



## The Globalization of Cricket: The Rise of the Non-West

Amit Gupta

To cite this article: Amit Gupta (2004) The Globalization of Cricket: The Rise of the Non-West, The International Journal of the History of Sport, 21:2, 257-276, DOI: [10.1080/09523360410001681975](https://doi.org/10.1080/09523360410001681975)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523360410001681975>



Published online: 05 Aug 2006.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1189



View related articles [↗](#)



Citing articles: 35 View citing articles [↗](#)

# **The Globalization of Cricket: The Rise of the Non-West**

AMIT GUPTA

The globalization of sport has typically followed the patterns witnessed in most areas of international relations – the wealth, technology, marketing, and ideas controlled by the North have led to various international sporting events being dominated by the wealthy nations of the west. Thus the Olympic movement has moved away from being an international sporting event that drew global audiences wherever it was held, to one where unless it takes place in the United States it does not become the commercial success that it is hoped to be. Gone are the days when a country like Mexico could hold the Olympics. Now wealth, power, and a time zone that is friendly to western television audiences make or break that sporting event. Similarly, as Maguire and Pearton have argued, it is the global figuration of wealth, training and recruitment facilities, markets, and television that have led to the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and European teams dominating international soccer.<sup>1</sup> European soccer teams now have tie-ups with teams in the non-Western world and regularly poach their talent.<sup>2</sup> Brazil and Argentina, traditional world powerhouses in soccer have seen their domestic leagues denuded as their players go to make their fortunes in Europe, with even the remote Faroe Islands becoming a site for Brazilian soccer migration.<sup>3</sup>

International cricket, however, has not followed the path of other transnational sporting events. It is a game where the non-Western countries have begun to dominate not just on the field but, more importantly, in shaping the economics and politics of the game. This article suggests that this change, that is atypical for international sport, has come about because of processes within the globalization phenomenon particularly, the rise of a transnational community that can support its team across frontiers, the spread of technology that provides real time coverage of the sport, and the decline of the sport in its host country thereby allowing alternative centers of power to emerge especially in decision making.

## **Approaches to the Globalization of Sport**

Joseph Maguire and Hilary McD. Beckles have made arguments that suggest that the countries of the West have economic and technological

advantages that permit them to dominate global sport. Maguire has long argued that the globalization of sports has led to the domination of the West over non-Western countries in this activity.<sup>4</sup> Maguire is the first to acknowledge, however, that the global diffusion of sport is met by resistance at the local level as various groups attempt to preserve ethnic and national identities. The development of American football as a counter to rugby is suggested as one example of such resistance. The problem is that typically such resistance comes from within the west where the locus of international sporting power resides. It is more difficult to find international sports where the non-Western countries have taken over the global figuration of the sport.

From the perspective of cricket writing comes the work of Hilary McD. Beckles who argues that international cricket, as played in the West Indies, went through three phases, the colonial period, the nationalist period, and now the globalist period. Beckles has shown that the decline of West Indian cricket and its surrender to global forces follows a path typical in other North-South sporting relationships. He argues that the wealth generated by globalization has taken away the nationalist identity of the players and, instead, made them captives of the market process that makes them sell their services to the highest bidder. Beckles states that domestic capital was unable to provide the sponsorship required to retain the national characteristics that marked the West Indian game. The West Indies cricket board was thus forced to look to transnational capital to provide the necessary financial incentives to safeguard the game's economic future in the Caribbean. As a consequence transnational capital appropriated the West Indies cricket team much in the same way that the Brazilian football team was appropriated by Nike. This resulted in the game surrendering to the commercial needs of globalization and, consequently, hurting the domestic structure of cricket in the West Indies.<sup>5</sup>

He also suggests that national capitalist forces may have been unwilling to provide the needed financial support for the game, 'the view of the propertied white elite is that cricket is a black man's sport that practices "reverse" discrimination. This perception will have adverse consequences at the level of local sponsorship and financial support. [Further,] Sponsorship withdrawal from cricket and simultaneous promotion of other sports will force cricket officials to rely increasingly upon foreign multinationals.'<sup>6</sup> The West Indies dominated the international cricket scene from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s and remains one of the most marketable cricket teams globally. Yet they were unable to escape the pressures imposed by transnational capital on reshaping the game. Beckles's work while based on a study of Caribbean cricket would suggest that the traditional trends in the internationalization of sport are taking place in cricket as well.

Beckles's argument is not as easy to apply globally because it focuses on the West Indies – a set of Caribbean cricketing nations that for long have been the poorest in the sport and unable to finance the game successfully from within. West Indian cricket, both at the domestic and international level, is being sponsored by transnational capital, thus leading to the game losing its traditional roots in the Caribbean and to the game being centered around the most commercially viable nation in the region Jamaica.<sup>7</sup>

Instead, one must focus on the countries of South Asia to see where the future of cricket lies and what transformations are taking place within the sport. The psychologist Ashis Nandy, in his book the *Tao of Cricket*, argued that while the British invented cricket it was best suited to the Indians. The duration of the game, the possibility of a draw (i.e. no result), the rules and informal folkways that governed the sport, all appealed to the Indian character and even to the caste identities within Hinduism.<sup>8</sup> For a variety of reasons not only have the countries of South Asia adopted to cricket but they have also shifted the domination of the decision making of the game from the core to the periphery.

