

Nationalism and xenophobia in cricket: Identifying distinctions, examining promotion, and proposing solutions

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ABSTRACT

Various forms of racism are present in all types of sports. Xenophobia, in this context, is considered a new type of racism centered around the fear or dislike of foreigners, often intertwined with nationalism. As cricket's most popular format is matches between countries, this qualitative study aimed to examine whether nationalism in the sport is intentionally or unintentionally spreading xenophobia. A total of 20 participants (6 females and 14 males) from academic and professional cricket backgrounds, comprising sociology scholars, lecturers, PhD students, national-level umpires, professional players, coaches, journalists, and cricket board officials, participated in four focus groups, with five members in each focus group. The findings suggest that nationalism plays a role in partially promoting xenophobia, and within the context of cricket, nationalism may intentionally or unintentionally foster xenophobic attitudes, while also proposing potential policies to mitigate such issues. Overall, the study emphasizes the urgency of tackling xenophobia in cricket through proactive measures promoting inclusivity and combating discriminatory attitudes.

KEYWORDS

Xenophobia; Racism; Cricket; Nationalism

1. INTRODUCTION

Sports and racism have a long history (Hextrum, 2020). A high number of incidents have occurred recently and in the last century that have involved various forms of discrimination and prejudice (Hylton & Lawrence, 2016). These include the long struggle of African American athletes in

the US, soccer hooliganism in Europe and minority athletes' complaints regarding dual slandered based on race (Simiyu, 2012). Recently, a new wave of racial abuse has crossed Europe. For instance, in 2019 football players around Europe faced racial abuse from fans and fellow athletes (Steinberg, 2019). These incidents occurred even after soccer authorities established an organisation in 1997 named 'Let's Kick Racism out of Football' (Bennett & Jönsson, 2017).

Racism is also present in cricket; however, its intensity and nature is different because both league cricket and the presence of foreign players in league cricket teams are relatively new. Most of the racial abuse was seen as a “rush of blood” rather than real racism. In contrast to how the official cricket bodies perceive these incidents, they should be considered xenophobic and a type of racial abuse. International and domestic cricket has witnessed many xenophobic incidents, but umpires and match referees have either ignored them or have not considered them serious (Long et al., 1997). Beside these individual incidents in cricket, xenophobia and racism have always existed between countries due to the international tournament format in cricket. For instance, some of the most popular events in cricket are Ashes (Australia vs England), the World Cup (countries play against other countries) and the Pakistan-India bilateral series, and emotions against other nations are at their peak. Pakistan-India games are a classical example of this scenario, and are often considered, by both fans and the media, a type of war between the countries (Hasaan, 2016); during these matches xenophobic emotions are evident. Nevertheless, the Pakistan-India bilateral series is often also used as a diplomacy tool in the region and to ease tense military situations on the borders (Shahid, 2015). However, unlike other sport governing bodies, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has been frequently criticized for their less effective role and dual standards when implementing decisions. This criticism is often extended to their reaction to racism as well. The ICC has been criticised for different sanctions for the same actions committed by different country's players, corruption and favouring big nations (Malcolm & Fletcher, 2017; Philpott, 2018; Siddiqui et al., 2019). Therefore, this study aims to discuss the hidden and visible xenophobia in the field of cricket. The study offers a unique prospect in academia by examination of the relationship between nationalism and xenophobia within the context of cricket, a topic that has received limited attention in existing literature. Furthermore, the study explores the presence of xenophobia in cricket and investigates whether the sport inadvertently fosters or intentionally perpetuates xenophobic attitudes. By proposing potential policies to mitigate such issues, the research contributes to the development of strategies aimed at promoting inclusivity and combating discriminatory practices within the sport.

Furthermore, the study intends to highlight intentional and unintentional xenophobic practices in the field and outside the field of cricket. It also aims to elaborate on the relationship between nationalism and xenophobia. That is, the discourse around cricket often labels these types of incidents as a product of nationalism, but the current study will elaborate on the difference between nationalism and xenophobia. Therefore, this is a pioneer study in the field of sport that aims to distinguish between nationalism and xenophobia. The study also proposes policies that can eliminate xenophobia in cricket. Furthermore, it asks the following questions:

- **RQ1:** How can nationalism and xenophobia be differentiated?
- **RQ2:** Is cricket intentionally or unintentionally promoting xenophobia?
- **RQ3:** What policies can eliminate xenophobic attitudes in cricket?

