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## **Cricket's Regional Identities: the development of cricket and identity in Yorkshire and Surrey**

### **Introduction**

The link between a person's identity and the sports team they choose to follow is well documented. Beyond the sharing of a common experience with fellow supporters, sport also has the ability to nurture 'a strong localism – loyalty to neighbourhood, town, region [and] country, through identification and participation with the team'.<sup>1</sup> Academic work in the UK has largely focused on the generation of national identities and sport,<sup>2</sup> with the cricket literature following this broad trend.<sup>3</sup> Although some of the more historical cricket texts address regional identity they have concentrated on 'northern' identities and Yorkshire in particular.<sup>4</sup> The Yorkshire studies investigating cricket played by the Yorkshire County Cricket Club (YCCC) and that played at standards below the English County Championship (ECC).

Comparatively little research has been applied to southern sport and regional identities however. As a cricketing county from the games initial development, a great deal of research has been devoted to Surrey cricket, yet beyond the auspices of the Surrey County Cricket Club (SCCC) academic work is scarce. This is particularly true regarding the development of Surrey's regional cricket identity. As such, despite sports significant role in the generation and exhibition of identity being well established, studies in the formation of regional identities remain under-researched if not overlooked completely in cricket and other sports.<sup>5</sup>

With this in mind, this paper aims to explore the influences on the regional cricket identities of Yorkshire and Surrey. It asks how and why have these distinct identities

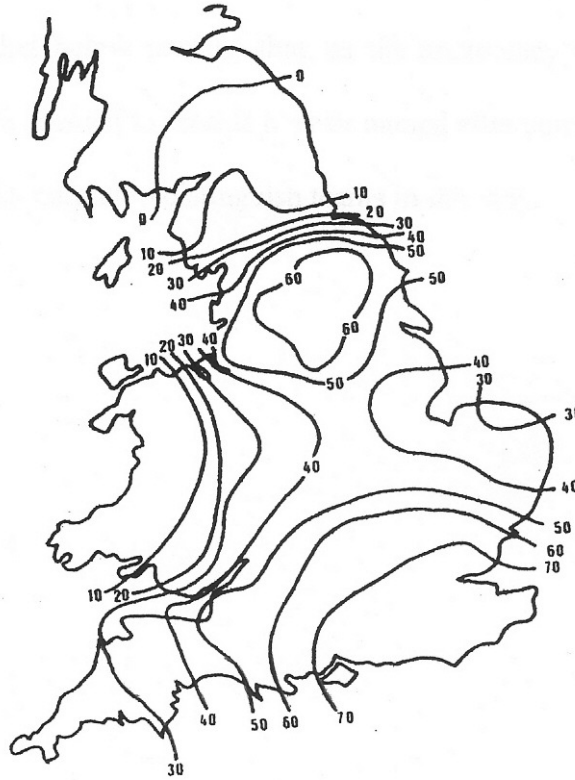
been constructed and communicated via cricket in the two counties? And whether the public, media and academic perceptions of two distinct regional stereotypes have any basis in fact?

In order to achieve this, the paper will utilise data from a survey of 400 contemporary Yorkshire and Surrey supporters.<sup>6</sup> The data initially being used to test the stereotyped cricket identity of each county and establish the meanings attributed to cricket regionally. The paper then compares the development of cricket in each region against economic and social contexts, and each county's literary representation. It will then question the validity of the literary 'evidence' regarding cricket identities in each region, and assess whether these stereotypes, or 'presumptions' are accurate.

### **Regional Identities**

Cricket has been described as the quintessentially 'English' game, and yet, a 'regional image has [also] been communicated'.<sup>7</sup> In YCCC and SCCC, Yorkshire and Surrey possess the two most successful clubs in the history of the ECC, with the two county clubs sharing 61% of ECC titles up to the Second World War. However, the regional identities of these two cricket regions could not be more different, despite, as John Bale has demonstrated, both being closely associated with the game by the public (Figure One). These stereotyped identities are highlighted by Richard Holt describing Herbert Sutcliffe of Yorkshire and Jack Hobbs of Surrey opening the batting for England. 'They were a pair whose virtues of northern grit and southern grace seemed to combine the perceived characteristic regional virtues of the English perfectly'.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure One: A mental map of English cricket<sup>9</sup>**



The isolines represent the degree, which Bale's respondents identified different parts of the country with cricket (numerals refer to percentages).

