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Abstract

This study shows the utility of the concept of diaspora for physical cultural studies, and particularly for thinking through sport in a Canadian setting. The capacity of diaspora theory to specify a matrix of real and imagined cross-border cultural, kinship, and social relationships makes it useful for understanding community (re)generation in sport settings. Relatively little about recreational cricket in the Caribbean and its diaspora has been documented, despite the sport's power as a symbol of Caribbean unity. My findings indicate that a group of first-generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants living in the Greater Toronto Area use a particular form of cultural production, the sport of cricket, to generate and maintain diasporic communities, that is, cross-border interpersonal networks with other Afro-Caribbean people who remain in their nations of origin, and who are dispersed throughout the United States, elsewhere in Canada, and England. Regardless of where they play, cricket matches are "home games" that allow players and spectators to *lime* (hang out) and (re)generate diasporic consciousness, that is, a sense of themselves as one people through the "authentic" Afro-Caribbean environment they create. The reproduction of Afro-Caribbean culture, community, and consciousness includes conflicts with South Asian and Indo-Caribbean diasporic groups.

Keywords

Canada, Caribbean, cricket, diaspora, Toronto

Diaspora is a crucial heuristic for thinking about cultural heritage. While diasporas are often constructed as homeless and displaced, they also draw on modes of cultural production, such as sport, to feel at home or emplaced. Abdel-Shehid (2005: 6) asserts that a national analysis of Black male athletes "is limited to the 'Manichean' terms that the nation sets out; that is, simply in terms of either inclusion or exclusion." However, the Canadian sporting sphere (Black and otherwise) "is profoundly located outside the geographical

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boundaries of the Canadian nation state” (Abdel-Shehid, 2005: 7), which presupposes a supra-national analysis. Rather than through concepts such as globalization or transnationality, which privilege geo-political nation states and cross-border movements, I argue that Afro-Caribbean sport cultures are best understood through a diaspora lens.¹ Diaspora theory guides us to understand the issues of cultural identity that are crucial in the face of local racism (Brah, 1996), and are formed as much through global flows as they are through dwelling (Clifford, 1997). One of the primary ways Afro-Caribbean cultural identity is maintained in Canada is through sports such as cricket.

No other sport spans the English-speaking Caribbean as cricket does. Particularly amongst boys and men, cricket is played in yards, roads, school fields, and elite grounds. Much has been written about the history of the West Indies team, which represents the entire Caribbean region in international cricket, and its role in (de)colonization and nation building, especially because of its synonymy with fairness, civility, and the opportunity for Black and Indian lower class masses to gain accommodation with, and recognition from, the ruling White elite (Beckles and Stoddart, 1995; James, 1963). The rise of the West Indies team to the status of world leaders in the 1970s and 1980s coincided with the formation of the region’s post-colonial identity. Cricket became a symbol of Afro-Caribbean power and independence (Yelvington, 1995). This period also coincided with the shift in immigration law that made qualification for entry into Canada based not on nationality or ethnicity, but on marketable educational, employment, and linguistic skills among other criteria, and the subsequent welcoming of tens of thousands of Caribbean migrants (Mensah, 2002). Many male Afro-Caribbeans continued to follow the West Indies, in Canada, but playing and watching recreational cricket occupied even more of their leisure time.

Relatively little about recreational cricket in the Caribbean and its diaspora has been documented (Carrington, 1998, 1999, 2002; Joseph, 2011a, 2011b, 2012 notwithstanding), which is surprising given the region’s high rates of emigration, the millions more recreational than professional cricketers, and the sport’s power as a symbol of Caribbean unity. This study demonstrates the ways in which recreational cricket, a diasporic form of cultural production, is essential to (re)developing diasporic communities (real and imagined cultural, kinship, racial, and social groups) and diasporic consciousness (identity and belonging), which span a number of geo-political borders. As Walcott (2001: 126) puts it, Afro-Caribbean culture in Canada: “is fixed between the transmigration of cultural artefacts, practices and peoples throughout the United States, Britain and the Anglo-Caribbean region.” It is both the “imagined diaspora collective history and the demand of the nation state for black people to belong elsewhere” (Walcott, 2001: 126) that makes Afro-Caribbeans connect to people and cultures beyond Canada’s borders.

In this article I firstly review literatures on multi-national human and sport flows, including a discussion of globalization, transnationality, and diaspora theories. I show that diaspora is a multivalent concept that helps one to understand disparate dimensions of the Afro-Caribbean experience. Secondly, I examine how diaspora has been useful for understanding the cultures, politics, and communities associated with sport. Thirdly, I provide the methodological background for, followed by data from, my research with Afro-Caribbean members of a cricket and social club. I indicate how playing and watching cricket is central to the making of homes away from home. Fourthly, I discuss the

utility of a diaspora approach to studies of sport in Canada and research on Caribbean culture specifically.

Multi-national cultural and human flows

For several decades now, the global flows of cultures and people have been systematically analyzed. Under the terms globalization, transnationality, and more recently, diaspora, scholars have shown how sports travel globally, are taken up with a variety of local meanings, and create shifting affiliations and identifications for players and spectators.

Globalization

While the phenomenon is not new, research on what is termed “globalization” emerged in the mid 1980s and attended to the compression of time and space that resulted from increased communication and transportation technologies, the porosity of national borders that allow for circulating cultural and human flows, and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole (Robertson, 1992). The study of the world-wide social relations that allow local happenings to be shaped by distant events was brought into sport studies in the 1990s as debates raged over whether the global and local phenomena should be described as Americanization, cultural imperialism, or modernization (Donnelly, 1996). Sport globalization literatures tend to focus on macro-level sport flows, including mega-events such as the Olympic Games (Roche, 2006) or the Cricket World Cup (Sengupta, 2004), or multi-national corporations such as Coca-Cola (Groves et al., 2003) or Nike (Grainger and Jackson, 2000). These literatures, as Maguire (2011: 1041) points out, highlight positive effects of global flows such as “the spread of human rights and democracy, [and] improve[d] intercultural understanding,” and the negative effects of spreading consumer-dominated Western capitalism that imposes “its cultural products on vulnerable communities across the globe.” Globalization theory is more appropriate to understand macro-level social and economic flows. The cricketers under study here who regularly cross borders from Canada to the Caribbean, US and England, do not constitute a global phenomenon. Their micro-level, interpersonal networks and limited annual trips require a framework that can address multi-national, real, and imagined community formations.

