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'Tours of Imperialism': Cricket and Cultural Transfer in South Africa, 1880–1910

Dean Allen

Department of Sport & Physical Activity, Bournemouth University, Bournemouth, UK

ABSTRACT

Few can deny the significance of sport in today's South Africa. The sporting structures upon which this is based were first introduced to the country by the British in the late nineteenth century. In line with policies of cultural imperialism, sports such as cricket were promoted at this time as part of a wider political agenda that encouraged the adoption of an 'English' way of life in the region. Sports tours, most notably cricket, were a fundamental part of this cultural transfer between the 'Mother Country' and her colonies in Southern Africa. To underpin the study of transnational linkages and transfer in African sports, this paper will offer an historical overview of how 'British-styled' sport arrived in South Africa and how the early cricket tours between England and South Africa were constructed to promote distinct political and cultural connections. This paper will explore the early development of cricket in South Africa and investigate its symbiotic link to British imperialism and colonialism via the first tours and sporting exchanges that took place. The origins of the game in South Africa will be examined as well as its development up to 1910 (the date of Union in South Africa) as the site of a constructed transnational 'brotherhood' between Britain and its most coveted African colonies.

KEYWORDS

Cricket; South Africa; British empire; colonialism; cultural transfer

Introduction

Sport is embedded in South Africa's history and traditions and within its social organizations that have been shaped by continuing waves of immigration and the progressive conquest of land. Whilst Africans migrated south into present day South Africa at least two thousand years ago and the Dutch began to settle around Cape Town from 1652, it was the arrival of the British that heralded the introduction of 'modern sport' into the region. With their ethos of fair play, self-discipline and collective identity, the sports that emerged in Victorian Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century were brought to South Africa by the British immigrants who annexed and settled the country between 1800 and 1902. Sport and British cultural values, especially those of the public schools, were thereafter inseparably linked and produced a colonial sporting system that is still in existence today.

As this paper will demonstrate, sports such as cricket became tools for international and development politics in South Africa, being used by the British to exert control and influence

CONTACT Dean Allen  dean@deanallen.co.za

in the region. Via processes of cultural transfer, Britain's African colonies became the focus of concerted efforts to assimilate them as part of the wider Empire. Certainly the early development of cricket in Southern Africa was about more than mere 'sport'. Alluding to a transnational context, within the preface to his study of *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, J.A. Mangan expressed the wish that he:

Would not like [the] study of cultural diffusion to be naively and erroneously catalogued under 'Games'. It is concerned with much more: with ethnocentricity, hegemony and patronage, with ideals and idealism, with educational values and aspirations, with cultural assimilation and adaptation and, most fascinating of all, with the dissemination throughout the Empire of a hugely influential moralistic ideology.¹

This ideology would prove to be all encompassing and, arguably, nowhere more than in South Africa was such processes played out through sport. The 'cultural diffusion' of which Mangan talks relates to the ideology of British Imperialism that arrived in South Africa during the nineteenth century at the height of the Empire and its pervasive influence.

Due largely to the discovery of great mineral wealth in the region – diamonds and then gold – South Africa became the main focus of an ever-growing empire in the late 1800s. The Victorian age was a period of expansion for the British as they set out to exert control throughout large areas of the globe. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the British Empire contained around 460 million people and was spread over an area of more than 12 million square miles.² Occupying nearly one quarter of the world's area and including almost one quarter of its total population,³ Britain's Empire was 'by far the most enormous imperial system that the world had known.'⁴ According to Sandiford, 'the Victorians were inordinately proud of this empire which they regarded as tangible proof of their racial and moral superiority.'⁵ As much to do with commercial and industrial growth as with race or morality, competition from newly industrialized European nations saw Britain accelerate its expansionist policy in the last decades of the nineteenth century.⁶ Coinciding with cricket's development within South Africa and the transfer of a British-styled sporting ideology, almost five million square miles of additional territory and about 88 million new subjects were 'acquired' worldwide by imperialist Britain between 1870 and 1900.⁷

Rapid population growth during the period 1750–1900 left room for mass emigration as British subjects were encouraged to sail for the colonies in order to improve their prospects. With the establishment of the diamond and gold fields, South Africa took on a new political and cultural importance within the structure of the wider Empire. By 1901, there were approximately 100 million people of 'British stock' occupying territories beyond the United Kingdom and increasingly people looked towards the African continent as a site of opportunity and advancement.⁸ As Britons moved to southern Africa so did cricket.⁹

As this paper demonstrates, cricket in South Africa developed at a time of British imperial expansion within the territories and it was not long before it became aligned to deliberate policies of cultural transfer and developmental politics throughout the country. As part of the cultural imperialism and transnational linkages designed to cement ties between Britain and her dependants, cricket's development in South Africa reflected the progression of British influence throughout the region. Soon South Africa was allowed entry to cricket's exclusive imperial 'club of empire'. As Williams explains:

