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**KRIKET A SPOLEČENSTVÍ COMMONWEALTH:  
POROVNÁNÍ ANGLIE A INDIE**

**Pavína Sluková Křištofová**

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**CRICKET AND THE COMMONWEALTH:  
ENGLAND AND INDIA COMPARED**

**Pavína Sluková Krištofová**

**Plzeň 2018**

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Pavčina Sluková Krištofová

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The aim of this undergraduate thesis is to describe the major milestones of the cricket development in the world with the focus on the Commonwealth countries specifically on India throughout the history. It discovers what makes cricket such a popular game and how much of British Colonialism spirit there still is in cricket.

The thesis focuses on the key factors of cricket expansion in India and finds out about what people in India think about cricket and its relationship to Britishness through a survey.

The aspects of cricket considered in this thesis are the reasons of its popularity in Commonwealth countries and its new forms and the consequences they bring today.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

- 1) Do Indian people consider cricket as a symbol of Britishness?
- 2) How much of their own invention did Indian people implement into the game of cricket?

Hypothesis 1:

The results will show that there is a strong link to Britain in terms of how much of colonial essence in cricket is still noticed.

Hypothesis 2:

The results will show that there is at the same time a shift from the traditional conception of cricket.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### THEORETICAL PART

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1 CRICKET IN THE CONTEXT OF BRITISHNESS</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1 THE POSITION OF CRICKET AS A SPORT GAME	10
1.1.1 VARIABILITY	10
1.1.1.1 FORMS	10
1.1.1.2 SIZE AND SHAPES OF THE PITCH	11
1.2 BRITISHNESS AND ITS MEANINGS	12
1.3 CRICKET IN LITERATURE	14
1.4 CRICKET EQUALS FAIR PLAY EQUALS BRITISHNESS?	16
<b>2 CRICKET IN ENGLISH CULTURE</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 HISTORY	17
2.1.1 THE EARLY ERA	17
2.1.2 THE MODERN ERA – DOMESTIC CRICKET	18
2.1.3 BRITISH EMPIRE – INTERNATIONAL CRICKET	19
2.1.4 THREADS TO CRICKET IN THE POST COLONIAL COUNTRIES	20
2.1.5 TWO FACES OF CRICKET	21
<b>3 CRICKET IN INDIAN CULTURE</b>	<b>21</b>

3.1	HISTORY	22
3.1.1.	FIRST STEPS	22
1.1.1	INDEPENENCE	23
3.1.2.	TV PHENOENON	24
3.2.	THE FUTURE OF CRICKET	24
PRACTICAL PART		
<b>4.</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1.	INTRODUCTION	27
4.2.	QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN	27
4.2.1.	AGE AND GENDER	27
4.2.2.	FAMILY CONNECTION TO CRICKET	27
4.2.3.	CRICKET PLAYING AND LIKING IN THE PAST AND NOW	28
4.2.4.	CRICKET FANDOM AND IMPORTANCE IN LIFE	28
4.2.5.	FAVOURITE FORMAT OF CRICKET	28
4.2.6.	REASONS OF CRICKET'S POPULARITY	28
4.2.7.	POSITION OF CRICKET IN SOCIETY	28
<b>5.</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>29</b>
	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>37</b>
	<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>40</b>
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>41</b>
	<b>SUMMARY IN CZECH</b>	<b>45</b>





## INTRODUCTION

This thesis goes a little bit beyond the well-known definitions of the game of cricket that could not be, however, easily understood. The aim is not to define the very complex rules and even the more complex history of this (for us Czechs) unusual game which very probably needs a many years intensive study but to describe the major milestones of the cricket development in the world with the focus on Great Britain and on India throughout the history. The ambition is to discover what it is that makes cricket such a popular game in only a few chosen countries and how much essence of British Colonialism there still is in cricket. In spite of the widespread dispersal of Indians across the world, there is one thing that guarantees the persistence of the ethnic Indian identity – the game of cricket.

Chapter one shows the position of the game of cricket among other sports today. Various formats of cricket are described and several explanations of Britishness seen from different points of view are offered. Links between cricket and Britishness are searched. Some interesting facts about cricket in literature are displayed offering examples of different genres of literature. It is reflected how much of a fair-play in the game of cricket is.

In chapter two a brief history of the game of cricket in Great Britain is presented, including the spread out to British colonies. It scans its threads and the dualism of this game.

The history of cricket in India is briefly traced, as during British colonial rule the game was comprised and then twisted from a game of the rulers into a decolonized ‘genuinely Indian’ sport. A short history of cricket in India is presented proving there are few significant milestones which effected the development in such a vast extent gaining a huge popularity. It brings about the idea of the reasons why cricket is adored so enormously by Indian people. The future of cricket is examined.

The practical part of the thesis focuses on the key factors of cricket expansion in India and finds out about what people in India think about cricket, whether they play it now or whether they did play it when they were young. It examines the

relationship of this game to Britishness through a survey. The results bring an interesting view on the meaning of identification with Britishness.

## **1 CRICKET IN THE CONTEXT OF BRITISHNESS**

### **1.1 THE POSITION OF CRICKET AS A SPORT GAME**

For most Europeans the game of cricket does not mean anything or very little. As is verifiable by the list of number of fans - within Europe the number of cricket fans is negligible (Wood, 2008). The list shows that the only European country which appreciates cricket is actually the UK where this game occupies number one place in the table. According to other charts, however, the position should be more precisely put together with only England (and Wales) because in Scotland or Ireland cricket is not particularly popular. It might therefore be a surprise that cricket holds an amazing second place as the most popular sport in the world right after football in terms of reputation and number of fans (Wood, 2008).

So what is it that makes cricket so special? Macintosh, a well-established cricket correspondent says: *It is a game of such beautiful simplicity and yet it is blessed with layers so complex that it can be anything to anyone.*” (Macintosh, 2010). It brings out another phenomenon of this game which is its variability. There are many different formats to play it be it a first-class match or even street cricket as people call it.

#### **1.1.1 VARIABILITY**

Despite the vast number of fans cricket holds worldwide there are only ten teams with full international status, who play the top - Test matches. Then there are other, shorter formats of cricket getting more and more attention and becoming more popular. That is in spite of conservative fans and high-class players are very slowly accepting the new short formats criticizing the fact that classical cricket is losing its position (Macintosh, 2010). David Bond, a BBC sport editor is naming the whole situation as follows, *“On the playing side it's a question of money. The emergence of well-funded T20 competitions like the Indian Premier*

*League and the Big Bash in Australia has shifted the financial balance of power away from Test cricket to the shortest form of the game.”* (Bond, 2013).

#### 1.1.1.1 FORMATS

The use of the term “Form” or “Format” equals and is possible. There are sources using both, but also those using either one of them. Both terms mean the way cricket is played.

Each of the different formats of cricket has its own peculiarity and even made several changes to the usual laws of cricket. When the game of cricket first began, there were only two categories of matches: First-class and Tests. In modern times, there are six categories but in fact three fundamental forms of cricket: First Class, One day, Twenty20. The most usual formats are as follows:

##### TEST MATCH

Test match is one of the two traditional formats in which international game of cricket is played. It is the highest standard of cricket. The most noticeable difference is that the game lasts over five days - playing each day six hours. In the past it could be a timeless game but in the modern time it usually lasts This format of cricket has been played for about a hundred and fifty years (Macintosh, 2010, p. 84). The players always wear the whites and the ball they play with is of red colour. Another important distinction is that in Test match each side has two runs to bat - called innings (BBC, 2018).

##### LIMITED-OVERS

Another format is Limited-overs, as the name evokes, only limited number of bats are allowed so that the whole game lasts only one day. This format, lasting approximately 8 hours, has been developed over the last few decades, belongs to so called one-day matches and as such is immensely popular amongst wider numbers spectators (Macintosh, 2010, p. 84). For this game on contrary players wear coloured clothing and the ball they play with is all white. Limited overs is however only one from few other examples of one-day-cricket (BBC, 2018).

##### TWENTY20

Similar but at the same time different is another example of another one-day-cricket. That is Twenty20 - an even more concentrated format of cricket which is calculated to last only about three hours, so that the spectator can see the match on the weekend after work, as is the case

with football. This format of cricket is specifically starting to grow heavily especially in India although it was pushed from England ( (Bhogle, 2009). The first ever Twenty20 match was played in 2007 and it was considered to be a very fascinating affair mainly because nobody really knew what was going on and how serious it was. However, it certainly was impressive in a way that it was by far more full of action (Macintosh, 2010, p. 84).

