

Community

Diasporas are communities positioned at the interstices of (1) a (mythical) homeland or local community where people are from, (2) the location where they reside, and (3) a globally dispersed, yet collectively identified group. These communities are neither homogeneous nor innate. A sense of community, Brubaker (2004) notes in *Ethnicity without Groups*, is often objectified as a “thing,” something always already there that people “have,” but “‘groupness’ and ‘boundedness’ [are] emergent properties of particular structural or conjunctural settings” (p. 55). Some groups go to great lengths to establish themselves as cohesive and bounded communities. For example, as Brent Hayes Edwards (2001) astutely points out, the term “*diaspora* is introduced in large part to account for difference among African-derived populations, in a way that a term like *Pan-Africanism* could not ... it forces us to consider discourses of cultural and political linkage only through and across difference” (Edwards, 2001, p. 64). A key example of discourses of cultural linkages is the pre-civil war collective self-definitions of the Afro-diaspora, which “often treated Africa as a fallen civilisation to be redeemed by African-American Christians. Self-identification as a diasporic ‘people’ did not necessarily imply claiming cultural commonality” (Brubaker, 2004, p. 57). The boundaries that diasporic groups construct around themselves shift around the multiple identities people express. Flattening a complex history and complex individuals through a focus on a singular identity as a diasporic group prevents us from understanding the ways in which group boundaries are constantly being (re-)made by people who have experienced the uneven trajectories of ancestry, plurilocal homelands and varied ways of constructing sameness and difference.

The Afro-Caribbean diaspora is a community fractured by “disjunctures produced by the diverse intersectional experiences of gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, age, generation, disability, geography, history, religion, beliefs and language/dialect differences” that produce power struggles (Hua, 2006, p. 193). Nevertheless, people who live within these groups develop a solidarity with each

other via transportation and communication technologies, economic and social remittances, political rights bestowed upon migrants, and transnational or cultural organisations that permit them to feel close to one another. They conceive of themselves as one community in spite of distance from the homeland or other dispersed group members. Furthermore, their proximity in the place of residence allows for a local sense of community that is not dependent on an elsewhere. This chapter explores the various tactics used by the MCSC members to reify the Afro-Caribbean community, to celebrate blackness and masculinity, and to establish themselves as part of a local community. I delve into their activities before, during and after games that mark them as part of a bounded group.

Liming: creating Afro-Caribbean social spaces and networks

For many of the Mavericks, playing cricket in Canada meant playing in cold weather for the first time. Although their season does not start until May, it might not be more than 15 degrees Celsius at that time of year in Toronto, a big adjustment from the 25–35 degrees Celsius year-round temperatures they were used to. Warlie, a 70-year-old black Barbadian-Canadian, who arrived in Montreal in December of 1968 explains that “In Toronto there’s no ocean to jump in, so the black man plays cricket and dominoes. I can be with the fellas and jus’ relax all summer. Winters are long an’ it’s hard to get used to. I tried to skate once, but the ice cracked, so now we don’t fight it. We not hockey players. Cricket’s our sport.” Warlie describes surviving Canadian winters as a struggle; his story of the ice cracking beneath his skates reflects how insecure and isolated he felt when he first arrived in Canada. He enjoys being active and feels imprisoned by cold weather, since he does not participate in any winter sports. Summers, in contrast, are full of physical activity, friendship and opportunities to relax. As he talks with me, he easily slips between the individual (“I tried to skate once”) and the collective (“Cricket’s our sport”) signalling the sense of community and social connections he developed by playing cricket and its associated activities, such as dominoes. Despite the cold weather, every May the men transform an empty field into a distinctly Afro-Caribbean environment. They recreate the cricket environments of their homelands and their youth through *liming*, defined by Warlie as “being with the fellas and jus’ relax.”

Liming is a uniquely Caribbean expression that captures the practice of socialising, hanging out, relaxing, or partying, which often involves outdoor

eating, drinking, dancing, playing dominoes, chatting and spirited rounds of verbal sparring. Known as *the dozens* (United States), *gaffing* (Guyana), *picong* (Trinidad and Tobago), or *keeping noise* (Barbados), Afro-Caribbean men and women tease, heckle and mock each other in a friendly manner with a combination of jokes and insults. This way of speaking is described by Abrahams in his text *The Man-of-Words in the West Indies* as a valued way of expressing masculinity and advancing reputation in outdoor Afro-Caribbean spaces. Rather than the content of their speech, the emphasis on speech using poetry or proverbs, aggressive talk using witty banter, socialising in an antiphonic pattern and using their native patois languages and English accents are keys to communication and characteristic of Afro-Caribbean communication rituals. Patois is not “broken,” “bad,” or a dialect of English; it draws directly from African linguistic structures in combination with the language of colonisers and many expressions are common enough throughout the Anglophone Caribbean for men and women from different nations to communicate with each other. The use of patois or speaking English with an accent in diasporic settings provides for its speakers a sense of identity. The MCSC members keep their culture alive with every word as they discuss their families, local and international politics, dominoes and cricket. As Madan (2000, p. 29) notes of Indian diasporic cricket fans, in “talking cricket,” and “in articulating allegiances and negotiating hybrid spaces, these subjects actually speak their identity as [Afro-Caribbean-Canadians] into existence.” Their joking and socialising are the lived social practices that denote the cricket grounds as an Afro-Caribbean homespace.

Language (accent, style of communication and topics of conversation) is one of the primary signals that Mavericks’ cricket grounds are spaces set apart from mainstream Canadian society. Carrington has noted of Afro-Caribbean cricketers in England, the movement “to create nearly autonomous spaces are an attempt to resist what might be described as the ‘terrorising white gaze’ (hooks, 1992) within public spaces ... [W]ithin a wider white environment, the cricket club provides many of the black men with a sense of ontological security” (Carrington, 1998, p. 283). Afro-Caribbean cricketers in Canada also create a black space in which they can feel comfortable. The ways they communicate with each other and with visitors from the diaspora while *liming* on and around the cricket boundary and club social events are examples of their negotiations over diverse conceptions of freedom, which, Noble (2008, p. 90) accurately points out, are not situated strictly within “party politics and political nationalist movements that characterised earlier anti-colonial and civil rights politics. Instead they are increasingly being traced out on the intimate contours of the body and

the self” for black people. MCSC members liberate themselves by carving out space in Toronto that is just for “their people.” Through *liming*, MCSC members are able to renew their sense of local and global community.

As a possible result of their status as visible minorities, ongoing racism in the dominant Canadian culture and relatively small numbers (and therefore lack of ethnically exclusive neighbourhoods), Caribbeans, in contrast to Italians according to a 1991 study, were found to be more likely to use sport to generate an ethnic identity. A statistical analysis of Caribbean and Italian soccer club members indicates that Caribbeans are more highly involved in their clubs as players and as participants in social activities and rely more on their soccer teams “as one key means for sustaining ethnic identity” (Walter, Brown and Grabb, 1991, p. 90). The authors went on to suggest that Caribbean clubs more often encourage “the use of ethnic language or dialect in conversation, and the recruitment of players by members’ recommendations rather than by open competition” (p. 90) to maintain the club’s ethnic links. With fewer organisations, social networks and material and cultural resources at their disposal than other non-racialised groups, Caribbean people are more likely to turn to a sports organisation to shape their identities.

