

Sport Heritage, Nation-Building and Nation-Branding in the Anglophone and Dutch Caribbean

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Introduction

Since the early 1970s, UNESCO has led the charge to preserve, protect, and promote both tangible and intangible cultural heritage around the world, although some countries of the Caribbean had started to move in this direction before UNESCO's initiatives.¹ At the global level, UNESCO enlisted the support of not only its member states but also civil society and non-governmental organisations. In addition, while it has not received as much attention, since 1999, UNESCO has also been making efforts to protect and promote traditional sports and games (TSG) or sport heritage, which is the subject of this Chapter.² In 2003, the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Convention, which subsumes sport, was also established.³

Against this background, the primary objective of this Chapter is to examine the relationship between sport heritage, nation-building, and nation-branding based on select countries from the Dutch- and English-speaking Caribbean. It begins by outlining the methodology of the study, followed by an examination of the contested nature of this identity formation process through heritage development, the examination of the efforts within the Caribbean to develop heritage and sport heritage in particular, and a discussion of the significance of these efforts in relation to the issues of nation-building and nation-branding.

Methodology and Limitations

This is a multiple exploratory case study based on several countries in the Dutch- (Aruba and Curaçao) and English-speaking (Grenada and Trinidad) Caribbean as well as on several sports such as cricket, baseball, and soccer.⁴ However, in the context of the English-speaking Caribbean, while the Chapter draws particularly on the cases of Grenada and Trinidad to highlight the mixed experiences with sport museums in safeguarding and displaying cricket heritage, this is within the wider



Brochure of the West Indies Cricket Heritage Centre in Grenada

context of cricket's historical sociopolitical function for the region as a whole. In any event, it should be noted that these are the only two countries in the region that are known to have established cricket museums. The qualitative aspect of the case study relied heavily on documents (scholarly, official, newspaper and internet reports, as well as email communication) and purposive interviews with four individuals involved in sport in the countries directly involved. These included the Aruba Sport Union (ASU) president and the former president of the Cricket Federation in Aruba; a foremost anthropologist and one of the founders of the first Sport Museum in Curaçao (Professor Valdemar Marcha), as well as one of the founders of the Cricket Heritage Center on the island of Grenada.

The study was significantly constrained, however, by the lack of access to relevant documents, organisations, and individuals involved in sport, sport heritage, and heritage in general across both regions. For instance, repeated attempts to contact certain heritage organisations in Barbados, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and even Trinidad and Tobago (which included the owners of Trinidad and Tobago's cricket sport museum), bore little or no fruit. Relatedly, the lack of information also stems from the fact that the area of sport heritage remains insufficiently researched and resourced across both regions. In addition, another major limitation of the study

was its focus on more competitive sport, which was a further consequence of the limitations in access to documents, people, and organisations combined with the stipulated word limit for the Chapter. As a consequence, the findings of this study are at best very tentative and preliminary, which is consistent with its exploratory nature. Nevertheless, it may still offer relevant baseline data for future studies on this neglected subject.