## 100-BALL CRICKET

100-ball cricket is an illustration of further shortening the game time in hope to invite new spectators. It is a brand new form of cricket just being presented in early April 2018. In addition there were agreed other changes in the usual laws of cricket (Network, 2018).

## DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS

Playing cricket on a domestic level is naturally seen in the cricket countries the same as in the various non-cricket countries. It may be called Club Cricket and it may be played in a way comparable levels to the formats defined above. Nevertheless, these would not be considered “certified” cricket matches.

### 1.1.1.2 SHAPE AND SIZE OF THE PITCH

Another characteristic of variability is rather a curiosity. In spite of the length of the pitch, which is specified to 22 yards, on contrary the ground itself can have quite different sizes or shapes. These can be circular or oval if not others.

## 1.2 BRITISHNESS AND ITS MEANINGS

In the context of today's worries about the consequences of Brexit on the one hand and terrorist attacks on the other, there are discussions in place about British values and identity. What are these symbols and what does the term Britishness represent? What they are and what their purpose is? It is not only politicians and experts from various fields that speak about them, it is also seen in many blogs chats and posts on the internet that these topics concern many people in the United Kingdom. And in fact there are even several Facebook pages named Britishness. It is therefore understood that all those facts lead to an extensive complex discussion which has not finished yet and there is no sign it is going to end.

Nevertheless there certainly must be features of Britishness like the Queen, the Union Jack, rainy weather, many historical monuments and sights such as Westminster, Stonehenge, Scottish kilts and pipes, and many others. At least these are the objects foreigners would probably consider.

What are some ideas of the Britishness from the view of the United Kingdom as a country and what the country's representatives - politicians think about it? Last year's pre-elections speeches by Jeremy Corbyn showed some signs of national consciousness when saying: "It's because I am driven by these British majority values, because I love this country, that I want to rid it of injustice, to make it fairer, more decent, more equal." (Parker, 2015), which suggests words like "Britishness" and "British values" do count. Even the current Prime Minister Theresa May felt she had to denote what Britishness stands for as she mentioned family, shared endeavour and common interests (Smith, 2017). Unfortunately none of those using the term was more specific about what it really means.

In fact there has not been any conformity across the UK political parties what exactly Britishness should stand for. Apart from the fact that British values should be promoted via schools, which was one of the topics a former Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove (Government Digital Service, n/a) had opened, politicians continue to argue over what such values actually consist of. Following their political party lines some would see Britishness as the union flag, a symbol of unity, tolerance and inclusion. Others would rather prefer to compare it to chicken tikka masala as they see it as a typical example of engaging and modifying outside inspirations, no matter how strangely it sounds. And some would relate British values to green countryside, unbroken traditions, mistiness or even warm beer. One of the former Conservative party leaders, Norman Tebbit claimed that Britishness would be measured by whether one supported the England national cricket team. (Perraudin, 2014). The concept of Britishness in the context of the cultural, historical, constitutional and ethical tradition of the peoples was even a subject of a House of Lords debate in 2008. There however was no note about the connection to any sport whatsoever (Cruse, 2008), whereas, in contrast, Ellis Cashmore claims sport belongs to one of the important realms of British culture (Higgins, Smith, & Storey, 2010).

Yet there is a short note about cricket in a BBC article saying that: "*Britishness, it is often suggested, is ultimately about shared values of tolerance, respect and fair play, a belief in freedom and democracy*". The author claims: "*It has always struck me as a pretty insulting to*

*our friends and relations beyond these shores..... If Britishness means anything at all it must go beyond ticking boxes of general niceness..... So, my sense of my own identity is shaped by the wobbly cine-films of my brothers and me playing cricket.....” (Easton, 2012).*

In addition a term Englishness also exists and is used by few authors, namely by Anthony Bateman in *Cricket, Literature and Culture: Symbolising the Nation, Destabilising Empire* where the game of cricket is presented as something being changed from exhaustion of Englishness into a newly reborn anti and post-colonial program **(Bateman, 2009, p. 3)**.

### 1.3 CRICKET IN LITERATURE

If put into the Google Books search there are more than 705 thousand links as a result of “cricket” which hardly touches half of the results of “football”. However if the term “cricket history” is inserted it comes out with the number as high as 2 million which, comparing to football history”, is actually twice as much.

Since cricket is a game played specifically in the Commonwealth countries the view from the point of the colonialism has to be taken in account, too. In the enormous number of texts on British imperialism, the accent is mainly on the victory (both in the sport field the same as in the political situation), then later on the loss, of governmental control by the colonial authority in colonial locations. Therefore, argument about the possible accession to that power has turned mainly into the group of three concerns: economic requirement, tactical control, and cultivating eagerness. Equally, debate of growing separatist movements has depended on comparable lines: there is a question if the control of such movements was driven only by the requirements for independence, by the motivation to rule the new foundations of profitable colonial regime, or by a naive purpose for political authority to guard additional benefits? These may be simplifications, but, to take India as a working example, much of the new study of history has been alarmed to prove either how Britain failed or how the Indian National Congress triumphed (Stoddart, 1988, pp. 649-673).

Apart from the political – colonial approach, there are, indeed, many authors writing about cricket remembering their childhood and putting it together with the memories of playing or watching cricket. Some research through cricket books, in comparison to basketball or football, may lead to a conviction that on the whole cricket has the greatest literature in sports

covering biographies, essays, memoirs, coaching books or tours. And the vast list of those works is not only about the rules, charts and memories. There are also publications offering quite a profound view on cricket in the connection to social and historical topics and above all those bringing globalization views. One of the authors of several books about cricket Sir Derek Birley won the British Society of Sports History's Aberdare Literary Award in 1995.

Although cricket has changed a lot since the old times, still it apparently offers something more than just a game, as it is expressed in the following quotation: *“Description of cricket, found throughout the literature of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are filled with the language of idealism: cricket was a noble game, a manly game. Cricket embodied the British virtues of strength, persistence, courage, healthy rivalries, camaraderie, and sportsmanship. Cricket was a respectable, a Gentleman's game.”* (Pugh, Gibbons, & Adams, 2002).

Perhaps it is because cricket is not just a sport as another of Birley's work says. He claims cricket is English Culture, reflected in a sport that has always been a complex depository of English etiquettes, orders and politics. He speaks about 'the English caste system' and changing from rural anonymity by gentlemanly bettors into the metropolitan fashion turning into representation for British imperialism (Birley, 2013, p. 68).

It is considered that the value of many of the books lays on those recently produced. Although there were writers with not-known and those with well-known names, such as William Blake, William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens, James Joyce and others writing about cricket throughout its history, only a very small amount was at a real literary value (Bateman, 2009, p. 4). There is however one holding still the same position as it did back in the 1958. It was a book of instruction, which could be perfectly understood by even a young boy. It was awarded as the most brilliant coaching book of all times. It is called *The Art of Cricket* by the author Sir Donald Bradman - a name everyone from the cricket world should know (Thompson, n/a).

Thanks to one of the best English cricket commentator ever – John Arlott, who was also a poet, there was even a cricket's poetry published. This iconic commentator was recognised specifically for his poetic phraseology (Almanack, n/a) used when commenting the game but surely is noted in his poetry. To sample just a few lines, a poem *Cricket at Worcester : 1938* follows:

*“Dozing in deckchair's gentle curve*



*Through half-closed eyes I watched the cricket*

*Knowing the sporting press would say*

*“Perks bowled well on a perfect wicket”.*” (Guha, *The Picador Book of Cricket*, 2016, p. 4)

Arlott was also one of the early members of the Cricket Writers Club and was later the subject of other researches and works about cricket. Guha, the cricket writer and historian mentions Arlott in one of his articles, *“Arlott had grown up with the prejudices of a conventional British upbringing. Friendship with Merchant broadened his social and political horizons. When he accompanied an English team to South Africa some years later, Arlott was asked to fill out an immigration form which asked what his race was. The options he was supposed to choose from were “white, Indian, coloured, black”. Rejecting them all, he instead wrote: “Human”.*” (Guha, *The other side of Merchant*, 2011).

#### 1.4 CRICKET EQUALS FAIR-PLAY EQUALS BRITISHNESS?

There is a lot of evidence that there must really be something about cricket and that it is without discussion one of the symbols of Britishness no matter how many symbols there are. Apart from that cricket can be a very dangerous and violent and an exhausting game there are no doubts that with the essence of the old imperial Britain it stands for respect and fair play. This is not seen so strongly in other sports. When the Englishman (or Australian or New Zealander) says "that's not cricket at all", he is concerned about what he thinks is wrong, just not fair-play. In fact one of the above mentioned sources also offers another definition of a cricket, which is: “fair and honourable behaviour” (Merriam-Webmaster, 2017). And there is even an idiom –not cricket- described as “not honest and moral” (Cambridge, Meaning "not cricket" in the English Dictionary, 2017).