Test cricket was played only between England and colonies or former colonies. As cricket was believed to express a distinctively English morality and as apologists for the Empire stressed the moral obligation to extend the benefits of British rule, the nature of cricket as an imperial game meant that cricket and imperialism became mutually supporting ideologies.¹⁰

This paper will explore how cricket in South Africa was used as part of a series of strategies to exchange ideas and culture across a transnational arena. The process of cultural transfer and assimilation were implemented to support the aims of the authorities in fostering social, economic and political ties between Britain and the colonies. To reflect this, the early development of cricket in South Africa will be examined here as the site of a purposeful movement to transfer a 'very British' cultural and sporting ideology to the African continent.

The Rise of Cricket

Coinciding with British control of South Africa, the mid- to late-1800s exhibited a tremendous growth in cricket's significance throughout the globe. Within Britain and Her African colonies, the game came to symbolize the very essence of English, Victorian society and the promotion of white, Anglo-Saxon values. Alongside the flow of capital, investment, and money in to Africa, sports such as cricket were seen as a valuable way of transferring a sense of British civility to the 'dark continent'. 'It is difficult to underestimate the importance of cricket in Victorian life' explains Keith Sandiford. 'It was a ritual as well as recreation, a spiritual as well as a sporting experience. Its values were used freely by politicians, philosophers, preachers and poets.'¹¹ It became the 'imperial game' and, above all else, it was a British creation that was to be purposively spread and developed throughout Africa and the wider Empire.

The introduction of British-styled sport and culture to South Africa was not unique. The cricket phenomenon that infiltrated sport-playing societies across the world, from Australia to the West Indies, had its origins in nineteenth century England. Here it had been transformed from a simple, pastoral game into a powerful and symbolic force representing all that was deemed by the ruling classes to be worthy in the Anglo-Saxon character. 'In a fiercely nationalistic era Englishmen regarded cricket, an exclusively English creation unsullied by outside influence, as proof of their cultural supremacy.'¹² It was a time of complacency, security, and opulent pride. Victoria had expanded her empire and cricket came to symbolize the civilizing mission of the Englishman abroad. For Britons, the game epitomized the spread of British influence throughout places like Africa whilst representing a tangible link with 'home.'¹³ Reflecting on cricket's place in the social history of England, J.A. Mangan has suggested how the game 'held up a mirror to society; it reflected its essential inequalities, snobberies and its essential harmony: but it did more, it successfully sustained all three.'¹⁴ South Africa, like other colonial settings, would successfully adopt as well as replicate this model.

The late nineteenth/early twentieth century was considered the 'golden-age' of cricket and what better means to spread political and cultural influence within a transnational arena. Patrick Morrah encapsulates perfectly the features of this period:

Such ... was the cricket of the last years of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth – gay, adventurous, elegant, dynamic. The immediate, tangible influences were the improvement of wickets, the new standard set by W.G., the emergence of the schooltrained amateur. But the fundamental causes of the blossoming of golden cricket lay deeper – in the character of the age itself. The Victorian era was one of solidarity, the building up of British prosperity and security after the desperate struggle of the Napoleonic wars. As the age progressed its paramount characteristic became self-confidence. Britain was the most prosperous nation in the world; wider still and wider were the bounds of empire set; the upper classes were entrenched in power, and nobody questioned their right to rule.¹⁵

Based on the rigid class system of Victorian society, cricket's social formation in South Africa during this period reflected the hierarchies that existed within British and its other colonial societies. Alongside an examination of cricket and the 'colonial ideal' in the context of South Africa, this paper also explores the role of the early tours in cementing firm linkages and transfers between the 'Mother Country' and her prized South African colonies.

Southern Africa and 'Colonial Ideal'

The late Victorians revered cricket and its cultural influence. In 1877, Charles Box wrote in his book, the *English Game of Cricket*, how 'all ranks and conditions of society, either theoretically or practically, participate to some extent in the game.'¹⁶ Despite cricket's intrinsic hierarchy, it was commonly portrayed as a game personifying equality both at 'home' and abroad. However, although it was played, as Box suggests, within all levels of society, the upper classes and those in control chose not to dwell upon the game's essentially exclusive nature. Throughout South Africa, cricket was introduced as a privileged game designed to encourage a certain code of behaviour and practice. However, as Williams explains, back in Britain 'cricket was portrayed as a mirror of social cohesion, reflecting the assumption of many from the privileged classes that social relations in England were characterized by harmony and cooperation.'¹⁷