The obvious North/South divide apart, each county, its cricket club and its cricketers are presented or perceived in very specific ways. Although the defined differences of the past have been somewhat 'diluted' in recent decades, due to television coverage (where we get to 'know' the players personalities better) and greater social mobility, the players and supporters of YCCC and Yorkshire the county has gained a strong reputation as a proud, passionate, working-class, and competitive region.<sup>10</sup> The survey data in this regard revealed that 59.5% of Yorkshire and 60.5% of Surrey respondents regarded the supporters of YCCC as '*Proud*', and more Surrey respondents (39.5%)

believed YCCC supporters to be '*Working-Class*' than the Yorkshire respondents themselves (31.6%).

Regarding the '*Passionate*' nature of Yorkshire supporters, the respondents were more than certain about the level of commitment to cricket in the county. 72.4% of the Surrey and 60.8% of the Yorkshire respondents believed in the passionate nature of the perceived Yorkshire. The perceived identity of Yorkshire supporters in this and other 'attitudinal' aspects, appearing uniformed from both within and outside of the county. Data that indicates both the strength and defined nature of Yorkshire's regional cricketing identity.

Although the Yorkshire identity appears strongly defined and uniformed across both regions, Surrey has historically been regarded very differently. In a cricket context, Surrey has been perceived as a privileged, upper/middle-class region, which takes its cricket seriously, but for more aesthetic and pleasurable reasons, rather than a gritty determination to beat all-comers.<sup>11</sup> Predictably, given its use as a recurring motif in the southern identities presented by the North's media (see below), 59.2% of the Yorkshire respondents regarded Surrey supporters as '*Middle-Class*'. The Surrey respondents' - despite a more 'working-class' demographic than those of Yorkshire - also regard the supporters of SCCC in middle-class terms (42.1%), however, they preferred to see themselves as '*Sporting*' (61.8%), and '*Knowledgeable*' (65.8%). Perceived class aside, neither group could pin-point the archetypal Surrey supporter.

When asked '*what does cricket mean to you?*' the Yorkshire respondents placed great importance on cricket's ability to function as an 'identity ceremony'.<sup>12</sup> 45.1%

regarded cricket as an opportunity to '*bond with others*' or to '*identify with where you come from*'. This 'meaning' of cricket does hint at a regional consciousness, lacking among the Surrey respondents. Certainly it may indicate why chants similar to the "Yorkshire, Yorkshire, Yorkshire" type are not heard at the Oval.<sup>13</sup> By regarding cricket as a catalyst for 'bonding' as a community or region, the Yorkshire respondents view cricket as 'more than a game' or perhaps more accurately, 'a game with more meaning'.

Far from regarding cricket in regional terms, 50% of the Surrey respondents regarded cricket as '*just a game*' or '*a way of life*', which reflect the upper/middle-class values traditionally associated with cricket in the South. This contrasting data initially appears to back-up the regional class identities of each region as perceived and presented in the media and literature, and yet poses further questions. How have these different meanings or values been generated across the two regions? What regional differences occurred in cultural and social development, and the development and presentation of cricket, which could have contributed to such different identities and meanings for cricket within the same country?

### **Cricket in Yorkshire**

Mellor has described Yorkshire's cricketing regional identity as a 'subculture [of professionalism] within a wider climate of amateurism'.<sup>14</sup> This is, he claims, partly due to the regions lack of access to print or travel as late as the 1880s. However, the 'All England' XI's had used the railways extensively during the 1850s, and by the 1870s the railways could ensure the arrival of the London dailies early editions in York by 10am.<sup>15</sup> One may also assume that cricket teams and those supporters able to

pay the fare were travelling beyond their regions too. In this respect, factors other than professionalism must have contributed to the development of Yorkshires apparently unique cricket regional identity.

Despite the occasional match in Sheffield versus fellow ‘northerners’ Nottinghamshire in 1771,<sup>16</sup> the cricket being played in Yorkshire is not mentioned in modern cricket histories with any regularity until the mid to late 19th century. Whether this reflects a bias of research into the early game in the South, or a genuine absence of cricket is uncertain. What is clear however, despite the first known ‘Yorkshire’ team playing as late as 1833, (some 100 years after the game’s initial development in the counties of the South-East) is that cricket in Yorkshire appears to have experienced a vast expansion in play and popularity in the two decades following ‘Yorkshire’s’ debut.

