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The sociodemographic profile of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) talent pathways and first-class counties: Considering the British South Asian player

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to examine the sociodemographic profile of youth and professional cricketers in England and Wales, with a particular focus on the British South Asian (BSA) player.

Approach: Sociodemographic data was collected via an England and Wales Cricket Board survey to identify participants' relative access to wealth via school type attended (i.e., state and private school) and ethnicity (i.e., White British, BSA, and Other). Divided across three groups, findings were compared against expected distributions based on national norms:

Findings: Results highlighted socio-economic and racial biases, predominantly favouring privately educated and white cricketers at both youth and professional levels. Specifically, whilst BSA cricketers were over-represented when compared to national norms at youth level, results indicated a reverse effect at PS whereby BSAs become under-represented.

Practical Implications: Highlighting disparities in socio-economic and racial representation provides justification for key stake holders to evaluate current practices and move towards building interventions to eradicate such biases.

Research Contribution: This paper provides a quantitative analysis of the sociodemographic profile for elite cricket in England and Wales. Subsequently this study can be referred to as quantitative rationale for future research to investigate systemic bias in elite sport

Key words: Talent identification; Talent development; Youth cricket; Professional cricket; Relative access to wealth; Ethnicity

Introduction

Relative access to wealth (RAW), defined as one's ability to utilise disposable income for non-essential purchases, and ethnicity impacts sports participation on a global scale (Schulte-Hostedde, Eys, Emond, & Buzdon, 2012). Several studies have identified that those deriving from families with a higher income generally engage in a greater amount of organised sport and physical activity when compared to their lower income-earning counterparts (e.g., Farrell & Shields, 2002; Humphreys & Ruseski, 2009; Seabra, Mendonça, Thomis, Peters, & Maia, 2008; Stuij, 2015). As such, this could subsequently influence the development of talent across various sports (Lawrence, 2017). For instance, higher RAW may benefit athletes with greater access to specialist coaching and equipment, or simulating sporting conditions (Farhi, 2006). Separating by sporting categories, Farrell and Shields (2002) revealed a greater monetary income was positively associated with increased participation in aerobics, gym visits, racket sports, and swimming. Alternatively, however, they found no income effect for cycling, football, rugby, or running, which highlights that access to and participation in particular sports may differ. Since a range of literature has revealed that cricket has been synonymous with the upper and middle classes from the late 19th Century (e.g., Kaufman & Patterson, 2005; Sandiford, 1983; Simons, 1996; Stone, 2008; Williams, 2012), it could be suggested that greater monetary income may have a positive association with increased participation in cricket.

Although previous findings indicate that a lower RAW can be a barrier to sports participation (e.g., Humphreys & Ruseski, 2009; Kantomaa, Tammelin, Näyhä, & Taanila, 2007; Stuij, 2015), no current research specifies whether it impacts the recruitment of young athletes into talent development pathways (TDPs). In addition, current literature is yet to explore the implications of RAW on the transition from a TDP to professional status (PS). Stuij (2015) identifies most youth athletes who participate in sport, regardless of their socio-

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economic status, will be taught the technical aspects of sporting capital (i.e., sport skills and rules). However, advanced aspects of sporting capital are often aligned with a higher socio-economic status (i.e., technical proficiency and decision-making skill). Therefore, it may be suggested that RAW is a contributing factor towards development into a TDP, whereby higher developed skill and sporting knowledge is likely to transfer to greater levels of sporting success (Phillips, Davids, Renshaw, & Portus, 2010). For instance, following their comparison of national income estimates and multidimensional welfare indicators, Den Butter and van der Tak (1995) established socio-economic status as a major determinant of international Olympic success. Similarly, Vagenas and Vlachokyriakou (2012) revealed a significant correlation between participants with a higher socio-economic status and the success of winning Olympic medals. Moreover, Lawrence (2017) studied the sociodemographic profile of Olympic teams from Canada, United States of America, Great Britain and Australia), identifying that a greater RAW (both as an individual athlete and as a competing nation) is a strong predictor for participation and success at both the Olympic and Winter Olympic Games.