The MCSC games are not merely sporting activities. They bring together family and friends from throughout the Black Atlantic to *lime* at the matches so they can feel “at home” whether they are in their nations of origin, elsewhere in the Caribbean, elsewhere in the diaspora, or at grounds in Toronto. While some club members emphasise their ways of life and thought as the same as in their homeland – as pure, stable and timeless – this should not, as Hannerz (1997) suggests, invalidate analyses that demonstrate the ways their cultures are creolised and Canadianised. That is to say, they use cricket to maintain black identities, but their status as Caribbeans means they are already embedded in a culture (if not an ancestry) that is a mixture of African, Asian, Indian, European and Middle Eastern. Moreover, their relative permanence in Canada, and in some cases, mixed-race children and families, reveal that their communities are not always so narrowly defined. Nevertheless, in the face of all this mixture, the ongoing naming of MCSC as a black club means that it is used for racialised community making in Canada.

Club members migrated to Canada mainly in the 1970s and 1980s to fill labour shortages and secure an income for their families. While much of their lives were completely transformed upon migration, especially for those who arrived in winter, cricket remained constant. They described joining teams as a saviour in their first months in Canada. In some cases, family members, or

friends from work introduced the Mavericks to the cricket community. In other cases, they found work and even family (some cricketers met their wives and reunited with cousins) through their interactions at cricket matches and related social events.

Mavericks, such as Mason, a 72-year-old Barbadian-Canadian, intentionally joined cricket leagues to ease the transition to their new country:

I went to trials for the Trinidad and Tobago team and I didn't make it, so I say "Let me jus' come to Canada an' start my life." I could have stayed back one year an' everyone telling me "Stay, you'll be selected when you're older." But I just decide I want to start makin' money ... At that time there were so many jobs here. They were beggin' us to come. It's just what you did. Finish A Levels [secondary school exams] and go to Canada or New York or England find work. I get a job and make friends, that's when I found a cricket team to play wit', so it seem everyt'ing work out. (Mason)

Erol, a 55-year-old black Barbadian-Canadian, also found league cricket through the interpersonal networks of a tightly knit Afro-Caribbean community:

When I came to Canada first, I eventually hooked up with the West Indian community people and they encourage me to you know, come out and have fun with them. So being new to the country I t'ink that was my – I would say – that was one of the focal points of me getting out and start playing cricket. (Erol)

Mason and Erol, through their new friends, set about playing competitive, recreational cricket in Canada and recreated Afro-Caribbean spaces through their *liming* practices at games.

For a new immigrant who felt "lost," cricket offered a sense of familiarity, comfort and security:

I didn't know that there was cricket played in Canada. I always ask and nobody ever knew ... I lived in a predominantly white neighbourhood. That was Ajax and at the time when I came there was no West Indian store. To get a West Indian store you had to come all the way back into Scarborough ... You see a black person in Ajax it was like "Oh my god!" ... And I remember one day my wife was driving down Baseline [Road] and she saw a big sign, "Cricket plays here" and "Practice on Wednesdays" ... So I went and I was the only Guyanese. All Bajans [people from Barbados] and Trinidadians, but it was comfortable, you know? (Reggie)

For Caribbean men new to Toronto, cricket provided instant access to a broader network of Caribbean people. In a Canadian (middle-class) culture that is focused on "inside life" (i.e., life inside homes, cars, workspaces, restaurants, or arenas), cricket offered Caribbean men a reminder of their (working-class)

home life where domestic affairs (including cooking and eating), drinking, socialising and physical activities are performed outdoors. Carrington's (1998) description of a recreational cricket club in England suggests that elsewhere in the Caribbean diaspora, this type of organisation provides the same sense of comfort for its participants, who describe it as "more than a club"; it was significant "in providing a safe space within a wider (hostile) environment for the earlier Caribbean migrants" (p. 284). Upon their arrival in a new country, Caribbean migrants can generate a sense of comfort at the cricket grounds, as they "develop a panethnic Caribbean identity as a result of interacting through these networks with other immigrants from the Caribbean," inevitably giving their "ethnic identity a transnational focus" (Rogers, 2001, p. 181). Reggie, an Indo-Guyanese who felt isolated in a white neighbourhood, shifted his primary category of affiliation from national group (Guyanese) to regional group (Caribbean) and racial group (black) based on his initial lack of access to other Indo-Guyanese people, the mixed nationalities of his first team members and the predominance of Afro-Caribbean people and cultures in the club.

The summers of 2008 and 2009 in Toronto were among the rainiest in recent memory. It rained at least once almost every weekend from May to September. Nevertheless, the Mavericks went out with their friends to play cricket under dark clouds and grey skies; if and when it rained, they continued to play until the captain decided the risk of injury was too great. At that time, they would call off the game and retire to the grassy area outside the boundary, where cars are parked, to join spectators already engaged in the non-cricket aspect of their weekend rituals: *liming*. The fact that MCSC members are forced to park their cars on the grass surrounding the boundary means that occasionally the fête (party) atmosphere is punctuated by the sound of a ball cracking a windshield. Men gathered at their cars were then briefly reminded that they were, in fact, at a cricket match. They turned around, heckled a player or two, and returned to their conversations.

Players and spectators brought out coolers full of food and drink, supplied their own lawn chairs and used their vehicles as a sound system, shelter, restaurant and bar as the occasion warranted. In better weather, more spectators came to the games and stayed longer afterwards; however, regardless of the forecast, every weekend, all summer long, at least twenty-two players and a few dozen spectators occupied various Toronto cricket grounds and contiguous parking zones in their efforts to reconstruct home and regenerate their communities. Werbner (2005, p. 745) points out a paradox of multiculturalism: "in order to sink roots in a new country, transnational migrants in the modern world begin

by setting themselves culturally and socially apart.” This is the function of *liming* at the cricket grounds. In most sports, a post-game celebration (or mourning) involving food and drink is standard. It is an inherent feature of the sport of cricket – hours of passive waiting for one’s turn at bat – that allow the Mavericks to *lime* before, during and after games.

Pre-game *liming*

Before cricket games have even begun or, in some cases, before their turn at batting, some MCSC players and all spectators were already generating a celebratory, carnival atmosphere through pre-game *liming*. Burton (1995) explains “carnival” and Caribbean “street culture” as a social, cultural and psychological complex unique to the Caribbean. As a result of slavery with manual labour of the most crushing and dehumanising kind imaginable, it should come as no surprise that the pastimes of Caribbean cultures would place an extraordinary emphasis on carefree vitality and re-humanising celebrations. On their way to matches, whether on tour in a bus or in their personal vehicles, the Mavericks play and sing along with “oldies,” including calypso, reggae and country songs as well as American popular ballads. More recent music styles out of the Caribbean such as ragga and dancehall are not predominant since the Mavericks typically celebrate the music of “their generation.”

While travelling on a bus to a game during a tour in England, one player contributed a Frank and Nancy Sinatra CD and a 1960s rhythm-and-blues CD to the ambiance, and players sang loudly the lyrics to “Saying something stupid like I love you.” When Al Green’s “Let’s Stay Together” came on, Warlie, a 70-year-old black Barbadian-Canadian, stood up in the aisle of the bus and serenaded me. His performance included a finale in which he got down on one knee and sang with outstretched arms (not an easy feat for him owing to his ailing joints). “How do you all know these words?” I asked him. “You haffa born early like me!” He replied enthusiastically as he struggled to stand. When I inquired about the most popular artists they were listening to before they migrated, Warlie and his peers shared their fondness for calypsonians such as Lord Kitchener, Mighty Sparrow, King Short Shirt and Black Stalin. They also celebrated Motown artists including Marvin Gaye, The Temptations, Curtis Mayfield and James Brown. The latter two, Gilroy (2010, p. 105) notes, “brought the political language of Black Power into the centre of the dance floor.” Notably, the music the Mavericks listen to is not only of the indigentous calypso, soca and reggae varieties, though these cannot be named as ‘purely’

indigenous as the stylings of itinerant Caribbean musicians are cross-fertilised by American elements (Gilroy, 2010). They also grew up listening to American music including the explosion of African-American rhythm and blues, soft soul and street funk with its righteous demands for civil and political rights (Ward, 1998). This music helped to cement their race consciousness and is a reminder of their youth and their own Caribbean homelands, despite its American origins.