Bailey argues that cricket was ‘regarded as a civilising influence in the... north... and [was instrumental in the] fostering of religious and educational ethics among the working class’.<sup>17</sup> Who introduced cricket to Yorkshire,<sup>18</sup> or why Yorkshire, rather than perhaps Cumbria or anywhere else for that matter, became such a hotbed of cricketing activity has been left unexplained by the authors of cricket histories. These histories suggesting that the touring professional XI's were the only regular visitors to ‘unfashionable’<sup>19</sup> northern cricket fields after 1846. Not one Yorkshire professional was listed among the 36 names in *Fred Lillywhites Guide* of that year, but only eight years later Yorkshire had the highest number of professionals (27 out of 110) listed in *Lillywhite's Guide* of 1854.<sup>20</sup> Indicating a large expansion in the number of ‘first-class’ professional cricketers nationally, but especially in Yorkshire. The success of

the professional XI's in northern regions possibly accounting for what happened within the professional ranks during this period, and Yorkshire's association with professionalism thereafter.

The increased incidence of cricket in Yorkshire culminated in the establishment of YCCC from the nuclei of the old Sheffield and York clubs in 1863.<sup>21</sup> In 1888, after residence at various grounds, 'Lot 17a' in Leeds, later Headingley, was acquired, by a combination of aristocrats and businessmen to eventually become the home ground of YCCC in 1903.<sup>22</sup> Under the leadership of Lord Hawke, captain for 28 years on, and later President off, the field, YCCC developed into a cricketing super-power - with no other county winning the ECC more times prior to 1914 - in spite of YCCC's strict regional selection policy. Yet, historically YCCC, thanks to its administrators, was one of the most conservative of cricket clubs - with big and small c's - initially being in the shadow of Nottinghamshire, the early 'northern stronghold',<sup>23</sup> and has tended to be a follower of trends, rather than a club that set them.

Richard Holt has noted that 'Yorkshire cricket was based upon a particularly fierce sense of territory',<sup>24</sup> which, Lord Hawke and the subsequent 'deportation',<sup>25</sup> of Cecil Parkin apart, forbade a player born outside of Yorkshire officially representing the white rose county until 1992.<sup>26</sup> This selection policy, which initially applied to all counties but only persisted at YCCC, has helped to enhance, since its ECC debut against Surrey in 1863, YCCC's reputation as a bastion of serious, competitive cricket, populated with equally serious, 'regionally motivated' professionals.



What really set the cricket played in Yorkshire apart from that in Surrey was what *Wisden* described somewhat disingenuously as the 'menace of the...Yorkshire leagues'.<sup>27</sup> Working-class cricket spectators' needs in Yorkshire were met largely by these leagues. Matches were played on half-day closing, Saturdays and even on Sundays,<sup>28</sup> very much in opposition to the ECC timetable 'designed around the mealtimes of the leisured'.<sup>29</sup> As in Association Football and Rugby, it is assumed that these leagues were based on fierce local rivalries, with both the participants and spectators status at stake. These 'rivalries' allegedly created a very competitive and popular form of cricket, with crowds much larger than most first-class counties would expect today.<sup>30</sup>

It is important to note the implied value given to the element of competition, or local 'status contest' by authors as being central to the ideology of the league's participants and spectators alike. If true, it is possible that these strong local identities and the will to win may have crossed over to the county game as players were selected from league sides to play for YCCC. Certainly Huddersfield, site of the first ever league, The Heavy Woollen Cup (1873) provided YCCC with the vast majority of its players in the early years of official competition. This may have distinguished YCCC players and Yorkshire players more generally, from the southern players who were more likely, as the current histories suggest, to have played less overtly 'competitive' public school, 'friendly' or 'village green' styles of cricket, preferred by many of the elite in the South.

As *Wisden* demonstrated, this element of competition and indeed the leagues themselves were looked down upon by the Marylebone Cricket Club's (MCC)

'amateur' powerbrokers. Leagues being regarded and presented as the thin end of the wedge of vulgar, competitive and professional 'northern' cricket, played at odds to the values espoused by the MCC.<sup>31</sup> Despite the Yorkshire Cricket Federation (1929) allying itself to the MCC,<sup>32</sup> and various leagues' and the MCC lobbying Parliament and the Football Association over issues of cricket ground taxation and football's encroachment into the cricket season,<sup>33</sup> the image of the leagues in the Long Room at Lords was never too pretty. In spite of the fact that many leagues, such as the Leeds and District, were what Birley calls 'essentially amateur combinations',<sup>34</sup> employing a limited number of professionals.