Cultural Heritage and Identity Formation

Although the two components are intimately connected, the notion of cultural heritage has been defined to include both the tangible and material (e.g., “buildings,” “monuments,” “sites”) and intangible aspects (e.g., “oral traditions,” traditional knowledge, and practices) of a people’s culture through which they celebrate their past and present.⁵ The heritage movement that emerged at a global level from 1972 under the auspices of UNESCO, with the establishment of the World Heritage Convention (WHC), has formed part of a process of identity formation that operates at two major related levels: the individual and the collective (group, community, nation, region, and globe). Relatedly, this identity formation process has also been bound up with several cleavages or sources of contestation related to “race,” ethnicity, social class, and citizenship that is linked to the impacts of slavery and colonialism, particularly at the national level. This process has also been marked by contradictory processes of exclusion, inclusion, acceptance, rejection, marginalization/incorporation, and “diversity and discrimination.”⁶ For instance, Ansano notes that while multiculturalism is celebrated, “the immense diversity of African people who came to Curaçao [is] almost never discussed or taken seriously in social analyses” yet “the still existing linguistic, ethnobotanical and spiritual presence of the native Kaketio community is not part of any important discussion on the island or about the island, except in small circles of archaeologists, botanists and others.”⁷ This “invisibilisation,” however, has not negated the continued presence of these peoples in language, literature, music, dance, religion, and rebellion, and neither has it done so in sport, where “successful sport figures” are used to create some feeling of unity and national identity.⁸ It has been well established, therefore, that heritage preservation and promotion is not just a cultural process but forms part of a political process as well. This political process has arisen out of certain historical experiences and imbalances in power and resource distribution in the development of societies, particularly those who have faced the destructive and unapologetic fury of a colonialism that devalued almost everything and everyone of non-European provenance.⁹

In defining the character of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), which can also be applied to heritage as a whole and sport heritage in particular, Alofs captures the political nature of heritage as well as its importance in the context of nation-building in the Caribbean:

Intangible Cultural Heritage is the outcome of the planned and unplanned processes of state-formation and nation building. The emerging states in the decolonizing Caribbean have faced this problem in the second half of the twentieth century. Along with economic development and regional integration, the process of nation building has been perhaps the single most important social and cultural challenge in the plural societies of the region.¹⁰

Drawing on the work of Benedict Anderson, who viewed the nation as an “imagined community,” Ansano poses the problematic of defining nation and national identity in the following terms: “Basically, the question is: what nation are we imagining, and who is the ‘we’ that imagines that nation?.”¹¹ While Ansano was referencing the context of the Dutch Caribbean islands and Curaçao in particular, the question equally applies to other Caribbean and developing nations as well. Therefore, the question of what constitutes sport heritage, like heritage in general, has to be placed in the context of the historically contested and related issues of nation, nationalism, and national identity.

Relatedly, the notions of nation-building and nation-branding can be seen as inextricably linked with these issues, in which both culture and sport have become enmeshed. However, while nation-building and nation-branding are arguably two sides of the same coin of development, the former can be possibly seen as speaking more to the political process of identity formation as well as general national development, while the notion of the latter speaks more to an economic process or capital accumulation, although it is also related to the former. Indeed, nation-branding has been defined by Kerr and Wiseman as “the application of corporate marketing concepts and techniques to countries, in the interests of enhancing their reputation in international relations” while Ansano has described it as a “neo-liberal strategy” used as part of nation-building that involves the marketing of countries through business and tourism.¹²

Sport Heritage in the Anglophone Caribbean

Before the 1999 UNESCO Punta del Este declaration, which recognised Traditional Sports and Games as heritage, and the 2003 ICH Convention, which identified such sports and games as part of intangible cultural heritage, Caribbean states within the regional bloc called CARICOM¹³ had made two major overtures in the 1990s

to develop cultural heritage in general and sport heritage in particular. The first took the form of a Regional Cultural Policy (RCP), which was first formulated in 1994.¹⁴ This policy was “seen as an instrument that aims at empowering people to be liberated to their creativity and self-development” within the context of creating a “democratic society.”¹⁵ With respect to heritage, an entire subsection was devoted to cultural heritage and entitled, “Cultural Heritage: Preservation and Protection.”¹⁶ This section established the importance of the region’s cultural heritage as part of the broader related issues of regional integration, nation-building, and identity. In defining cultural heritage, the policy stated:

[C]ultural heritage is the collective memory, in various forms, of the people’s response to life and reflection on life going back several generations ... It is the collective memory, embedded and expressed in many forms (museums being a particularly striking and critical example) which shows us both the positive and negative aspect of ourselves which we must know in order to build truly.¹⁷