The Mavericks are committed to celebrating their games (whether they win or lose) with music and dance. This ritual in which real, re-humanising pleasure is derived from consuming and moving the body to a range of calypso, reggae, soca and African-American music reveals a complex dialogue with plurilocal black cultures. As Gilroy states, “for a while, music did occupy the epicenter of black culture in a new and distinctively modern way: as both custom and commodity” (2010, p. 145). The Mavericks’ connection to black music, and therefore the Afro-diaspora, is also evident through their commitment to the reggae remix. Michael, a 56 year-old Indo-Guyanese-Canadian, who was also “born early,” drove me to several home games in Toronto and insisted on belting out the lyrics to reggae remixes of country ballads by artists such as Willie Nelson. The MCSC’s use of music to sing and flirt is an important means of performing masculinity, communicating across gender, and marking the Afro-diasporic space as an explicitly heterosexual community.

On one cold and windy Saturday in May 2008, I had bundled up before I made my way to watch the Mavericks take on another team comprised predominantly of Afro-Caribbeans. I approached a group of three women, wives of three of the players, whom I had seen the week before. They were the only women at the game the previous week and again they had come prepared with lawn chairs, blankets and large umbrellas. I set up my chair beside them and they expressed surprise that I had come back to another game. I told them that I would be at all the games, all summer long, but that I was also surprised at their returning, especially since it had been so chilly and pouring rain the previous Saturday. They acted as though there was nowhere else they would rather be:

The problem is people, young people these days don’t know how to relax. We need time to do these long games and lime or gaff as the Guyanese say. You come early and stay late, just relax ... Once you have a West Indian pace of life, this is all you do on the weekends. (Camila)

Money cyaan’t buy dis, you know. People wit’ money not here an’ dey don’t know what dey missing! ... We don’ wan’ no shopping or watching TV. That’s North American. What we want is lime. That might appeal to our children – walking up and down the mall – but that’s not us. (Tayana)

Percelle, the eldest of the group, a 41-year-old Grenadian-Canadian, sat back, adjusted her sunhat (which was unwarranted, but indicated her hope that the sun would emerge) and took out a novel. “That’s what’s wrong with Canadians.” She said, matter-of-factly distinguishing herself as a non-Canadian despite having lived in the country for 30 years. “You’re always supposed to be on the go. Here on the weekends (she took an exaggerated deep breath). Aaaaaaaahhh. Ain’t it?” She looked to me for confirmation that spending time at the games is relaxing as she wrapped a blanket around her legs for warmth. I nodded. “*That’s* the West Indian in us.” Percelle spoke as though she had effectively summed up everything I needed to know: Afro-Caribbean culture involves relaxing. The irony here is that the female partners of male cricketers who are present at the cricket ground are in the vast minority. For many weeks, only three to ten women joined thirty or more men. The majority of female partners were elsewhere, doing unpaid domestic labour or possibly involved in women-only spaces for relaxing such as hair salons (Anthony, 2005), bus shopping trips (Trotz, 2011), or kitchens (Marshall, 1983). The literatures on the lived experiences of Afro-Caribbean womanhood in Canada (e.g., Beckford, 2012; Chancy, 1997, Crawford, 2003; Jackson and Naidoo, 2012) hardly posit “relaxation” as a main tenet. Rather, the intersections of racism, sexism and classism force Afro-Caribbean women to work harder, suffer more abuse and experience more discrimination than the average Canadian. Black Caribbean women compensate for this by creating a persona of strength that allows them to deal with all manner of hardship without breaking down physically or mentally, and diversions allow them to disengage from the realities they face (Jackson and Naidoo, 2012). Claiming a lifestyle premised on relaxation may be one way in which Percelle and her peers combat their lived reality.

Many female MCSC members contrast their Caribbean and Canadian cultures and posit the cricket grounds as “outside” Canada. They “travel” to the grounds to escape a (young) mainstream, consumerist Canadian society. These women arrive early to games, set up their seats, arrange their umbrellas to shade them from the sun (or protect them from the rain), open their coolers full of snacks and alcohol, and set about the business of relaxing. They are proud of their weekends’ “West Indian pace of life” and explain relaxing without spending money and “walking up and down the mall” as part of their sense of Afro-Caribbeanness. They claim consumerism is a big part of being Canadian that they do not subscribe to, yet their new clothing (brightly coloured tops and shorts), accessories (big earrings, gold watches, multiple rings and purses to match their outfits) and choices of alcohol (imported beer and expensive cognac) belie their anti-consumerist attitudes. The

female club members reported jobs in office administration, accounting, business and education. None of them were retired. Their working- and middle-class, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. weekday hours and adult children permitted them the freedom and motivation to *lime* on the weekends. Some of their peers who were engaged in shift work or had young children were unable to make it to the cricket grounds. However, for men and women who are getting sicker and lonelier in old age, with less disposable income, connecting with their friends and family at the cricket ground and engaging in a celebratory atmosphere was one way of assuaging the emotional and physical pain of ageing in the diaspora.

The focus on *liming* can only partially explain why “young people” (second- and third-generation Afro-Caribbean-Canadians) do not join the MCSC. When the Mavericks competed in England, a few opposing teams boasted Caribbean men from their twenties to their seventies on their rosters. This multi-generational mix, within the same type of *liming* atmosphere the MCSC creates in Toronto, suggests that the local broader sporting culture may be a significant factor in determining whether or not second- and third-generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants are interested in devoting their entire weekends to the club. In England, although football (soccer) is the more popular sport, cricket holds a central place in popular culture even as it is seen as epitomising rural, traditional, elitist, white, Englishness (Malcolm, 2013). In Canada, however, cricket remains marginal, is only beginning to appear in some multi-ethnic high schools and falls far short of soccer, ice hockey, volleyball and baseball in popularity among the adult population (Canadian Heritage, 2013). Recreationally, among second- and third-generation immigrants, cricket is played primarily by South Asian youth in Canada. Although their young people are missing, the MCSC players and spectators see the cricket grounds as a place to recreate Afro-Caribbean communities.

Bishops is a 69-year-old black Barbadian-Canadian supporter who migrated to Canada in 1989, but has been visiting Toronto to work and stay with family since 1962. He umpired for the Mavericks from the time he migrated until he developed cataracts in the early 2000s. Bishops still arrives to every home game at least an hour early. He no longer needs to prepare for the game; rather, he arrives early so that he can “have a drink, or whatever. See who is about ... I like being around, so it doesn’t disturb my weekend. This *is* my weekend ... How long I been comin’ here? So long I can’t remember (laughs).” Pre-game *liming* has been a regular part of Bishops’ weekend routine for 20 years and something he has done in Toronto for nearly half a century. He talks with other MCSC members over the cacophony of rhythms that emanate from multiple car stereos in the parking area. He reminisces about past games, heckles his friends and

enjoys a game or two of dominoes. His weakened eyes prevent him from umpiring or driving, but his sister brings him to the matches in the mornings and picks him up late at night, giving him the entire day on Saturday and again on Sunday to *lime* with his friends. This cricket institution is important for his sense of community. Like the older Afro-Caribbean men in England, whom Carrington (1998) records describing the cricket club as “part of their history” (p. 287), a “focal point,” and a “shining light” in the community (p. 288), Bishops is unable to imagine what else he would do with his weekends. His entire social circle can be found within the MCSC.

