British Asian communities cannot be reduced to the labels of 'Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Sri Lankan', and 'Bangladeshi'; rather it requires an appreciation of what Brah (1996) refers to as 'axes of differentiation'. For Brah, 'race' and ethnicity are not unitary; they are multi-dimensional, processual and require meticulous appreciation of power and differentiation. In spite of this, and the fact that there are very distinct cultural and religious differences between and within groups, the term 'British Asian' is often used to categorise/essentialise members of the Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, and Bangladeshi communities who have settled in Britain. Crucially, while no categorisation is wholly accurate when attempting to generalise what are very diverse phenomena, the term British Asian is generally known and understood within the academy to delineate individuals of South Asian descent who were either born in Britain, or whom have migrated to Britain and claimed British citizenship.

[2] Daniel Burdsey's work on British Muslim professional cricketers has gone some way to address this, but it remains the case that amateur British Asian cricketers' voices are marginalised.

[3] Space does not allow discussion here of the methodological discourse surrounding the politics of inter-racial research; but for further reference please see Bulmer and Solomos (2004), Young Jr. (2004), Carrington (2008) and Fletcher (2010).

[4] The loyalty rhetoric expressed through Tebbit's cricket test has become more formalised in the requirements of the recently defeated Labour government, where allegiance to the nation was an essential part of the citizenship process (cf. The Home Office, 2009).

[5] The etymology of the word 'diaspora' goes back to Ancient Greece, as a term used 'to describe their spreading all over the then known-world. For the Ancient Greeks, diaspora signified migration and colonialism' (Georgiou, 2001: 1).

[6] There are a number of cricket grounds around the world that have been invested with great cultural and symbolic significance. Above all, however, Lord's has remained the prime example of a cricket ground which has taken on a far more symbolic social role. For over two hundred years Lord's has

commanded pilgrimage aspirations for players, spectators and administrators alike which perhaps, no other sports venue could (Stoddart, 1998).

[7] In a report on national identity published by The Office for National Statistics 75% of Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in the UK identified themselves as British. This contrasted with data showing that the groups "least likely to identify themselves as British were those recording themselves as 'other white', including Europeans and Americans. Less than 40% of this group said they were British, English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish." Add to this the figures of those who saw themselves as predominantly Scottish (73% in Scotland) and Welsh (62% in Wales) and we can ascertain that British Asians are identifying with Britain more openly than other groups (Engel, 2004).

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