Transnationality

Proposed as an alternative to globalization, the term transnationality has been used within sociology since the late 1980s to refer to sustained cross-border relationships, patterns of exchange, and social formations (Vertovec, 2000). Although the hyperopic lens of cultural studies across the globe is narrowed with transnational perspectives, and “nebulous concepts like the ‘global’ and the ‘local’ whose boundaries blur and overlap,” can be avoided (Nakamura, 2005: 468), there is a connotation with transnationality that movement is across the borders of two nations, exemplified by case studies of Japanese and American sport media (Nakamura, 2005), sport migration from China to the United

States (Oates and Polumbaum, 2004), or an athlete's "escape" from Cuba to the Bahamas (Carter, 2007).

Much of the transnationality literature based on case studies of Caribbean migrants, however, shows that social interactions that transcend geo-political borders connect migrants to people in *multiple other regions*; thus, more all-encompassing terms have been deployed, such as "transnational community" (Georges, 1990), or "transnational social field" (Glick Schiller and Fouron, 1999; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004). These varieties of Caribbean transnationality expand the definition to include social forms with "multiple interlocking networks of social relationships" not limited to national boundaries (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004: 9). While diasporas include transnational networks, diaspora theory is useful to think beyond communities. Diaspora theory draws our attention to complex cultures (post-colonial sites and performances) that generate a consciousness (a sense of home, identity, and belonging).

Diaspora

The turn to diaspora in the 1990s resulted in an increase in theoretical breadth and depth (Clifford, 1997). Vertovec (2000) proposed a tripartite classification of diaspora as a mode of cultural production, social form, and type of consciousness, which summarizes the many overlapping trajectories of diaspora pertinent to this study.

Firstly, diasporas are formed through cultural forms such as music, fashion, literature, visual art, film, and sport, which cross borders or travel various "routes," and have the capacity to unite dispersed people (Clifford, 1997; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1994). Music that conjoins elements of Afro-Caribbean, African-American, and Black-British styles is, according to Gilroy (1993: 85), central to Black political struggles that transcend borders: "The forms of connectedness and identification [music] makes possible across space and time cannot be confined within the borders of the nation state." Gilroy (1993: 36) clarifies that "by posing the world as it is against the world as the racially subordinated would like it to be, this musical culture supplies a great deal of the courage required to go on living in the present." I argue below that sport settings provide homespaces that serve the same function for Afro-Caribbeans.

Secondly, considering diaspora as a social form or community refers to the process of dispersion from a central location and the ongoing maintenance of both a homeland (e.g., nation of origin) and a homespace (e.g., sense of belonging). This is done through social networks, memory sharing, economic strategies, communication and transportation technologies, and institutional policies. For example, return visits have been described as critically important in facilitating the economic and emotional survival of local communities and Caribbean diaspora networks (Duval, 2004; Joseph, 2011a). These are facilitated by governments, businesses, and individuals.

Thirdly, diaspora as a type of consciousness emphasizes a sense of identity, whether due to experiences of racial subordination or awareness of pride in one's heritage. The literatures of the Black and Caribbean diasporas have clearly elucidated the creation of a consciousness that transcends nations, languages, and generations and is organized within and against racist structures in Western cultures (Clifford, 1997; Gilroy, 1993; Walcott, 2003). With respect to the Afro-Caribbean diaspora, Stuart Hall (1994) suggests

immigrants may have little actual attachment to an actual homeland, but a strong sense of who they are through imagined connections to other places and times. He describes Afro-Caribbean communities as sharing identities developed through the “imaginative rediscovery” of a heritage that figures Africa as a motherland, passed on through “memory, fantasy, narrative and myth” (Hall, 1994: 395). These identities are also “constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (Hall, 1994: 402). A diasporic consciousness is also formed vis-à-vis other ethnic groups. Avtar Brah (1996: 189) coined the term “diaspora space” as an heuristic to “problematize the notion of ‘minority/majority.’ A multi-axial performative conception of power highlights the ways in which a group constituted as a ‘minority’ along one dimension of differentiation may be constructed as ‘majority’ along another.” The notion of “diaspora space” is useful in thinking about how Afro-Caribbeans are not only victims, but also perpetrators, of racist exclusions in Canada.

These three dimensions of diaspora – culture, community, and consciousness – overlap and inform each other. Whether they travel for sport or are the hosts, Afro-Caribbeans spend money locally, share memories, consume traditional foods, and play music and sport, which are modes of cultural production that help to develop a sense of belonging. Rather than being held together by the bonds of a biological Blackness or an homogeneous ethnic culture, Afro-Caribbeans maintain communities through circulating Black and Caribbean cultural forms that are “rhizomatic” (Walcott, 2003: 31); they feature connections and divergences, unities and disunities, they are re-interpreted, transformed, and creolized in planned and accidental ways, depending on the ideas of the consumers, artists, and athletes. More detail regarding diaspora theory and how it has been taken up within sport studies is provided in the following section.