Before games (and before MCSC members were fully intoxicated) were occasions for more serious discussions. MCSC members do not often discuss the negative experiences of racism they have had in Canada; however, they do see themselves as racialised subjects. When asked about challenges at work, transit, or life in Toronto, most players and supporters recounted experiences of institutional or interpersonal racism, such as being turned down for a job for which they were qualified, being reprimanded for infractions that were common among all employees, being stared at in public, or sensing (especially white women’s) fear or disgust when alone in an elevator or seated on a bus. Discussions of racism were rarely named as such, but a tacit understanding was shared among players who spoke of whites as “they,” and described to me a look or feeling of exclusion they experienced.

Invariably, they relied on a neoliberal mantra of having a “thick skin,” getting an education and using hard work and perseverance to overcome racial barriers. Having a close-knit network of friends and family also helped them to survive, especially when they first arrived in Canada. Rogers’ (2001, p. 186) observations of Afro-Caribbeans in New York suggest “Racial barriers that block their path into the mainstream make it necessary for these black immigrants to hold onto their transnational ties and the accompanying exit option.” The “exit” does not have to be to an entirely different nation-state or homeland, however. MCSC games and events provided a separate space for blacks to share their struggles and create an alternative community. Beyond escaping racial barriers, many of the MCSC members join together because they enjoy each other’s company and find it easy to create a carefree social environment at the cricket grounds.

Fête-match *liming*

Every Maverick game featured a celebratory atmosphere, but approximately one-third of the Mavericks games were formally named fête-matches, a cricket

match and fête in one. Fête-matches were typically held in honour of a visiting team from Windsor, Ontario; Montreal, Quebec; the Caribbean; or United States. However, one of the biggest fête-matches of the summer was between locals. A Memorial Match is held every July in honour of a Toronto police officer of Barbadian descent who died in the line of duty:

[The memorial game] is Metro [Toronto Police] versus Barbados Ex-Police. On that day you mus' come early or will not get a place to park anywhere. Many senior officers come ... *Share* and *Camera* [Caribbean-Canadian newspapers] come to do stories on it for the local players. There is no stereo system unfortunately because we don't have a clubhouse but people blast music from their cars. It is something the whole community is involved in. (Winston)

To say that “the whole community” is involved raises the question of how “community” should be defined. There are some obvious constituents of the Afro-Caribbean community missing: those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, between 10 and 40 years of age, Francophones, Hispanophones, Indo-Caribbeans, many wives and girlfriends and non-drinkers, to name a few, are unable or unwilling to join in this celebratory, Afro-Caribbean space. Nevertheless, those who attend the Memorial Match name it as a central feature in the community social calendar.

On the day of the Memorial Match in 2008, I made my way to the grounds early so that I could find a parking place. One hour before the game was scheduled to begin, only a few players and a handful of supporters were present. I wondered if I had gone to the wrong location and asked one of the men I saw relaxing at the scorer's table. “No, dis [Mavericks], dey always startin' late boy! You know 'bout West Indian time?” West Indian Time requires the addition of at least one hour to any game's scheduled starting time. Tettey and Puplampu (2005) explain that members of the African diaspora can adhere to a mainstream concept of time in their workplaces and in dealings with institutions outside their homespace; however, within their communities they revert to African time, black people time, island time or West Indian time, which constitute a form of time that is non-linear or polychronic and does not dwell on schedules. “The fact that they are able to apply appropriate time schemes to particular contexts is an indication of the dialectics of continuity and discontinuity that characterise the *in-between* spaces these communities occupy” (Tettey and Puplampu, 2005, p. 154, emphasis in original). They avoid misunderstandings and tensions because all share a “silent language” (Hall, 1959) and an understanding of MCSC as an organisation that runs on polychronic time. They are hybridised Caribbean-Canadians, who emphasise certain aspects of their identities at particular times.

By one o'clock, the scheduled starting time, the crowd had thickened, but several players were still missing. No one who had arrived on time seemed to mind or even notice that the game did not start promptly. While they waited for the match to begin, some men started to play a game of dominoes. Others were gathered around the trunks of their cars, filling their plastic cups with a caramel-coloured liquid (usually rum or brandy), telling jokes and talking aggressively. Some players were getting into uniform, using the area around the boundary as their changing room with no apparent concern for modesty. They sat on the grass, applied their ointments, bandages and braces in preparation for the game. By the time the game started, I was thankful that I had arrived early because the field adjacent to the boundary had rapidly filled with cars. At the coin toss there were over 100 spectators and close to 200 more joined us by the end of the day.

Throughout the game, the music, alcohol and conversation helped MCSC members to create communities similar to what they (imagine they) experienced at home. Men who were former police officers from Barbados bonded with current members of the Toronto police force, while a popular Edwin Yearwood song, *It Feels Like I'm Home Again*, was featured at the 2009 Memorial Match. The song eloquently captures the mood at the grounds by describing the celebrating, music playing, dancing and "misbehaving" that go on at a Caribbean party. MCSC members use music and other cultural forms to make cricket grounds in Toronto, their nations of origin and elsewhere in the diaspora feel like home.

Early in 2008, the team travelled to the island of St. Lucia for a tournament. At one of those games, a very loud, rusty green jeep pulled up alongside the grounds and Sutara, a 65-year-old Indo-Trinidadian-Canadian woman, announced "Reggae truck come!" as though this was one of the regular features of the match for which she had been waiting. She got out of her seat and was grabbed by her 66-year-old Trinidadian husband, Hussein. They danced at the side of the field even though he was fully dressed in cricket whites, with his pads on, waiting for the next wicket to fall so that he could go in to bat. The sight of spectators and players grabbing women to dance with around the boundary was a regular feature of the Mavericks' fête-matches.

Terrel, a 56-year-old black St. Lucian-Canadian, took great pride in the history of the club and the way in which it brings people together for travel and games every weekend:

We play an entertaining form of cricket. It is a community t'ing. We all know each other. That is what makes it enjoyable. There are more spectators at our cricket than any other cricket in Ontario because we are set up as a community cricket club ... You see there we dancin' an' singin', here, we do a prayer before it [second innings] start. It's not just sport for us. (Terrel)

The prayer and moment of silence among players standing in a circle on the field after the tea break one game demonstrated to one club member, whose brother had recently died in Barbados, that he has the support, empathy and love of his fellow players. By describing their activities as “not just sport,” Terrel explained that MCSC provides a resource beyond cricket matches. They are a social community that draws on each other for emotional support. Their friendships are so long lasting (over 50 years in some cases) that some MSCS members consider each other “fictive kin.” Afro-Caribbeans are involved in family networks that knit blood relatives and friends across global spaces. Research studies on diasporic families (Bashi, 2007; Olwig, 2001; Sutton, 2004; 2008) mainly focus on women’s experiences and roles in maintaining social and kin networks, especially underlining the inclusive nature of the concept of family, including step parents, half-siblings and fictive kin, who are “like family to us” in childrearing and emotional support (Sutton, 2004, p. 245). The MCSC demonstrates that men also preserve communities and develop social capital across the diaspora through the relationships they renew with their friends and family members at cricket matches. This is particularly true for those men who are unable or unwilling to return to the homeland after retirement as they had once planned. Meeting at the local cricket ground with others not only to celebrate good times, but also to share their sadness around ageing (though this is often done through humour); cope with illness, death and grief; and reconcile their physical and emotional alienation from the homeland, helps them to survive in the diaspora.