1.1. Literature Review

Nationalism, a multifaceted concept, functions as a binding force within nation-states (Özkirimli, 2003), fostering unity and a shared identity among citizens (Lee, 2015). However, this seemingly unifying force is not devoid of downsides. While nationalism can contribute to a positive national identity, it also holds the potential to generate negative sentiments toward those perceived as "foreign" or outside the national community, thus giving rise to xenophobia—a complex psychopathological condition marked by a distrust and loathing of foreignness (Baum & Potter, 2008; Gans, 2003).

The intricate relationship between nationalism and xenophobia has been extensively explored in scholarly literature. Nationalism, as a binding agent within nation-states, is recognized for creating positive emotions associated with national identity (Leerssen, 2006). Kohn (2017) argue that nationalism is a positive force that unites people, fostering a sense of pride and loyalty to one's homeland. However, this positive connotation of nationalism comes with a caveat. For instance, Kersting (2007) suggests that xenophobia can be considered a negative side effect of nationalism. The potential for the negative consequences of nationalism to manifest in the form of xenophobia has implications not only for societal dynamics but also within the realm of sports.

The realm of sports provides a unique context for the intersection of nationalism and xenophobia. Intense nationalistic fervor in sports, particularly in cricket, has been observed to manifest as discriminatory attitudes and actions toward athletes from different countries (Malcolm, 2001). This phenomenon has been documented in various studies exploring the dynamics of nationalism and xenophobia within the sporting arena (Bekhuis et al., 2013; Chiweshe, 2016; Llopis-Goig, 2009). In

the context of cricket, Cleland & Cashmore (2014) note that race has been at the heart of cricket throughout the twentieth century, with mythologies of race, gender, and nationalities contaminating cricketing spaces. Therefore, the literature indicates that national rivalries, a defining feature of cricket, can escalate into xenophobic behaviors, including racist chanting during matches and derogatory slurs exchanged between players.

Xenophobia itself, as Tromp et al. (2013) describe it, involves a fear or dislike of foreigners, encompassing a broader spectrum of emotions beyond a simple aversion to the unfamiliar. The nuanced nature of xenophobia, particularly when entwined with nationalism, has far-reaching implications (Kubota, 2016). Therefore, Tafira (2011) emphasizes that xenophobia is a new form of racism that is culturally based. The cultural underpinnings of xenophobia within the context of sports, especially cricket, underscore the need for a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics. Moreover, sociological perspectives contribute to a deeper comprehension of xenophobia as a political ideology emerging in contexts gripped by the politics of fear (Llopis-Goig, 2009).

Xenophobia in Cricket

Recently, there has been an increase in violent behaviour in sports, dehumanizing racist and xenophobic attitudes, hooliganism, corruption, political interference and the influence of big business, the media and sponsors (Patsantaras et al., 2008). Xenophobia in sports is neither simple nor straightforward, as major stakeholders have declined to acknowledge certain acts as xenophobic (Hylton & Lawrence, 2016). This is why racist chanting occurs during matches and racial slurs are uttered during altercations between individuals, at both the grassroots and elite levels of sport (Cleland & Cashmore, 2014). The mythologies of race, gender and nationalities polluted cricketing spaces (Nicholson, 2017). England, the most important and old member of the cricket club, was complicit in a number of racist and xenophobic episodes throughout history (Burdsey, 2011). These include accusations of ball-tampering, cheating and match-fixing by Pakistani players and officials (Malcolm & Velija, 2017), and a long history of criticism by the English press towards West Indian cricket fans (Malcolm, 2009),

The introduction and popularity of league cricket highlighted these issues further. For instance, English cricketer Craig Overton reportedly told Pakistani cricketer Ashar Zaidi (playing for Sussex at the time) to "go back to [your] own country" (BBC, 2015). Furthermore, Sur and Sasaki (2020) have mentioned that Indian fans do not want to see Sri Lankan players in their favourite Indian Premier League (IPL) team because of the conflict between India and Sri Lanka due to the persecution of ethnic

Tamils. Furthermore, in 2003, England and New Zealand refused to play matches due to security concerns in Zimbabwe and Kenya, while other teams played their match as scheduled (Holden, 2013).