Sporting diasporas

Diaspora theory has been used sparingly to examine and exemplify sport-related social forms, group consciousness, and transnational cultural flows.² Cricket is one exception, as South Asian cricket fans are known to be among the world’s most passionate and exuberant. Outside of their homelands, alienation and division in the face of institutional racism, verbal discrimination, and Islamophobia, along with the intensive packaging of South Asian cricket as a global commercial product, have created millions of South Asian cricket zealots (Davis and Upson, 2004; Roberts, 2004; Valiotis, 2009).³ Davis and Upson (2004) show Indian and Pakistani fans in Chicago can be brotherly, and cheer alike for cricketing greats such as India’s Sachin Tendulkar. However, watching professional cricket “could also be something that opens rifts between the represented communities” (Davis and Upson, 2004: 640), and thus reproduces historical antagonisms of the homeland.

For members of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora in Canada, I found that recreational cricket fandom and its associated practices, such as tourism, drinking, dancing, and socializing, were “significant to the production of a cultural heritage experience” (Joseph, 2011a: 158). This echoed Carrington’s (1998: 284) study that found a Caribbean cricket club in England “transcended its sporting function” because it operated as “a place where Black people could be themselves (for example, in being able to tell certain jokes and

speak in Caribbean patois).” Positioning this Caribbean group as part of a Black diaspora demonstrates the multiple affiliations Afro-Caribbeans make.

The idea of the Black diaspora has been skillfully deployed to explore the achievements of individual pugilists, namely Jamaican-Canadian-British Lennox Lewis (McNeil, 2009), Cuban Benny Paret (Abreu, 2011), and Americans Bill Richmond (Desch Obi, 2009), Jack Johnson and Mike Tyson (Carrington, 2010), and Muhammad Ali (Farred, 2003). The boxing careers of these athletes offer insights into the complex relationship between sports, international and post-colonial politics, media representations, and diasporic identities. For example, Muhammad Ali renounced what he dismissed as his “slave name,” Cassius Marcellus Clay, in favor of a name that “both ‘honoured’ the Nation of Islam ... and brings into public view the effects of slavery – the ways in which it continues to haunt, inform, and shape black consciousness in America” (Farred, 2003: 28). Ali’s new name locates him as an African, an American, an “individual black man” and “an anti- and post-colonial ... Third World spokesperson” (Farred, 2003: 29). Casting a diasporic light on boxing reveals that while these men have been classified as national heroes, they also exemplify the sub- and supra-national kinships, and (resistance to) ongoing racism within the Black diaspora.

In Gamal Abdel-Shehid’s (2005) monograph, *Who Da Man?*, he argues that using diaspora as a concept allows him to read Black Canadian sporting performances, movements, permanence, histories, and attachments as located both inside *and* outside the geo-political space defined as Canada. He shows Caribbean-Canadians in particular are repeatedly expelled from the nation. The media furor surrounding Black Jamaican-Canadian Lawrence Brown (accused killer of a white woman in a dessert café) is not unrelated to representations of Black Jamaican-Canadian Ben Johnson (champion sprinter caught using banned steroids to enhance athletic performance). Calls for their literal and figurative deportation, and greater policing (of the streets and track and field runners), evince that Blackness and Caribbeanness in Canada are represented as always already criminal, itinerant, and exterior to the nation. “As a result,” Abdel-Shehid (2005: 38) opines: “a diasporic or outer-national reading of blackness is one hermeneutic necessary to discuss blackness in Canada and sport ... [and] how forms of blackness cross borders.” With this directive in mind, this study uses a diaspora approach to examine the border-crossing and dwelling of Afro-Caribbean athletes and their supporters.

Methods

To begin this project, a friend introduced me to her father who had been playing cricket in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in Canada for over 30 years. He took me to a practice where I met a group of 12 Caribbean men, from diverse nations such as Antigua, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad, who each play cricket for a number of different teams. Some of the cricketers invited me to games with their respective teams and so I became connected to a network of four teams and over 50 cricketers aged 44–74 (mean age 61), to whom I refer as the Mavericks. The majority of the Mavericks migrated to Canada in the 1960s and 1970s and are working-/middle-class. Their age, occupation, and nations of origin are paired with pseudonyms below.

Data were collected using ethnographic methods, which are particularly useful in developing grounded analyses of complex and subtle sporting realities (Carrington, 1998, 1999, 2002; Davis and Upson, 2004). I conducted in-depth interviews with 29 cricketers, supporters, and tournament organizers, and for 21 months from 2008 to 2009 recorded observations and self-reflexive field notes at the Mavericks' charity runs, picnics, and dances, as well as "friendly" matches in the GTA and abroad. "Friendly" cricket matches are internally organized through social networks and emphasize conviviality, as opposed to externally controlled league play, where competition is primary. The Mavericks traveled to cities such as Montreal Quebec, Windsor Ontario, and relatively close US cities in New York, Ohio, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania for long-weekend games with 12–16 players and 10–20 male and female supporters. The highlights of their years were annual two-week cricket tours in countries where they have social and kinship ties, such as St. Lucia, Barbados, and England. The data presented below are from home games in the GTA between May and September in 2008 and 2009 and a two-week trip to multiple cities in England in June 2008.

A note on my positionality is pertinent to describe the means of data collection. As a 30-year-old, unattached woman, I was an anomaly at the cricket grounds. Hence, many male players and supporters and their female partners approached me to inquire about my motivation for attending games. I chatted with them about my research project and many happily agreed to be interviewed and suggested other Afro-Caribbeans I should speak with. I did not play cricket, but was able to learn about the game and the culture surrounding it through two roles commonly held by female club members: the scorekeeper and the spectator. As I learned the rules associated with both roles – scorekeepers must know how the game is played and be meticulous under pressure, spectators must celebrate on field achievements, heckle failures, and share in camaraderie by chatting, drinking, eating, and dancing – I came to feel a sense of belonging in the club. My "insider" Black Antiguan heritage, and appreciation for/understanding of Afro-Caribbean dialects, dancing styles, and foods, helped me to develop rapport and collect data at cricket grounds.