There is not seen such a national disaster, recently happening in Johannesburg when South Africa played against Australia, when a cheating during a Test match took place and immediate action was taken such as very severe bans for the Australian cricket players. Although it was argued that people should not have been surprised, still the shock that was even commented by worldwide broadcasts and newspapers as headline news was incomparable. Other evidence that cricket has lost much of its gentleman’s fair play pattern

happened last year in India, when Indian “cricket superstars” were criticised for many conflicts of interest by Ramachandra Guha. Guha is an Indian historian, writer and intellectual, an expert in fields of environmental, social, political and cricket history, who contributes to the main Indian newspapers and many academic journals, a personality that was appointed to BCCI (The Board of Control for Cricket in India). He was so disappointed with the situation in Indian cricket soon after that he resigned from that post complaining about the “superstar culture” abusing their powerful positions by which act he was said to have opened the Pandora’s box (Vic, 2018).

## **2 CRICKET IN ENGLISH CULTURE**

### **2.1 HISTORY**

Cricket is a game, rather than sport, which has been representing Great Britain for more than two hundred years. However, not all of the sources agree about where it came from. Malcolm offers several approaches from the traditional one, that it was invented in England to another one, which says it has actually Celtic origins and was played in 500 A.D. Others even claim that cricket was invented in France and the very surprise solution offers the Indian view which says that it is: “Indian game invented accidentally by the British” (Malcolm, *Globalising Cricket*, 2013, pp. 41,42). That of course needs to be understood from the Indian humour point of view.

#### **2.1.1 THE EARLY ERA**

It is known that most of the modern sports games have been invented by the British. Football, tennis, rugby, golf are played around the world. Cricket is far from widespread, perhaps because it is the most English of all games. It was originally a children’s game. Some sources date it back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century when it gained its great popularity. However, it was soon banned by King Edward III who was worried about the bad influence of cricket on military discipline. Even when King Edward IV later imposed fines and imprisonment on it due to illegal betting the game still continued to be practised (Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 1999, pp. 4-5).

### 2.1.2 THE MODERN ERA – DOMESTIC CRICKET

Cricket received its satisfaction in 18<sup>th</sup> century when it underwent major development. It was adopted by both aristocracy and lower-class societies and that is something that no other sport has gone through. The popularity and the development throughout the social classes and ongoing interactions with the need of each other but also mutual rivalry and hostility is something that has created such a special and a vivid phenomenon (Brookes, 1974, pp. 344-345).

Brookes further explains that cricket held strong features of an elite tradition regardless of the fact that at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century many of the members were enrolled from middle-classes so it had been losing the upper-class only status (1974, pp. 344-345).

Organized cricket in England has been played since the early 18th century, with the first match of two eleven-member teams being held in Sussex in 1697. In 1719, the Middlesex team played against the Kent team, which can be considered as the first match of two county councils, the so-called "county cricket," which is still an English tradition. "County cricket," gradually developed into an organized first-class competition, and since the 18th century, cricket teams competed in London adding other counties of the greater part of England to participate later.

From the very beginning, there was also a lot of money, so the top players soon began to make a living from it. (Malcolm, *Globalising Cricket*, 2013, pp. 42-43) In addition, bets were placed on the results of matches, which led to an increasing popularity of the game. One of the first successful professional players was Thomas Lord, who, besides playing (he was said to be a good bowler), had also opened and looked after the pitch which holds his name up to this day. Lord has relocated his field several times, but in 1813 he finally settled in St. John's Wood in the northwest of central London. The Lord's is the sacred place of all the devotees of this noble game (MCC, 2016).

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), which used the Lord's pitch during its matches, was formed in 1787. In the first year of its existence, the Club Committee finalised the cricket rules originally written by Hambledon Cricket Club (HCC), located in Hampshire (Mortimer, 2013, p. 16). Since then, it has been a world-renowned authority for more than two centuries in this respect. The rules of the game gradually developed until the end of the 19th century, but in the twentieth century they have again undergone some changes, although relatively

small ones. Those were for example the way the ball has to be thrown ( (Rumford & Wagg, Cricket and Globalisation, 2010) and also the way the batsman has to be protected so that nowadays he looks very much like a hockey-keeper (Macintosh, 2010, p. 84)

But there was still money driving it, aristocrats establishing laws to play it and advertising matches to enhance their social status...and onward throughout the centuries when the country was more industry driven the new middle-class was adopting the aristocratic social practices to be as well presented as something rather old while real aristocrats were watching it with a disdain (Malcolm, Globalising Cricket, 2013, pp. 42-43).

### 2.1.3 BRITISH EMPIRE – INTERNATIONAL CRICKET

No matter how the countries that were once part of British Empire, dealt with lost and gained independence, they all experienced main change in the countries' structures and societies. Cricket was always part of it, it symbolized "the very essence of an exclusive white, Victorian society" (Malcolm, Majumdar, & Meltha, The changing face of cricket: From imperial to global game, 2010, p. 5)

Cricket was one of the first sports ever be played internationally, long before international footballers and hockey players began to play. The first cricket match of the actual national teams of two countries was played as early as in 1877 in Melbourne but there were other international matches even before when other countries' teams toured abroad. In 1877 Australia defeated England. Then the Australian team repeated their success five years later in London. And what happened was that at that time one of British newspaper published the famous, ironically meant funeral announcement publicly announcing the cremation of English cricket whose remains were to be sent to Australia. That created the legend of The Ashes. At London's Lords Pitch, a Urn is placed in which there are ashes of goal pins burned after another match (England lost again) in Australia in 1883. Since then a trophy has been played in the so called Ashes Series. Until the end of the 19th century, both teams played almost every year. After initial collapses, English players started to perform better and mostly won. As other international teams started to qualify, they joined the Ashes being now played as series of six five-day matches every two years (Lynch, 2009, pp. 6-7).

Cricket spread quickly into the British colonial countries - unsuccessfully in America and – successfully in West Indies with the growth of the "first" British Empire. Australia and New

Zealand were then “cricketised” during the “second” British Empire (Malcolm, Globalising Cricket, 2013, p. 130). But the enormous roll out of the cricket commenced under the rule of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). There was also an impact on the level of education, as in the state schools which were attended by top social class, cricket changed into the most popular sport and was considered as the one to represent the goals of moral and cultural values. *“That time every summer the same time across the country, there were games played, with the task to unite distant communities as a spiritual connection, so that people would have something to common, supporting togetherness, rather than Britishness or Australian-ness. A kind of imperial bond was promoted”* (Majumdar D. , n/a, pp. 11-12). In spite of the fact that there were other sports popular, cricket that the one which held the prestigious position on such a bond scale.

Many countries that once were British colonies are even now deeply involved in the community of international cricket, and besides all 10 full associates of the International Cricket Council (ICC) (Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the West Indies, and Zimbabwe) have close bonds to British colonial history, and in fact are present members of the Commonwealth (Pugh, Gibbons, & Adams, 2002). As a prove of that, Bowen declares: *“When people go in large numbers to other countries, and establish colonies there, so far from abandoning their social habits and customs, they do their best to maintain them, not only that, to maintain them in the state they knew when the first substantial number of them arrived in their new homeland”* (1970, p. 72).

This British Empire phenomenon is described in the New world Encyclopedia as the one including *“many stable democracies, often modelled on the Westminster Parliament”* And it is not just the law, it is also the educational institutions *“founded by the British have developed into institutions of excellence”*. It helped people *“to develop a sense of national identity as well as a feeling of belonging to the wider civilized world.”* (New world Encyclopedia, 2016)

#### 2.1.4 THREADS TO CRICKET IN THE POST COLONIAL COUNTRIES

It may seem that the supreme cricket’s position was very strong and stable. The thing is that in many post-colonial countries that happened indeed. It is argued that conservative, old lawed cricket did not cope well with the newly gained liberation of indigenous people, their

freedom, self-determination, multiculturalism and second-wave feminism. In contrast of sports like football, athletics, basketball, that did better in that (Majumdar D. , n/a, p. 9).

#### 2.1.5. TWO FACES OF CRICKET

An interesting point is brought by Malcolm. He stresses out that there is something different about cricket. It was more natural to speak about a game rather than about a sport. It the same has laws rather than rules. It took the form of clubs rather than sports associations. It presents freedom, so that everybody can play it – especially in the modern times, and the unity with the British aristocracy or higher-class society in general (Malcolm, 2013, pp. 16,186). Together with so many different formats of playing it and so many different top-class championships, it is not easy to orientate one-self.