However, while the RCP also recognised the role of sport in the process of identity formation at a national and regional level, there was no notion or language of sport heritage or any recognition that sport was also an important part of heritage or cultural heritage in general. Consequently, although the policy was based on a definition of cultural heritage that stressed the intangible, sport was still excluded from this notion.¹⁸ By way of contrast, in the 1992 West Indian Commission report on the region, which was the second major overture towards heritage in the 1990s, there is direct reference to sport as heritage, although in relation to the sport of cricket only. In this regard, reflecting on the historical importance of West Indian cricket to the integration of the West Indian islands and the West Indian collective sense of self, the Commission noted:

No West Indian believer can afford to underestimate or neglect this game. *It is an element in our heritage* which binds us close and is seen as such both by ourselves and the outside world ...¹⁹

In further relation to cricket, the Commission noted:

Cricket has been a major cultural force in forging a sense of community among West Indians. It carries with it an historical pedigree dating back to the twenties and flourishes today as foremost among the Region’s agents of cultural integration, embracing the enthusiasm and interest of all West Indians irrespective of class, race, gender, political affiliation or creed. The achievements have served to foster a sense of regional identity and unity-in-diversity ...²⁰

The centrality of cricket as part of West Indian sport heritage has also spawned largely historical writings that underline the importance of the game as a source of national and regional identity in the region as well as of resistance to British imperialist domination.²¹

However, notwithstanding the supposed importance of cricket to the process of nation-building in the West Indies, the regional response to the recommendations of the West Indian Commission has been at best mixed. In this regard, for instance, while a cricket museum was established in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009 by the private Queens Park Cricket Club with some state financial support and is still operational, the Cricket Heritage Center, which was established in Grenada in the same year by two businessmen, had to cease operations in 2018 due to lack of support from the State, the cricket fraternity, and the public.²² In the words of one of its owners, “They were not very supportive at all” and this was attributed further to “a lack of appreciation of our own history.” This outcome was clearly at odds with the West Indian Commission’s regional mandate to encourage West Indian states to treat cricket as an important “element in our heritage.” It is also an expression of the lack of commitment at a national level to document the achievements of not only our cricketers but all other athletes.

In addition to seeing sport and cultural heritage in sociopolitical terms as a conduit for national identity or nation-building, it was also seen in economic terms as an industry in its own right, which was relevant to the promotion of the tourism on which most of the islands heavily depend.²³ In fact, in one of its recommendations, the West Indian Commission advised “that linkages between tourism and sport be pursued and strengthened with a view to deriving the maximum benefit from the West Indian reputation for sporting excellence, linked to other aspects of the regional tourism product.”²⁴ In these respects, the 2013 creation of the professional T20 cricket league, called the Caribbean Premier League (CPL), facilitated the establishment of this linkage through sport tourism. Since its establishment, the league has been welcomed across the region by fans, cricket authorities, the state, and, of course, the tourism sector, for which it has been a major marketing or branding boost on islands so heavily dependent on tourism. In relation to its economic impact, the West Indies Cricket Board receives US\$4.5 million annually from the staging of the tournament while returns to the tourism sector increased from US\$105 million in 2013 to US\$136 million in 2019.²⁵ Therefore, while West Indian cricket and cricket heritage would have been originally seen as an important part of the process of nation-building narrowly defined in a political sense (nationalism, regionalism, etc.), particularly in the postwar period, it has now become an integral part of the tourism economy and the general process of capital accumulation on these islands.

Dutch Caribbean

The Dutch Caribbean consists of six islands and the Anglophone Caribbean of over a dozen. Unlike the vast majority of islands in the Anglophone Caribbean, which are politically independent of their former coloniser, Britain, the islands of the Dutch Caribbean reflect a more peculiar political and constitutional reality in their relationship with the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This is evident in the fact that of the six islands, three are “autonomous” territories within the Kingdom of the Netherlands: Aruba, which assumed this status in 1986, followed by Saint Maarten and Curaçao in 2010. The other three (Bonaire, Saint Eustatius and Saba) are special municipalities “under direct Dutch rule.”²⁶ However, notwithstanding their differing political status, the Dutch government still assumes responsibility for their defense and foreign policy.