### **Background: From Semi-Amateur to Professional**

Until Kerry Packer transformed international cricket, it was a semi-amateur game both in terms of its potential for providing a livelihood as well as in its administration and marketing. This semi-amateurish status and the emphasis on traditions was seen as one of the greatest strengths of the game. Cronin and Holt argue that

Cricket's very strength, and hence its mobilization by John Major as a political tool, was, and remains, its traditions. The game has always looked to the past and its bedrock certainties, rather than to the future and to new modes of operation and activity. [They continue, quoting Brian Stoddart], 'Cricket devotees need to be convinced that new forms fit their social world. Attempts to attract new crowds founder upon this point. Cricket survives and flourishes because those who follow it find meaning within its playing and representational text.'

This is an important point since the emphasis on tradition hurt rather than helped the game's effort to fit into a modern sporting market.

As a potential livelihood, for example, cricket lacked the resources to allow players to make a living from playing the game full time and for what should have been an extended career. A few superstars, like Donald Bradman and Garry Sobers, made a good living out of playing cricket, and from the endorsements that came from being a cricketing celebrity, but by and large cricketers had to hold down a second job and retire early as the

pressures of family life and the inability to generate a secure and sufficient income led to retirement from the game. Thus promising players like the Australian Paul Sheehan gave up the game at an early age and even the former captain of India, Mansur Ali Khan, the Nawab of Pataudi, initially retired at the age of 29 to pursue business interests.

What chances cricketers had of making money off the sport, through writing sports columns for instance, were severely circumscribed by the policies of the respective national boards. Donald Bradman, during the controversial 1932 'bodyline' series got into trouble with the Australian cricket board over the writing of a column, while Sunil Gavaskar was to take the unusual step, in Indian cricketing circles, of writing *Sunny Days*, his autobiography, while still very much an active player.<sup>10</sup> In the English county game a cricketer's pay off for years of loyal service to the county came from a benefit game – which was often inadequate to base a retirement on.

The management of the game was also hidebound in tradition and conservative thinking. The game was controlled by the International Cricket Council, established in 1907 as the Imperial Cricket Conference, an organization dominated by the white nations of the Commonwealth. Thus it was England, Australia, South Africa and even tiny New Zealand that set the rules for the game and guided its economics and marketing. To suggest that the ICC lacked business acumen and followed politically conservative policies was an understatement.

Politically, the ICC allowed South Africa to continue playing test cricket right up to 1970 (by 1961 the United Nations General Assembly had passed resolutions condemning apartheid in South Africa) under the official claim that sports and politics should be separated – even though South Africa's apartheid policies ensured that the two were intertwined. When the 1970 South African tour of England and the 1971–72 tour of Australia were cancelled, it was due to protests by anti-apartheid groups and not because the cricket boards of Australia and England saw something repugnant in the political structure of South Africa.<sup>11</sup> As Mike Marqusee has argued, even after South Africa was banned from international cricket, sporting links with the country were tacitly condoned by the English and Australian authorities. In the 1970s, players could play first-class cricket in South Africa without fear of repercussions and even after the 1977 Gleneagles Agreement, which banned sporting ties with that country, links continued.

It was only in the 1980s that the Western cricket authorities, under international pressure, imposed three-year bans on players like Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting for going on rebel tours to South Africa. Yet these players were welcomed back into the fold when their bans were over.<sup>12</sup> This was an easy let-off compared to the West Indies board that had banned

players like Alvin Kallicharran and Colin Croft for life for going on a rebel tour of South Africa. Further, as Mike Marqusee has written, the English TCCB repeatedly attempted to downplay the issue of apartheid and to maintain sporting links established with South Africa.<sup>13</sup>

The ICC was restrictive about letting new countries in as test playing members of the organization because it would have led to a shift in the voting balance of the organization (though the issue was couched in terms of whether these countries would provide strong enough competition in a test match situation). Thus Sri Lanka did not enter the test arena till the 1980s even though visiting MCC and Australian teams had stopped in Colombo for decades to play games. Contrast this with the quick accession in the 1980s and 1990s of Bangladesh and Zimbabwe to test status and the ongoing move to get Kenya to be the next test playing nation and it shows how the power in the ICC has shifted.

The ICC was also semi-amateurish in its handling of the economics of the game. One-day cricket had started in England with the introduction of the Gillette Cup in 1963, but the ICC did not see the potential for a one-day game at the international level. The first one-day international was played in Australia during the Ashes tour of 1970/71 when rain washed out play. A cricket world cup of one-dayers soon followed and the first three cups, regardless of the financial aspects of the choice, were held in England – even though alternative venues like India and Australia would have provided much larger gates and purses.

The members of the ICC were also conservative in their distribution of broadcasting rights to their product. Traditionally, state broadcasting corporations, that paid a pittance in royalties, got to handle the broadcast of the game. Thus the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and India's Doordarshan network would routinely get the right to televise the game. Making money by selling the sport commercially was frowned upon. Thus even as late as the early 1980s it was difficult to get live telecasts of cricket games played internationally. The famous 1981 Ashes series, where Ian Botham single-handedly demolished the Australians, was seen in parts in Australia due to contractual and technical problems. And that was in the post-Packer era.

The Australian cricket board was equally inept in terms of its ability to secure a livelihood for its players and in terms of the marketing of the game. It was their reluctance to allow Kerry Packer to broadcast cricket on a commercial network – and to instead give the rights to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation at a much lower asking price – that led to Packer's breakaway cricket series and the subsequent transformation of the game.<sup>14</sup> Packer also took the first step for player power when several members of his cricket series took the English TCCB to court and won.