In another of his books Malcolm proves further duality of cricket. He sees it as an instrument and at the same time as a resistance to colonialism (Malcolm, Majumdar, & Meltha, *The changing face of cricket: From imperial to global game*, 2010, p. 5). In addition there were malingn and bening connotations to Britishness in context of cricket (Malcolm, Majumdar, & Meltha, *The changing face of cricket: From imperial to global game*, 2010, p. 195).

Majumdar adds another view from the sociological point, saying that cricket stands between two incompatible positions. One is meritocracy – meaning that players should only deserve positions according how clever they are. Another is the principle of equal chances – which is quite opposite to the previous principle, saying that everyone has an equal chance (Majumdar & Mangan, 2004, p. 10)

### **3 CRICKET IN INDIAN CULTURE**

Cricket has become truly a religion for India. There should not be any doubt about it. People in India literally live it, they eat cricket, sleep cricket, they even dream about it and those who can afford it they would travel the world for it. Such huge is the popularity in India, where people emotionally get involved with every up and down of their national team. The facebook

pages and its hundreds of cricket fan clubs prove that not even the age, sex, job or social status matters. But how did all this start?

### 3.1 HISTORY

#### 3.1.1 FIRST STEPS

Some sources say cricket was brought to India in early 18<sup>th</sup> century by British sailors (Majumdar & Mangan, 2004, p. 194). Some however state that it was by the soldiers and officials of the East India Company (Ramaswami, 1976, p. 1). It was popularised by the first governor of Bombay, Lord Harris, but in spite of this, the first cricket club was found in Calcutta in 1792 (Calcutta Cricket Club – CCC). The club and those which followed were all “white only” clubs. They very soon inspired the local people to copy. The first non-British cricket club was formed by Paarsi community, who made a contract with the British. They were the descendants of former powerful business and professional class of doctors and lawyers (Majumdar & Mangan, 2004, p. 194). But the Paarsis were not the only community in Bombay that time, soon the Maharajas formed their teams too. Muslims and Hindus did not want to be left behind and also started with cricket. The way they did it was only an imitation of the British, who really did not mind as for them it was actually good to see local people are disunited, not just for the game itself but also for the political reasons (Majumdar & Mangan, 2004, p. 195).

Out of this the competitive cricket came out and in 1912 there was a first tournament between all these communities and Europeans (Ramaswami, 1976, p. 7). That tournament broke not just the religious but also political barriers. It turned into a kind of 15 day carnival from which cricket had spread in other places in the country under the patronage of the Hindu and Muslim Princes of India. Ramaswami points out that there was another important aspect of Indian cricket national self-esteem in terms of that encouraging some of the best players by Maharajas and Princes. Those players played even better than the British, and thus people wanted to follow them (Ramaswami, 1976, p. 7). It meant a lot as those players showed that they were equal to Englishmen, at least on the field if it was not possible in terms of law. The following matches were taken as the possibility to measure up with the white men. In 1933 there was first ever Test match played in India and although India lost the hope was there, together with the upcoming hunger for independence from Britain. (Ramaswami, 1976, p. 13).

### 3.1.2 INDEPENDENCE

In 1937 a communal tournament was held on in Bombay between Muslims and Hindus. That one became a political issue between those communities and heavy tensions were seen as the nationalists demanded independence from Britain (Ramaswami, 1976, p. 19).

Mahatma Gandhi considered sport played between communities to be a sectarian divisive and an obstacle to new India, saying: “I should have thought that such unsportsmanlike divisions should be considered taboos in sporting language”. When the independence was really there, there were doubts whether cricket – as the game of Empire – would survive. The Anglophobic nationalists wanted the game to be wiped out as their developers, the British, went home, too. That was however outstandingly ineffective. What until that time was a rural sport has infiltrated a lot into the countryside (Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*, 2003, p. 15). India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru believed that Indians should keep the best of their colonial past, which apparently was the case of cricket. Nehru was also a fan of cricket, he claimed it was important and it was not actually representing a colonial leftover but a kind of continuity of the history of India. With the sheer popularity there was no problem with this view. In fact after the independence the game of cricket became important and vital for building the nation (Bose, 2006, pp. 1-2). The New India needed a unifying element, the fact that the individual consumes sport not as an individual, but as a part of larger society. That perfectly fitted to cricket. No caste, no language, no religion mattered, just cricket. The game of cricket simply turned into being so well accepted as never before (Ramaswami, 1976, p. 34). This could be seen as the moment where Indian cricket was slowly losing its Britishness.

There surely were excellent players in the Indian national team, it revealed later that a “*complex of being ruled by the white for almost two hundred years had a big impact.*” In 1952 the team was destabilized when a number of the best players gone to the new state of Pakistan. It showed that change was required. Since then another trend of nationalism had appeared in cricket, precisely in the matches with Pakistan. Guha says: “*Cricket has been tragically drawn into the complicated history of India-Pakistan relations*” (Majumdar D. , n/a, p. 196). So this time the game did not really unite but rather divide people. And the bitterness is still there, still provoking, showing its violent and darker side. And in fact even now people who would not normally follow cricket matches like many young people or more specifically young ladies, they would watch when India plays against Pakistan for sure. This



would be perhaps comparable to Czech nation watching Czechs playing against Russia in the past (which actually is still vivid even now). Such atmosphere is from obvious reasons far more electric than it would be during other matches.

On the other hand that was the point when the Indian team rose from ashes with the new player, named Tyger, who did well to build up a new team that was assembled from all locations of India. He put the team together with the intention of winning over England. And the unbelievable historical victory came in 1983 when India won the World Cup. It had opened doors to promoters and cricket was gradually becoming to be a big business (Majumdar D. , n/a, p. 229).

### 3.1.3 TV PHENOMENON

Just about that time, in 80-90's satellite television took world cricket into smallest corners of India. The boom has started. At the beginning there was hardly anything seen on television. On the other hand it was very comfortable, offering many advantages like instance reply or expert comments. It was becoming more and more preferable. It also fitted better into the new faster world. There is no wonder that long games of cricket lasting three or more days were slowly exchanged by so called one-day matches. They started to satisfy India more, being more extrovert, loud, much more enjoyable, fast winning. The internet made it even faster and more accessible. It had broadened the cricket's social base even more. The accent was more on winning rather than participating (Mehta, 2008, pp. 143-144). Specifically, television had a huge impact on children. Those were the ones that now have dreams about becoming cricket superstars and in fact Youtube channel is full of stories how a little poor boy became a rich cricket player. Most of the current heroes have gone through the same story. Thanks television the children had the chance to see international cricket. They could watch and imitate the players.

## 3.2 THE FUTURE OF CRICKET

In the late 90's there were signs of match – mixing, which eventually proved there were direct links between players and illegal bookmakers. It lead to the decline of watching cricket,

people were losing their faith in it. And again, another new leader, top player, was found. This time it was Maharaja, who had no colonial background and thus didn't suffer with the Empire complex. He was fresh, free and had a liberating voice saying that he does not have to prove and win over England. This has brought a new wave into the game, but the money was there already and the business started (Mehta, 2008, pp. 147-148).

A completely new thing India gave the world was Indian Premier League (IPL), although it was inspired the British Premier League. It has created the greatest turning point in the history of cricket. It was the launching the Twenty20 as usually is called T20. This shortened form of cricket can only be played in only three hours. It has made everything even faster, fuller of actions, more accessible, thus has brought more money into it. A lot of people make investments in cricket and the whole business is driven by private enterprises. Obviously the conservative old players call the T20 the most vulgar expressions and do not take it too seriously, but cannot do much about it. People however love it, as it perfectly fits today's consumer-friendly primetime entertainment. It is more a show rather than a game, it is even watched by women, by housewives (Bose, 2006, p. 178). Macintosh even anticipates that the T20 format is the future of cricket (2010, p. 84). Rumford states that, "*Cricket, in England at least, is infused with an aura of nostalgia bound up with its mythical invention*" ...and he however continues that Twenty20 format has had such a huge positive influence in terms of technology and fandom but adds that it has also made cricket limited and condensed into an entertainment (Rumford, 2013, pp. 76,81).

Whether like it or not cricket is undergoing the process of "Indianisation" says Russel Holden and is further analysing the impact on new conceptions of Englishness rather than Britishness. Cricket is changing while still returning back to its origins and at the same time trying to fit better the domestic audience thus is more multicultural than other sports filling the gap in the market (Holden, 2013)

As mentioned previously a well-known Indian writer and historian Ramajandra Guha accused many of the top Indian players for not playing fair. According to him Indian cricket players do handle numerous procedures insensitively, they abuse the veto power to forward various appointments for coaches or even commentator's panels, they also have dual contracts, which are not permitted (n/a, 2017).