The total population of the three autonomous islands is approximately 300,000. Curaçao’s population is the largest at 164,093, followed by Aruba with 107,087; together, they account for 90% of the total.²⁷ Like the Dutch Caribbean on the whole, both countries are multicultural and multiracial, as they comprise peoples of Amerindian, European (e.g., Holland, France, Germany, UK, Spain), North American (US, Canada), African, Asian (India, Lebanon, Syria, China), Latin American (e.g., Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela), and Caribbean origin (e.g., Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Guyana, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago) owing to their long history of migration.²⁸ In the early twentieth century, this migration, particularly from the English-speaking Caribbean, was driven by job opportunities in the oil industry that emerged just after World War I.²⁹ However, notwithstanding this plurality of peoples or nationalities, which varies from island to island, the largest group consists of those who were born on the island. In the case of Curaçao, this amounts to 76% while in Aruba it amounts to 65%.³⁰ While official census data do not provide figures on the composition of their population by race or ethnicity, Alofs notes that due to the limited development of plantation slavery, “The Afro-Caribbean cultural heritage on Aruba is less dominant than on many of the other Caribbean islands” so much less that it is “often denied” and devalued owing to their societies’ historical racist thinking.”³¹

Curaçao

Writing in 2011, Haviser and Gilmore noted, “Of the five islands in the Netherlands Antilles, Curaçao currently has the most effective cultural heritage management program, at both the Island Territory level (with a specific Monuments Bureau) and the NAAM Foundation level, with emphasis on cultural heritage management for

the island.”³² This more developed cultural heritage infrastructure can be seen in the fact that Curaçao, in addition to thirteen museums, now has eight official local organisations, including four governmental and four non-governmental, involved in the protection and promotion of cultural and natural heritage.³³

Regarding sport, the exact number of sports played on the island is not known, but soccer and baseball are two of the most popular in terms of spectatorship.³⁴ Figures provided by the Curaçao Bureau of Statistics reveal that in 2016, the most watched sports in the country were “outdoor football” (32.5%) and baseball (32%). However, it is not clear if the survey made any distinction between watching games on television, particularly games in international leagues such as Major League Baseball (MLB) or football leagues in Europe, and attending games locally. In addition, that only around one-third of the country watches either soccer or baseball seems at odds with the country being 76th out of 210 countries in FIFA’s global ranking of football-playing countries (FIFA 2021), and with its even more impressive history in baseball given its more than a dozen players in MLB.³⁵ Since 1989, at least sixteen players from the island have played in MLB, although players have also played in Japan and the Netherlands.³⁶ Based on the MLB presence of its players, Curaçao was said to have had “the most major leaguers in the world per capita” in 2014 with “one major leaguer for every 21,000 residents.” For this reason, it was described as “something of a colossus” in world baseball by the *New York Times* in spite of its small size.

However, notwithstanding its rather impressive legal and organisational heritage management infrastructure, the dominant historical focus in Curaçao, as elsewhere, has been on its cultural and natural heritage, with little or no attention paid to sport heritage, although this has been slowly changing. Alluding to the deficiency in this area, a Mongui Maduro Library senior information specialist commented, “Regarding Sports Museums: I’m not aware of any other institution that is collecting or safeguarding sports memorabilia. This area is lacking.”³⁷ In 2016, however, this changed with the opening of the first sport museum in Curaçao as part of the Curaçao Public Library.³⁸ While the concept of a museum has been one of the major mechanisms employed throughout the Caribbean as a whole and the Dutch Caribbean in particular, for preserving and promoting the heritage of the islands, what has been noticeably lacking or absent has been the use of the sport museum.³⁹ The Sport Museum Curaçao (SMC), as it is called, is still very much a work in progress. It aims to document the island’s heritage in several sports including baseball, fencing, football, karate, soccer, track and field, and swimming.⁴⁰ The website also reveals the role played by blacks and whites, men and women, in creating this heritage as players, coaches, and administrators. As a consequence, the SMC seems to be quite all-inclusive in terms of the range of document sports and those who play them.