2. METHODS

2.1. Design

This study adopted a qualitative approach based on focus group interviews. A qualitative study is considered the most appropriate method to elicit meaning and gain in-depth knowledge that is currently absent from the literature (Berg, 2001). Due to the lack of in-depth studies in this area, this approach is intended to be a starting point for future studies. Focus group interviews are used due to the study's sophisticated and complex nature, as focus groups can generate rich data through interactions; this format is used especially to get information on the perspectives of a group or category on certain topics (Ten Have, 2004). Focus groups are structurally similar to in-depth interviews because they use open-ended questions that are designed to elicit knowledge from participants (Austin & Sutton, 2014). However, focus groups are a separate data collection technique from in-depth interviews, which are usually conducted on a homogenous group to provide information around topics specified by the researchers (Rosenthal, 2016; Smithson, 2008).

2.2. Participants and Recruitment

To serve the purpose of this study, the interviews used two types of expert: 1) sociologists and 2) cricket professionals and experts. These two types of experts were chosen to understand the expert opinions from academia and the field. The preliminary stage of sampling involved negotiating access (Okumus et al., 2007), and this process was eased due to the lead researcher's established relationship with various sports stakeholder groups (clubs, athletes and sport researchers) and academia (universities and research institutes). Participants were invited to participate in focus group interviews as per their convenience. The criteria used for the academics were that they all belonged to the sociology department and had to have at least one article published. The criterion for cricket professionals and experts was that they had at least two years of experience in their field. The purpose of using these criteria was to choose experts in the field, as criterion sampling is considered a type of purposeful sampling (Patton, 2014).

A total of 20 participants (6 females and 14 males) participated in four focus groups with five members in each focus group. These groups were organized to facilitate in-depth discussions and exploration of the research topic from different perspectives. Each focus group was carefully composed to ensure diversity among its members, representing various backgrounds and viewpoints relevant to the study's objectives. By convening multiple focus groups, the research aimed to capture a broad range

of insights and experiences related to nationalism, xenophobia, and cricket. Galvin (2015) argued that as few as four individuals can render accurate information if they possess a high degree of knowledge in the domain of inquiry. Around 90% of themes can be identified within three to six focus groups (Guest et al., 2017). The participants' characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the participants

Focus Group	Participant	Gender	Profession
FG1	P1	F	Assistant professor of sociology
	P2	F	Lecturer of sociology
	P3	F	Assistant professor of sociology
	P4	M	PhD scholar of sociology
	P5	M	PhD scholar of sociology
FG2	P6	M	Lecturer of sociology
	P7	M	Associate professor of sociology
	P8	F	PhD scholar of sociology
	P9	F	PhD scholar of sociology
	P10	M	Assistant professor of sociology
FG3	P11	M	National level umpire
	P12	M	Radio commentator
	P13	M	Professional player
	P14	M	Local club president
	P15	M	Cricket board marketing member
FG4	P16	M	Professional player
	P17	M	Club coach
	P18	F	Professional player
	P19	M	Sports journalist
	P20	M	Sports journalist

2.3. Procedure

The data was collected through focus group interviews. Focus groups were chosen as the data collection method to explore the participants' (expert) experiences and opinions on racism and xenophobia. The participants were informed about the interviewers' backgrounds and the main aim of the interviews. All participants were asked to sign a voluntary participation form that explained the purpose of the study.

The focus group discussions centered on the themes of nationalism, xenophobia, and their implications for cricket. Each participant had the freedom to contribute by responding to questions, sharing new insights, or expanding on previous comments. Questions were posed to encourage active participation, fostering a collaborative environment where diverse perspectives could be explored and discussed. For instance, questions were asked: (1) Can you provide examples of how nationalist rhetoric or ideologies have intersected with xenophobic attitudes or behaviours in recent times? (2) Are

there any historical or current events that you believe highlight the close link between nationalism and xenophobia? (3) How do you perceive the relationship between nationalism and xenophobia? (4) How would you define nationalism in the context of cricket? (5) Can you share any personal experiences or observations of nationalism or xenophobia in cricket? (6) In your opinion, what factors contribute to the association between nationalism and xenophobia in cricket?