In the wider social and economic context, Yorkshire was going through major changes. The industrial revolution had created a massive population influx into areas that had previously been nothing more than northern market towns or villages.<sup>35</sup> Within these new populations (Table 1), often based around particular industries, came the need to provide alternative leisure forms to the workforce and their families - alternative that is, to the alehouses.

**Table 1: Population growth in selected localities in Yorkshire, 1801 – 1851.<sup>36</sup>**

	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851
<b>Halifax</b>	52,027	59,475	75,190	89,739	109,073	120,958
<b>Huddersfield</b>	47,079	56,633	71,021	88,772	109,011	123,860
<b>Bradford</b>	42,780	50,607	70,847	97,191	132,161	181,964
<b>Sheffield</b>	39,049	45,253	54,117	74,058	85,293	103,626

## **Cricket and Industry**

The industrial revolution not only transformed the landscape and working lives of the people of Yorkshire, it was a catalyst in the transformation of cricket's popularity and accessibility. As in Wales, mining was a prominent industry in Yorkshire, with the mining industry providing for the workers' welfare by law. The Mining Industry Act of 1920 instigated the foundation of the Miners' Welfare Fund, which was to be financed by what became known as the 'miner's magic penny'. This was a levy of one penny per tonne of saleable output,<sup>37</sup> and in 1929 contributed the enormous sum of £635,000 to working men's sport in South and West Yorkshire alone.<sup>38</sup> To put this figure into context, the MCC's Findlay Commission was gravely concerned about the first-class counties operating at a combined loss of £30,000 as late as 1937.<sup>39</sup>

Unlike Wales, Yorkshire accommodated other types of heavy industry and manufacture. These industries also made contributions to the 'welfare' of their workers, with sport provision just one of these contributions. The Pilkington Glassworks in St Helens ran four teams<sup>40</sup> and the Rowntree Cocoa Works in York also provided cricket for employees.<sup>41</sup> In more general terms Williams<sup>42</sup> provides figures for work's teams in various locations across Yorkshire (Table 2). Unsurprisingly, bearing in mind the finances available, 25% of the teams detailed by Williams in Halifax were works-based in 1930.

**Table 2: The number of works cricket teams in selected localities, 1900 – 1939.<sup>43</sup>**

	1900	1914	1922	1930	1939
<b>Barnsley</b>	11(80)	6(61)	5(73)	18(101)	6(32)
<b>Halifax</b>	3(43)	12(100)	3(88)	30(117)	24(93)
<b>St Helens</b>	4(34)	3(32)	4(32)	6(44)	10(42)

Note: Numbers in brackets represent the total number of teams from each locality which were mentioned in local newspapers. Each locality represents the area for which local newspapers reported upon recreational sport. The

geographical extent in the coverage of local sport scarcely changed between 1900 and 1939. The totals of work-based teams do not include those which were playing in interdepartmental works competitions.

The above indicates that a great deal of cricket was available to men of all classes (and some women)<sup>44</sup> in Yorkshire. Although the membership of YCCC had always been predominantly middle and upper-middle class<sup>45</sup> - somewhat in opposition to the identity associated with YCCC - the patronage referred to above, allied to working-class autonomy in the administration and playing of local cricket, afforded the Yorkshire and England cricketer Sir Len Hutton to observe: 'George Herbert Hirst and Wilfred Rhodes both came from Kirkheaton, near Huddersfield and both learnt their cricket in what might be called an industrial village, cricket being the game to play and the cricket ground being the meeting place for all during the summer months'.<sup>46</sup> Cricket in Yorkshire was not divided by class.

### **Cricket in Surrey**

Cricket had been played in Surrey by numerous teams long before the foundation of the much-lauded Hambledon club (Hampshire) around 1750, with numerous clubs being formed between 1700 and 1750.<sup>47</sup> Some of the very first 'Surrey' teams from the 1730s were selected by Frederick Louis the Prince of Wales, and he deserves much credit for the development of the game in Surrey and beyond, until his sudden cricket related death in 1751. It is not surprising that a member of the Royal Family would be associated with the county, Surrey having been regarded as the playground of Royalty, court and the aristocracy since the times of Henry VIII. As a consequence, organised cricket in Surrey, once aristocratic patronage was established, for the most part existed, in its more developed form, solely for these men, with their retained professionals relatively dependent upon their patronage.