In an interview, one of the SMC's founders, the renowned scholar and professor Valdemar Marcha, provided the context and rationale that led to its establishment. The museum was actually first conceived in 2013 after a chance encounter with his childhood hero, the soccer goalkeeper Ermilio Harto, while he lay on his death bed suffering from prostate cancer. This encounter led to the sad and grim realisation that people like Harto "were forgotten and their achievements not documented other than in old newspaper clippings." Marcha bemoaned this sense of "being forgotten after having done so much for their country, for their club and for the fans." The absence of such documentation, however, was a manifestation or product of a deeper, more sordid reality that had to do with Curaçaoans' lack of self-worth and "interest in our own history." This echoed statements by one of the founders of the failed Cricket Heritage Center in Grenada, who attributed its failure to "a lack of appreciation of our own history." Marcha added:

We are not interested in our own history. We as a people. I am telling you about the natives. We are not proud of our history. Soccer history is something you throw away because it is not being documented and taught at schools, elementary school, secondary school. We don't have heroes that we are proud of. It's a national disaster I would call it. That is one of things we have to deal with.

This lack of self-worth was seen further as a direct legacy or byproduct of European colonialism, which was constructed around the destruction and devalorisation of everything and everyone non-European while promoting the valorisation of all things European. In this regard, he stated:

We do not appreciate or value what is ours. It is sad but it is true. We have learned to strive to copy the Dutch in order to be somebody ... We model ourselves after the European establishment, the colonizer. The colonizer is the model that is what you want to be, that's what you should be. Everybody encourage their children to be like them.

This lack of documentation of its "sport heroes" and of self-worth among many Curaçaoans motivated Marcha to write a history of the island's soccer players and suggest the establishment of a sport museum. The latter was first conceived as a "Salon of Fame" for the former national soccer players he had mobilised in researching and writing the history. Although the various sport federations did not embrace the idea originally, it was eventually established in partnership with the Curaçao Public Library and "with the support from the community, some banks and Mordi Maduro, a former Vice President of FIFA." In his estimation, the major function of the museum was to "educate and improve the dignity of generations to come because they can see they are standing on the achievements of great ancestors."

The SMC's establishment and its assigned role clearly reflect the recognition of the importance of sport heritage in Curaçao as a mechanism for not just nation-building but helping to repair the damage of colonialism to people's sense of self, although the problems of self-devalorisation that prompted this initiative would not vanish overnight.

Aruba

Although Aruba became politically “independent” almost twenty-five years before Curaçao did, the policy and institutional infrastructure for managing its cultural heritage is not as developed or advanced as Curaçao's. For instance, Alofs has bemoaned the general lack of resources devoted to studying and managing Aruban cultural heritage, although attempts to do so go back to the late nineteenth century.⁴¹ Consequently, while recognising “the progress ... in the fields of language, literature and history” as well as “archaeology and museums in recent years”⁴², he can still claim, “Scientific research on Aruban cultural heritage and identity so far is unsatisfactory when taking into consideration the urgent need for recording and analysing cultural heritage in a rapidly changing society.”⁴³

This situation could possibly explain why Aruba has only seven museums devoted to its cultural heritage, compared to Curaçao's thirteen. The challenges in researching and documenting the island's heritage appears to be even worse



Cricket field in Aruba (photo Leroy Collins)

in sport, where scholarly writings on its history are either lacking or not publicly available or both. The sparse available evidence, however, reveals that there are around thirty-five sport organisations on the island that fall under the umbrella of the Aruba Sport Union (ASU), which was formed in 1941.⁴⁴ As in Curaçao, two of the more popular team sports are soccer and baseball, and it is baseball that has given it the greatest international recognition through the participation of at least six Arubans in MLB since 1996.⁴⁵ And, as further testimony to the importance of the sport as part of Aruba's sport culture or identity, its first three Major Leaguers were awarded the Order of Orange-Nassau at the rank of Knight by the government for their outstanding achievement in the sport.