In addition to RAW, Lawrence (2017) also identified a considerable racial bias within the Olympic and Winter Olympic teams, predominantly favouring white athletes. Kochanek and Erickson (2019) offer a potential explanation, suggesting that although current youth development models consider individual differences as relevant (such as race), their “individual-centred, functionalist orientation prevents a race-centred perspective” (p.8). This suggests that ethnic minority groups are potentially exposed to a lack of understanding from respective governing bodies towards their culture and history. It could be argued that this perspective is underpinned by Critical Race Theory (CRT), which acknowledges the historical and contextual foundations that relate to a young person (Kochanek & Erickson, 2019). When applied to a sporting context, it has been stated that “CRT can inform a more socially responsible, just framework that empowers all sport participants, including youth of colour”

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(Kochanek & Erickson, 2019, p. 2). In essence, CRT seeks to challenge dominant ideologies of colour-blindness, race neutrality, equal opportunity, objectivity, and meritocracy (Hylton, 2010), and has served as an explanatory, analytical framework for interrogating issues of race and racism for many years (Treviño, Harris, & Wallace, 2008). However, in the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter protests the UK government stated they were “unequivocally against” the concept of CRT, with the equalities minister Kemi Badenoch stating, “We do not want teachers to teach their white pupils about white privilege and inherited racial guilt” (Guardian, 2020).

Fletcher (2011) states that there have been dominant claims that British sport remains meritocratic, and that recruitment and selection procedures apply a “colour blind” ideology, which thus nullifies the concept of white privilege. However, Rodriguez (2006) defines this “colour-blind” ideology as “the assertion of essential sameness between racial and ethnic groups despite unequal social locations and distinctive histories” (p. 645). Indeed, CRT theorists argue that the notion of colour-blindness acts as a powerful tool whereby social hierarchies and dominant hegemonies are subsequently maintained through the failure to acknowledge prejudiced criteria for inclusion (Hylton, 2008). Additionally, a colour-blind ideology can minimize the awareness of racism as it fails to recognise that prejudicial views and behaviours affect the lives of minorities (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Burdsey, 2011, Lusted, 2009). Instead, CRT proposes that race should be placed at the centre of our policy making within sport, to provoke an analysis of existing racial processes and make visible the extent to which such processes influence sporting participation and development (Hylton, 2008). Employing a strategy which places race at its core will highlight a structure’s micro-aggressions, defined as subtle insults directed towards people of colour (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000), as well as acknowledge other everyday racisms, resulting in a deeper comprehension of the complex manifestations of race (Garland & Rowe, 2001).

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Presently, the England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB, 2018) strategic framework "South Asian Engagement Action Plan" offers evidence to suggest that BSA inclusion is thriving in England and Wales, with approximately one third of the recreational playing representation being BSA. This depicts a substantial over-representation of BSA participation when compared to the general population, whereby the United Kingdom Census of 2011 identified 7.5% of the entire population of England and Wales to be of South Asian heritage (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2012). However, those who have applied a CRT lens to the inclusion of BSAs in English and Welsh cricket (i.e., Burdsey, 2011; Fletcher et al., 2011, 2014 & 2020) warn that this type of quantitative analysis fails to depict an accurate indication of the levels of inequalities and prejudices faced by racially marginalised groups, as it neglects to acknowledge perceptions and lived experiences. For instance, Burdsey (2011) identified that a colour-blind ideology has become so entrenched within cricket in England and Wales, that ethnic minority cricketers have been encouraged to endorse the claim that the effects of microaggressions and other forms of racism are often overstated. Further, Fletcher, Piggott, North, Hylton, Gilbert, and Norman (2014) described how members of the BSA community believed that cricket is controlled by white people, in the interests of white people, throughout all levels of the game. Indeed, there is evidence to support their claims, as currently less than 5% of the eighteen first-class counties' coaching staff in England and Wales are of a South Asian origin, whilst only one of those counties has a Chief Executive Officer who identifies as BSA (ECB, 2018). Williams argues that such a disproportionate prevalence of white males who hold positions of power in sport demonstrates a contradiction towards minority groups that has led to the retention of a white dominated status quo within sports management.

Additional findings from Fletcher and colleagues (2014), highlight the notion that the BSA community must do "twice as much" to be recognised, which has resulted in the BSA community feeling on the outside of the mainstream system. This opinion was later reinforced

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by Fletcher, Piggott, and North (2020) who identified that members of the BSA community felt they were denied opportunities to develop as coaches and players due to their race, and that current attempts to reach out to the BSA community had been perceived as merely tick boxing exercises from the governing body. These findings from CRT literature provides ample evidence to suggest that the struggle for racial equality within cricket in England and Wales continues to exist, despite the level of BSA representation in recreational cricket (ECB, 2018).