With all that it may be therefore comprehended that cricket as a game is gradually losing its sanctity in favour of business and money being linked with it more and more. The global

marketplace has made the Indian cricket players the best paid ones. It is making them the real superstars with a power nearly as similar as the Prime Minister.

## PRACTICAL PART

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses in detail the research methodology which has been taken up for the purpose of exploration of the Indian people's approach to the game of cricket. The research is based on structured questionnaires that were spread out among the people in India to collect the necessary data for the studies. To support the data a few discussions were held with three other local Indian people. The key area was the relationship of Indian people to cricket, their ability to play it, to cheer for the national team, to distinguish or express ideas about the way cricket is perceived.

#### 4.2 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

In order to detect the important factors and views, a structured questionnaire has been used to collect data (see Appendix). It was designed to capture factors such as, age, gender, family connection to cricket, popularity of it in the past and today, ability to play it, experience with cricket, relationship with it and its perception. An advanced on-line survey was used (Survio, 2017).

##### 4.2.1 AGE AND GENDER

In my questionnaire I have examined participant of all age and gender as it plays a significant role in perceiving sports (Alexandris, McDonald, & Funk, 2016, p. 5).

##### 4.2.2 FAMILY CONNECTION TO CRICKET

The family links to the game of cricket are examined

#### 4.2.3 CRICKET PLAYING AND LIKING IN THE PAST AND NOW

The popularity of cricket is surveyed and put in comparison of the past and today's taste. Participants show whether they did and still do play cricket or other kinds of sport.

#### 4.2.4 CRICKET FANDOM AND IMPORTANCE IN LIFE

Participants are surveyed about and whether or not they like cricket and support it and also how much this sport is important to them.

#### 4.2.5 FAVOURITE FORMAT OF CRICKET

This question shows the popularity of a specific format of cricket. As that has changed throughout years.

#### 4.2.6 REASONS OF CRICKET'S POPULARITY

Participants are asked to express their opinion about why cricket is so popular in India. Different views are taken into account such as:

- Because it does not need much, only a ball, not much space and only a minimum of two players.
- Because there are many cricket coaching centres and stadiums in India.
- Because India is performing well in the international cups.
- Because Indian people have significant physical strengths to play it.
- Because many cricketing legends come from India and they inspire others to join.
- Because cricket means money and money is attractive and important in our lives.

#### 4.2.7 POSITION OF CRICKET IN SOCIETY

Participants were to express their meanings about whether they consider cricket as a national sport and about how strongly they agree with statements regarding their opinion about

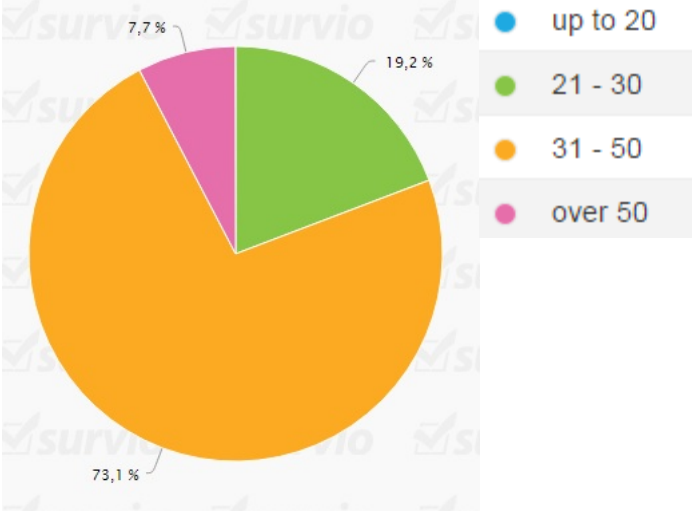
cricket's position in Indian society and its relationship to Commonwealth countries and to Britishness.

## 5 RESULTS

The results showed that Indian nation loves cricket and that is makes an important part of their lives.

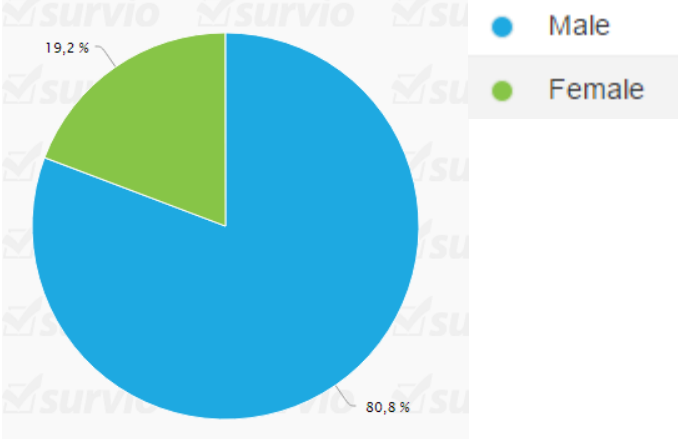
More than 73% of respondents were in the group of age between 31-50 (see tab.1). The majority - 80% of them were men (see tab.2).

### 5.1.1 Please indicate your age



tab.1

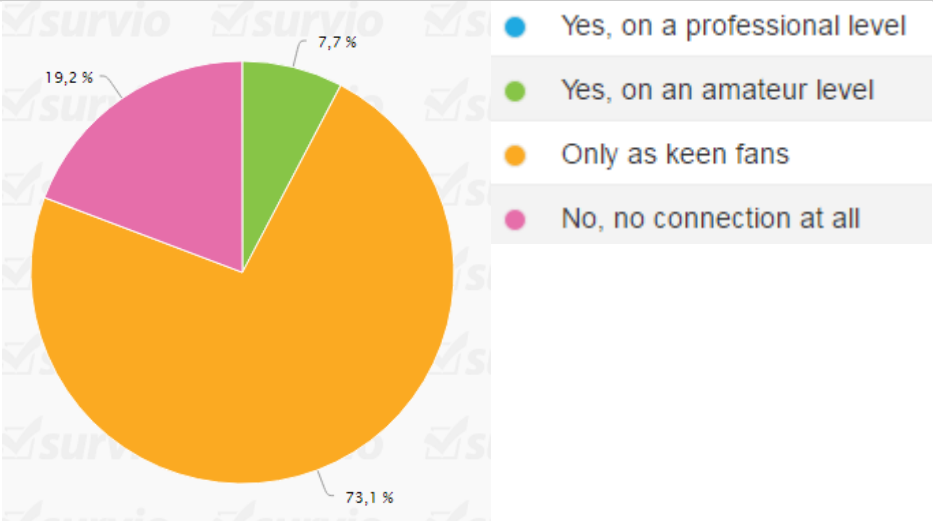
### 5.1.2 Please indicate your sex



tab.2

Among the family of participants were only 7%, who would play cricket on a professional level, otherwise 73% are only keen fans (see tab.3).

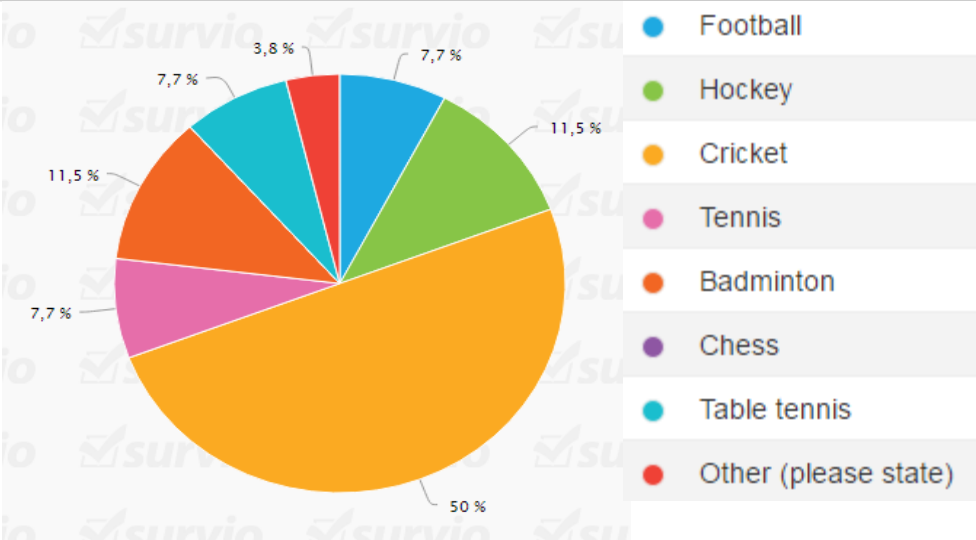
5.1.3 Does your family have any connection with cricket?