Packer's lawyers showed that neither the ICC nor the TCCB had entered into any contractual obligations with the cricketers so they did not have right to ban the players from county and test cricket.<sup>15</sup>

In short, the ICC's decisions had both a racial bias and showed a lack of appreciation of the financial potential of the international game. Thus the ICC did not display the type of financial and organizational skills that other sporting bodies in the Western core did. UEFA and the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) both reached out to the non-Western countries. FIFA, in the 1980s and 1990s, increased the number of non-Western countries that participated in the World Cup. This not only broadened the appeal and marketability of the World Cup but it also allowed served as a market for viewing new talent. UEFA member clubs, as mentioned earlier expanded their partnerships to poach on the best players in non-Western leagues.<sup>16</sup> In that sense cricket's international governing body was atypical of other such organizations and was consequently able to allow the non-Western states to break its control of the game.

Nor did England, the birthplace of the game, develop the type of figurations that would have permitted its continued domination of cricket. In the late 1960s, England had worked towards the internationalization of the game and securing the status of the English cricket league by encouraging the migration of sporting labour. English club leagues, such as the Lancashire League, had for decades imported players to play in the tournament. But by the 1960s, the English county circuit had become the magnet for top-flight international players. While the financial benefits for these foreign professionals were not astronomical, it did see cricketers put county over country. The Pakistani Younis Ahmed gave up playing for Pakistan to concentrate on county cricket and to gain an English residency. The Indian Farokh Engineer, in 1974, similarly chose to put his county (Lancashire) over his commitments to the Indian national team. A similar situation arose for some West Indian players and, later, in the 1980s, Graham Hick refused to play for his native Zimbabwe and, instead, chose to gain an English residency.

But the English county system collapsed because it failed truly to globalize. By the early 1970s, a number of county teams had four to five foreign players on their teams. This led to a backlash against foreigners with English players claiming that migrant sporting labour was taking away jobs from the English and lowering the standards of the English game. The number of foreign players was first reduced to two per county and eventually to one (Somerset got a special exemption to keep both West Indians Viv Richards and Joel Garner). The residency requirement to play for England was also raised from five to ten and eventually 15 years. Paradoxically, these attempts to strengthen English cricket may have actually weakened it.

The late 1960s and the early 1970s were the period when the English cricket team was competitive enough to play the best international sides. In the early 1970s England first won, and subsequently retained, the Ashes against Australia. It also beat the West Indies and made the finals of the 1979 World Cup – a success record not matched in the 1980s and 1990s when English cricket had purged itself of its international presence (although two foreign players are now allowed on each team's roster).

Another reason for England's cricketing demise lay in its inability to tap successfully non-white players who, by the 1980s, were making their presence felt in the county circuit. Doubts remained about the motivation and patriotism of these players. As late as 2002, the Australian coach Tom Moody argued that England's cricketing future lay in tapping the Asian cricketing talent that was emerging in the country.<sup>17</sup> England's hockey team had already achieved international success by taking in young Asian talent. English cricket, until the mid-1990s, had not kept pace with other national sports. In fact, in the new millennium, there is the greater fear that cricket is not attracting young people and women, vital for securing advertising contracts, to the game.<sup>18</sup>

### **Cricket in the Periphery**

While cricket in the core, particularly in England, displayed signs of atrophying, cricket in the periphery flourished. There were several reasons for this. The sport was one of the few where the countries of the South could not only compete but also succeed. It was also one where, perforce, they could play against top-flight opposition. The ability to go to England and Australia and challenge the two established powers of test cricket and, as in the case of the West Indies, beat them, was an incentive that could not be matched by other sports. For the countries of South Asia, their performance in the Olympic games, with the exception of hockey, rarely matched international standards. In football, the other truly international sporting event, none of these countries fared particularly well. India's heyday in football had been in the 1950s while the best performance out of the Caribbean came from the Reggae Boyz national team of Jamaica that made the 1998 world cup in France. While the Caribbean countries had done well internationally in athletics, the only team sport where they dominated was cricket.

In the South Asian case, while hockey was very popular and was able to generate large gate receipts, it did not have the snob appeal of cricket. Cricket not only was played by the upper classes, but it was also situated in the club circuit that made it appealing to the rich and newly rich in these countries. Yet at the same time, the game also had tremendous appeal at the



mass level and was allowed to flourish there. The cricket leagues of Bombay (Mumbai) were/are so organized that anyone can play in them and this has permitted talent to flourish that would otherwise have been shut out by the elite club system.<sup>19</sup>

But the rise of cricket in South Asia has to also be attributed to other factors. One was the decline of hockey just as cricket took off in these countries. Indian and Pakistani hockey had dominated the Olympic Games since the 1920s. By the 1970s, countries like erstwhile West Germany, Holland, and Australia had emerged as the new powerhouses of international hockey. Indians and Pakistanis were satisfied when they beat each other in international competitions only to lose to the more powerful and physically fit European teams. Moreover, as Shekhar Gupta points out, Indian hockey, although the same problem applies to Pakistani hockey, was in its most glorious phase before the era of live television and significant amounts of sponsorship.<sup>20</sup>

As hockey lost its hold, cricket staged a major breakthrough with the Indian and Pakistani sides emerging as strong international contenders. This became all the more apparent in the 1980s when India won the 1983 World Cup and ended the West Indian domination of the one-day game (Pakistan went on to win the World Cup in 1991/92). At the same time, however, games like basketball, soccer, and baseball started to become popular in the Caribbean and this led young West Indians to move away from cricket to more lucrative sports – especially those that had a base in North America.