From a socio-cultural perspective, it is well documented that cricket has historically been synonymous with the notion of “Englishness”, such that throughout the Victorian era, cricket was glorified as a perfect system of ethics and moral codes which embodied what it meant to be English (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005; Sandiford, 1983). Furthermore, post-world war two (1945), cricket continued to be an expression of English moral worth and played a key role in representing one’s economic and social status (Simons, 1996; Williams, 2012). However, Fletcher (2011), identified that several of their Asian respondents noted that they took pride in how their culture distinguished them from the typical concept of “Englishness”. Further evidence of this cultural divide stems from Burdsey’s (2006) reference to Carvel (2000) and the National Centre for Social Research annual survey, whereby “Englishness” proved problematic for BSAs, such that one third classified themselves as British (not English) and only 7% classified themselves as English (not British). This could explain why, over recent years, it has been increasingly acknowledged that a substantial number of BSAs support the country of their ancestry, particularly when those countries are playing against England (Werbner, 1996). Furthermore, Yassim (2013) identified that supporting an ancestry nation creates a sense of community and inclusion for BSAs, as it forges a symbolic link with the subcontinent. As such, this enables the celebration of tradition, whilst creating a feeling of belonging with the nation that they, or their ancestors, migrated.

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Adding to the socio-cultural influences of BSAs' exclusion from sport, Lusted (2009) argued that sporting organisations are deep-rooted within Victorian British values about sport, through maintaining traditional ideologies of amateurism, fair play, and meritocracy. Consequently, this strengthens the interests of white groups and ultimately sustains rather than eradicates racial inequalities (Tate, 1997). Therefore, it is unsurprising that when migrating to Britain post-world war two, BSAs also transported their cricketing culture which contrasted that of the English game, in an attempt to play cricket "the South Asian way" (Raman, 2015). As a result, there has been a steady rise in mono-ethnic cricket structures which apply "the South Asian way" existing outside of ECB regulations (Fletcher, 2015) due to BSAs' desire to compete among one's own community, and facilitate contingent and cultural integration (Burdsey, 2006). Johal (2001) explains that these leagues represent safe space which enables participants to engage and celebrate their own culture within a racism-free environment. In contrast, it can be argued that the establishment of BSA-only leagues presents evidence of a direct resistance to the official (white) structures (Fletcher, 2011; 2015). However, regardless of the underlying reasons for the creation of mono-ethnic leagues, it has been suggested that their existence places the blame onto BSA cricketers for their own exclusion from traditional performance pathways, rather than BSA cricketers being viewed as "the recipients of exclusionary attitudes and practices" (Burdsey, 2011, p. 268).

In addition to CRT research, several other studies have explored racial inequalities in sport, with some identifying that having a migration background or foreign nationality, can have a negative effect on sport participation (e.g., Breuer, 2006; Farrell & Shields, 2002). As explained by Hallmann and Breuer (2014), lower participation in a specific sport can often be a result of how that sport is socially valued from country to country. However, as cricket's origins trace back through the British Empire, which covered large parts of the subcontinent at the turn of the twentieth century, it is unsurprising that there is high participation across most

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South Asian countries today. From a socio-environmental perspective, it has been suggested that cricket is followed like a “second religion” in the subcontinent due to the extreme levels of passion and enthusiasm for the game (Sheikh, Ali, Saleem, Ali, & Ahmed, 2013), and that like religion, cricket is deeply entangled within everyday conceptions of cultural identities in many minority ethnic communities (Fletcher, 2015). Therefore, it could be argued that the motives for normal ethnic exclusion put forth by Hallmann and Breuer (2014) may not apply for British South Asian (BSA) cricketers in England and Wales, as cricket appears to be socially valued by both white British (WB) and BSA cultures.

Despite the effects that RAW and ethnicity have on sports participation being well documented (i.e., Butter & van der Tak, 1995; Lawrence, 2017; Vagenas & Vlachokyriakou, 2012), to the author’s knowledge, there are no previous studies documenting the sociodemographic profile of TDPs and at PS in cricket on a national scale. There are arguments to suggest that opportunities for the BSA community to access TDP and subsequently transfer to PS will be limited (Burdsey, 2011; Fletcher et al., 2011, 2014 & 2020). However, before evaluating the perceptions and lived experiences of racially marginalised groups in elite cricket, this study seeks to add a quantitative analysis of the RAW and ethnicities of the individuals participating in the TDPs and at PS in the first-class counties in England and Wales. As such, this study will provide future academic discourse with a platform to evaluate the inclusivity and meritocracy of performance cricket, not just at the recreational level, as previously documented (ECB, 2018).