Such cordiality was a facade. In reality, 'few other cultural institutions made so clear the inequalities of economic status and social background or demonstrated to individuals their place in the social hierarchy.'¹⁸ Cricket egalitarianism was thus an illusion both in Victoria's Britain and throughout places like South Africa because cricket enforced barriers of class, race and gender and did little to remove them.¹⁹ This was all part of the transnational transfer of Britain's elitist sporting ideology. The reality, in fact, lay in sustaining exclusivity because the Victorian elite, in Britain and the colonies, remained determined to protect both their status and their privileges. A conscious investment, both financially as well as morally, was thus launched by the bourgeoisie despite public suggestions that sport and privilege was 'available to all'. As Sandiford points out:

the political economy of Victorian cricket underlines [the] class segmentation and the social directives which drove it. Millions of pounds were spent on cricket during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century when the game underwent explosive growth at village, league and country levels.²⁰

Cricket had assumed an importance within British and South African society as the new world of amateur sport became exclusive and emphasized the level of class (as well as race) discrimination throughout the Empire. 'For most of the social elite' explains Tranter, 'sport was an opportunity for social differentiation not conciliation, and was used to restrict rather than expand contact with social inferiors.'²¹

This was particularly useful throughout Africa where hierarchies of privilege (usually based upon skin colour as well as social standing) had to be established by the British. The game will 'never be understood by the *profanum vulgus*, nor by the merchant-minded, nor by the unphysically intellectual', the famous amateur cricketer C.B. Fry had proclaimed after touring South Africa with the England team in 1895.²² Fry was not alone in understanding the political and cultural significance of the game.

With the Victorians obsessed with the concept of 'character', cricket became particularly useful in the area of moral training, both in Britain and throughout South Africa. Tremendous

significance was attached to the fact that cricket involved a strict adherence to explicit rules and implicit conventions. For the British, cricket was about self-discipline. It was a game that meant accepting the umpire's verdict without question and thus developing a healthy stoicism. It meant contributing to a larger cause, that of team and country, without focusing too narrowly on the needs of oneself. The game, after all, was supposed to build character and produce other benefits that were highly valued throughout the Empire. Despite its essential exclusivity, cricket and its ethos were encouraged throughout all levels of South African society and even if access to the game was not always available, its lessons in morality were apparent to all.²³

At the time of the first official English cricket tour to South Africa in 1888, the game had assumed an importance beyond that afforded the other major sports. 'The Victorians revered cricket as an institution because they believed that, like the Church and the Crown, it had a key role to play in English life. Their cultural and political leaders looked upon it as having specific and vital functions to perform.'²⁴ These functions included the spread of British culture and values abroad as well as the establishment of a 'privileged set' within the colonies themselves. Whilst examining the South African context, Merrett and Nauright explain how 'the ability to appropriate and dispense English culture as the measure of social acceptability gave English-speaking whites and those they chose to include a real sense of cultural and moral power and superiority.'²⁵

Colonial Connections

Cricket's development on the African continent began with the arrival of the British military between 1795 and 1802. Colonialism delivered British culture to Southern Africa and it was not long before cricket was being played. British soldiers stationed in the Cape were reportedly playing cricket in 1806, whilst two years later the first known reference to an 'official' cricket match being played in South Africa appeared in the *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser*.²⁶ However, it was later in the century that the game started to spread elsewhere with the arrival of significant numbers of British settlers to South Africa. Port Elizabeth was home to the first organized cricket club in 1843, and this was followed a year later by a club at Wynberg in the Cape. To the north, the first 'rush' on the diamond fields brought cricket to the Kimberley region, with the Orange Free State forming its first cricket club in Bloemfontein in 1855. The first Transvaal club opened in 1863.²⁷

With these clubs arrived distinct connections and comparisons with the British model back 'home'. Throughout South Africa, cricket's imperialists viewed the spread of the game as an indicator of a colony's cultural and social development. English cricketers were seen as purveyors of the 'enlightening' process in far flung corners of empire and South Africa was no different. England captain Pelham Warner for one associated southern Africa's evolution with the spread of cricket throughout the continent. After returning from the 1899 tour to South Africa he felt compelled to report: 'Step by step we have forced our way up north, and the cricket pavilions that have sprung up along our track may almost be called the milestones on the road of the nation's progress.'²⁸

Britain's control of South Africa, however, was not straightforward and other cultural institutions were called upon to play their part. The military, the schools and the church all became major tools in securing the foundations of hegemonic control in the colonies and

were vital if British imperial influence was to be sustained throughout parts of Africa. The British rulers were aware, according to Green:

that if insurrection were to rear its ugly head at two or three outposts simultaneously, then their resources, already stretched to the limit, might snap altogether ... The answer, they felt, lay in a combination of psychological warfare, discipline and decorum, good manners and plenty of churches, propaganda by polite pretext.²⁹

In South Africa, cricket played its part in this process – with the number of international cricket tours around the time of the South African War (1899–1902) an indication.³⁰ The relationship between cricket and the expanding empire were already well established by the time of the second, third, and fourth English tours to South Africa throughout the 1890s, prompting the conservative *Blackwood's Magazine* to imperiously exclaim how ‘the Englishman carries his cricket bat with him as naturally as his gun-case and his India-rubber bath.’³¹ It was, of course, a two-way process as the first South African team (comprising colonial players) left to tour Britain in 1894.