In cricket, only the batsman and bowler are guaranteed to be engaged in every play. The fielders and the other batsmen spend 90 per cent of the game waiting for their turn in the spotlight, which, for the Mavericks, leaves ample time to drink and socialise with each other during games. One might expect such a relaxed approach to come from spectators, not players, but as a result of the non-competitive ethos and friendly nature of the Mavericks’ cricket, being on the field does not stop them from telling jokes, heckling other players and even eating and drinking. At one game, I witnessed Otis, a 47-year old black Barbadian-Canadian fielding at the third-man position (close to the boundary) while drinking rum and coke from a plastic cup and devouring a curry chicken roti wrapped in a napkin. He kept his beverage and lunch just outside the boundary, out of respect for the sanctity of the field; however, in between plays he came over to chat with some of the spectators there while he ate and drank. In his discussion of professional cricket, Burton (1995, p. 91) explains that the “constant and indispensable involvement of the crowd in West Indian cricket

can be paralleled in many other Afro-Caribbean cultural institutions where there is no absolutely clear-cut separation between ‘performers’ and ‘spectators.’” For example in Afro-Christian religious worship there is passionate interplay between ‘priests’ and ‘congregation.’ In carnival the performers, masqueraders and audience eventually become indistinguishable. Afro-Caribbean cricket can be best appreciated and understood as a similar “collective rite” and “popular fête” where the players and spectators become indistinguishable.

A close examination of the concept of boundaries helps to understand the function of cricket for the MCSC. Hannerz (1997, p. 10) explains boundary as a term that belongs with other geographical metaphors, “frontier,” and “borderland”; yet these “are terms not for sharp lines, but for zones, where one thing gradually shifts into something else, where there is blurring, ambiguity and uncertainty.” Writings emerging out of or about the US–Mexico borderland (e.g., Kearney, 1996) reject the notion of the boundary as a container for culture in favour of a borderland where multiple, complex and contradictory identities are formed. The boundary marker in traditional cricket is a heavy white rope that encircles the playing field. The Mavericks, lacking in many of the resources of wealthier cricket clubs with permanent establishments, mark their boundaries with pylons spaced approximately seven metres apart. Consequently, an imaginary line connecting the pylons separates the playing field from the spectators’ area. This porous boundary marker operates as more of a frontier or borderland, and what happens at the interstices is symbolic of the ways these Afro-Caribbean-Canadian men recreate their ethnic identities. The boundary around their cricket field is a ludic space, a contact zone for the meeting and mingling of people and a metaphor for the national, regional and village boundaries that are crossed regularly by the players.

For the MCSC, the boundary does not distinguish players and non-players, those formally involved in athletic pursuits from those who are there to be entertained and socialise. The supporters are often former players or current Mavericks who are taking a day off from play. They do not allow an imaginary boundary line to separate them. Their back and forth conversations and combining of “serious” sporting play with “frivolous” word play, drinking or eating resists the competitive, serious and hierarchical traditional construction of the Victorian English sport, and is in line with Afro-Caribbean transformations of cricket into a fête or carnival atmosphere where boundaries are made and transgressed. Gupta and Ferguson (1992) point out that the hybridised subject that is produced in borderlands is more normal than exceptional. The spaces on either side of the boundary are not as stable, homogenous or fixed as traditional anthropological work

has shown. The diasporic subject, situated within a “transnational public sphere means that the fiction that such boundaries enclose cultures and regulate cultural exchange can no longer be sustained” (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992, p. 19). The laughing, joking, eating, talking and fielding Otis engaged in at the border zone contiguous with the playing field demonstrate the inseparability of socialising and playing sport, and operate as a metaphor for the regular border crossing and hybrid identities of these men of the Afro-diaspora.

To take the metaphor of crossing boundaries further, the Mavericks continue to play cricket with their friends and family members in and from other nations. The imaginary line separating nation-states, such as that between Canada and the United States is also porous. Massey (1994) describes spaces as “extraverted.” Local places are grounded in global flows that are unrestrained by boundaries. The modes of belonging to a place (i.e., within the boundaries) are defined by a multiplicity of political, social and cultural practices and procedures in other places (i.e., outside the boundary). Therefore, the players (and their food and drink) that slip through are essential to the creation of a global sense of place and unity among Afro-Caribbean-Canadians. When Otis engaged with his peers – from Toronto, Montreal and England – at the boundary, he demonstrated how the local depends on the global. The making and crossing of boundaries, in multiple senses of the word, is essential for creating this Afro-diasporic community.

Although eating while playing was against Otis’ captain’s wishes, when the weather is hot and a team is visiting from out of town, some cricket etiquette is abandoned in favour of the fête. Warlie’s Barbadian-English brother who came to visit him in Toronto for a few weeks said, “I like this game. It reminds me of when Maple play home all of you keeping noise here.” His comparison of the Mavericks in Toronto to Maple Cricket Club in Holetown, one of Barbados’ most esteemed clubs, is evidence that the Mavericks have done an adequate job recreating a homeland environment through cricket. The many differences from Maple, including the matting they were playing on, the relative wealth and age of the players, the diversity of the players’ nationalities and the level of cricket play were all ignored in favour of emphasising the similarities and the affective sense of home created.

During cricket games, the Mavericks entertain each other with domino competitions and spirited rounds of verbal sparring featuring ribald jokes, witty insults and clever “trash talking” in an antiphonal call and response fashion. “I find that they are very aggressive in the sense of conversation, very noisy, makes a lot of noise. ‘Always miserable’ I call it (laughs),” Layton, a Barbadian-Canadian

joked about his fellow Afro-Caribbeans. The consumption of spirits typically accompanies their socialising, which increases in volume and intensity as each afternoon turns into evening. Outsiders may misconstrue the constant yelling of the domino players, cricketers and spectators as fighting, but, as Otis and Layton explained, friends say what is on their minds and do not take insults personally:

It's a fun bunch. We have our ups and downs but when that's finished we all family ... When it's done I don't hold it against any person ... You figure a bad field placing, or bad batting order or bad bowling change, these are things that can happen that cause cricketers to get frustrated, but after we leave the field we all one group. Like it never happen. (Layton)

Although Layton was shouting and swearing at (and about) his captain for the better part of 10 minutes, he insists that there are no hard feelings. This means of aggressive talking is a ludic, community celebration of speech, a ritualised conflict that brings men together (Abrahams, 1983). Otis agrees:

You see, for me I figure if me and you is friends an' I get upset wit' you an' you get upset wit' me I should be able to tell you how I feel an' it should be no problem between me an' you. When me speak me mind we should be able to sit down an' have a drink an' be happy 'bout letting we one another know how we feel ... I don't care how loud it get.