On the question of ethnicity and sport, ASU President Gerald Franca, surprisingly, stated, "Color discrimination is not popular here. It's not an issue here." This statement, however, seems to fly in the face of the major historical role that ethnicity and colour have played in shaping Aruba's social structure, social relations, notions of hierarchy, and sense of national identity, which has always privileged the Mestizo-Aruban and marginalised the Afro-Aruban.⁴⁶ It is in this context that baseball became a space or site used by Arubans of colour to resist or challenge their subordination in society as well as an avenue for upward social mobility (Guadeloupe), which was similar to the function cricket served in the West Indies.

However, when asked further about the association of certain sports with particular ethnic groups, Franca noted that in certain sports like soccer, baseball, and lawn tennis, the situation was mixed, because you have both "good colored and white players," but sports like boxing (mainly individuals of colour) and swimming (mainly whites) were associated more with one group or the other. In relation to the sport of cricket, this has been associated more with expatriate players of colour from such British Commonwealth countries as Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, and even Pakistan. They introduced the game to the island in the 1940s after migrating in pursuit of employment opportunities in the new oil industry. Aruban Cricket Association President Jamal Mahawat Khan revealed, however, that not only was cricket not "as popular as baseball and soccer" but "it never became an Aruban sport." He further stated that there is "no cricket heritage in Aruba because it never got a chance to root itself in Aruba [or] get rooted in a certain generation." While it has been played in the country since the 1940s, cricket is not seen as Aruban enough to be part of the country's sport heritage owing to its continuing association with expatriates.

Nevertheless, the island does seem to have a rich sport history, which motivated the late Francisco "Chipen" Chirino to establish a private sport museum, but it apparently closed after his passing. This was revealed in an interview with ASU President Franca, who stated further that there is "no real sport museum in Aruba. We have the information but it is not organized." Chirino was a major figure in

Aruban sport and was particularly known for having “organized Little League Baseball for over thirty years.”

However, while the sport museum no longer exists, Franca said there are plans to establish a new sport museum based on “information” already collected. This consists of “history, photographs, cups, trophies, medals, newspaper reports” and would also include the “material” previously housed in the sport museum established by Chirino. In explaining the museum’s design, Franca said it would cater to all sports in Aruba and would be accessible to the public. He added:

The idea is to focus on all sports. We have thirty-five different sports practicing in Aruba that have associations and they have their own statutes and they work independently, maybe internationally. The sport museum would try to populate all the information we can get from the different sports that we can put our hands on to get it out to the public.⁴⁷

However, while they have acquired a body of information or materials for the museum as well as a possible location, the lack of funding from either the government or the business sector has prevented its construction. They are more focused on “such investments as hotel construction, factories and housing,” which can bring more socioeconomic benefits.

The sport museum was seen as serving multiple purposes by providing an opportunity for people to reflect on the island’s sport history, on “how they used to play, where they used to travel, what the outcomes were if they got any recognition”; creating “an incentive for kids to go behind different sports” and informing them of their “national heroes.” In addition, the museum could help children born in Aruba to foreign parents become “part of the community” by exposing them to the “history of the country and what happened especially in sport.” For these reasons, the museum was seen as having “importance to the community” and being “definitely ... a necessity.” However, while Franca acknowledges the country’s sport heritage, he notes that knowledge of this heritage is limited to “people who really practice their sport ... [B]ut the other people, they don’t even know that.” This lack of knowledge is fuelled by the fact that the island’s sport heritage or history is not even taught in schools, as is the case in Curaçao and also the Anglophone Caribbean. But while the country’s sport heritage was seen as serving a definite nation-building function through integration of and education about the island’s sport history, particularly among children, it was not seen as serving any significant socioeconomic function. Franca said, “It won’t be a special attraction to tourists. They might go there to look around especially if we have one or two baseball players from the Major Leagues and they would like to see their backgrounds. I don’t think it would be a crash [success].” It was the sports of beach tennis and pickleball that were seen