As this paper demonstrates, cricket’s development in southern Africa followed closely the path of British imperial expansion. A difficult country to administer, the early tourists and pioneer cricket officials in South Africa were eventually successful in galvanizing the different centres into a sense of shared identity through the sport. Within its ‘Articles of Constitution’ the governing body of South African cricket (the South African Cricket Association – SACA) confirmed in 1898 how:

The area of the Association shall be divided into districts defined by the Government surveys, as the Association in general meeting may from time to time decide, and that the following be recognised as districts for Unions:- Western Province, Eastern Province, Border, Natal, (including Zululand), Transvaal (including Swazieland). Orange Free State (including Basutoland), Griqualand West, Bechuanaland (including Rhodesia).³²

As politicians divided South Africa into manageable districts, cricket reinforced this British administration through its competition and organization. As it had done in places like India and the Caribbean, cricket would perform the important role in South Africa of imparting a sense of imperial and colonial kinship across an otherwise fragmented and disparate nation. It was all part of the ‘cultural transfer effect’ that had proved so effective elsewhere.

Cricket’s Cultural Transfer

The politics and demographics of South Africa were complex in the period leading up to the Anglo-Boer War and it would be inaccurate to suggest that cricket was played only in the British colonies during this time. The power of the game to cement linkages within the South African arena is evidenced by its cultural transfer effect on the non-British populations. In the Orange Free State cricket had been played since the 1850s, despite the region being largely dominated by Afrikaners. A small but significant colonial community maintained cricket’s profile right up until the outbreak of the war in 1899. The first known mention of the game in the Free State can be traced back to a notice that appeared in *The Friend* in January 1855 declaring that ‘a meeting of the Bloemfontein Cricket Club will be held at the Rifle Club Room on Monday, 5th inst., for the purpose of framing rules and regulations for the same.’³³ It may have been a distinctly ‘British pursuit’ but cricket was also taking hold on the borders and margins of the African empire.

This was sport at the frontier and cricket was at the forefront of efforts to assimilate the 'local' population. Once described by Sir George Grey as 'The Remote Wilderness', the population of Bloemfontein was barely 100 in 1855, yet cricket's introduction in to this remote outpost signifies its centrality within the British settler's psyche as well as its effectiveness in creating linkages and connections across a transnational context. As Floyd suggests, the fact that cricket was introduced at all 'proved how deeply ingrained the sporting element was in the lives of those pioneers' and how 'during the intervals of peace when they were left unmolested by the Basuto these gentlemen found time to have a friendly game'.³⁴ As elsewhere, this was a picture of the noble, cricket-playing Englishman defying forces of darkness in a far-off land he was 'born to colonise'.

Further north another Afrikaans heartland would be transformed by the mining revolution as the Transvaal became the focus of Britain's imperial intentions. With the goldfields opening late in 1886, Johannesburg's growth was rapid and soon cricket was established as the premier sport as players migrated in to the region. With them came notions of 'Englishness' and how to 'play the game'. The *Transvaal Critic* regularly carried articles and comments on cricket and its ethos within its pages during the period from 1893 to 1898.³⁵ Within the country districts, cricket's powers of cultural transfer were evident as Krugersdorp, 'a Dutch stronghold', was developing as a leading centre for the sport whilst it also flourished at Kerksdorp, Potchefstroom, Pretoria and Barberton during the pre-war period.³⁶

With the goldfields thriving, many of Johannesburg's cricket patrons had newly acquired wealth to lavish on the game. The arrival of Major Warton's England team in 1888 and the 'prize money' awarded, made a mockery of the amateur status of many of the players. Allsop describes how, for example, the Hon. C.J. Coventry was awarded around £70 for the highest 'amateur' score for Johannesburg against a Transvaal XV. Of the professionals, Bobby Abel was given nearly £200 for his 78 not out against a Johannesburg XXII.³⁷ As part of the transfer process, 'cricket capitalism' and the 'shamateurism' so insidious in the English game had also reached South Africa it seems.