In contrast, my "outsider" status, at times, prevented me from accessing certain people and spaces. After learning about my project there were some club members who believed my attention might be redirected from research to romance. Some female members surreptitiously kept me away from their husbands, or sabotaged or joined our interviews. Others befriended me and introduced me to certain men as their "granddaughter" or "niece" to position me as less of a potential target for men's sexual attention. They repeatedly advised me, for my own "safety," either to stay away from certain club members, or to bring a male companion, particularly to club dances. Some male club members, even after months of being turned down, continued to perceive my friendliness as romantic interest and ask me out on dates. This was especially the case with men who were closer to my age. My relationships with some of these men had a negative impact on the project as I sometimes tried to avoid them and thereby missed out on occasions to collect data. On the other hand, some men who expressed romantic interest ended up being integral to the study as they were eager to spend time with me, share their memories, provide extended in-depth interviews, and invite me to other social events they had arranged.

Beyond gender, my status as a second-generation immigrant and outsider to cricket lore also influenced the interpretive process. By turning the analytical gaze back on myself, at times, in the analysis below, I attempt to dissolve or at least problematize contrasts between myself and the research participants (Williams, 1996). Because my subjective experience is an intrinsic means of data collection, I show how my experiences as both an insider and outsider while traveling abroad (e.g., on a two-week cricket tour in England), and dwelling at home (i.e., at GTA games on weekends) help one to understand Afro-Caribbean diasporic culture, community, and consciousness.

Traveling abroad – remaking a Caribbean home

Their histories of growing up playing cricket with family, friends, peers, and colleagues, the global dispersion of Caribbean peoples, and the resulting interpersonal networks in multiple locations, allow the Mavericks to organize cricket trips from afar. On a cool June morning in England, I stood with Nestor (63, transit employee, Barbadian-British), watching the team warm up prior to their first game of the two-week tour. As the players stood in a semi-circle, tossing the ball back to one batsman, Nestor explained that he did not know the Mavericks well, but he had been instrumental in organizing their tour:

I came to [Montreal] Canada for my cousin's wedding. I came down to Toronto, [James] picked me up at the airport, took me back to his house, and said to me, "The blokes over here want to come on a tour. Is it possible you can organize a tour," right? So I promise him that when I go back to London I would make some inquiries and let him know. (Nestor)

As a result of James and Nestor's networking, the Mavericks contacted eight teams and coordinated games over a two-week period. In addition to cricket, Nestor ensured that each team hosted us with a traditional Caribbean dinner, and some teams offered an after-party. Nestor explained, "It's more than cricket, isn't it? It's a proper holiday." He emphasized his role in arranging the trip and the game schedule so that we could attend a reception at the Barbados High Commission and the annual Barbados Cultural Organization Charity Ball.

Later that week, I was surprised when we arrived at the cricket ground in Birmingham, England, on a Tuesday morning to find nearly a dozen Caribbean men ready to support the cricketers. Over the workday their numbers steadily increased by about five supporters per hour, so that a group of 40 men were gathered by the end of the day. I was reticent to join a group of men sitting at a table beside the clubhouse. I was intimidated by their loud slapping of dominoes on the table and aggressive heckling of each other. Warlie (59, electrician, Barbadian-Canadian), who had adopted me as a surrogate granddaughter over my first six months of fieldwork, was standing close by and I decided to join him. He gave me a warm hug and introduced me to a few of the local men as the club "historian." I took the opportunity to ask why they had come to the grounds that day. Warlie explained to me that when a Canadian team comes to play cricket, word gets around the local Caribbean community in the English cities they visit. Some men took a day off work, left early, came by the local grounds on their lunch, or stopped in even while they were on the clock to see who was playing.

The men playing dominoes told me they knew this would be a great game between their “local Bajan boys” and a “West Indian team from Canada.”⁴ Since they were retired, they could stay at the ground socializing from morning until night. “Is a rum an’ lime ting!” I was told, meaning that they came to drink alcohol and to *lime*, the Caribbean expression for hanging out. Another man mentioned, “The only time us ol’ blokes get together is cricket and funerals, isn’t it?” Due to their age, it is particularly important to them to socialize and make connections to their broader communities before they become ill or pass away, and to share their cultural heritage with younger generations before it disappears. Listening to the calypso music blasting in the clubhouse, and watching the cricket on the field, I noted that, paradoxically, going to the cricket ground to see a “Canadian” team could be considered a homecoming for Barbadian-British men.

Warlie explained that (unexpected) family reunions are a common feature of the Mavericks’ trips. He joyously described seeing a man he instantly knew was his cousin on the Mavericks’ previous trip:

When I came to England last, I met my cousin that I haven’t even met as kids. I knew he lived in England but where in England I didn’t even know, but he happened to find me at the game and it was like ‘Woah!’ I didn’t even remember him, but we [my family] have a distinguished look so you get to recognize them.

Surprisingly, I too met a man who could be a “distant cousin” at one of the games. He told me he was from Antigua and shares my last name. He was sure we were related because I “look everything like [his] daughter.” We spent several minutes trying to figure out whether we were kin. Unfortunately, I could not answer many of his detailed questions about the location of residence of my extended family or the name of the store my mother’s family had owned. I failed this test of my Antiguaness, locating me firmly outside of the Caribbean and solely in the diaspora. For me, the Mavericks’ cricket matches provided a homespace characterized by the traditional Caribbean foods my mother fed me and the calypso music my father played for me. These forms of Caribbean diasporic culture provided me with a sense of comfort. For the Mavericks, a sense of home, belonging, and diasporic consciousness comes from the interpersonal connections they are able to create and renew that overlay the food, music, and sport.