Interviews had no time limit and lasted between 90 and 115 minutes. All interviews were conducted during January and February of 2020 and were based on an interview guide that included the topics, which were based on the research questions of the study. During the interviews, group discussions and practical examples of participants were encouraged. All interviews were conducted by the first author of the study. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

2.4. Data Analysis

The analysis commenced after conducting the first focus group of the study. This strategy allowed the researchers to become familiar with the participants' responses and to prepare better for future interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Along with the field notes that were taken during the interview, the researchers noted down their first impressions of the interview and then proceeded to discuss these initial impressions with the other researchers. This process also helped the researchers improve their upcoming focus group discussions. Two levels of coding were adopted for the current study: the open coding level and the axial level. Open coding was employed for the initial analysis. In open coding, data and concepts are categorised into initial themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). To do so, group discussions were read until researchers obtained a good grasp of the data. After open coding, axial coding was applied. Axial coding is a process of crosscutting or relating the initial themes to one another (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In other words, the initial themes are classified into more defined, concrete themes; in some cases, the researchers combined similar themes and those that could not stand alone. (Smithson, 2008) has cautioned that if focus group data is treated as identical to individual interview data during the analysis the unique aspects of the focus group are undermined. To overcome this issue, this study adopted a group as the unit of analysis instead of an individual.

Once the researchers individually identified the themes, a triangulation process was applied. Researchers triangulated their findings and made decisions about the final themes to be presented. In a triangulation process, a research team member presents and discusses the themes and sub-themes that they identified through a careful readings of the transcripts (Patton, 2002). Through this process of discussion and debate, consensus should be built on the final set of themes that represent the content

of the focus groups (Rosenthal, 2016). Results in this study were elaborated from the themes identified during the triangulation process.

3. RESULTS

The results of the study are presented below. Results are illustrated and elaborated using participant quotes; participants are identified by their participant code and focus group number.

3.1. Nationalism and Xenophobia

Participants of the study made it clear that nationalism and xenophobia are oppositional. Nationalism is a positive force that bounds the people of a country together, while xenophobia is a negative emotion that produces a negative perception in the country against those who do not belong to the country. However, participants did not reach a consensus on whether nationalism or xenophobia are interrelated. In the study, positive, negative and neutral statements on the interrelation between nationalism and xenophobia were found. For instance,

Neutral: Nationalism is mostly an internal matter. If someone supports and follows the interests of his or her nation that does not necessarily promote xenophobia [FG1, P2].

Xenophobia is, to a certain extent, constructed from various aspect of nationalism, but we cannot blame nationalism for it. In certain countries xenophobia exists, while in others it does not, while we cannot claim that a certain country is less or more nationalist. Thus, this relationship is more complicated [FG2, P10].

Negative relation: Our nationalism makes us like (even love) our own countries, which helps us fulfil our national interests. So, nationalism and xenophobia are different in meaning, existence, prevalence and magnitude [FG1, P3].

Nationalism is patriotism. It has nothing to do with hate or dislike of other nations. It is about love of your own country [FG1, P5].

Positive relation: Xenophobia and nationalism are two faces of a single coin. More nationalism leads to xenophobia. As xenophobia is a dislike of people of other nationalities, it is based in national love, which is nationalism. That is why we cannot reject the hypothesis that xenophobia and nationalism are interrelated [FG2, P7].

Xenophobia is a radical form of nationalism and many countries around the world have faced violent xenophobic nationalism [FG1, P1].

However, it is interesting to note that all group members (of FG1 and FG2) agreed that extreme nationalism can lead to xenophobia. For example,

Too much nationalism is harmful as it can cause xenophobia [FG1, P4].

There is no particular definition of too much nationalism, but yes it can cause damage [FG1, P3].

3.2. Cricket (not) Promoting Xenophobia

Cricket is unique because its popular format is competition between countries. Therefore, this study has asked whether cricket and other sports that are more heavily played on the international level can lead towards xenophobic feelings. Participants of the study completely or partially agree with this claim:

International level competitions may temporarily produce xenophobic feelings among viewers because during the match you are supporting one country and opposing the other country; thus, xenophobia of various intensities (based on attitude) appears and disappears [FG3, P15].