Racial discrimination was also part of the cultural transfer process as during this era cricket reinforced a white, colonial exclusivity throughout the wider realms of southern Africa. The 1886–7 inter-colonial tournament included a white team from British Bechuanaland (now Botswana) whilst Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) became a member of the South African Cricket Association, having been admitted to the Currie Cup competition in the 1904–5 season.³⁸ The inclusion of these white colonial teams from outside South Africa took precedence over non-white teams from within the country, leading Nauright to argue that 'racial solidarity [became] more crucial ... than national-based solidarities'.³⁹ Certainly cricket's colonial community preserved a privileged position within South African society. Surrounded by a large local population linguistically constructed as 'uncivilized', the ability to appropriate English culture and pastimes provided this group with a certain sense of moral power and superiority.⁴⁰

Despite the supposed exclusivity, the cultural transfer effect meant that cricket's moral lessons and codes of behaviour were inevitably transferred to the local population. Cricket, as Sandiford claims, may have been a vital element in Anglo-Saxon culture, but the game also influenced the other sections of South African society.⁴¹ In 1900 that great cricketing tourist Pelham Warner exclaimed how 'the natives of whatever race show no anxiety to learn the game, nor do the Dutch, save only those who, from their education, or from their

contact with our residents, have grown to be practically Englishmen themselves.⁴² Despite such rhetoric, there is ample evidence to suggest that cricket was being widely played by the non-English population in the years before the South African War.

A Game for Africa

By the time cricket had become established in the nineteenth century, distinct cultural groups had emerged within South Africa. Apart from the two white groups, there existed those of mixed race or 'coloureds' predominantly found in the Cape; migrant workers brought to Natal from the Indian subcontinent as well as the indigenous African peoples present throughout the country. Whilst the history of black cricket in South Africa is still being written, existing research suggests that its origins date back to shortly after the inauguration of the white game in the country.⁴³ In the Western Cape, the standard of cricket was such that a Malay team was awarded a game against W.W. Read's English touring side of 1891, whilst in the Eastern Cape cricket was particularly well developed among the African population after the game had been introduced by missionaries and the first British garrisons.⁴⁴ The first reports of Africans playing cricket in Queenstown were as early as 1862, while in Port Elizabeth the first African cricket club was founded in 1869.⁴⁵

Although Africans were now playing the game in large numbers, their involvement in first-class competition was severely restricted. International tours were reserved for the gentleman tourist whose breeding and skin colour were as fundamental as his cricketing ability. International tours were organized to preserve a white imperial solidarity over the 'dark masses' throughout South Africa. Revealingly, after meeting Cecil Rhodes at Oxford University in March 1895, Pelham Warner recounts a conversation about cricket and the debate surrounding the talented coloured player Krom Hendricks.⁴⁶ It shows the attitude and influence of Rhodes in the 'selection process' of the early South African teams:

I was fortunate enough to sit next to Rhodes, and the conversation turned on the first visit, during the previous summer [1894], of a South African team to England. Rhodes had had a good deal to do with the financing of this side, and he remarked, 'They wanted me to send a black fellow called Hendricks to England.' I said I had heard he was a good bowler, and he replied, 'Yes, but I would not have it. They would have expected him to throw boomerangs during the luncheon interval.'⁴⁷

Whilst the power of the game for cultural transfer was undeniable, Africans were left to fend for themselves and to administer and develop their own cricket in the face of increased colonial arrogance and opposition. 'That they did so at all', suggests Sandiford, 'speaks volumes for the awesome power of cultural imperialism which, historically, has proved as capable of inspiring mimicry as enforcing obedience'.⁴⁸ Inevitably black participation in cricket became marginalized as opportunities of joining in non-racial sports became near impossible. Cultural imperialism had meant that colonial South Africa had created its own hierarchical structure and the native population were being disenfranchized within their own land.

Both white groups in South Africa maintained a distance from native Africans. Whilst the English had their culture, their history, and their heritage to distinguish themselves at the top of South Africa's racial hierarchy, for the Afrikaner 'a Calvinist doctrine of predestination' provided them with their ideological justification for racial superiority.⁴⁹ Cricket, however, was not open to all. As Merrett and Nauright explain, 'cricket was the imperial game par

excellence, the epitome of British culture, morality, and manners (and racism), and this dimension served to alienate Afrikaners ... In particular after the South African War it found little favour in the Afrikaner community and its imperial characteristics limited its reconciliatory potential.⁵⁰