Three other factors helped shift the balance of power towards the periphery. First, was the rapid growth of technology in the form of satellite and cable technology. With the growth in both industries came the spread of the global sports networks ESPN and STAR. Both transnational television networks recognized the appeal of cricket and, more importantly, the commercial possibilities of the one-day game – where a commercial break was possible every four minutes due to the end of an over. As the technical possibilities of the game grew, so did its audiences – especially since television was beginning to spread throughout Asia.

In 1973, for example, only about 100,000 television licenses had been granted in India, which was then a country of six hundred million people. The state run television corporation, Doordarshan, that limited its broadcasts to the major metropolitan areas (and those towns that were within the range of its urban transmitters), covered cricket. In fact, most Indians followed the matches through the radio commentaries on All India Radio. Coverage of international cricket was just as poor. Indians had to rely on Radio Ceylon, which picked up the broadcasts from Australia and beamed them to India. By the late 1980s, over 70 per cent of the country

could receive television signals and the advent of cable and satellite dishes in the 1990s took it to every corner of the country. The existing market for sports in South Asia had found the technological outlet it required to target the consumers.

By the early 1990s not only was Indian and Pakistani cricket being shown live, but also test matches in countries like South Africa were being beamed to the subcontinent. Writing at the time of the 1996 World Cup, Mike Marqusee explained why South Asia was so important to the globalized sports broadcasting industry. He remarked,

Because of its vast popular base, cricket in the subcontinent is an ideal vehicle for multinational corporations seeking to penetrate ‘emerging markets’. And, thanks to satellite television, subcontinental cricket can be used to sell goods in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and South-East Asia. As a result, this World Cup has become a kind of carnival of globalization – sponsored by tobacco, soft drink and credit card giants.<sup>21</sup>

The global coverage afforded by new technology was made more significant by the existence of a large South Asian diaspora, particularly among the Persian Gulf states. Joel Kotkin, in his book *Tribes*, has suggested that the existence of large transnational diasporas like those of Indians and Chinese will alter the way international economic and political relations are conducted.<sup>22</sup> In the case of cricket the impact of the Indian and Pakistani tribes was felt in the 1980s when Sheikh Abdul Rehman Bukhatir brought cricket to the desert state of Sharjah. Bukhatir, a cricket fanatic, took a game that had no domestic base, and promoted it successfully in Sharjah. He was able to do this because of large Indian and Pakistani diaspora populations in the Persian Gulf that served as ready customers for sporting entertainment with heavy nationalistic overtones.

Bukhatir’s spectacle in the desert was beamed to South Asia and soon had a large following. The competitions he organized were popular not only because of the excitement of one-day cricket but also because he was to pay substantial purses to the participating teams and, subsequently, even went on to organize lucrative benefit games for retired cricketers. Sharjah, a country with no national team and no cricketing culture, had become the cricketing centre of the world as both Western and non-Western teams eagerly sought to milk the cash cow. Sharjah’s role as an international cricket centre was reinforced in 2002 when the Australian team, unwilling for security reasons to play a test series in Pakistan, agreed to play in Sharjah – a neutral venue. Now there is talk of making Morocco and Dubai future international cricket sites. Morocco, like Sharjah, has no indigenous

cricketing culture but its proximity to Europe, and its perfect weather, would allow the staging of tournaments in the winter months that would attract European and South Asian diaspora crowds.

But Sharjah also changed the game in a way that had not been viewed as possible a decade before. Bukhatir's desert circus removed the need for a structured competition based on traditions. Thus the Ashes were held once every two years between England and Australia. Test matches had to be sanctioned by the ICC and tended to be few and far between. Top cricketers in the past often went several years without playing a test. And then there were the first class games in each country – the Shell Shield, the Sheffield Cup, the Currie Cup, and the Ranji Trophy, that had long and reputable histories. Sharjah changed the game by having one-day matches often and by coming up with competitions that might or might not survive beyond their first outing. As a consequence, international cricket lost some of its significance as a serious competition between countries and assumed the form of entertainment exhibitions.

In these exhibitions, artificial restrictions on bowlers and fielders permitted a large number of runs to be scored, one team won and held aloft a trophy, and six months later no one remembered what the competition was about or its significance. Cricket, because of overkill, was taking on the form of professional wrestling but, surprisingly, not losing its significance as a sporting event to the television audiences. The main casualty was the domestic game, except in Australia, which, due to the surplus of international competitions, drew increasingly small crowds.

The diaspora, however, was not restricted to the Persian Gulf but also existed in Britain and the United States. In fact it was the British Indian, West Indian, and Pakistani diasporas' passionate support for their home teams that led Conservative Minister Norman Tebbit to make public his famous test for loyalty among immigrant populations. Tebbit argued that the immigrants' support for the English cricket team rather than those of their home countries showed that they had become true citizens. The latter two were not only more prosperous diaspora groupings but were better connected in their transnational linkages. This was particularly the case with the British diaspora that emerged as the center of the corruption scandal that tainted international cricket in the 1990s.<sup>23</sup>

It was this section of the diaspora that was able to attempt to manipulate internationally the results in one-day competitions including the one between South Africa and India that led to the banning of South African captain Hansie Cronje. Such attempts at match fixing would not have been possible had there not existed a large connected diaspora that passionately followed the game and had money to burn on betting. Although it could be argued that the betting scandal was a globalized routinization of what had

fostered the initial popularity of cricket – the heavy bets placed on the outcome of domestic games by the English elite.

The cricket scandal was truly transnational since players from Pakistan, India, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa were allegedly involved in the betting process. This would not have been possible in the 1970s or 1980s because the technology did not exist to get real time coverage of games, the games themselves were not as numerous as they became in the 1990s, and the South Asia diaspóra was not as interconnected to carry out the kind of bookmaking activities that led to the scandal.