At many of the games in England, boisterous reunions were common. A typical greeting was an exaltation of the players name followed by “A you dat?!” (Is that you?!). Players would often introduce themselves to the opposing team members by first and last name and had no troubles describing their island, parish, or village of origin, the location of their current extended families or the organizations to which they (used to) belong. Because the Caribbean players on both sides of the Atlantic are of similar ages, from large families (eight children on average), and small villages (less than 5000 people in some cases), the chances of two cricketers from the same area knowing (of) each other were relatively high. At the very least, when they encountered people from their nations of origin who shared their last names, they were able to trace their familial connections. Where no direct relationship was found, they shared stories and nostalgic memories of their homelands and of West Indies international cricket success of decades past. I had no such memories to share.

Sara Ahmed (2000: 89) writes: "The issue is that home is not simply about fantasies of belonging (where do I originate from?) but that it is *sentimentalized* as a space of belonging ('home is where the heart is')." Rather than focus on their real homelands, coeval nations *over there*, these first-generation migrants remake their homes *over here*, through sharing memories of home. Ahmed (2000: 91) continues:

[M]igration involves, not only spatial dislocation, but also temporal dislocation: "the past" becomes associated with a home that is impossible to inhabit and be inhabited by, in the present. The question then of being-at-home or leaving home is always a question of memory, of the discontinuity between past and present.

For the Mavericks then, being in a space where they can recall memories, throw back their heads in laughter, reunite with friends and family, and break the discontinuity between past and present allows them to create a homespace that makes them feel a sense of belonging. In other words, these athletes use sport, a cultural form, to maintain social networks, or a diasporic community, which influences a sense of a collective identity, a diasporic consciousness, that allows them to remain symbolically attached to their homelands.

The opportunity to rekindle or develop friendships can be understood as one means of assuaging the nostalgia for home said to be characteristic of the "homing desire" of diasporic populations, which, Brah (1996: 180) reminds us "is not the same thing as desire for a 'homeland'." Some of the Mavericks lack the ability or desire to repatriate or even visit their nations of origin. They have adult children and grandchildren to whom they wish to remain close, and in some cases, they have not saved enough money to retire (yet) and so they continue to work and/or rely on Canadian government financial assistance. Also, characteristics of the homeland have changed in their absence. Many of the Mavericks no longer have a home to return to as their family properties have been sold or are occupied by one or more of their siblings, and some indicated that the increased levels of violence and tropical climates were not appealing to them. Although they did not pine for their actual homelands, they yearned for its people and cultures, and use their two-week cricket tours (to various Caribbean nations or England) to create a homespace.

Unanticipated reunions with old friends and family members, who also have networks of their own, are one means of sparking future tours in a number of different cities. I got to know Vilroy (62, office clerk, Barbadian-Canadian) through dancing together at the Mavericks' many functions. He was one of the few cricketers with the energy to stay on the dance floor for most of the evening. When I asked him to explain how they first decided to go to Boston, MA, for a cricket trip, he told me that on the last tour to England the team captain, Sam, "ran into a friend from back home" whose brother and cousins had all moved to Boston from Christchurch, Barbados. "In Boston there are lots of Barbadians [Sam] knows from back home, so now we always go there for return visits. They come play us and then we go play them." One tour begets another and ensures the spread of the rhizomatic connections of diaspora.

Evidently, globalization or transnationality frames are insufficient to describe these multi-sited cross-border networks, which are important to community maintenance practices. This study shows that the "unending restlessness" that keeps Blacks/Caribbeans

crossing the Canada-US border (Walcott, 2003: 42) is facilitated by relationships that cross the Atlantic. Human and cultural flows through Montreal, Toronto, Boston, and London help to create the sense of one deterritorialized community. A diasporic framework is necessary to understand these dispersed homelands and the complex social networks that precipitate and result from traveling. However, the emphasis on the “multi-placedness of ‘home’ in the imaginary of people in the diaspora” should not obfuscate feelings of emplacement or being “anchored in the place of settlement” (Brah, 1996: 194), which is also central to diasporic experiences. Walcott (2003: 147) insists that Blacks/Caribbeans in Canada understand their experiences both “locally and extra-locally.” Below I explore the “local” experiences of some of the Mavericks who are unable or unwilling to travel and the possibilities and limitations of cricket as a site for diasporic Caribbean community (re)generation in Canada.

Dwelling at home – keeping “Indians” out

Avtar Brah’s (1996: 190) notion of “diaspora space” draws our attention toward the historically contingent entanglement of genealogies, trajectories, and relationships of diasporas (plural is intentional); to understand the Afro-Caribbean diaspora it is necessary to deploy “a concept of diaspora in which different historical and contemporary elements are understood, not in tandem, but in their dia-synchronic relationality.” An analysis of Afro-Indo tensions in Canadian sport settings provides insight into the ways a diasporic consciousness is formed.

To understand the local tensions between Afro- and Indo-Caribbeans, a brief history of Caribbean ethno-racial politics is necessary. In nations where nearly 50 percent of the population has Indian heritage, such as Trinidad and Guyana, by the mid-1970s politics were firmly divided along ethnic lines and large-scale violent confrontations, allegations of electoral fraud, and political assassination were the backdrop of African and Indian racially oriented political competition (Yelvington, 1995). In Trinidad, for example, a political movement to break free from neo-colonial political practices – where government decisions were dictated by the economic interests of White and Black middle-class elites – initially attempted to include lower class Africans and East Indians in solidarity; however, conflicts between ethnic groups at all class levels eventually divided the country. Black Power came to mean ownership and control of the government and economy by the Black “majority,” thereby subjugating the Indo-Trinidadian population (Munasinghe, 2001). Ethnic conflicts are not limited to those territories with significant Indian populations. In Jamaica, Africans resented Indian competition for work and wages, and feared that Hinduism and Islam would have adverse cultural influences (Shepherd, cited by Mohammed, 2009: 62). In Barbados, Indians perceived Africans as lazy, materialistic, and prone to criminal activity (Beckles, 2004). Therefore, contemporary Afro-Indo Caribbean tensions played out on cricket grounds of the diaspora are not new.