Cricket, especially, is played between countries that have numerous issues between them. For example, Britain plays against its old colonies (Pakistan, India, West Indies etc.), Pakistan and India play and have intense political rifts between them, South Africa and Zimbabwe play and Zimbabweans face xenophobic attacks in South Africa, England and Ireland (Ireland is the latest country to achieve independence from England) play and many more. Thus, when these countries play against each other, people of these countries already have some sort of grievance towards the other country. As a result, matches between these two nations provoke xenophobia among fans. [FG2, P10]

Apart from the international level, even league cricket can promote xenophobia among cricket fans. For example, the Indian Premier League banned Pakistani players or Sri Lankan players in the past and stopped their players from participating in the Pakistan Super league. These types of political decisions certainly lead towards xenophobia among populations of those countries [FG3, P14].

Most sports are free from governmental interference, such as football. Thus, even though racism based on skin colour exist, clubs in Ukraine and Russia hire African players. But the case is totally different in cricket. Here, the ICC does not get involved in these types of matters and as a result we see a contention between some countries [FG4, P19].

3.3. Policies to Decrease Xenophobia

Participants of the study proposed different policies that could decrease or eliminate xenophobia in cricket. According to the study participants, the ICC should reconsider its role and regularize leagues, ensuring there is less government interference and equal treatment among its member and ensuring there is cricket expansion.

Regularize leagues: the ICC is not interfering in the leagues as it often contradicts with its calendar. It is time that the ICC took a step forward, regularized all the leagues by inserting them into its schedule and introduced equal opportunity rules so players from around the world could compete freely anywhere. This will not only help players from smaller cricket nations but also eliminate xenophobic attitudes among fans [FG4, P20].

Less government interference: the ICC should implement a policy that reduces the role of government in sport, just like football or other federations. As we know, politics cause xenophobia sometimes, so less political interference would lessen xenophobia [FG1, P5].

Equality: the ICC is often blamed for supporting big cricket nations. The past hold of the big three and of English and Australian teams are few incidents that support this statement. Therefore, the ICC should take steps that favour cricket instead of protecting some nation's interests. Sometimes, it is felt that a certain rule is interpreted differently for two country's players. These types of actions provoke xenophobic attitudes among diehard fans [FG3, P12].

Expansion: If more countries played cricket, there would be less xenophobia. Currently, there are only 10 test nations that must play each other repeatedly. But when there will be 20 countries, they will all compete against each other and the bad intention against a certain nation would lessen [FG4, P19].

4. DISCUSSION

This study focused on xenophobia in the field of cricket. To do this, it elaborated on the relationship between nationalism and xenophobia. Cricket pundits often call racist or xenophobic incidents "nationalist", but this study elaborated on the difference between nationalism and xenophobia. Furthermore, this study examined whether xenophobia existed in the field of cricket and whether cricket as a sport is intentionally or unintentionally promoting xenophobia. It also intended to highlight the policies that can eliminate xenophobia in the game.

There was no consensus among participants regarding the first research question on the relationship between nationalism and xenophobia. Participants agreed, disagreed and remained neutral towards the claim that xenophobia and nationalism are interrelated. Previous studies have identified that xenophobia and nationalism are somewhat interrelated. For instance, Mpofu (2020); Elias et al. (2021) supported the claim that nationalism and xenophobia are interrelated. In this vein, Kersting (2009) has argued that a new type of nationalism is emerging that is against non-citizens (foreigners) living within the country, which is a kind of nationalism that is directly related to xenophobia. Additionally, some studies have found that nationalism does not always lead to acute manifestations of extremism like xenophobia (Rustamovna, 2022). Thus, this study aligns with past research suggesting that xenophobia is not always caused by nationalism. Moreover, research conducted in various sporting contexts has highlighted the presence of xenophobia. For example, research conducted by Llopis-Goig (2017); Rek-Woźniak & Woźniak (2020) in the field of soccer revealed a complex relationship between nationalism and xenophobia, with some fans exhibiting exclusionary behaviours towards players of opposing nationalities. Similarly, studies by Senkbeil (2010); McCarthy et al. (2022) in the realm of basketball and netball have highlighted instances where nationalist sentiments have intersected with xenophobic attitudes, particularly during international competitions. However, it is important to note that not all studies support the notion of widespread xenophobia in sports.