The role of the diaspóra was clear in the 2003 world cup when the India's playing in the finals saw a surge of fans enter South Africa to watch the tournament. Interest for the game, particularly in the North American diaspóra, will increase with the 2007 World Cup since games are to be played in the United States. Cricket may thus finally become commodified as the location of the tournament, the choice of venues, and of playing times, will be geared to fit the economic capacity of the South Asian diaspóra.

The third factor was the atrophying of the game in some of the countries of the west, and even in the Caribbean, as other sports captured the public interest. In England, cricket became too expensive a game for the average school to offer as the equipment and the maintenance of a pitch were beyond the limited budgets of most schools. Games like soccer and rugby, that offered exercise and were low cost, proved much more attractive alternatives.

The huge salary differentials between football and other sports on the one hand, and cricket on the other, also led to the game losing its popularity. While star cricketers like Sachin Tendulkar, Brian Lara, and Steve Waugh were to make fortunes out of the game, for most cricketers at the first class level the rewards remained modest. In contrast, a footballer playing the first division game in England was better remunerated.

The atrophying of the game was not true for all nations in the center. For the Australians, cricket remained one of the games where they could successfully compete at the international level and win. The run of the Australian test team since the early 1990s further ensured the success of the game in that country. As did the shrewd television marketing by the Packer group that created a large television audience for the game. The Packer group was also financially savvy enough to buy the broadcast rights of South Asian cricket and thus acquire cricket's most lucrative marketing outlet.

On the playing field, the change in status of the non-Western nations has been reflected in the composition of cricket teams sent to South Asia. Until the mid-1970s, the English sent second-string teams to South Asia with

some of the best players opting out of a demanding tour of the subcontinent. The Australians were a notable exception to this trend sending their strongest sides to compete – although in the 1996 World Cup the Australians refused to play games in Sri Lanka for security reasons. Now not only would missing a South Asia tour be financially damaging to the individual player, it would also lead to omission from future test appearances because of the need of the visiting team to do well in the lucrative South Asian market.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Rise of the Non-West**

A combination of these factors has led to the rise of the non-Western nations, particularly those of South Asia, in the decision making process of the ICC as well as in terms of overall control of the game. This control has been manifested in several ways. The chairmanship of the ICC, once reserved for the western nations, moved to India with Jagmohan Dalmiya emerging as the most controversial president ever of that organization. The composition of the ICC has also changed with a significant impact on the organization. The non-Western nations now prevail and their number continues to grow with Bangladesh already a new test playing nation and Kenya under consideration for test status.

The position of the non-Western countries is reinforced by the financial control they have over the game. It is these countries that draw the crowds, with the exception of the West Indies, which remains plagued by financial difficulties, it is the countries of South Asia that can provide the large purses to make an international competition attractive, and thus it is they who will increasingly dominate the game. The push to get India to play in international one-day competitions is indicative of the positive impact of the Indian national team on gate receipts. So too is the demand to get India and Pakistan to start playing against each other.

The Indian government suspended cricketing links with Pakistan following a spate of terrorist incidents that it claimed were orchestrated by Islamabad. Since the May–June 2002 military showdown between the two countries, which almost resulted in nuclear war, there has been a push to get the two nations to start playing cricket again. The argument made is that cricket is one of the bridges to peace. A more pragmatic explanation is that gate receipts suffer at international competitions if India and Pakistan are not playing each other. Indicative of the change of economic relations in the game is that Indian cricket prospers despite its self-imposed restriction of not playing Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistan has made it clear that the Sharjah tests could not substitute for international cricket played in Pakistan. Pakistani authorities warned that if future tests and one-day

games were not played in Pakistan they would implement their own boycotts.<sup>25</sup>

It was also an Indian public relations executive, Mark Mascarenhas, who was able to get international cricket the true market value for its broadcasting rights. Mascarenhas's firm, World Tel bid 8.5 million British pounds for the 1996 World Cup and took the game to a new financial level. International observers now believe that an India–Pakistan one-day series of five televised games, played in a non-traditional venue like Morocco, would fetch an even higher broadcasting purse.<sup>26</sup>

The impact of the change in power relations has been evident for some time now in international cricket. The Board of Cricket Control in India (BCCI) was for long able to resist the pressure of the ICC to undertake reforms and conduct an investigation into corruption in the Indian game. An investigation conducted by a former Chief Justice of the Indian Supreme Court exonerated all those suspected of match fixing. It was only when the Indian police taped South African captain Hansie Cronje confessing to having taken a bribe, that the Indian board reluctantly moved to impose bans on players like Mohammed Azharuddin and Ajay Jadeja.<sup>27</sup>

A more crucial test of power came during the November 2001 India–South Africa test. After Mike Denness, the ICC appointed match referee, fined and suspended a number of Indian players for ball tampering, the BCCI threatened to walk out of the ICC and take the other nonwestern countries, which now included South Africa, with it to form an alternate international cricket organization. The BCCI put pressure on the South African government to appoint a South African, Denis Lindsay, as match referee for the next test – although the Indian team did observe the one match ban on Virender Sehwag by not selecting him for the test. The ICC was to back down even though it claimed that the India–South Africa test match was not authorized and therefore an unofficial one. The divergence of cricketing interests between the west and the nonwest was further accentuated by the 2003 World Cup, which saw the pull of market forces, as well as political and diplomatic tensions, cause rifts within the ICC membership.