Their demonstrations of verbosity, volume and vehemence are central to performances of Afro-Caribbean masculinity. Abrahams (1983) shows that Caribbean men are socialised to engage in a form of ritualised battle with each other through their words. Language is not used merely for communication; rather, talking with wit, poetry, repetition, creative insults, volume and fluency is an instrument of power, domination and masculine display. Community members join into the antiphony of the argument, creating a celebration of speaking acts enjoyed by all, and subverting the structures and hierarchies of the everyday world (Abrahams, 1983). Highlighting as he does, talking in this way as “play,” Abrahams (1983) makes it easy to see that the physical engagement with the sport of cricket is not the only way these men play on their summer weekends. Moreover, those who come to games as supporters and spend afternoons commenting on cricketers' accomplishments (or lack thereof) are just as engaged in cricket play in a manner different from the dominant understanding of the sport. Barbadian diasporic novelist, Paule Marshall (1983) explains that the idiom of a people, the way they use language, reflects their very conception of reality. The Mavericks loudly ridicule each other, take note of people breaking the rules and point out failures, often in a humorous manner, demonstrating the

importance of being heard, freedom of speech, justice and reputation in Afro-Caribbean communities.

A popular spark for loud disagreements around the boundary was a differing philosophy about the objectives of the cricket games and tours: recreation and vacation versus responsibility and competition. For example, the umpires for their matches are usually volunteers: MCSC supporters or current players who are taking a rest day typically assume the responsibility. They don a white jacket and hat, carry six stones or marbles to keep track of the legal balls in each over and are not permitted to consume alcohol. Many of the Mavericks are resistant to taking on an umpiring role, especially because if they are not playing that day, they want to drink and *lime* around the boundary with their friends. On one occasion, a few players from the batting team were asked to share the umpiring duties for a few overs each. They refused and an intense argument broke out around the boundary, with the captain yelling about players “Not having any fucking respect” and the players shouting that they cannot be told what to do (“I’m nobody’s bitch!” was a phrase that was repeated often). The use of sexist and/or homophobic remarks is commonplace in the community, reinforcing the notion of the cricket grounds as a place to make boys into (hegemonic) men (Carrington, 1998; James, 1963; Williams, 2001) and to perform a particular style of heterosexual masculinity. As a result of their differing philosophies about appropriate behaviour, the games, matches, meetings and post-game parties were punctuated by big disagreements.

When Hussein, a 66-year-old Maverick was bumped from his spot as opening batsman for two consecutive games he threatened to quit cricket all together. The captain had suggested that the seven top Mavericks should remain in the line-up at all times to improve their chances of winning the tournament in St. Lucia. The other players were described as “the walking wounded,” capable of bending down for balls, but often unable to get back up. Spectators often called out to the players to remind them that they were “playing cricket, not football [soccer]” because they were constantly using their feet to attempt to stop balls in the field instead of diving for catches as they may have done in years past. Hussein announced to his teammates: “I was around here from the origins [of this team], and he think he can play some fucking “super seven”? You see him? No fucking loyalty! Where would dis masters team be without me? We’re supposed to be playing *friendlies*. Raas!” Hussein’s swearing and use of the expletive “Raas!” (which translates most closely to “Damn!”) demonstrated his anger and sense of disbelief that he was being cast aside in favour of more capable players. The “super seven” were not only the seven most talented, but also happened to

be the youngest and fittest of the Mavericks. The blow to Hussein's ego that came with the realisation that he may now be considered too infirm for a team he helped to pioneer erupted in a verbal explosion. However, his "anger" dissipated as quickly as it erupted, as he turned to laugh and joke with one of his older (and even more infirm) teammates, demonstrating that the performance of anger was more authentic than the emotion itself.

In his examination of the linguistic innovations and performances of the black diaspora, Gilroy (1993, p. 85) notes that an "amplified and exaggerated masculinity has become the boastful centerpiece of a culture of compensation that self-consciously salves the misery of the disempowered and subordinated." Taking this concept into a sporting arena, Majors and Billson (1992, p. 30) point out that symbolic displays of toughness defend a black man's identity and gain him respect as an athlete. After a team meeting during which the recreation versus competition issues were discussed at length, amidst a combination of aggressive posturing and cool disinterest, the manager agreed to prioritise recreational rather than competitive goals and give every player equal game time. Subsequently, the "super seven" remained in every game for which they were available; however, Hussein re-entered the line-up as opening batsman for some of the games. This suited him well because once he was out he was free to drink on the sidelines while his teammates chased the number of runs needed to win.

The Mavericks prided themselves on their capacity for drinking and told stories around the boundary, in the pavilion, or at their cars about their purchase and consumption of expensive alcohol, how well they can play when they are drunk and how much fun they had while drunk at parties, on tours or after games. These stories are part of the gender myth making that dictates how they come to know themselves and their community. With their increasing age and declining physical prowess, the Mavericks are forced to emphasise other aspects of masculinity to protect their status. As Whannel (2002, p. 68) notes, "some of the key ingredients of a particular form of sporting masculinity ... being a rock-hard, unsentimental heavy drinker" are of key importance to the view of sport as "a form of masculine proving ground." The Mavericks drink copious amounts of alcohol and their brand choices are both deliberate and symbolic; as I've written elsewhere, they "mark their masculinity, class status and prominence within the group, through the purchase, sharing and consumption of expensive alcohols" (Joseph, 2011a, p. 159). The act of drinking is imbricated with costs, styles and rituals that denote class distinctions. Club members are expected to bring bottles of beer or spirits to the grounds to share among friends. This is over and above the portion of the club fees they pay that goes towards alcohol for

the after-parties. Consumption of vodka is not as common as cognac. Anthony adopted a haughty English accent “May I offer me lady a spot of Courvoisier” as he pretended to be my butler and poured generously from an \$80, 750-ml bottle. Consuming expensive brands and embodying Englishness are used to signal sophistication.

Consumption of rums, in contrast, signal a commitment to the homeland, transnational travel and working-class roots. Players are quick to emphasise that they “only” drink rums from their homelands (e.g., Wray and Nephew from Jamaica, Cavalier from Antigua), which “not only signals a fixation on tradition for these older men, but it also provides evidence of their nostalgia for, allegiance to, and regular access to home” (Joseph, 2011a, 159). The Mavericks boast about how little they paid when they purchased the bottles the last time they were home. They could possibly buy some of their favourite Caribbean rum brands in Toronto liquor stores, yet they prefer to keep money in their nations of origin, supporting their friends and family who are shop owners and pay local (Caribbean national) prices. Even though the rum was acquired for a low cost it has a high value. When one woman uses Terrel’s rum to quell the sting of a mosquito bite she is chastised (jokingly) for “wasting” it. “Ah wah dis t’all? You t’ink I here fe watch fuckin’ cricket? I here fe drink! Don’t go wastin’ me rum ’pon stupidness, you hear?” His mock anger and miserable attitude elicited laughter from all within earshot and this type of behaviour carried on for the duration of most games and well into the after-parties.