Methods

Sample

An ECB survey was conducted in 2018 to collect data regarding players’ schooling background. This was completed by all members of the professional playing staff at the eighteen England and Wales’ first-class counties ($n = 371$), as well as obtainable U16-19

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players in their academies ($n = 41$). Therefore, where available, RAW was measured through school-type attended (i.e., state vs. private). The ECB survey also collected ethnicity data for those participating at eighteen first-class counties in England and Wales' at U10–U15 ($n = 1,652$), U16–U19 ($n = 497$), and PS ($n = 371$), and Ethical approval for this study was granted at institutional level.

Measures

Utilising methodologies from previous empirical research (Lawrence, 2017), school type was used as a proxy for RAW (i.e., state school = lower RAW; independent school = higher RAW), as sufficient resources to fund tuition fees indicates a higher RAW. State schools were defined as government funded schools with no tuition fees or entry level examinations required for access, whereas private schools were defined as independent schools alongside any other school requiring a tuition fee for entry. Acknowledging that participants could fluctuate between the two school types, a minimum of one year within the independent schooling system as an account of higher RAW. Lawrence (2017) indicated that one year was considered to have sufficient sensitivity and specificity to discriminate private education as a surrogate marker of participants RAW.

Participants selected their ethnicity based on the 18 Ethnic Groups from the 2011 Census of England and Wales GOV.UK, (n.d). To enable this study to better understand BSA participation, ethnicity was divided into three categories, including: (a) White British (WB), (b) British South Asian (BSA), and (c) Other. The BSA category was deemed a separate Asian category, which other empirical research has utilised (Kanters, Bocarro, Edwards, Casper, & Floyd, 2013), due to the contrasting approaches different Asian cultures portray towards cricket (i.e., South Asian counties hold cricket in higher regard than East Asian countries). Thus, based on the Ethnic Groups, those with “Indian”, “Pakistani”, “Sri Lankan” and “Bangladeshi” heritage were considered in the BSA cohort. The WB cohort comprised of “English, Welsh,

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Scottish, Northern Irish, or British”, “Irish”, “Gypsy or Irish Traveller”, and “Any other White background”. The *Other* cohort consisted of the remaining eleven Ethnic Groups, including “Chinese”, “Any other Asian background”, “Black, African, Caribbean, or Black British”, “African”, “Caribbean”, “Any other Black, African, or Caribbean background”, “Arab”, and “Any other ethnic group”.

Procedures

First-class counties were requested by the ECB to collect the school type attended and the ethnicity of their professional playing staff, as well as the participants within their TDPs. Surveys were subsequently returned to the ECB who collated and presented the data for analyses. Participants were allocated into three groups according to their age in years or whether they obtained a professional contract: (a) U10–15; (b) U16–19; and, (c) PS. School type distributions were compared with expected distributions from national norms. These were generated from the Department for Education (2018) for state school norms, and the Independent Schools Council (2018) for independent school norms. Moreover, ethnicity distributions were compared to the national norms generated from 2011 census (ONS, 2012). Participants were allocated into three ethnicity categories: (a) BSA; (b) WB; and, (c) Other. Within the PS cohort, further analysis compared the observed distributions, for both school type and ethnicity, to the expected distribution based on the TDP sample. To ensure that comparisons of school type were reflective of those who paid tuition fees at independent schools, those who received scholarships based on their sporting prowess were removed from the sample ($n = 32$).

Data Analysis

Pearson chi-squared (χ^2) tests were used to compare the observed and expected distributions of both school type and ethnicities within the ECB first-class counties (U10–15; U16–19; PS). Due to more than 20% of the expected data generated having a frequency under five within the

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U16–19 cohort, a Fisher’s exact test was used for the state and private school distributions. Odds ratios (ORs) accompanied by 95% confidence intervals were calculated to compare the effect that school type and ethnicity had on the likelihood of converting to PS. All statistical analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS statistics version 24. Results were considered statistically significant at $P < 0.05$.