### **The Commodification of the World Cup: 2003 and 2007**

A consequence of the globalization process has been the commodification of cricket, most notably in the way the World Cup has been organized and marketed. With the 2003 World Cup the commodification of cricket took place with consequences that are like to be detrimental to the nationalistic character of the game.

The 1996 World Cup made a substantial profit because Jagmohan Dalmiya was able to successfully commercialize the competition. For the

2003 and 2007 World Cups, the ICC, through a plan created by Ehsan Mani, Pakistan's representative, sold the broadcast rights to Global Cricket Corporation, a subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. The deal, worth \$550 million, was beneficial to the ICC because it permitted the development of a ten-year plan to globalize the game.<sup>28</sup>

The deal was cut, however, at a time when the international sports market was booming and it seemed that in the future sports broadcast revenues would only continue to increase. By 2003, however, such optimistic projections were revised because the televised sports market had collapsed in most parts of the world and was unable to deliver the advertising revenues broadcasters were expecting. The collapse of the sports market was seen as potentially jeopardizing the agreement with GCC – it was feared that the Murdoch company would use any excuse to withdraw from the contract since it was overvalued.<sup>29</sup> It was imperative, therefore, that the 2003 cup be a financial success and this shaped the ICC's stance on both political and financial disputes that arose before the competition began.

At the commercial level, the ICC ran into trouble with the Indian players who were unwilling to sign the standard contract. India's participation in the World Cup, with its best possible team, was crucial because the Indian market accounted for more than fifty percent of the global market revenue. The Indian players had commercial endorsements with corporations that were not the official sponsors of the 2003 World Cup and this led to the fear that 'ambush marketing' might take place. Ambush marketing, as defined by the sponsorship code of the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa is, 'the attempt by an organization, product or brand to create the impression of being an official sponsor of an event or activity by affiliating itself with that event or activity without having paid the sponsorship rights – fee or being a party to the sponsorship contract.'<sup>30</sup>

The demands of global advertising ran counter to the sponsorship arrangements Indian players already had with other companies and to forgo these contracts would have meant that the players lost a significant portion of their incomes (because Indian players make more from commercial endorsements rather than match fees). Not surprisingly, the Indian players, backed by the BCCI, the Indian government, and even the Delhi High Court, sought to change the terms of the ICC contract to their advantage.<sup>31</sup>

The ICC contract specified that for thirty days prior to the tournament, during the competition, and for 30 days after it ended, the players were not supposed to advertise the products of non-official sponsors.<sup>32</sup> Further, for a period of six months after the tournament, the official sponsors could use the images of the players in their advertising campaigns. The compromise reached was that the ban on non-official sponsors would be in force during

the tournament and the players' images could be used for a period of three months after the tournament ended.<sup>33</sup> India also agreed to put the \$9 million it received in tournament fees on hold until any potential disputes between the ICC and GCC were resolved.

While the Indian case is to be decided in an international court of sports arbitration, it brings up the fact that the power has shifted within cricket because the nonwestern nations are the ones who now make the game commercially viable. For the ICC to dictate terms and conditions, as it did in the past, will be exceedingly difficult as the financial interests of countries like India and Pakistan will force them to disobey the rulings of the ICC. In 2002, when the BCCI clashed with the ICC over players contracts for the Champions Trophy in Sri Lanka, there was speculation that Jagmohan Dalmiya wanted to use the dispute as an excuse to form a rival international governing body for cricket. The rival organization would be based in India and would ensure that the South Asian countries controlled the game.<sup>34</sup> During the 2002 Champions Trophy, the ICC backed down on the issue of ambush marketing.<sup>35</sup> This may have led the BCCI to believe that a similar accommodation would take place over the 2003 World Cup players' contracts. Disciplinary action against such states, therefore, which was easy to enforce in the past, will be difficult to enforce in the future because it would mean financial trouble for the ICC's entire membership.

At the political level, the unstable domestic situation in Zimbabwe led to calls in the United Kingdom to stop the English team from playing in that country. England, Australia, and New Zealand initially cited security reasons for not playing in Zimbabwe.<sup>36</sup> Subsequently, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and members of his cabinet asked cricketers to reflect on the human rights abuses in Zimbabwe and the fact that touring that country would help legitimize the Mugabe regime.<sup>37</sup> Citing human rights violations, the British government called on the English team to boycott the Zimbabwe match. The nonwestern countries, on the other hand, supported Zimbabwe's right to hold World Cup games and South Africa refused to reschedule cancelled Zimbabwe games at locations in South Africa. The ICC, which needed all the games to be marquee events, in order to make the cup a commercial success, also stood solidly behind Zimbabwe and demanded that England play its game in Harare. Cricket's international body adopted a similar position on the reluctance of New Zealand, for security reasons, to play in Kenya. Both England and New Zealand subsequently had a portion of their tournament fees deducted because they forfeited these games.



### **World Cup 2007**

The commodification of the game may well reach new levels with the decision to hold the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean. With it, the clash between globalization and nationalism will most likely sway in favor of market forces. On the one hand, the West Indies is one of the traditional powers of international cricket and the game itself has played an important role in the constructing national identities of the various island states of the Caribbean. Hosting a successful world cup in traditional venues like Barbados's Kensington Oval, therefore, would work to foster those very nationalistic tendencies that are viewed as being on the decline in the Caribbean.