Post-game *liming*

A cricket match might start at noon (one o’clock Caribbean time), but many MCSC members do not arrive at the Mavericks’ home grounds until five o’clock, in advance of the post-game celebrations that typically get underway by six or seven o’clock. Post-game celebrations are a key motivational factor for MCSC members’ participation in this community. Vilroy, a 68-year-old black Barbadian-Canadian, explained to me: “Once the game is out of the way then we party!” Warlie, his 70-year-old compatriot concurs: “The joy of that cricket [with visiting teams] is the socialise after the game. It doesn’t matter who win, because we, at our age, we just havin’ fun. And it’s about R and R. Do you know what that means?” Warlie asked me, with a twinkle in his eye. “Rest and Relaxation?” I inquired, knowing that there had to be something more to this furtive question. “No, no, no, no.” Warlie laughed. “R and R is rice and rum! That’s the fun part. After the game, we have

someone to go cook for us every weekend, an' have food an' drinks." The Mavericks refer to their sport as "R and R cricket," "goat water cricket," "rum cricket," "liming cricket," and "fête-match cricket," which emphasises the priority food, drink, conversation and dance takes in this Afro-Caribbean community. Marshall, a black 58-year-old Barbadian-Canadian, explained that "It is a very social type of game, so what happens is that the game of cricket really starts after the game. The camaraderie, the getting together after the game and having drinks and a few post-mortems and stuff like that makes the game of cricket, what it really is."

Most of the Mavericks' games were followed by players gathering in the changing room (or around the boundary where changing rooms were unavailable) for a slow process of changing out of their cricketing clothes and starting a post-mortem meeting where they discussed the strengths and weaknesses of their performances in the game over a few drinks. After changing, the Mavericks typically enjoyed in a dinner, award presentation, party or dance where alcohol was also a significant feature. Male and female bodies rubbed together to the rhythms of the omnipresent music. The lascivious behaviour increased as more alcohol was consumed, but these actions were not dependent on the outcome of the game: "Win or lose we drink our booze!" was a common mantra.

After the players changed out of their whites (uniforms), they typically had an opportunity to enjoy food provided by the home team. Usually the wife or girlfriend of one member of the team, or a female club member prepared the food. On the Mavericks' tours, the cooks had the advantage of using the kitchens in the clubhouses to prepare meals. Clubhouse kitchens were usually busy all day with at least two generations of women spending the morning preparing tea (a meal of crustless egg, tuna, cornmeal and/or cucumber sandwiches served with hot tea and cold juice) for between innings. They spent the afternoons cooking an elaborate traditional Caribbean meal for dinner. All afternoon the mother-daughter team, sometimes with grandchildren running underfoot, chopped vegetables, seasoned meat and prepared sauces, the aromas of which filled the clubhouse and the grounds, building players' and spectators' anticipation of the meal to come. MCSC members were unable to enjoy this aromatic aspect of the after-party at their home games because the meals were always prepared off-site and brought to the grounds by the caterers in their cars, thus they relished having access to a clubhouse for the fragrant reminders of the homeland it provided.

Those who were able to replicate authentically the flavours of the homeland, by using Caribbean imported ingredients or recipes handed down for generations, were venerated, welcomed back and in all cases paid to provide dinner. Women's recipes are an indigenous knowledge system containing centuries-old

information about ingredients, spices and modes of preparation. One MCSC member who operates her own catering company with her daughters was often hired to provide meals. Despite their hard labour, the pleasure women gain from preparing these meals, especially in association with their children, should not be discounted. They created stereotypical Afro-Caribbean dishes: rice and peas, fried or jerk chicken or fish, provisions (plantain, breadfruit, yams), green salad, oxtail and gravy, and goat water or curry goat, with souse (pork hooves, chopped tomatoes, onions and cucumbers in a vinegar sauce) or cassava pone (cake) for dessert. As Schmidt (2008) notes about Caribbean music in the diaspora, the incorporation of many national styles signals a trans-Caribbean presence that opposes mainstream or singular nation styles. The chefs did not shy away from serving Jamaican akee alongside Barbadian flying fish. Trinidadian chicken roti was paired with Barbadian macaroni pie and was usually laid out on a table with servers making up plates for the long line of players, supporters and community members who came for dinner.

The performance of gastro-nostalgia is characterised by continued preference for ingredients, cooking styles and eating practices from the homeland, which reflect a desire to establish bonds of communion with the past and the diaspora, maintain culinary/cultural identities and enact postcolonial resistance against mainstream cultural forms (Cook and Harrison, 2003, 2007; Theopano and Curtis, 1991). Unsatisfied with iconic “Canadian” cuisine, such as Tim Horton’s doughnuts, the members require, what Vilroy calls, “proper food” after their games: “Now some of the clubs try to outdo each other with curry goat and t’ing. You know it’s a social gathering. After running around in the sun we don’t want to just eat a donut, so we have some proper food. West Indian food.”

Whether it is the cooking style of barbeque, the African-inspired use of root crops such as dasheens and yams, the partiality for spices such as curry or jerk, the incorporation of fruits such as plantain and okra, or the omnipresent hot pepper sauce, Afro-Caribbean food carries with it regional and heritage markers, and eating it can give rise to an imagined, temporary visit to the homeland and a sense of maintenance of ancestral identifications. Sorrel juice, malt drinks, coconut water, rum punch and a range of soft drinks put thirsty MCSC members at ease with the liquid flavours of home. The global production of some of these products (e.g., Coca-Cola from the United States or coconut water sourced from Thailand) does not negate their association with the homeland for club members.

The foods consumed after games offer a sense of regional if not nation-of-origin identity for the Mavericks. More than the specific food types, for some

club members the rituals of eating – including dining in a casual buffet style; sucking, crushing and spitting out bones; and eating until one's belt must be loosened – signal resistance to assimilation to hegemonic Canadian culture and bourgeois propriety restrictions of eating indoors, at a table with a knife and fork, waiting until everyone is served and not talking with food in one's mouth. On one occasion, I lined up for dinner behind a corpulent woman, Beatrice, who was a supporter of a visiting team from New York. She took two plates at the start of the buffet table and asked the servers for two pieces of fried chicken on each plate. This did not seem to be an anomaly because many women, who are always permitted to line up first for food, often get a plate for their children or husbands at the same time. However, Beatrice had neither a husband nor children with her on the trip. The caterer, who knew this, pointed at one of her laden plates and asked, "Who is this for?" With a New York-Guyanese accent she exclaimed, "How you t'ink I get so big an' fat?!" in mock anger. "My mumma tell me don' be too skinny, dey t'ink you poor, so me eatin' fuh two, thank you very much!" she exclaimed with a scowl. After loading up her plates with rice and peas and green salad, she stuck out her large breasts and round backside and pranced away from the buffet table. This comment elicited laughter from many other women in the line and sent a clear message about the social significance of food in this black cricket space.

We do not need to explore Afro-Caribbean communities in depth to discover examples of class-based nutritional inequalities as matters of life and death. Hurricanes, earthquakes and droughts leave many families at the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder, at risk of experiencing lingering hunger and, indeed, dying of starvation. Although many of the Mavericks demonstrate a high-class status through their alcohol preferences, the food the Mavericks purchase, share and consume represents what Bourdieu (1984, p. 185) refers to as popular, working-class tastes for the heavy, the fat and the coarse. It is interesting to note that the Mavericks do not describe this as central to working-class emphases on the importance of body strength and cheap, nutritious, calorie-rich foods, as Bourdieu (1984) describes. Instead, their emphasis on indulgence and over-consumption is used to mark a higher class status; a big, round bottom and ample breasts for women in particular, are symbols of wealth, health and prestige in this community. Not every woman took two plates, but the servings of food were always generous and seconds were provided without rebuke until every scrap was consumed. Indeed, to pass on dinner was frowned upon. Any of my attempts to decline were met with astonishment, frustration and even anger. My Caribbeanness was constantly questioned and tested, and not eating placed

me under suspicion among women. Although the ground might be marked as a men's cricket space, it also provides a venue to perform middle-class, black, older women's Caribbean femininity through food consumption. The overt rejection of dominant North American beauty standards that require a skinny body, flat belly and food portion restrictions reveal the space as outside mainstream Canadian society.