Results

Relative Access to Wealth

The state and private school distributions within the U16–19 cohort were significantly skewed when compared to the national norms (χ^2 (df = 5) = 136.84, $P < 0.001$; Fisher’s exact). The state (χ^2 (df = 2) = 31.41, $P < 0.001$) and private (χ^2 (df = 2) = 63.44, $P < 0.001$) school distributions within the PS cohort were significantly skewed when compared to the national norms. Further descriptive analysis demonstrates that privately educated cricketers within PS ($n = 142$; 38%) were significantly over-represented when compared to the national norms (14%). Furthermore, state school cricketers ($n = 229$; 62%) were significantly under-represented when compared to national norms (86%). Table 1 displays the school type distributions in the TDPs and at PS compared with expected distributions. A significant OR of 15.9 (95% CI 9.47 to 26.52; $P < 0.001$) was found between the WB private school cohort and the WB state school cohort in converting to PS. In addition, a significant OR of 21 (95% CI 8.41 to 52.18; $P < 0.001$) was found between the WB private school cohort and the BSA state school cohort converting to PS.

****Table 1 near here****

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Ethnicity

The ethnicity distributions for the U10–15 cohort were significantly skewed when compared

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to the national norms (χ^2 (df = 2) = 409.313, $P < 0.001$). Further descriptive analysis demonstrated an over-representation of BSA cricketers ($n = 321$; 19.4%) compared to the national norms (7.5%). However, there was a minor under-representation of WB cricketers ($n = 1296$; 78.5%) when compared to the national norms (80.5%) and a major under-representation of OT cricketers ($n = 35$; 2.1%) compared to national norms (12%).

The ethnicity distributions for the U16–19 were significantly skewed when compared to the national norms (χ^2 (df = 2) = 133.314, $P < 0.001$). Further descriptive analysis identified an over-representation of BSA cricketers ($n = 129$; 18.7%) when compared to the national norms (7.5%). Similarly to the U10–U15 cohort, there was a minor under-representation of WB cricketers ($n = 392$; 78.9%) when compared to the national norms (80.5%), as well as a major under-representation of OT cricketers ($n = 12$; 2%) compared to the national norms (12%).

The ethnicity distributions for the PS were significantly skewed when compared to the national norms (χ^2 (df = 2) = 9.603, $P < 0.001$) and the expected talent transfer from TDPs (χ^2 (df = 2) = 369.192, $P < 0.001$). Further descriptive analysis identified a significant under-representation of BSA cricketers ($n = 22$; 5.9%) when compared to the expected distributions from both the national norms (7.5%) and the expected talent transfer from the TDP's (19.1%). This represents a relative decrease of 69.1% of their representation from TDP to PS. Moreover, there was a minor under-represented of WB cricketers at PS ($n = 285$, 76.8%) when compared to the expected distributions from both the national norms (80.5%) and the expected talent transfer from the TDPs (78.7%). This represents a relative decrease of 2.4% of their representation from TDP to PS. Further, OT become significantly over-represented at PS ($n = 64$; 17.2%) compared to both the national norms (12%) and the expected talent transfer from the TDP (2.4%). This represents a relative increase of 616.6% of their representation from TDP to PS. A significant OR of 3.15 (95% CI 1.90 to 5.22; $P < 0.001$) was found between WB and

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BSA cricketers for converting to PS according to expected distribution calculated from the TDPs. Table 2 displays the ethnicity distributions in the TDPs and at PS compared with expected distributions. Figure 2 displays the ethnicity percentages of the BSA cricketers from each cohort (U10–15; U16–19; PS) compared to the national norms. Figure 3 displays the ethnicity percentages of the WB cricketers from each cohort (U10–15; U16–19; PS) compared to the national norms.

****Table 2 near here****

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Discussion

This study documented the distribution of RAW and ethnicity within the first-class counties TDPs and at PS across England and Wales. The results highlight a distinct over-representation of privately educated WB cricketers at PS. As such, WB players who attended private schooling were 16 times more likely to convert to PS than their WB state educated peers. Furthermore, when incorporating ethnicity, privately educated WB players are 21 times more likely to convert to PS than BSAs who attended state schooling. Additionally, regardless of schooling background, WB players were 3 times more likely to reach PS compared to their BSA counterparts. Subsequently, these results indicate that there are possible RAW and ethnicity biases within the first-class counties TDPs and at PS.