On the other hand, the Caribbean could be victim of the forces of globalization because of its proximity to the United States. This proximity provides a media market of affluent expatriates (both South Asians and West Indians), an access to advanced broadcast technology, and the existence of a superior entertainment and hospitality infrastructure – stadiums, hotels, and entertainment complexes. The organizers of World Cup 2007 have already bowed to these pressures. The United States, a country with limited cricketing talent, has automatically qualified for the cup and there are ongoing discussions to hold several matches in the United States – with Florida and particularly the city of Orlando seen as viable venues.<sup>38</sup>

The move to make the United States an additional venue is already being viewed with concern among the Caribbean countries. They not only see this as taking away from the prestige of hosting the world cup but there is also the implicit worry that financial constraints may not permit the various West Indian islands from fully participating in the tournament. Jamaica and Barbados, for example, are both reported to have substandard stadiums that, therefore, are not considered adequate to host a game.<sup>39</sup> Further, the need for extra hotel rooms may also complicate the chances of these states to have a successful tournament. And as the date for the tournament nears, there may be pressures to move more matches to more lucrative venues. The United States would be the obvious winner in such a situation. An India-Pakistan game would be extremely profitable since the South Asian diaspora would pay for expensive tickets and would provide prizes and lucrative endorsements to the Indian and Pakistani players.

The 2003 and 2007 World Cups show which way the future of the game is headed. It is the non-Western countries that will dictate the number of test matches that are played as opposed to the number of one-day internationals. They will determine the number of countries to get membership to the ICC and they will increasingly decide on the venues for international

competitions. At the same time, market forces will weed out the commercially inefficient countries and lower their bargaining power within the ICC (this will likely affect both Western as well as weaker non-Western cricket markets like the West Indies).

This goes against the general trend in international sports and competitions where the chances of nonwestern nations hosting a major sporting event are slim, both due to financial considerations and the politics of the respective governing bodies. In contrast, the possibility of a nonwestern state hosting the Olympics or the football World Cup gets increasingly remote because of the vast disparities in the finances of the various regional organizations. South Africa may be the exception and gets to host the 2010 football World Cup but that would be because of the political significance attached to having an African nation host the tournament (it would also fulfill FIFA president Sepp Blatter's promise that an African nation would host the cup during his tenure).

### **Different Perspective on Globalization?**

One element of globalization has been the flow of wealth, technology and ideas from the core to the periphery. While the impact has been to create certain universal structures, such as cultural and economic trends, these structures tend to favor the west because that is where they originate and it is in the western nations that the wealth, infrastructure, and technology have resided that make globalization possible in the first place.

In the case of international cricket we have witnessed a different trend, where the nonwestern nations have established greater control over the game and look like determining the future course that the game will take. They are likely to decide its format, its content, its venues, and increasingly work to reshaping the rules of the international cricket organization the ICC to favor them. Globalization theorists have not discounted the role of the periphery in the globalization process and do see such nations as playing a role in the establishment of the global culture (the term globalization is used broadly here to encompass the economic, political, cultural, and entertainment structures that have emerged in the era of transnationalism).

Thus one can point to the breakthroughs made by nonwestern fashion designers like Vera Wang, the impact of non-Western music be it salsa (Ricky Martin and 'Living la Vida Loca') or the growth of Reggae, and the growing group of nonwestern film makers like John Woo or Shekhar Kapur who have managed to break into Hollywood. Globalization would seem to be truly working. There are limits, however, to how much emphasis one can put on these trends. Salsa may come from the Latin world but it has been appropriated by the west and its global popularity comes from the

successful marketing skills and financial and technological resources of western music companies. Reggae, similarly, was appropriated by the west which was its principal market. It now, however, has a small niche in the broader market of world music. In that sense it has followed other fads from the non-Western world that become popular for a few years and then subside. The advent of nonwestern filmmakers, similarly, has not changed the power structure in Hollywood or led to a denting of Hollywood's hold over the international market for movies.

International cricket is different because the organization, economics, and character of the game is now dominated, and being changed, by the nonwestern world. In that sense the game is somewhat unique to the globalization process because it reflects changes in the power structure of international organization that typically do not occur in the sphere of transnationally organized activity.

One should not, however, read too much into the shift in the power structure in cricket as a forerunner to changes in the organization and reward structure of other international sports. Cricket is different from other sports due to two crucial reasons. One is that it has a diminishing status as a sport in the country of its origin – England. It is football and Manchester United that capture the imagination of the British public, not the rather ineffectual efforts of the English test team. It is the premiership league that is the most watched sport in England while the county cricket league continues to face declining attendance. In Australia, while crowd support for the game remains high, and the game flourishes financially, the ability of the Australian board to determine rule making is limited by the fact that the nonwestern countries now have more votes and certainly provide more lucrative gates than the traditional powers of cricket.

The second major difference lies in the fact that cricket is one of the few international sports where the United States is not a serious participant – international rugby being another. Where the United States has decided to participate internationally, its status as the remaining superpower and, more importantly, as a lucrative market that can entice an international sporting organization with, automatically puts it in a favorable bargaining position. The decision to grant the United States the 1994 World Cup, even though its football credentials at that point of time were slim, it did not even have a domestic league, is a case in point.<sup>40</sup> In that sense one could argue that the international sporting system resembles the international balance of power. Within a unipolar power structure, the United States prevails be it in terms of the exercise of military power or the ability to stage and influence sporting competition. Cricket is a somewhat unusual sport because the world's leading power does not participate in it and, therefore, sees no need to interfere in its international decision-making structure.

Despite this fact, the shift in the power structure of cricket would seem to add to the development of the literature on globalization because it would suggest that some degree of decisionmaking is shifting from the core to the periphery, precisely because the forces of globalization, like the migration of labour and the spread of technology, are creating a global entertainment market.