While the Mavericks numbers are declining due to ageing, death, and lowered rates of immigration, more and more Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Sri-Lankans, and Indians (hereafter, South Asians) are immigrating to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2009) and cricket remains popular among them as well as among Indo-Caribbeans. In the 1990s and early 2000s, league teams that were once exclusively Caribbean became increasingly racially mixed;

however, several Mavericks told me that their languages, foods, and ways to *lime* (hang out) were different from many South Asian and some Indo-Caribbean groups, and as a result, they left league play in order to play on primarily Afro-Caribbean “friendly” teams.

Despite numerous invitations to conduct an interview beside his new backyard pool, I elected to meet Riddick (64, retired police officer, Barbadian-Canadian) at a GTA restaurant at the conclusion of the Mavericks’ 2008 summer season. When I inquired, “What is the biggest difference between friendly and league teams?” Riddick immediately responded, “Bus trips! A lot of Indian guys don’t travel. That’s their culture. The bus trips are Black trips. ... Indians don’t drink. They wouldn’t fit in, so we don’t invite them.” He points out two important aspects of Mavericks’ cricket: traveling and drinking, and labels these activities “Black.” Comments such as “The bus trips are Black trips,” which was a common refrain among the Mavericks, and Carrington’s observation that recreational Caribbean cricket provides “an arena that allows for Black expressive behaviour” (Carrington, 1998: 283) draws attention not to the racial identity of the Mavericks (the majority were Black, yet a full range of phenotypes and ethnicities found in the Caribbean were represented – including Chinese and Portuguese), but to the hegemony of Afro-Caribbean culture in the Caribbean and the diaspora.

Indo-Caribbeans who embraced Afro-Caribbean culture were welcomed while the Mavericks ignored, subordinated, and excluded other cultural expressions, such as abstaining from alcohol, or listening to chutney, Bhojpuri, or bhangra music, because they did not “fit in” on the bus trips.⁵ To borrow from Carrington’s (2008) analysis of race among Caribbean recreational cricketers, this study highlights the degree to which the signifier “Caribbean” is internally struggled over in Canada. I did not need to fly to Trinidad to experience racial antagonisms. I merely drove to Pickering, Ontario, where Michael (57, fitness club vice president, Guyanese-Canadian) explicitly cited the Black Stalin calypso song “Tonight the Black Man feelin to party/tonight the Black man feelin to jam” in reference to himself, despite his Indian heritage. Similarly, Lawrence (73, retired postal worker, Trinidadian-Canadian), who has Spanish and Portuguese ancestry exclaimed, “All o’ we Black, you know.... That Negro culture *is* Trini. I go die Black, you know.”⁶ These claims seem to expound racial solidarity between Afro-Caribbeans and others when, in fact, they reveal just the opposite. As in the Caribbean region, the Caribbean diaspora is reproduced through hegemonic processes that promote what were once Black lower class cultures – carnival, steel pan, and calypso, for example – to the stature of regional symbols and privilege Black culture and identity as “authentic” across the Caribbean region, and suppress the cultural expressions of other groups (Brereton, 1979; Hintzen, 2002; Mohammed, 2009; Munasinghe, 2001).

When, during his tenure as captain, Vivian Richards described the West Indies cricket team as “African,” Yelvington (1995) explains that it might have been satisfactory for most Caribbeans based on dominant nationalist discourses; however, it was unacceptable for large sections of the Guyanese and Trinidadian populations, who saw it as yet another instance of Black hegemony and dominance. In these nations, many Indo-Caribbeans supported India in test matches against the West Indies, revealing their ongoing feelings of marginalization by Black leaders (Mohammed, 2009). This history of divisiveness might explain some older Indo-Guyanese and Indo-Trinidadian cricketers’ reluctance to play with the Mavericks and be subsumed within an Afro-Caribbean subculture.

In addition to subordinating Indo-Caribbeans, the Mavericks “don’t invite” South Asian cricketers to play or travel with them. Despite their own dwindling numbers and the benefits that could accrue from amalgamating, they explain that South Asians attempt to “spoil all o we ting” (restrict our fun, Riddick). For the Caribbean men in Carrington’s (1998: 284) study, cricket provided a place for Black people to feel “free from the strictures imposed by the White gaze.” Shifting the lens of analysis to another majority/minority axis reveals that for the Mavericks, freedom from the South Asian gaze is also an important motive for segregated participation.

Verbal misunderstandings between Caribbean and South Asian cricketers were one of the most common reasons given to justify why the Mavericks segregate themselves from South Asian teams. Riddick claimed that at the cricket ground “Indians speak in their own language. You know, this makes me really, really upset. I don’t know why they do this. It creates a barrier. Are they saying things they don’t want us to know?” He was vehement that “we are in Canada” and he communicates in English “so that should be the language on the field!” Wesley (57, college instructor, St. Lucian-Canadian), who was also very competitive, was not yet ready to leave league play but saw the influx of South Asians as a problem. He considered moving to another team because of the shifting demographics on his local GTA team: “There are only five West Indians left and all of the other 195 club members are Pakis. There are too many and I can’t understand what they’re saying half the time.”

My discussions with Riddick, Wesley and others about their lumping of all South Asians into the category “Indian” and use of the derogatory word “Paki” revealed their understanding that these terms have racist connotations, and drew attention to two points. First, Brackette Williams’ (1996) suggests ethnographers must constantly ask themselves about their varied and shifting local social personae. A researcher’s features, in my case “Black” skin, shape which data are gathered. The Mavericks’ apparent comfort in sharing anti-South Asian sentiments “reflected an (unspoken) shared space of assumed racial empathy” (Carrington, 2008: 435; see also Fletcher, 2011; Williams, 1996). I was never asked overtly, but my positive “answers” to inquiries about whether I would dance close to my partner, wine my waist to soca music, use hotsauce, or eat souse (pig foot soup), established my Afro-Caribbean authenticity during fieldwork. This allowed these men to feel comfortable sharing anti-South Asian sentiments with me.