Acknowledging that these results do not identify the causal effects, the author's offer suggestions based on current research and areas for future discussion. It is important to consider key differences between budget allocations across the state and private school sectors (Callanan, Fry, Plunkett, Chanfreau, & Tanner, 2015; Headmasters & Headmistresses Council, 2015). For instance, the Department for Education (2019) presents recommendations on how state schools should spend their allocated sports budgets. Upon analysis of these

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recommendations, there is a clear emphasis on increasing sporting participation, but little in the way of developing skills and transitioning talented students to expert performers or professional athletes. On the contrary, private schools are not constrained by such recommendations, and traditionally place a higher emphasis on greater participation *and* sport-specific development (Wright & Flynn, 2007). Subsequently, this could have an influence on: (a) the access to quality facilities; (b) increased accumulated hours participating in organised cricket; (c) higher standard of sports coaching and competition; and, (d) greater participation in multiple sports (e.g., De Bosscher, De Knop, Bottenburg, Shibli, & Bingham, 2009; Normand, Wolfe, & Peak, 2017; Weissensteiner, Abernethy, Farrow, & Müller, 2008). These factors may therefore collectively explain the lack of transition from TDP to PS in those who are state educated.

Providing adequate facilities for the development of young cricketers could stretch beyond the bounds of the Department for Education's budgetary guidelines for state schools. For example, typical indoor facilities found in state schools, such as a sports hall, present limited space in which to participate in cricket activities (Low, Williams, McRobert, & Ford 2013). Although, to the author's knowledge, there is no published research depicting the difference in private and state school sports facilities. Further, several newspaper articles have reported the vast gulf in the standard between the two sectors, stating that private schools' facilities far surpass those of state schools (e.g., The Guardian, 2014; The Independent, 2015; The Telegraph, 2015). In 2002 there was a conscious move towards developing partnerships between schools and cricket clubs by the Labour government, whereby they launched the School Sport Partnerships as part of their Physical Education, School Sport, and Club Links strategy (Ofsted, 2011). The programme was designed to facilitate an increased quality and quantity of physical education and sports opportunities for young people. Thus, despite this

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strategy being disbanded by the proceeding Conservative government, this highlights how state schools have previously struggled to offer adequate provisions for cricket.

This can be further evidenced by professional counties, who often hire private school facilities to use as their training centres for the development of their elite players (e.g., Worcestershire County Cricket Club, 2020); which may also go beyond facility usage through partnering expert coaches. Additionally, from a skill development perspective, it has been well documented that higher levels of perceptual-cognitive skill directly correlates with performance in high-performance cricket batting (i.e., Müller, Abernethy, & Farrow, 2006; Sarpeshkar, Abernethy, & Mann, 2017; Weissensteiner, Abernethy, & Farrow, 2011). As a result, companies such as BOLA, have endeavoured to develop ball projection machines which incorporate an opponent's bowling action, in an attempt to replicate match conditions and allow for the development of perceptual-cognitive skill (Ford, Low, McRobert, & Williams, 2010). However, these machines come at a high expense that state schools are unlikely to afford. In contrast, private schools often utilise their larger budgets to acquire such equipment, subsequently exposing their students to increased levels of perceptual-cognitive development. Previous research has identified that a key discriminator between higher and lesser skilled batsman was the accumulated hours spent participating in organised cricket, whereby the highly skilled players were reported to have accumulated 2–3 times more hours of organised cricket experience per week compared to their lesser skilled peers (Weissensteiner et al., 2008; Jones, 2019). As private school students participate in twice as much organised sport than their state school peers (The Headmasters & Headmistresses Council, 2015), it could be suggested that privately educated students possess an advantage in their cricket development because of the greater number of hours accumulated participating in organised cricket. When comparing the standard of sports coaches across the private and state sectors, it has been suggested that private schools employ a greater amount specialist sports coaches in addition to Physical

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Education teachers, in order to further develop students' sporting prowess in specific sports (Headmasters & Headmistresses Council, 2015). As these additional sports staff are often ex-professional athletes, this could significantly improve a young students' sporting development through the personal experiences and knowledge of the coach being applied to the school students (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Townsend & Cushion, 2017). In addition, it could be anecdotally suggested that those coaches working in partnership between private school and county club may provide their young cricketers with more favourable opportunities.