The second research question aimed to understand the role of cricket in spreading xenophobia. Participants of the study seemed to agree that cricket spread xenophobia. However, they did not blame the ICC for this; instead, participants discussed decisions of the ICC that unintentionally fabricated xenophobic sentiments among fans. Past studies have identified that politics and politicians cause xenophobia (Chiweshe, 2016). Thus, the opinions of the study participants is in line with the past studies. Brentin & Cooley (2015) mentioned that social exclusion can cause xenophobic sentiments among societies. The participants of the study stated that the exclusion of certain countries from leagues also provoked these sentiments. Most importantly, Fletcher & Swain (2018) claimed that cricket does not (and has never) offered equal opportunities to all who have watched, played or followed it. That statement is reflective of the results of current studies.

The third research question related to the policies that can help eliminate xenophobia in cricket. The first proposal in this context was to regularize leagues and ensure there are strict regulations for all member countries. This is in line with past studies, such as Llopis-Goig (2009) who has mentioned that by implementing strict regulations German authorities are able to deal with xenophobia and other racial abuses. Thus, equal treatment and policies that favour equal treatment could reduce xenophobia.

The third proposal was the expansion of the ICC. Currently, there are only 12 test members who are defined as full members, while other teams are called associate members. Of these 12, India, Australia and England are considered the “big three”—the most important members. Expansion would serve two aims: 1) it could reduce the monopoly of certain countries, as other large and rich nations would enter the field and 2) countries would not play as much against the same countries, thus reducing political and nationalist sentiments. The last proposal that study participants gave to reduce xenophobia was reducing government interference in cricket and its policies. The international governing body of football, FIFA, is an example in this regard as it strictly prohibits government inference in the federation and clubs.

The results of this study indicate that cricket is currently favourable to xenophobic sentiments. Therefore, it is necessary to take steps to eliminate xenophobia from the sport. In this context, the ICC must focus on cricket leagues, and instead of not interfering in internal affairs of countries’ cricket organizations it should regulate the league. The ICC should introduce leagues in its calendar where all leagues play simultaneously, following the European football model. When players and fans become familiar with players of other nations, xenophobic sentiments will gradually lower among fans and player.

5. LIMITATIONS

As with any study, there are limitations that should be acknowledged and considered for future research. Even though the current sample includes experts, this study is not a conclusive outcome, as even within the current study participants disagreed with each other. Therefore, the results of the study are a starting point for further investigation, rather than a conclusive report. Furthermore, the qualitative nature of the study makes it difficult to generalize. Lastly, as the nature of the topic is complicated, future studies could try to use data that includes all cricket stakeholders (i.e., experts, fans, players, organizations and the media) to ensure that the results are more comprehensive.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study advances our understanding of the complex dynamics between nationalism, xenophobia, and sports, particularly cricket. The findings contribute to scholarly discourse and offer practical considerations for governing bodies and stakeholders aiming to create a sporting environment that not only celebrates national pride but actively works to eliminate xenophobic attitudes, fostering a spirit of inclusivity and fairness within the diverse landscape of cricket.

The practical implications of this study extend beyond academic discourse, offering valuable insights for cricketing authorities, sports organizations, and stakeholders invested in fostering a positive and inclusive sporting environment. The nuanced understanding of the interplay between nationalism and xenophobia within cricket illuminates potential areas for intervention. Practical implications include the implementation of policies that promote the regularization of leagues, ensuring equal opportunities for players irrespective of their national origin. Additionally, the study suggests a need for measures to reduce government interference and political influences in cricket, fostering a more apolitical and fair playing field. Embracing equality and expanding the scope of cricket to involve more nations could contribute to diminishing xenophobic attitudes among fans and players. These practical considerations provide a roadmap for cricketing authorities to navigate the complexities of national pride and cultural diversity, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more inclusive and harmonious global cricketing community.

The academic contributions of this study lie in its nuanced exploration of the intricate relationship between nationalism, xenophobia, and cricket. By delving into these dynamics within the context of sports, particularly cricket, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in the intersection of national identity and discriminatory attitudes. The differentiation between nationalism and xenophobia, as illuminated in the findings, contributes to theoretical discussions surrounding these concepts. Moreover, the study expands the scholarly discourse by unraveling the ways in which international and league cricket may act as conduits for the expression of xenophobia, offering valuable insights into the sociocultural dimensions of sports. The proposed policies to mitigate xenophobia within cricket contribute practical considerations for scholars and policymakers, enriching the academic landscape with actionable strategies aimed at fostering inclusivity and fairness within the global cricketing community.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

FUNDING

This research received no external funding.

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