This had not always been the case. Before cricket had been 'Anglicized' by imperialist politics and the Boer War, the sport's transnational influence had meant that Afrikaners were also playing the game in significant numbers. Krugersdorp was regarded as a leading cricket centre for the 'Dutch' whilst the game was also played at Pretoria, Barberton, and Potchefstroom. In fact the early tours were not just a pursuit for the English as Afrikaners Arthur Ochse and Nicolaas Hendrik Theunissen appeared for South Africa in the first Test of 1888, as did Jacobus Francois du Toit and Charles Gustav Fichardt in the 1891–2 series (Fichardt played again in 1895–6). In the Republican heartland of Johannesburg, A.W. Wells has shown that the town's first cricket team in 1886 was captained by and featured an equal number of Dutch speakers,⁵¹ while among the names listed by W.H. Mars as the 'pioneers' of Cape cricket in the 1860s were van Renan, van der Byl, Cloete and de Smidt.⁵² From these surnames and others it is clear that cricket's cultural transfer effect had infiltrated the non-English communities throughout South Africa.

However the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War meant that the game became more strongly associated with English cultural values and was despised by those Afrikaners who chose to fight to maintain their own identity and independence against British rule. The decisive event occurred in 1912 when South Africa secured its place within London's newly formed Imperial Cricket Conference. Membership of this body, cricket's regulating institution, was confined to cricket-playing countries that accepted the British monarch as head of state. Not only did this have the general effect of stifling the spread of cricket in places such as Holland, the Nordic countries and America, but it was particularly offensive to the Afrikaners, who as a people still recovering from a bitter conflict with British imperialism, were now most unlikely to adopt a game that had so explicitly chosen to identify itself with that same political ethic.⁵³

British cultural imperialism had indeed marked cricket with an English identity throughout South Africa. Following the war, international cricket between England and South Africa became strongly anglicized and it was not until 1927–8 that Afrikaner Jacobus Petrus Duminy represented South Africa at Test level.⁵⁴ Few Afrikaner schools played cricket or encouraged the game and most senior cricket was organized around English colonial clubs and societies. As the epitome of empire, cricket failed to win favour with those who found themselves outside of its exclusive clique.

Conclusions

Throughout their development, modern forms of sport in Africa have continued to be influenced by the British model which first introduced them to the continent in the nineteenth century. Processes of colonialism and imperialism have ensured that the connection and linkages between South Africa and Great Britain have remained strong and continue to shape sport in that region. This paper has shown how, historically, the sport of cricket in South Africa was used as a deliberate tool for cultural transfer and as a means to exert political influence.

It was not a simple process. As Bradley explains, ‘the history of cricket is a convoluted affair which is inextricably linked to the social and economic history of Britain and its Empire. Indeed, the game served as a symbol of that Empire’s ideology ... [for] the spread of cricket was bound to the imperial movement as a whole. As the boundaries of Empire pushed forward, so did the cricket frontier.’⁵⁵ Nowhere was this more evident than in South Africa during the late nineteenth century. Cricket became bound up with cultural transfer at this time whilst an imperial agenda thrust politics upon the game in South Africa in much the same way that policies of racial segregation did so later during the years of apartheid.

Late Victorian society witnessed a powerful hegemonic force which saw the responsibility for Britain’s morality and ethics shift downwards from the upper classes. It was during this time that cricket, primarily through the elite public schools, was invested with extra significance by the middle classes as *the* sport of Imperial Britain and the wider Empire. ‘Cricket became the symbol par excellence of imperial solidarity and superiority epitomizing a set of consolidating moral imperatives that both exemplified and explained imperial ambition and achievement. It became a political metaphor as much as an imperial game’⁵⁶ and, as this paper has shown, was used purposively in Africa by the British during this time.

Throughout Southern Africa sports such as cricket could provide a purposeful distraction from the enforced control of the colonies by Britain. By introducing such moral pursuits to the ‘dark continent’, the Empire was seen to improve the lives of those it colonized and as Brantlinger succinctly notes, the game became a relaxing couch for conscience.⁵⁷ In reality, ‘athletic proselytism was a statement of masculine cultural superiority as much as a gesture of general benevolent altruism’⁵⁸ and in South Africa, despite the rhetoric, cricket was promoted as the exclusive domain of the white colonial executive.

Cricket’s governing bodies (the Marylebone Cricket Club at Lord’s and SACA) represented the transnational organisations responsible for shaping the development of the sport during this era. For the imperialists, cricket in South Africa cemented the bond between Britain and its territories and symbolized a conceited view of social ‘progression’: ‘Our cricket has grown with our country’ declared South African cricket benefactor Sir Abe Bailey in 1912.⁵⁹ Later, in 1927, A.C. Webber, president of SACA and chairman of the Board of Control, was keen to pay homage to the imperial ‘pioneers’ of the nineteenth century for having ‘laid the foundation’ for the success of cricket in the country.⁶⁰

Alongside cultural imperialism, British-styled games such as cricket were vital in the whole process of assimilation and mobilization in Africa. These sports would supersede traditional, pre-colonial forms of recreation in South Africa as Britain’s cultural and political influence became the dominant factor in the cultural landscape in the decades surrounding the Anglo-Boer War. As this paper has shown, South Africa had witnessed cricket’s development from its early introduction by the British military and by the end of the nineteenth century the game had become an important social institution, fitting in with the structure and relations of the wider Empire.