Through engaging in approximately twice as much organised sport as state school students, privately educated students may obtain greater opportunities to develop a multi-sports background (Normand, Wolfe, & Peak, 2017). One such advantage, identified by Ferguson and Stern (2014), is that sampling multiple sports will aid in the development of a variety of motor skills and sporting knowledge. Similarly, participating in a secondary sport, or "donor sport" (e.g., Strafford, van der Steen, Davids, & Stone, 2018; Travassos, Araújo, & Davids, 2018), significantly enhances knowledge and skill development of a primary sport, due to the transferable values that the secondary sport provides. For example, Mann, Abernethy, and Farrow (2010) demonstrated a correlation between expert baseball batters having higher success at anticipating ball path trajectory when playing cricket, compared to non-expert baseball batters. Furthermore, multi-sport participation from a young age has also been linked to a longer career in sport, such that providing different sporting experiences maximises both physiological and healthy psychological development (Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity, & Payne, 2013; Russell & Limle, 2013). Therefore, it could be suggested that private school students may possess an advantage over state school students via the additional exposure to more organised sport and developing a multi-sport background; through providing them with greater opportunities and transferable skills to develop their cricket capabilities.

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It is important to recognise that RAW is not the sole contributor when considering the potential barriers to inclusion and development in cricket. Indeed, CRT theorists have identified that there are similarities in oppression concerning all aspects of an individual's social identity (e.g., RAW, ethnicity, and gender; Kochanek & Erickson, 2019). For instance, results of the present study indicate that the likelihood of transferring from a TDP to PS is decreased further by having lower RAW *and* being BSA. More specifically, significant ORs highlight that cricketers are 21 times more likely to convert to PS if they are WB and privately educated, rather than BSA and state educated. Meir and Fletcher's (2020) analysis of how state primary schools can spend their allocated Physical Education and Sport Premium (PESP) funds offers an insight into how BSAs and other ethnic minorities may fail to be accommodated for within state education. Their results indicate that the PESP policy may not be able to achieve its social justice agenda, as state primary schools have autonomy over their budget allocations, rather than a structured policy which regulates their distribution of resources and sporting funds. Therefore, state primary schools may have their own priorities which dictate their allocation of resources, which Meir and Fletcher (2020) suggest may result in a lack of commitment towards achieving the social justice principles which underpin the PESP initiative and so a potential failure to accommodate for ethnic minorities as a result.

Aside from RAW, the present study has identified that ethnicity alone is correlated with representation on both TDPs and at PS. For instance, the Independent Schools Council (2018) declared that 33% of students attending independent schools in the UK are "ethnic minorities", an over-representation compared to the national norms for the England and Wales (19.5%; ONS, 2019). As this study has identified attending an independent school significantly increases the likelihood of becoming achieving PS, it could be argued that our results should display an over-representation of BSA players at PS, although the authors acknowledge that ethnic minority does not solely apply to BSA. However, whilst the results of the present study

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outline an over-representation of BSA players in the U10–15 (19.1%) and U16–19 (18.7%), when compared to the national norms (7.5%), the results display a large decline, or reverse effect, whereby BSA representation drops by over two thirds when transferring to PS (5.9%). This results in a significant under-representation of BSA cricketers at PS when compared to the expected distribution from the national norms (7.5%); even more so when compared to the expected distribution calculated from the TDPs (19.1%). Additionally, the over-representation of BSA cricketers at U10-U15 and U16-U19 seems rather skewed when compared to the ECB's (2018) findings which identified 30% of recreational cricketers to be BSA. These results corroborate with CRT findings from Burdesy (2011) and Fletcher et al (2010, 2014 &2020), and provide quantitative data to suggest that racial barriers to talent development are prevalent within elite cricket in England and Wales.

It is unlikely that this ethnicity bias is due to the geodemographic racial distribution of the general population, as the BSA population across England and Wales is increasing (Department for Education, 2019; ECB, 2018). Furthermore, due to the popularity of cricket amongst the BSA community (ECB, 2018; Sheikh et al., 2013), combined with the over-representation of BSA players in the TDPs, it could be argued that a lack of potential talent is unlikely to be the reason for this under-representation. Hylton (2010) states that myths and stereotypes surrounding BSAs' exclusion from elite sports are typically framed as such: (a) socio-cultural influences; (b) role models and sporting competence; (c) religion and physicality; and, (d) diet and nutrition. This study provides evidence that the number of potential BSA role models in elite English cricket are few. However, as the results of this study are purely quantitative and subsequently fail to analysis potential causes for BSA's under-representation, future research is required to decipher whether the remainder of Hylton's claims are correct and to identify other potential causes for the lack of BSA players transferring from TDPs to PS, which is aligned with the ECB strategy "South Asian Engagement Action Plan".