tab.3

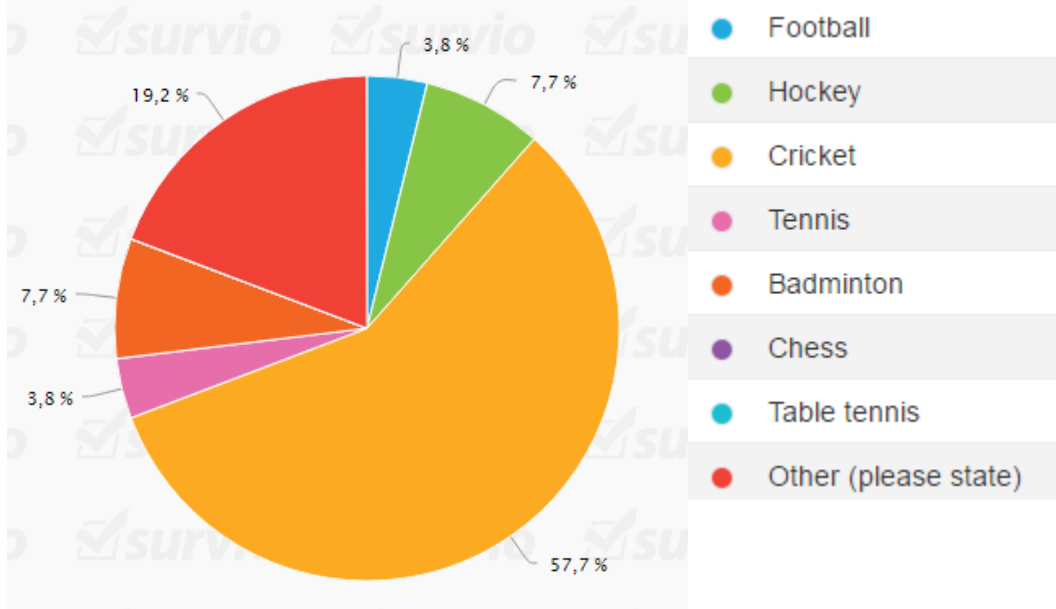
Half of the participants would consider cricket as their favourite sport(see tab.4) when they were at school age and a little bit over 57% (see tab.6) would see it as their favourite sport today.

5.1.4 What was your favourite sport during your school life?



tab.4

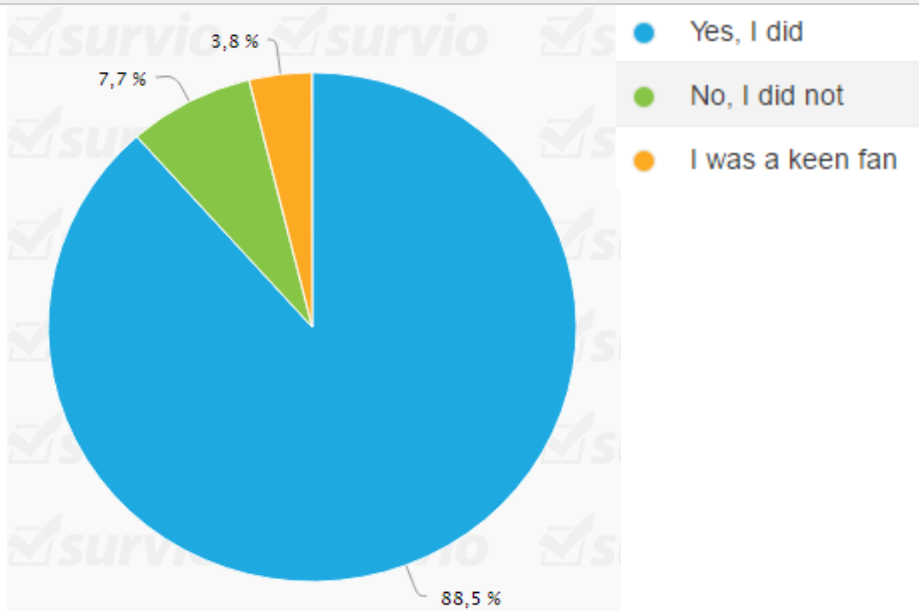
5.1.5 What is your favourite sport now?



tab.6

A little bit different situation is with real playing cricket while 88% would play it when at school age (see tab.5) only 24% would play it today (see tab.7). Interestingly nearly 4% out of these play it professionally.

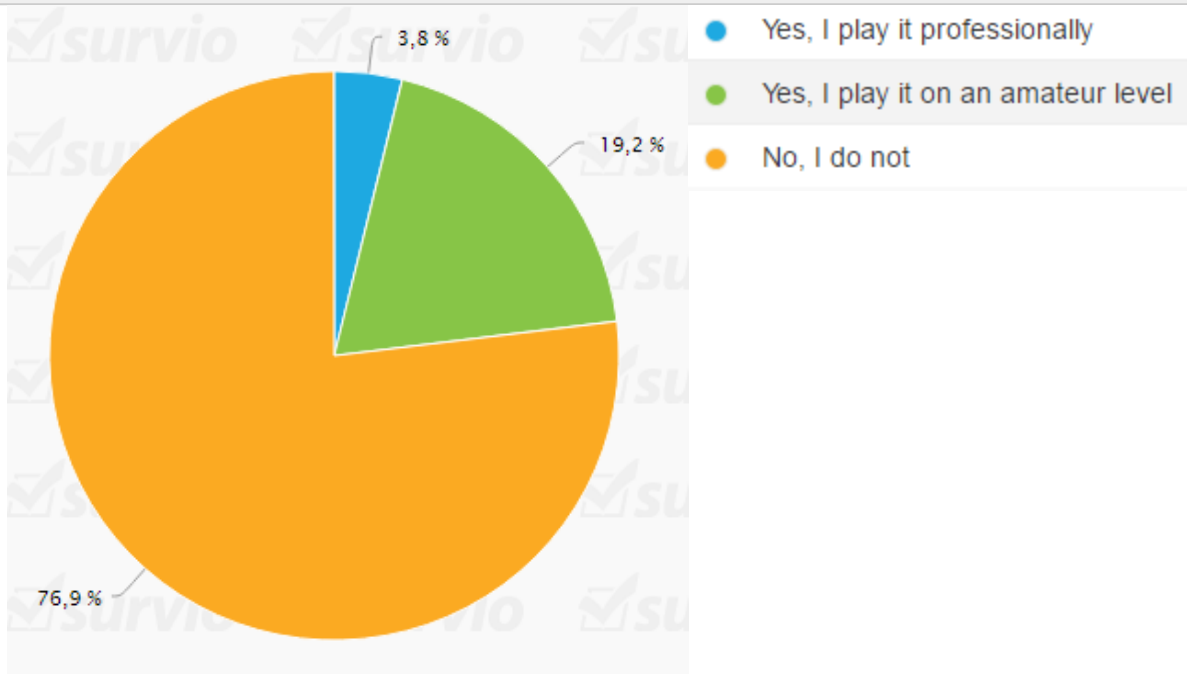
5.1.6 Did you play cricket during your school life?



tab.5



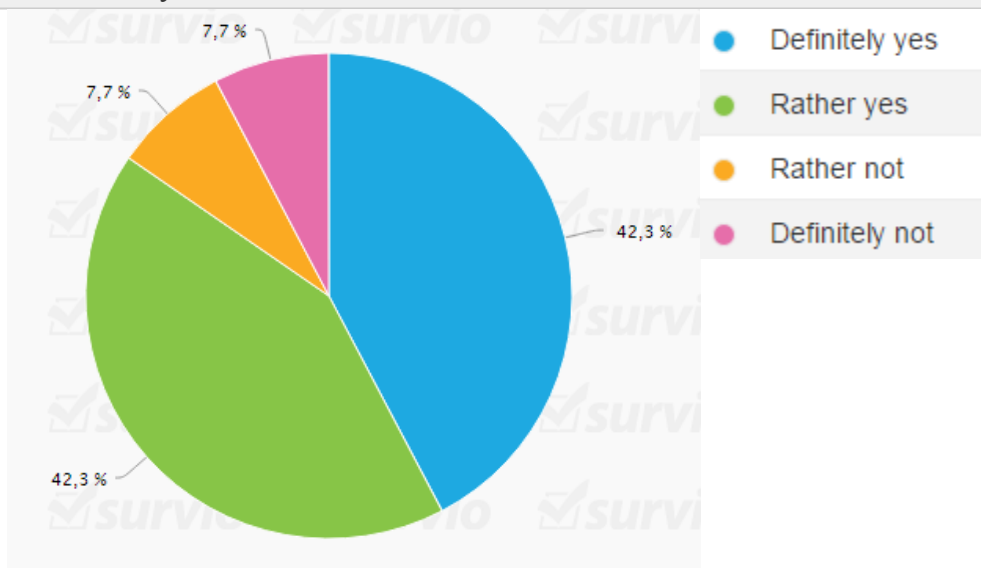
### 5.1.7 Do you play cricket now?