as having greater potential to attract tourists, particularly Americans given their historical connection with Aruba in the area of commerce.

Discussion

Whatever their linguistic, political, economic, historical, sociological, demographic, and sporting differences (e.g., centrality of baseball vs. cricket), Caribbean countries, whether Dutch or Anglophone, have three fundamental commonalities as relates to heritage: (i) a clear institutional bias towards traditional notions of cultural and natural heritage, which was reinforced by the 1972 World Heritage Convention; (ii) the lack of any significant attention to or interest in the documentation and promotion of sport heritage by either scholars or policymakers, and (iii) attempts to promote sport heritage, where they have occurred, being driven largely by private individuals with minimal or no state support. Although sport had become part of modern-day nationalist politics in the construction of nations and national identity since the reintroduction of the Olympic Games in 1876, and was generally seen as an aspect of popular culture that even facilitated colonisation, it still did not make the initial cut in the global heritage movement, although there were subsequent attempts to correct this omission through the 1999 Punta del Este Convention and the 2003 ICH Convention.⁴⁸ As a result of the historical exclusion and/or marginalisation of sport from notions of heritage (tangible or intangible), this has led not only to a paucity of literature on the subject but to a lack or absence of public policies (education, tourism, sport, heritage) to deal with this area, particularly in small island developing states (SIDS), like those in the Caribbean.

However, in spite of this lacuna, the Dutch and Anglophone Caribbean islands examined here still provide examples of attempts to protect and promote their sport heritage, which are linked to nation-building and nation-branding, although the experiences vary significantly by island and by sport. Regarding the West Indies, while there is recognition of the importance of its cricket heritage, which goes back to the nineteenth century, particularly in building each nation and, as an integrated region, in serving as an instrument of decolonisation, there have been mixed attitudes to the documentation and dissemination of this rich heritage. For instance, of the twelve islands from which players have been drawn to represent the West Indies cricket team, a cricket museum only exists on one, Trinidad, while the attempt to establish another on the island of Grenada failed as a result of the lack of support from the government and public. While cricket therefore has definitely been used to imagine or construct nations in the Caribbean and even a single Caribbean nation, the documentation and institutionalisation of its cricket heritage

has been lacking beyond the historical writings of a handful of cricket historians. However, as the game has become more professionalised and commercialised with the advent of the shorter version called T20 cricket, which lasts approximately three hours, West Indian cricket has also become an integral part of nation-branding through its incorporation into the tourism economy on which the majority of islands depend for their livelihood.

Historically, sport has reflected the structure and conditions of the society or time in which it has been organised and played. So, in traditional society, where religion dominated people's lives, sport was a means by which people communicated with their gods, by asking for favours (fertile soil, fertile women, protection against illness) and even, in some cases, sacrificing losers.⁴⁹ For instance, the ancient Olympic Games was one of several crown festivals in Greece held in honour of the god Zeus.⁵⁰ Fast forward to the twenty-first century, we see that sport in general and cricket in particular, in the West Indies is now being used to serve the interests of both local and foreign capital. In the latter regard, all T20 cricket franchises in the CPL are owned by Indian businessmen, which is a profound reflection of the game's commodification and globalisation along the circuit of global investment capital. This can also serve to illustrate the neoliberal character of "nation-branding" to which Ansano made reference. This commercialisation of the game, however, has resulted in tremendous controversy, because it is seen as undermining the game's historical political function as a symbol of West Indian regional integration and decolonisation.⁵¹ In that regard, political consciousness has been seen as being substituted for "cash consciousness."⁵²