As we have seen, this spread of British sport and culture was further galvanized by the tours of the late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries which emphasized the connections and transfer between different parts of the world. For the empire builders, sport, and cricket in particular, fostered emotional loyalties between Britain and her subjects and by the last decades of the nineteenth century, cricket had assumed such a level of importance that it played a central part in establishing Britain’s cultural dominance up to Union in 1910. Whilst control of southern Africa would be one of the final acts of British colonization, the

influence of transnational cultural transfer during this period is proven by the sports that are still played on the pitches and grounds of South Africa to this day.

Notes

1. James Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 17.
2. See Malcolm Tozer, 'Cricket, School and Empire: E.W. Hornung and His Young Guard', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 6, no. 2 (1989), 157, and Keith Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1994), 144.
3. Ramsay Muir, *A Short History of the British Commonwealth* (London: G. Philip, 1962).
4. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, 144.
5. Ibid.
6. See John Kendle, *The British Empire – Commonwealth, 1897–1931* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1972), 2, and Katharine Moore, 'The Pan-Britannic Festival: A Tangible but Forlorn Expression of Imperial Unity', in James Mangan (ed.), *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism. British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700–1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1988), 144–62. Derek Birley has described how 'a land-grab had developed with all the European powers competing. Markets; raw materials; reception areas for immigrants; Christianity; exploration – all played their part in making Africa and Asia skirmishing grounds for rival imperialistic ambitions.' Derek Birley, *The Willow Wand* (London: Aurum Press, 2000), 85.
7. Trevor Lloyd, *The British Empire 1558–1983* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 258.
8. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, 144. This despite the fact that the numbers within Britain itself had increased from around 24 million in 1831 to about 41 million in 1901.
9. 'Where the British flag went, so too went cricket' wrote Brian Stoddart. In other words, cricket's 'geographical spread matched that of British expansionists who were part of the direct and indirect British empire'. Brian Stoddart, 'Other Cultures', in Brian Stoddart and Keith Sandiford (eds), *The Imperial Game* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 135.
10. Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 1.
11. Keith Sandiford, 'England', in Brian Stoddart and Keith Sandiford (eds), *The Imperial Game* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 9.
12. Ibid.
13. See D.C. Allen, 'Logan's Golden Age: Cricket, Politics and Empire, South Africa, 1888–1910' (PhD diss, University of Brighton, 2008).
14. James Mangan, 'Series Editor's Forward', in Jack Williams (ed.), *Cricket and England. A Cultural and Social History of the Inter-War Years* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), xi.
15. Patrick Morrah, *The Golden Age of Cricket* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967), 148.
16. Charles Box, *The English Game of Cricket* (London: The Field Office, 1877), iii.
17. Jack Williams, *Cricket and England. A Cultural and Social History of the Inter-War Years* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 15.
18. Ibid., 114.
19. As David Frith explains of the Golden Age: 'Class distinctions held firm, in cricket as in real life, though it has long been a prime claim for English cricket that it has brought all breeds of men together in a pavilion. This it may have done, creating an additional mystique, but it could never bring about any real fusion of species.' David Frith, *The Golden Age of Cricket 1890–1914* (Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1978), 12.
20. Sandiford, 'England', 24. 41.
21. Nigel Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain, 1750–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41.
22. Cited in Gerald Brodribb (ed.), *The English Game: A Cricket Anthology* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1948), 11.
23. See Allen, 'Logan's Golden Age'.
24. Sandiford, 'England', 29.