Limitations and Future Directions

It is important to recognise the limitations of this study. Similar to Lawrence' (2017) methodology, pooling individuals who have experienced private schooling highlights the advantages gained by accessing the system. Although this current study defined one year of private education as enough to assess an individual's relative access to wealth, no previous research has investigated as to which schooling year, if any, has the greatest effect on developing talent when attending a private school.

Second, only participants selected for academies within the U16–U19 cohort provided their schooling data. As such, this reduced sample size may not provide a complete representation of this particular population. Finally, the results also identified that the “Other” ethnicity sample were also vastly under-represented throughout TDPs (U10–15 $n = 35$; U16–19 $n = 12$), when compared to the expected distributions based on the national norms (U10–15 $n = 198$; U16–19 $n = 60$). Since it could be argued that some ethnicities within the “Other” sample have a similar connection to cricket as the BSA community (e.g., Black, African, Caribbean, or Black British), further research is required to explore this under-representation in TDPs.

It is important to reinforce that the findings of this current study do not explain the possible causes behind the under-representation of BSA cricketers at PS within cricket in England and Wales. Thus, future research is required to explore the mechanisms that underpin the over-representation of privately educated and WB cricketers, as well as the under-representation of state educated and BSA cricketers throughout the eighteen first-class counties in England and Wales. First, the authors recommend an in-depth analysis of how the private and state schooling sectors differ in their abilities to develop expert performers. Such analyses

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should focus on how cricket is prioritised within a schools' budget, the role cricket plays within the school culture and ethos, as well as the effect that employing ex-professional cricketers as school coaches has upon the development and selection of players to TDPs. Such research will likely enable a deeper understanding of the causal effects which lead to the over-representation of private school students within professional cricket.

Second, with the current study's results indicating that BSA players are not being selected for PS, the authors recommend that further research is necessary to determine the extent to which key stakeholders within TDPs (e.g., coaches, practitioners, policy makers) are knowledgeable about the cultural differences of their cricketers, as well as the requirements this presents for effective and inclusive talent development within cricket. It is suggested that initial areas for enquiry should centre around social cultural influences, the scope of white hegemonic control within governing bodies and other influencing stakeholders, and the effects of diverse cultural diets within cricket. Furthermore, broadening one's perspective beyond cricket, the development of research regarding the application of CRT to talent development within sport, could prove beneficial for gaining an insight into how to create inclusive TDPs, whereby participants from all ethnic and socio-ecological backgrounds can achieve their potential. Whilst current CRT models exist within other industries such as education (e.g., Ortiz & Jani, 2010), to the authors' knowledge there are no such models which utilise CRT with a direct focus on talent development within sport.

Finally, the results of the present study highlight a major over-representation of OT cricketers at PS ($n = 64$; 17.2%) compared to the expected from TDP ($n = 9$; 2.4%). This increase is likely to be due to the excess of Kolpak players joining first-class counties from countries residing in the European Union Association Agreements. For example, in 2020, there were 17 contracted South African Kolpak players signed to first-class counties in England and Wales (Wisden, 2020). Kolpak players are eligible to sign for English and Welsh counties so

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long as they agree not to represent their national side. This proposition is extremely attractive for county cricket clubs as it allows them to sign high quality foreign players without exceeding their limit for overseas players in their squads. With the UK leaving the European Union Kolpak contracts will no longer be valid, therefore, the authors recommend that further research monitors the effects this has upon the sociodemographic profile of professional cricket in England and Wales.

Conclusion

The results of this study highlight RAW and racial biases in first-class counties cricket, predominantly favouring privately educated and WB players. Since the aim of a talent development pathway is to offer the most appropriate learning environment to realise potential, creating greater opportunities for both state educated and BSA cricketers could prove beneficial to further develop TDPs in cricket. Although the authors of this current study offer these possible explanations; (a) Contrasting priorities in budget allocations between the state and private schooling sectors; (b) facilities and equipment disparities between state and the private schooling sectors; (c) amount of accumulated hours on sports (d) socio-cultural influences; (e) role models and sporting competence; (f) religion and physicality; and, (g) diet and nutrition, these findings prompt further inquiry into identifying barriers that both state educated and BSA cricketers face throughout the transition from TDPs to PS.

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