tab.7

Nearly 85% are keen fans of cricket today and as a few of respondents mentioned, they would even travel the world for important matches. (see tab.8)

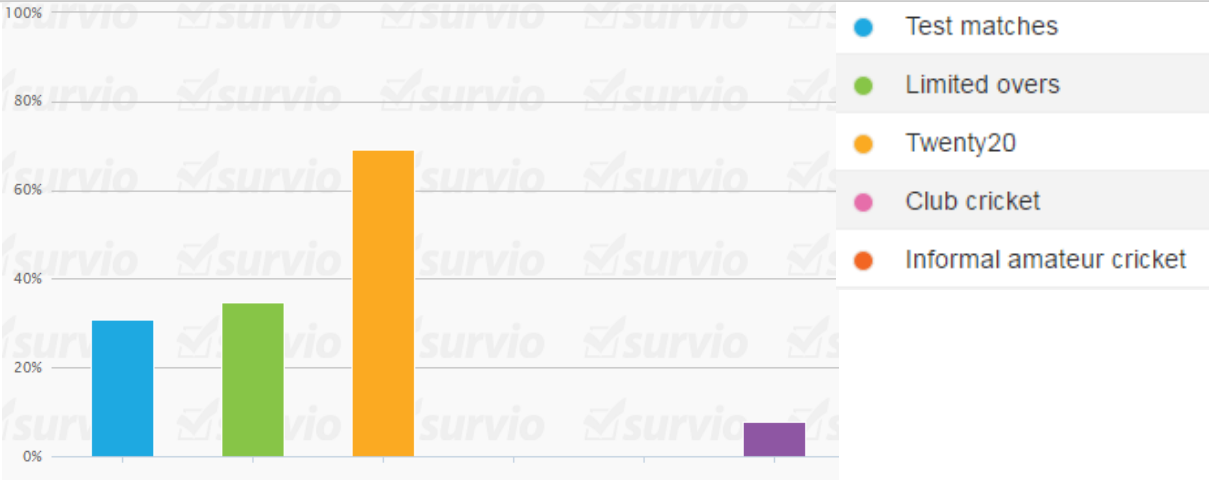
### 5.1.8 Are you a keen fan of cricket?



tab.8

Tab. 9 shows that nearly 65% of respondents prefer so called Twenty20 matches, which is the format actually founded in India and is winning not only there. (see tab.9). While limited overs and Test matches are only less than 30% popular.

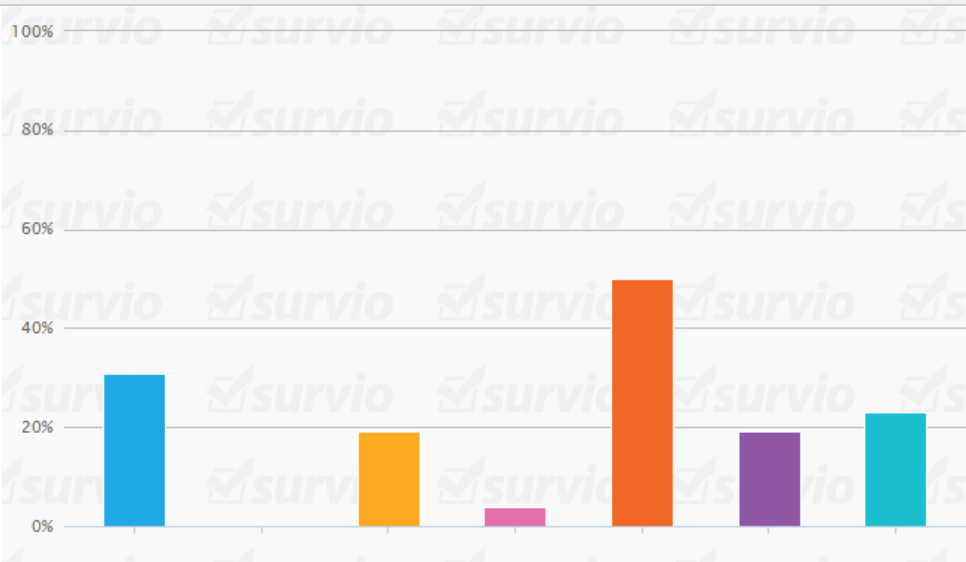
5.1.9 What is your favourite form of cricket?



tab.9

50% of Indian people think that cricket is so popular because cricketing legends come from India and they inspire others to join. That is seen on many facebook cricket fan-club pages in India, they prove that the top class players are nearly more powerful than politicians (see tab.10).

5.1.10 Why do you think cricket is so popular in India?

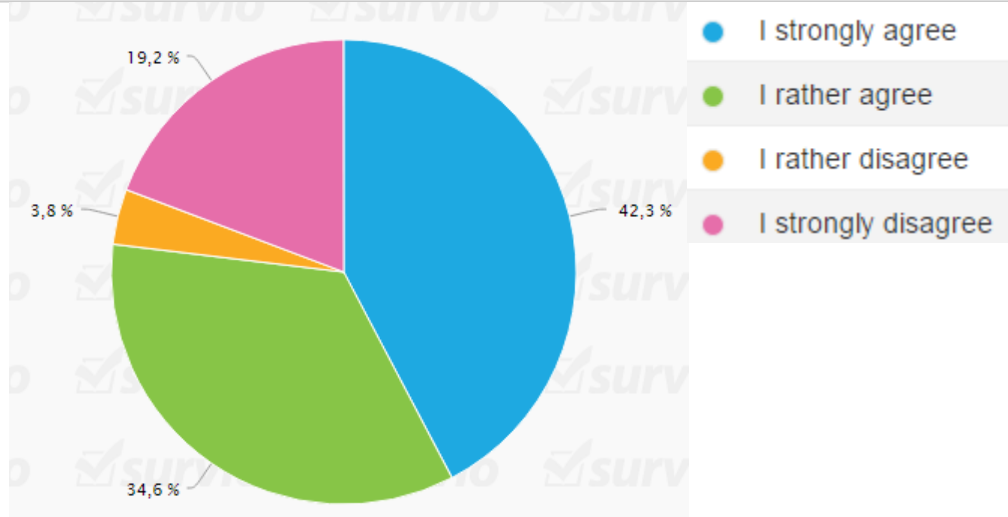


● Because it does not need much, only a ball and a bat, not much space and only minimum of two players	8	30,8 %
● Because there are many cricket coaching centres and stadiums in India	0	0 %
● Because India is performing well in the international cups	5	19,2 %
● Because Indian people have significant physical strengths to play it	1	3,8 %
● Because many cricketing legends come from India and they inspire others to join	13	50 %
● Because cricket means money and money is attractive and important in our lives	5	19,2 %
● Please specify another reason or write "not relevant"	6	23,1 %

tab.10

Nearly 77% consider cricket as a national sport of India, out of which only 42% agree strongly with it. However 19% strongly disagree (see tab.11)

#### 5.1.11 Do you consider cricket as a national sport of India?

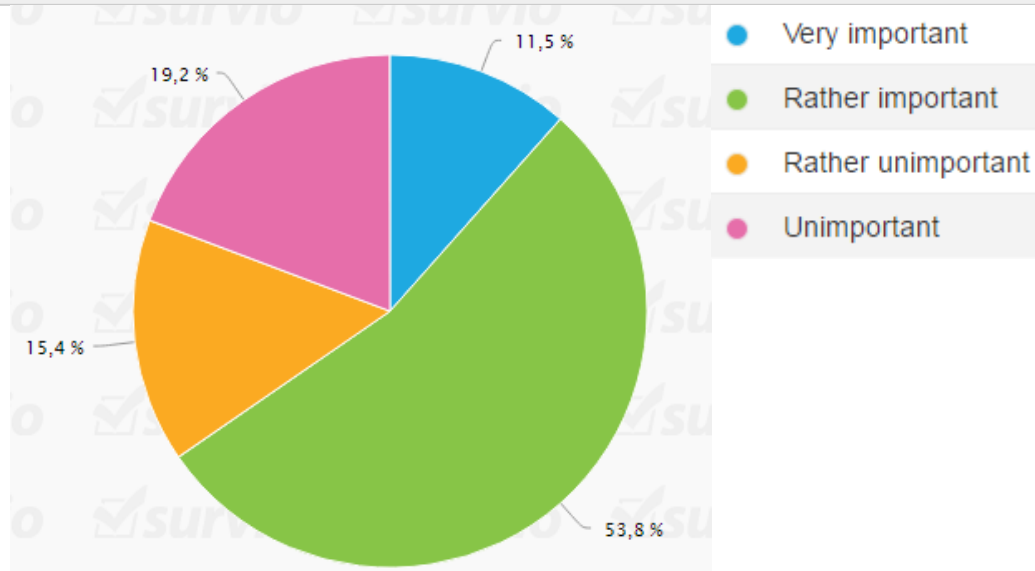


tab.11

Cricket plays an important part of lives of Indian people, so say nearly 65% of them and 15