The Dutch Caribbean countries examined also reveal relatively mixed experiences in relation to the use of their sport heritage for either nation-building or branding. In both societies, sport heritage has been seen as important to the process of nation-building, which served as an important justification for the establishment of or plans to establish a sport museum. For instance, in Curaçao, the documentation of its soccer heritage was seen as part of a deeper process of self-valorisation of its people in order to counter the worst effects of colonialism, which was grounded in the devalorisation and denigration of non-Europeans, particularly those of African descent, who were seen to have no history or culture anywhere. Consequently, it was part of an attempt to showcase the island's own sport history and heroes and create a greater sense of self-worth or self-respect in the population based on the island's own achievements and combat the historical practice of looking to Amsterdam or metropolitan Dutch culture for validation and a sense of importance. Thus the Sport Museum Curaçao (SMC) is not just about nation-building but rebuilding that sense of self in the people of Curaçao, structured around a greater

appreciation and knowledge of their own sport history and those who made it. In Curaçao, the use of sport heritage to construct or reconstruct notions of nation has been intimately linked to the issue of race and to ensuring that the invisible (i.e., sport heroes) became an integral part of its imaging or reimagining. Relatedly, the sport of cricket in the West Indies served the same basic function: making former subaltern groups like those of African and Asian descent an integral part of the nation or society. These experiences show that what we consider sport heritage and its functions, just like heritage in general, are an ineluctable product of “state formation and nation-building.”

In Aruba however, while the value of sport heritage and the rationale for the establishment of a sport museum was not framed in terms of a postcolonial response or as countering the negative impacts of Dutch colonialism, it was still seen as serving important developmental functions in relation to public education about the island’s sport history, motivating youths to participate or excel as well as helping to integrate individuals into Aruban society, particularly children born on the island to foreigners. Unlike the SMC however, there was no indication that the establishment of this museum in Aruba was influenced in any way by concerns over racial exclusion or any negative colonial legacy, although colour and ethnicity have formed an integral component of social relations on the island.

However, the fact that cricket is not seen as Aruban or part of its sport heritage because of its continued association with expatriates—although it has been played in the country for over eighty years and even has a national association funded by the Aruban State—reflects the socially constructed and political nature of notions of nation, heritage, and national heritage. It also shows the exclusionary and contradictory character of the process of identity formation and the pertinence of the question: “What nation are we imagining, and who is the ‘we’ that imagines that nation?”⁵³ Does this “we” include citizens of Aruba who play cricket?

In relation to nation-branding, there was no indication that sport or sport heritage was being used for this purpose on either island as part of the marketing of its tourism industry, unlike the case of cricket in the West Indies. Admittedly, while the professionalisation experienced in baseball and the economic export of its best players to MLB can be seen as facilitating some degree of “branding,” for both nations, the absence of, say, a professional baseball league has undermined the potential for a branding similar to that of the CPL via West Indies cricket. Consequently, this may perhaps explain why we have not seen a similar tension between the use of sport heritage for nation-building and nation-branding in the Dutch Caribbean as we have seen in the Anglophone Caribbean.

Conclusion

In both the Anglophone Caribbean and Dutch Caribbean, sport heritage has been used for nation-building purposes in varying degrees, but its use for nation-branding purposes seems to have differed significantly. Notwithstanding this, the interest in sport heritage in both regions still lags far behind the interest shown in cultural and natural heritage globally, as well as in the Caribbean as a whole. However, for SIDS in particular, like those in the Caribbean, where sport has served to provide more international visibility, respect, and prestige, sport heritage needs to be placed more firmly and squarely on the agendas of the state, the private sector, the sport community, researchers, scholars, and educators if its nation-building and nation-branding functions are to realise their full potential.