In 1744 'Surrey' gentlemen proved the prime movers in the introduction of new laws of cricket,<sup>48</sup> yet so called village cricket remained prevalent across the county at this and later times, despite Surrey having the highest number of clubs per head of population than anywhere else in the country in pre-Victorian times.<sup>49</sup> Although Surrey appears to have been the early 'southern stronghold' of the game, the literature implies that matches or clubs centred upon the local 'magnate' and his close circle of friends, rather than the labourers or common folk.<sup>50</sup> Horn states that this was due to matches being organised during the summer months, which effectively prohibited agricultural workers' participation. These 'common folk' 'often [being] unable to afford the necessary time or the equipment to play.'<sup>51</sup>

Not all of the literature agrees. Pycroft in his book of 1800 observed that cricket was 'the common practice among the common people in... Surrey'.<sup>52</sup> What form this cricket took is unclear, and there is no mention of the agricultural labourers of Yorkshire missing out on cricket for similar reasons. It was Country House matches of 'grand' style between members of the aristocracy that appear to have been a frequent and possibly common occurrence in Surrey. From the 1720s the XI's of the Prince of Wales, and the Earl of Tankerville employed professionals and played for large wagers at venues such as Peper Harrow, near Guildford. In the late-Victorian/Edwardian era, annual matches between the families of Sir Walpole Lloyd Greenwell and Sir Henry Dudley Gresham Leveson-Gower reflected the renaissance in, and change in function of Country House cricket.<sup>53</sup>

Following the deaths of patrons such as Tankerville and the remaining influence being divided between the Montpellier Club and others, cricket in Surrey all but disappears

from the historical archives from the late 18th century. As the 'Surrey' teams or clubs appear to tail off, the professionals, such as Martingell left for the more lucrative fields of Kent, where he was paid £60 a year (although he would return to great affect against 'England' in 1848),<sup>54</sup> and so-called 'first-class' cricket in Surrey remained in the doldrums until the first steps to form what became SCCC were taken.

In early 1844, the Montpellier club lost its Beehive ground at Walworth, forcing one of its members, a Mr William Baker to come to the club's aid. Baker leased the Kennington Oval from the Duchy of Cornwall 'for the purposes of cricket' for £140 a year.<sup>55</sup> The Oval secured, a meeting was held on the 31st of August 1845, where the resolution 'that a Surrey club be now formed' was passed.<sup>56</sup> As witnessed later at Yorkshire, the first committee were a combination of 'old' and 'new' money, although this group appear to have been rather more cohesive regarding the establishment of a home ground and influential in the development of the national game.

Despite this 'southern', 'gentlemanly' or 'establishment' façade, more than any other club, SCCC embraced professionalism; '[S]eldom [fielding] fewer than eight, the total often rose to eleven - the whole side!'<sup>57</sup> Surrey were, to coin a phrase; 'in it to win it' shedding any notions of play for plays sake. Players were (as required) Surrey men or those who complied with residency rules and the Oval was located within the county. This changed in 1888 when Surrey's boundaries were reduced, following the creation of the City of London.

Although it would be hard to detect from its projected image, SCCC more than lived up to YCCC's reputation as a bastion of professionalism, and were indeed more representative of Mellor's 'subculture of professionalism' in the South, than Yorkshire ever were nationally. Surrey the county, however, did not go through the labour pains of the industrial revolution that Yorkshire did, with the people of Surrey, according to Brandon, 'exist[ing] in autonomous ignorance, until overrun by other relationships emanating from London'.<sup>58</sup> With industry almost non-existent, populations remained relatively static. The population of Guildford (scene of the earliest known reference to cricket and Country House matches from the early 1700s) not passing 20,000 until after 1901.