Secondly, these comments, the sense of shock I endured each time I heard them, and my reluctance to include them in my final reports out of fear of making my participants “look bad,” pointed out for me that the Caribbean diaspora in Canada is unified – vis-à-vis the Euro-Canadian “we are very much the same” – but within the diaspora there “is a profound difference of culture and history. And the difference *matters*” (Hall, 1994: 396, original emphasis). Hall refers to the difference between Caribbean peoples from different nations: Martiniquians and Jamaicans are his example. My study shows that the boundaries of difference are also repositioned in relation generation of immigration. That is not to say that there are no second-generation Afro-Caribbeans who would use such racist language in the GTA. However, I believe our spatial and temporal distance from the post-colonial struggles of the various Caribbean nations, and integration in multicultural spaces of the GTA, make us carry fewer burdens of these historical racial conflicts. First-generation immigrants, in contrast, generate their diasporic consciousness through

ethnic and racial barriers that are loaded with the histories of slavery and indentureship and post-colonial jockeying for power.

In Jack Williams' (2003) chapter, *Paki Cheats!*, he shows that in the 1980s and 1990s the English derided Pakistani Test cricketers based on beliefs of English moral and cultural superiority and their difficulties adjusting to the rise of Pakistani immigrants on a local scale and cricket power at an international scale. The Mavericks' similar feelings resulted in covert rather than overt abuse. Ethnic groups become more vocal about their racism when they feel that their hegemony is being threatened. Drawing from John Clarke's "magical recovery of community," Fletcher (2011: 3.2) similarly argues that, "when one's community identity is under threat, community members may attempt to recreate, through symbolic manifestations, a sense of their traditional cultural identities as a substitution for its 'real' decline." In the case of the Yorkshire County Cricket Club, exclusionary practices, racist language, and normative whiteness are couched as "tradition" but efforts "to protect their heritage by denying many ethnic minorities access to the imagined community" reveal the club's institutionalized racism (Fletcher, 2011: 6.12). The Mavericks' racist comments cannot be excused, but they must be understood in relation to their declining physical power (ageing, ailments, injuries, and illness), numerical power (each year more players leave league cricket, convert to a spectating only role in friendly cricket and, sadly, some pass away), and political power (Black communities are increasingly pathologized in the media), relative to South Asians. Their efforts to protect the cultural exclusivity of "friendly" cricket are therefore redoubled. Their imagined community is bound by a Black, Caribbean masculinity.

The Mavericks resented the ways South Asians turned "their" cricket grounds into Hindi or Bengali spaces when there are fewer and fewer places in which Caribbean people can comfortably speak in their native language in Canada. Despite their admonishments that South Asians should speak "proper English," the Mavericks chose to speak in their native languages, fusions of the English of the colonizers of their respective islands and territories and the West African languages of their ancestors. For example, Otis (70, retired plumber, Barbadian-Canadian) uses a thick accent no matter who he is speaking to: "Dey ask me, 'you been 'ere so long an still talk so?' I say 'yeah, how I supposed to talk?!'" George (66, retired principal, Jamaica) pretended to hide behind a tree from his friend's wife after "stealing" a chicken drumstick off of her plate, "Ay! Me noh want she wuk obeah pon me! (I don't want her to cast a spell on me!)," he screeched. In Western societies, Caribbean accents are banished to the domestic realm or "Black space" (Carrington, 1998), in which Caribbean people are separated from non-speakers and feel comfortable to use their native tongue without being judged. Just as the South Asians do, the Mavericks use their native languages against the extinction and marginalization of their culture that can result from disuse, to express a consciousness of themselves as a singular community, and to set an exclusive boundary around the cricket grounds as a Caribbean homespace.

The conflicts described here are characteristic of "diaspora spaces," where different ethnic groups find themselves together, negotiating for material and discursive power (Brah, 1996). As Brah (1996: 190) reminds us, there are other transnational histories and crucibles of diasporic trajectories: "where Europe is not at 'the center' – which retain a critical bearing on understanding contemporary diasporic formations and their inter-relationships." If the home team, which is always responsible for providing the food, brings tandoori instead of

jerk chicken, ladoos and samosas instead of plantains and dumplings, and prohibits drinking, as one Muslim South Asian team was reported to do, the (re)making of an Afro-Caribbean homespace through cricket is interrupted. Because their main goals include (re)generation of their Afro-Caribbean cultures, communities, and consciousness, the Mavericks are unable and unwilling to share cricket sites with South Asians. The Mavericks' conflicts with South Asians draw attention to what Munasinghe (2001: 1) describes as, the "contestation over the power to define the cultural coordinates of the symbolic space of the nation" and, I would add, the space of the diaspora.

Discussion

The concept of diaspora, argues Avtar Brah "places the discourse of 'home' and 'dispersion' in creative tension, *inscribing a homing desire while simultaneously critiquing discourses of fixed origins*" (Brah, 1996: 192–193, original emphasis). I have considered diaspora here as a community, generated by immigrants' rituals of movement across borders. Whether in Boston, MA, London, England, or Christchurch, Barbados, while at the cricket grounds (or its associated social practices), the Mavericks are at once part of a community that is "dispersed" and "at home." Even when they don't travel, their cricket games in the GTA against other Afro-Caribbeans can be considered "as a practice of dwelling (differently), as an ambivalent refusal or indefinite deferral of return" (Clifford, 1997: 249). The grounds offer a place for solidarity both to an elsewhere and to the Canadian nation state.