An important corollary of dinner was dancing. Many teams hosted a party at their clubhouse, a street fête, their hotels, or at a rented hall. It is important to re-emphasise here that which team won the game is not important. C. L. R. James' (1963, pp. 197–198) thick description of cricket explains:

cricket is perhaps the only game in which the end result (except where national or local pride is at stake) is not of great importance. Appreciation of cricket has little to do with the end, and less still with what are called 'the finer points,' of the game. What matters in cricket, as in all the arts, is not finer points but what everyone with some knowledge of the elements can see and feel.

James refers to emotions evoked by the players on the field, but his analysis can be extended to the broader cricket environment. What do the spectators see and feel around the boundary, in the clubhouse, or at the parties?

The disparity in the numbers of male and female MCSC members was most noticeable at parties where men only danced with female partners, and many men were left standing at the bar or sitting at tables because all of the women were occupied. Certain players constantly asked me to reserve them a dance, so that I was never wanting for a partner. Reggie, a 52-year-old Indo-Guyanese-Canadian player, remarked "Where you get so much pep?" when another player asked if he could cut in to dance with me, and Reggie, after having danced three songs already, needed to sit and rest. About half of the club members usually remained on the dance floor for the majority of the night. They danced with their hands in the air, "getting on bad" and "winning their waists" (grinding their groins and backsides on their partners), to old calypso and reggae tunes and paraded around the dance floor in pairs to country songs and American ballads until they were sweaty, out of breath and sore in the joints or muscles, at which time they retreated to the seating area to rest, or to the bar to refill their glasses.

Terrel, a 56-year-old black St. Lucian-Canadian, explained that he always has something to celebrate and is proud to be the last one to leave a party, even when he is on the visiting team: "We send home the members, we close up their clubhouse, we like to party as a community. It helps that we always winnin'!" The Mavericks did not, in fact, always win, but their celebrations at the end of each night certainly gave that impression. When the Mavericks travelled, their

celebrations typically continued from the after-party in the clubhouse, to the bus, to their hotel. Back at the hotel, female MCSC members sat at tables in the hotel restaurant or suites, chatted with one another, or more often, went to their rooms to sleep, while the men spent hours standing or sitting near the bar, or relaxing in their suites discussing Windies cricket or nation of origin politics as well as the critical moments of the game they had just won or lost: Which over was the turning point? Which bail came off which stump, and why? Was it or was it not a leg bye? Can the umpire be trusted? Should the captain have moved the slip? These questions were critical to players' egos, their impressions of their performances and their anticipation for upcoming games.

One night after a game in St. Lucia, four of the Mavericks and I sat at a table in Lawrence's hotel suite drinking rum and eating his famous curried pork. I asked the players to tell me how they each got introduced to the group and Curtis explained when he first arrived in Canada and had started working at a factory near his home in Scarborough he overheard Lawrence talking at lunchtime. He instantly recognised the white Trinidadian's accent, and although he is a black man from Grenada he felt a kinship between them. Lawrence invited him out to cricket and despite their age difference – Curtis was only 18 years of age when they met and Lawrence was 48 – they remained close friends ever since. Curtis explained that Lawrence was “like a father”.

He help nurture me into a man, you know? ... I was content to keep renting [a house] – terrified actually – of taking on a debt like a mortgage and so. Baby coming the next year and he sit me down and advise me, paying rent is same as paying a mortgage, but if you own property you can get somewhere in Canada, you know? ... He really show me the ins and outs of this place. For that I owe him my life.

To my surprise, Curtis appeared to be close to tears and he reached over to put Lawrence in a headlock before planting a kiss on his cheek. Lawrence replied “I love this guy. Known him near 30 years and I can say I love him” as he hugged Curtis back before wrestling out of the headlock. This type of open, physical affection between men was rare, but an important aspect of the homosocial camaraderie developed through this sport and social club.

Michelle Stephens (2005, p. 14) draws from C. L. R. James' work to discuss the homosocial “routes” transnational Caribbean intellectuals of the early twentieth century followed; they created “a black transnational community as black men travelling in colonial space in a common state of desiring, desiring freedom, language, community – and each other.” The space James describes is a homosocial world that permits deep affinities between men, but as Stephens

(2005) and Abdel-Shehid (2005) point out, homosexual affections or attractions are disavowed. As much as they displayed their love for each other, Lawrence and Curtis were both also known for displays of homophobic banter, even later that same night, as another one of the Mavericks, Michael, a 56-year-old Indo-Guyanese-Canadian, joined the party in a pink-and-blue, iridescent, button-down shirt that Lawrence and Curtis felt was a “homo style.” Michael was derided and interrogated about what kind of club (gay or straight) he would be frequenting later that night. Homosexual or transgendered men, *queens*, *buggers* and *batty bwoys*, who are a minority but well known on every Caribbean island and in Caribbean-Canadian communities (Crichlow, 2004; Murray, 2012) are said not to exist among the MCSC members; however, it must be surmised that somewhere, in the space of “freedom,” post-game *liming* and homosociality represented by the cricket grounds and cricket-related travel, it is likely that some male club members had additional, intimate motivations for participation in men-only spaces. I admit, there were many social spaces, locker rooms and hotel suites that I chose not to or was prohibited from accessing or researching owing to my gender and personal comfort levels; therefore, I was unable to document whether MCSC homosociality ever presents as homosexuality. My questions on this topic were met with denial, abhorrence, or laughter. Nevertheless, the cricket and social club after-parties allow opportunities for some alternative visions of black male intimacy.

This chapter highlights how *liming* before, during and after cricket matches is a means of (re)creating (in) an Afro-Caribbean community. By drawing on Afro-Caribbean cultures, not only cricket, but also verbal play, music, dancing, drinking and eating, MCSC members also hail elements of their ancestry. Though they are from different Caribbean nations, they unite based on their shared cultural roots, shared racial identifications and the creation of predominantly male, trans-Caribbean cultural spaces. People from Antigua, Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica are united as one community in Canada; they can head to their local cricket ground to capture a sense of Caribbeanness while “at home” in Toronto.

If black musical forms can be considered a “counterculture of modernity,” supplying “a great deal of the courage required to go on living in the present” (Gilroy, 1993, p. 36), then physical cultural practices, such as black/Caribbean cricket spaces, can also be examined as “deeply encoded oppositional practices” (p. 37) and means of “individual self-fashioning and communal liberation” (p. 40). Mavericks’ raucous behaviour at the cricket grounds, antiphonal communication styles and blurred distinctions between friends and family every weekend in Toronto and on trips abroad are functions of the desire to

resist their embedment in a predominantly white culture throughout their working week. They rely on diasporic resources including the folk cultures of their ancestors and opportunities for *liming* that allow them to feel that within Canada and the diaspora they are part of a community. What I have described here is generally in line with other anti-assimilationist theories and histories of diaspora that demonstrate how immigrants maintain their cultures in their new homes. This is not to say that the MCSC members are not also deeply influenced and transformed by their stays in the metropolis and visits to other diasporic locations. They are at once members of local, tightly bound Afro-Caribbean communities and transformed by the influence of the mainstream Canadian society and the embodied cultural understanding they gain in the various locations to which they travel. Their routes of travel and the influence this has on a globalised sense of community in the Afro-diaspora will be discussed in the next chapter.