## NOTES

1. J. Maguire and R. Pearton, 'The Impact of Elite Labor Migration on the Identification, Selection, and Development of European Soccer Players', *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 18 (2000), 760.
2. As Maguire and Pearton show Ajax (Netherlands) and Arsenal (England) now have partnerships with teams in South Africa while the Italian league has for long poached the talent in Argentina and Brazil. *Ibid.*, p. 762.
3. See Alex Bellos, *Futebol: The Brazilian Way of Life* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002), pp. 5–25.
4. Joseph Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, and Civilizations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).
5. Hilary McD. Beckles, *The Development of West Indian Cricket: Vol. 2 The Age of Globalization* (Kingston, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies Press, 1998), pp. 21–2.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 83/4.
8. Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket* (New Delhi: Penguin India, 1986), pp.1–7.
9. Mike Cronin and Richard Holt, 'The imperial game in crisis: English cricket and decolonization' in Stuart Ward (ed.), *British culture and the end of empire*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 121.
10. Mihir Bose, *The History of Indian Cricket*, (London: Andre Deutsch, 2002), p. 289.
11. Mike Marqusee, *Anyone but England: Cricket, Race, and Class*, (London: Two Heads Publishing, 1998), pp. 10–12.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 218–19. It was only in 1989 that ICC and the British TCCB reluctantly agreed to a life ban on players who went to South Africa.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 226–8.
14. Thrasy Petropoulos, 'Packer: A born gambler,' BBC Sport Online, 9 May 2002, available at, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/cricket/1967964.stm>.
15. Thrasy Petropoulos, 'Court backed Packer's Men,' BBC Sport Online, 10 May 2002, available at, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/cricket/1968299.stm>.
16. Although this did little to reduce the racist attacks by soccer fans in Europe or to make black players more acceptable in dressing rooms. See Simon Kuper, *Football Against the Enemy* (London: Phoenix Press, 1995).
17. Tom Moody, 'Potential goldmine to be tapped,' *The Observer*, 8 December 2002.
18. Mike Marqusee, 'Cricket's fading light', *Guardian*, 2 July 2003.
19. For a discussion of the origins of league cricket in Bombay/Mumbai and its implications for Indian nationalism and colonial relations see, Ramachandra Guha, 'Cricket and Politics in Colonial India', *Past and Present* Nov 1998 pp. 155–72.
20. Shekhar Gupta, 'This just isn't cricket', *The Indian Express*, 7 September 2002.
21. Mike Marqusee, 'For the love of the game', *New Statesman and Society*, 15 March 1996, p. 20.
22. Joel Kotkin, *Tribes: How Race, Religion, and Identity Determine Success in the New Global Economy* (New York: Random House, 1994), pp. 1–6.

23. For details see the Condon Report available at [[http://www.uk.cricket.org/link\\_to\\_database/NATIONAL/ICC/MEDIA\\_RELEASES/2001/CONDON\\_REPORT/CONDON\\_REPORT.html](http://www.uk.cricket.org/link_to_database/NATIONAL/ICC/MEDIA_RELEASES/2001/CONDON_REPORT/CONDON_REPORT.html)].
24. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, the Australians were reluctant to actually tour South Asia and told the BCCI's representative that their commitments to other test playing nations were more important. See Chris Harte, *A History of Australian Cricket* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1993), pp. 482, 532, and 549.
25. Pakistan had reportedly lost 12 million pounds as a result of cancelled tours see, 'Moroccan Cup: Millionaire's plan to save Pakistan,' *Guardian*, 19 Aug 2002.
26. 'First International Cricket Tournament in Stadium Made for Television', *Africa News Service*, 23 August 2002.
27. Vijay Lokapally, 'A sorry state of play,' and Praveen Swami, 'Questionable links,' *Frontline*, Vol. 17, No. 9, 29 April-12 May 2000.
28. Scyld Berry, 'Mani's top priority is damages claim,' *Daily Telegraph*, 15 June 2003.
29. Paul Kelso, 'Money worries that haunt World Cup,' *Guardian*, 28 Jan 2003.
30. Cited in Gowree Gokhale and Vikram Shroff, 'Gentlemen don't prefer bonds,' *Economic Times*, 25 Jan 2003.
31. David Jones, 'ICC on offensive in contracts row,' *Daily Telegraph*, 29 Dec 2002 and P. Subramanyam, 'ICC permits India play in World Cup,' *The Hindu*, 25 Jan 2003.
32. Julia Day, 'Cricket faces sponsorship row,' *Guardian*, 19 February 2003.
33. 'Dalmyia resigns from ICC committee,' *The News*, 31 Dec 2002.
34. Henry Blofeld, 'Cricket: Dalmyia determined to pull down house of cricket,' *The Independent*, 9 Sept 2002.
35. 'The cricket contracts row,' *The Hindu*, 30 Jan 2003.
36. Mihir Bose, 'England face backlash over World Cup,' *Daily Telegraph*, 12 Sept 2002.
37. Hasan Suroor, 'A moral issue or plain politics?' *The Hindu*, 4 Jan 2003.
38. David Hopps, 'US play in next World Cup,' *Guardian*, 11 March 2003 and Denis Campbell, 'Mickey Mouse plan for World Cup,' *The Observer*, 9 March 2003.
39. Charles Randall, 'World Cup blow for West Indies,' *Daily Telegraph*, 10 June 2003.
40. Andrei S. Markovits and Steven Hellerman, *Offside: Soccer and American Exceptionalism*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 201-9.