According to Vertovec (2000: 148), the experience of dispersion, awareness of multi-locality, and sharing of fractured, collective memories "produce a multiplicity of histories, 'communities,' and selves. Yet instead of being represented as a kind of schizophrenic deficit, such multiplicity is being redefined by diasporic individuals as a source of adaptive strength." Especially as the cricket players described above age, drop out of playing the sport, and are increasingly unable to travel, they draw on their international connections for teams to visit them. When they are the hosts they provide local tours, dances, an abundance of traditional Caribbean foods, alcohol, including Caribbean rum and Canadian beers, domino games, nostalgic memories, and ribald jokes. This *liming*, characteristic of a masculine outdoor Caribbean culture, is central to claiming not only a Caribbean identity, but also a Canadian one. As Walcott (2003: 147) puts it, when "[w]atching cricket [in the GTA...] bodies of colour actually and symbolically refigure Canadian space and make their presence felt beyond the confines and restrictions of immigration legislation, multicultural discourse and policies, and the local police." Making connections to other Caribbeans through sharing a sport known to be central to anti-colonial efforts is one way to assuage the racialized exile that is life in Canada.

Conclusion

This paper demonstrates the utility of a diaspora approach to studies of sport in Canada and research on Caribbean culture. The Mavericks, a group of first-generation immigrants living in the GTA, choose not to participate in mainstream sports and, furthermore, they exclude themselves from mainstream cricket leagues. Instead, they use their social networks to arrange their own cricket matches, "at home" in Canada and "at home" in

Caribbean spaces in their nations of origin, the United States, and England. Cricket, like steel pan music or obeah religious practices, is a powerful cultural symbol of the Caribbean region and is used by men and women of Caribbean descent as a political venue, to (re) visit roots, (re)create memories, (re)generate belongings, and (re)fashion nationalisms. My findings indicate that two-week cricket tours and long-weekend bus trips allow cricketers and their male and female supporters to maintain their diasporic communities through reunions with family and friends who have dispersed elsewhere. As a result of repeated travel to the same destinations, Caribbean cricketers “in separate places effectively become one community” (Clifford, 1997: 246). Massey (1993) reminds us that the diaspora is far from a utopian space of free and easy hybridities. Wrenching disjunctures and displacements and unequal power relations with other groups are foundational features of the movements and dwelling of the Caribbean diaspora in Canada.

The homeland cultures that are reproduced at the cricket ground are linguistic and culinary, musical and kinesthetic. However, they are also exclusionary and racist. Participants (re)generate their homeland cultures in terms of Afro- and Indo-Caribbean antagonisms. Cricket in the GTA is increasingly dominated by South Asians and Indo-Caribbeans, making the efforts of the Afro-Caribbean minority group to (re)construct their version of authentic cricket culture in Canada even more difficult and necessary. This analysis shows that first-generation Caribbean-Canadians’ sporting experiences cannot be read only in relation to the dominant White Canadian group, discourses of racism in sport, or understandings of Afro-Caribbean “routes” or travel experiences. Moreover, globalization and transnationality paradigms do not help us to fully understand the geographic, social, and cultural flows described in this paper. Interactions between diasporic groups in the place of dwelling frame the meanings that are made in recreational sport. A diaspora approach to physical cultural studies is necessary to understand these relationships.

Much work remains to be done in consideration of the intersections of sport and diasporas, especially the Caribbean diaspora. We may consider how Indo-Caribbean and South Asians relate within sport settings. How does being in the latter stages of life, as many of the cricketers in this study are, influence their diasporic consciousness, impetus to in/exclude other ethnic groups, and desire/ability to travel? How do performances of Caribbean masculinity change in different diasporic sporting locations? More broadly, what role can/does sport play in creating homespaces, including the mythologized nation or region of origin, place of residence, and deterritorialized communities? In Canada, where nation state heritage discourses encourage immigrants of color to desire an elsewhere, asking questions about diasporas opens up the national historical record to a re-examination. In addition to experiences of exclusion and racism, which of course must still be exposed, the rhizomatic associations among athletes, spectators, and tourists in sport-related settings can offer more insight into the entangled and historically embedded performances of race, ethnicity, and the formation of diasporas today.

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Notes

1. I use the term Afro-Caribbean for linguistic simplicity, with the recognition that the participants of this study are all Canadian citizens, mainly from Barbados, and primarily of African descent. To say they are Afro-Caribbean is not to specify race; rather, all club members are subsumed within a Black cultural hegemony pervasive in Barbados and the Caribbean more generally (Brereton, 1979; Hintzen, 2002; Munasinghe, 2001; Mohammed, 2009). The Black diaspora and Caribbean diaspora are often conflated (Hall, 1994; Gilroy, 1993; Walcott, 2001, 2003).
2. The significance of sport for maintaining ethnic identity outside of Ireland has been widely studied – see the special issue of *Sport in Society* 10(3).
3. Despite a wide range of religious affiliations among South Asians, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam, any “brown” person can become a victim of Islamophobia. Semati (2010: 257) explains that we live in a “post-9/11 context... of racialization and a redefinition of brown from exotic Other to a signifier of potential terror.” A wide range of “politics, histories, societies and cultures... [are conflated] into a unified and negative conception of an essentialized Islam as ideology, which is then deemed incompatible with Euro-Americaness” (Semati, 2010: 257).
4. Bajan is a colloquial way to refer to a person from Barbados.
5. Indo-Caribbean music with an emphasis on *liming*, dancing, and drinking is welcomed; for example, chutney-soca, an Africanized and carnivalized expression Caribbean culture from Indo-Caribbean artists such as Hunter and Ravi B.
6. Trini is a colloquial way to refer to Trinidadian culture. Negro is the way many older Caribbean people refer to Blacks. It is not used pejoratively.

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