25. Christopher Merrett and John Nauright, 'South Africa', in Brian Stoddart and Keith Sandiford (eds), *The Imperial Game* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 57.
26. *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser*, 2 January 1808.
27. Robert Archer and Antoine Bouillon, *The South African Game: Sport and Racism* (London: Zed Press, 1982), 81.
28. Pelham Warner, *Cricket in Many Climes* (London: Heinemann, 1900), 176.
29. Benny Green, *A History of Cricket* (London: Guild, 1988), 197.
30. For a detailed account of South African cricket and the significance of the international tours around this period, see Dean Allen, *Empire, War and Cricket in South Africa: Logan of Matjiesfontein* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2015).
31. Cited in Richard Holt, *Sport and the British* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 6.
32. Cited in Transvaal Cricket Union. *Yearbook 1898–99* (Johannesburg: M.J. Wood, 1898), 5.
33. Quoted in George Floyd, 'The History of Cricket in the Orange Free State', in Maurice Luckin (ed.), *The History of South African Cricket* (Johannesburg: W.E. Hortor & Co., 1915), 55.
34. *Ibid.* Floyd was at the time hon. secretary of the Orange Free State and Basutoland Cricket Union. See Maureen Hart, *Bibliography on South African Cricket 1810–1953* (Cape Town: University School of Librarianship, 1954), 5.
35. *The Critic*, Johannesburg, vol. 5 (1) (1893) – vol. 13 (316) (1896).
36. See George Allsop, 'Reminiscences of Cricket', in Maurice Luckin (ed.), *The History of South African Cricket* (Johannesburg: W.E. Hortor & Co., 1915), 123–34, 125.
37. *Ibid.*, 126.
38. See Louis Duffus, *Play Abandoned* (Cape Town: Timmins, 1969), 118, and Warner, *Cricket in Many Climes*, 176.
39. John Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), 26.
40. See Dean Allen, 'South African Cricket and British Imperialism, 1870–1910', *Sport in Society*, 12, nos 4/5 (2009), 464–81.
41. Sandiford argues that apart from dress and language, some observers in the nineteenth century termed cricket as the most significant and most visible part of Anglo-Saxon culture. See Keith Sandiford, 'Introduction', in Brian Stoddart and Keith Sandiford (eds), *The Imperial Game* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 2.
42. Warner, *Cricket in Many Climes*, 176.
43. See Andre Odendaal, *Cricket in Isolation* (Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1977); Andre Odendaal 'South Africa's Black Victorians: Sport and Society in South Africa in the Nineteenth Century', in James Mangan (ed.), *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700–1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1988), 193–214, and Andre Odendaal, *The Story of an African Game* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2003).
44. See Allen, *Empire, War and Cricket in South Africa*.
45. See Archer and Bouillon, *The South African Game*, 79.
46. Hendricks had starred for the Malay team against W.W. Read's 1891 touring side, taking four wickets for 50 runs in 25 overs and was said by English Test players George Rowe and Bonner Middleton to be one of the fastest bowlers they had encountered. Hendricks was first included in the final squad of 15 players from which the side for the first South African tour to England was to be selected, but later omitted as a result of 'the greatest pressure by those in high authority in the Cape Colony'. See Odendaal, *Cricket in Isolation*, 325, and Odendaal, 'South Africa's Black Victorians', 203–4.
47. Pelham Warner, *Lord's 1787–1945* (London: George G. Harrap, 1946), 60. Rhodes was no doubt referring to reaction afforded the Australian Aboriginal team that had toured England some years earlier.
48. Sandiford, 'Introduction', 3–4.
49. Jon Gemmell, *The Politics of South African Cricket* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2004), 56.
50. Merrett and Nauright, 'South Africa', 58.

51. 'The first cricket team, formed in the year gold was found, captained by O.J.J. van Wyk, and containing as many Dutch-speaking men as English': Arthur Wells, *South Africa: A Planned Tour of the Country Today* (London: J.M. Dent, 1949).
52. Walter Mars, 'The History of Cricket in the Western Province', in Maurice Luckin (ed.), *The History of South African Cricket* (Johannesburg: W.E. Hortor & Co., 1915), 134.
53. See Dean Allen, 'South African Cricket, Imperial Cricketers and Imperial Expansion, 1850–1910', *The International Journal for the History of Sport* 25, no. 4 (2008), 443–71.
54. See Gemmell, *The Politics of South African Cricket*, 82, and Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa*, 27.
55. James Bradley, 'The MCC, Society and Empire: A Portrait of Cricket's Ruling Body, 1860–1914', in James Mangan (ed.), *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 44–5.
56. Ibid.
57. Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 11.
58. James Mangan, 'Britain's Chief Spiritual Export: Imperial Sport as Moral Metaphor, Political Symbol and Cultural Bond', in James Mangan (ed.), *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 6.
59. Abe Bailey, 'Cricket in South Africa', in Pelham Warner, *Imperial Cricket* (London: The London & Counties Press Association, 1912), 324.
60. See Andrew Webber, 'The Control of Cricket in South Africa', in Maurice Luckin (ed.), *The History of South African Cricket* (Johannesburg: W.E. Hortor & Co., 1915), 21.

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Notes on contributor

Dean Allen is currently a senior lecturer in the Department of Sport at Bournemouth University in the UK as well as a Research Associate at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. Having lectured at universities in the UK, Ireland, Australia, and South Africa, he has published widely on the history and politics of sport and society throughout the British Empire most notably South Africa. His particular interests are colonialism, imperialism, and the identity of sporting groups and nations.