% claim it is unimportant. (see tab.12)

5.1.12 How important is cricket for you /either playing it or being a fan of it/ ?



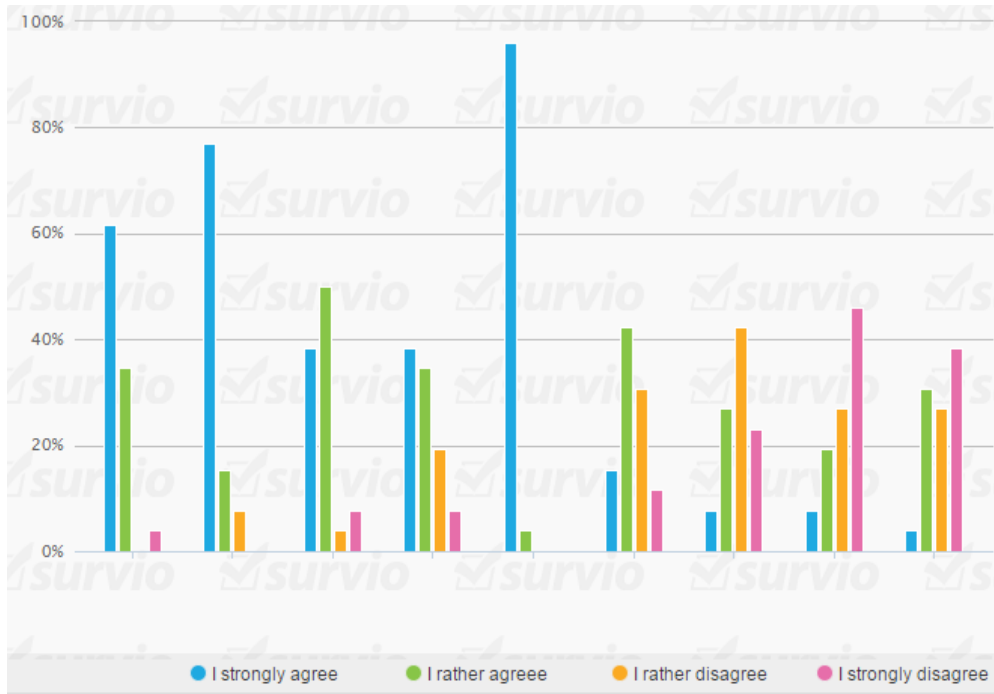
tab. 12

The last section included statements about cricket and respondents had to say again how much they agree with it. The chart shows up to what extent they did. The statements were as followed:

- a) Cricket brings Indian nation together.
- b) Cricket is not just a sport but a part of life of Indian people,
- c) Cricket is the Indian pride.
- d) Cricket makes India special.
- e) Cricket attracts advertising companies and makes it a big business.
- f) Cricket means a connection to other Commonwealth countries.
- g) Cricket means a closer connection specifically to Great Britain.
- h) Cricket evokes back colonial times.
- i) Cricket is a symbol of Britishness.

It is seen that nearly an absolute 100% was the agreement with the statement d) proving that cricket is a big business. With a surprise however the statement i) where cricket is seen as a symbol of Britishness only by some 3%, a little bit higher result is made by h) – evoking back colonial times, but again not so high, similar 3% means connection to Great Britain.

5.1.13 How strongly do you agree with the following statements?



tab. 13

## CONCLUSION

To summarize, cricket has its strong position as a widely played game, long enough that it has not been really forgotten where its origins are but the achievements and vast popularity has been the most important factor. It is considered to be rather an Indian national game and although there is a massive role of money in it which makes it a different business today, still people would follow it, adoring it immensely.

The results of the questionnaire are, however, to a great extent influenced by a very low number of participants. They were only 36, which makes it irrelevant in the comparison to the number of people living in India, but as many of blogs, facebook pages of cricket fans and university discussion were searched, it may well be declared that the results follow the findings of the survey.

It also needs to be said that although there are only 36 respondents, there were 18 other participants who did not complete the survey and many others who would “like” the survey on the facebook pages and those who would start a conversation offering other views on the topic. Specifically those from university discussion fora as mentioned above. They would suggest that such research should be more focused on the economic aspects of this phenomenon. Which finely corresponds with the responses confirming that: Cricket attracts advertising companies and makes it a big business.

Although cricket holds an exclusive position, in particular it does not manage to guarantee the continuance and concord of the Indian nation, nor it is a perfect device for nation-building

The undergraduate thesis described the major milestones of the cricket development in Great Britain and in India with the focus of key factors of its expansion in India specifically. It presented the different views of Britishness and put it together with the connection of the game of cricket. A study was undertaken to prove or disprove the initial hypotheses.

In chapter one the position of the game of cricket among other sports today was set and various formats of cricket were described. Links between cricket and Britishness were put together. Interesting facts about cricket in literature were displayed based on different genres of literature. Examples were given of how much of a fair-play in the game of cricket is.

In chapter two a brief history of the game of cricket in Great Britain was presented, including the spread out to British colonies. The dualism of this game was scanned.

In chapter three a short history of cricket in India was presented with the focus on few significant milestones which effected the development of this sport in such a vast extent gaining a huge popularity. It brought about the idea of the reasons why cricket is adored so enormously by Indian nation. The thesis showed the important role cricket plays in creating an Indian identity. The future of cricket was examined.

The practical part of the thesis focused on the key factors of cricket expansion in India and focused on what people in India think about cricket, whether they play it now or whether they did play it when they were young. It examined the relationship of this game to several approaches including Britishness through a survey.

The first question searched for the answer whether Indian people consider cricket as a symbol of Britishness and how much of colonial essence in cricket is still noticed. The results showed that cricket is a very important phenomenon for Indian people. They are big fans for that game even if not playing it. It however showed that there are other sports people too, such as badminton, football or tennis. It also showed that some people would not even consider cricket as a national game. The reason why cricket is popular showed to be mainly because many cricketing legends come from India. Thus they inspire others to join, support, copy and inspire them. The top class players earn huge amounts of money and are the idols not just from the point of view of sport but also the fashion and take often place of the politicians in terms of influencing much more crowds.

The responses showed that there is very little attitude that people would link cricket or see it as a link to be more closely tightened to the Commonwealth empire or even to Great Britain. With the hundreds of years of finding the cricket own way, going through the history when cricket at the beginning of the independence played a united role, creating specifically new modern, fast, business driven format of cricket (Twenty20), there is no more sing of seeing cricket as a symbol of Britishness as it may be seen in Britain. Indians simply do not consider cricket as a symbol of that. Thus this hypothesis was not confirmed at all.

The second question was about how much of their own invention Indian people implemented into the game of cricket. It was anticipated that there would be a shift from traditional conception of cricket. The results confirmed this especially in terms of the format of the game

as mentioned above. It shows that India has not only found their own way, in which they succeed and what the fans love, but it also takes it not just as a sport but a way of life for India. It has its legends, it shows the world the way and it has already forgotten its initial period ages ago, when it was born as a new independent and cricketing country... literally from the Ashes.



## **APPENDIX**

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In the Appendix the sample questionnaire for the research purpose can be found.

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## **SUMMARY IN CZECH**

Cílem této bakalářské práce je popsat hlavní milníky vývoje kriketu ve světě s důrazem na země Commonwealthu a zároveň nastínit klíčové faktory rozvoje kriketu v Indii.

Práce obsahuje praktickou část, jejímž cílem je vytvořit dotazník za účelem prozkoumat přístup ke kriketu v současné Indii a zaměřit se na vazby mezi kriketem a kolonialismem.

Kriket je zkoumán nejen z pohledu oblíbenosti a fanouškovství, ale zejména z pohledu toho, jak se jako sport v Indii proměnil a jaká je jeho současná pozice. Výsledkem je zjištění, jak dalece vidí kriket spjatý s tzv. britskostí obyvatelé Indie.