### **'Friendly' Cricket?**

Regarding the industries of Surrey, none of the 'national' type such as mining or steel existed. Those that did exist i.e. Dennis Brothers Coachworks in Guildford, any evidence of long-standing industrially sponsored cricket provision is yet to be discovered. Only two clubs traced that are still playing today originate from an industrial background. Weybridge Electric Cricket Club (WECC) being founded by a group of workers from the New Weybridge Electric Company and the Vickers-Armstrong Cricket Club (now Concorde Cricket Club) of the Vickers Aircraft Factory.<sup>59</sup>

More research is clearly required, as the current bank of knowledge implies that no industrial patronage of cricket in Surrey existed, or if it did, it was on such a small scale that the working-classes would have had very few opportunities to play.<sup>60</sup> Of those who did, it appears they did so due to their own efforts, as witnessed at WECC

or status/class rivalries. The prime example of this being Esher Cricket Club. Formed at a meeting in The Bear public house in 1862, the new club usurped an already existing club made up of the 'tradesmen of the place'.<sup>61</sup> However, these tradesmen or 'village members' later withdrew to the Green and Esher Cricket Club became 'strictly amateur'.<sup>62</sup>

Whereas Yorkshire's working-class had ample opportunities to watch or play cricket on their own terms, the evidence above would suggest that their counterparts in Surrey had few options. Surrey's working-classes appear to have been unable to develop their own Yorkshire style leagues, with matches appearing to remain under the control or influence of an upper-class, largely unaffected by the social reforms of the industrial revolution. In this respect, 'leagues' as witnessed in Yorkshire were not desired in Surrey or the South generally by its upper-class cricketing overlords. This is not to say that competitive cricket was not played, but as Dobbs highlights: 'to the country-house set, the very concept of a league had all the connotations of the northern masses swaying, cheering and booing at football matches'.<sup>63</sup>

The amateur ethos of the upper-middle classes remained the dominant framework for cricket in the South, and any working-class (or middle/upper-class for that matter) desire for competitive leagues as witnessed in Yorkshire failed to gain a foothold. As late as 1939, not one of the home-counties 1,100 clubs affiliated to the Club Cricket Conference (CCC) played in a league.<sup>64</sup> Reasons for this may vary. An apparent phobia to leagues in the South apart, the CCC (originally the London Club Cricket Conference) itself was formed during the Great War (1915) on 'amateur', 'non-competitive' lines in opposition to the ultimate in 'contests' being played out on the

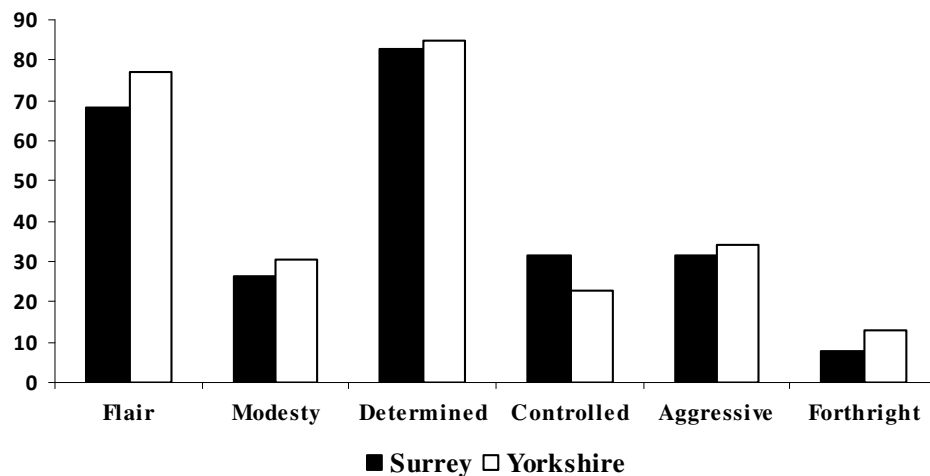


Western Front.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, the status security still evident in the southern aristocracy and upper-classes, and the lack of an industrial bourgeoisie prepared to patronise working-class cricket may have been a factor.

In the south, ‘friendly’ matches was the order of the day. As one northern cricketer who ventured south observed; ‘I’d never heard of a ‘friendly’ game before I came south’.<sup>66</sup> This situation persisted ‘officially’ for some time, until the first equivalent to the northern leagues in the South - the Surrey Clubs’ Championship – despite opposition, was finally inaugurated in 1968.<sup>67</sup> Despite the existence of leagues, i.e. the I’ Anson Cup (1901),<sup>68</sup> the implication as to which social classes’ ideology and values dominated cricket in the region is clear.

The above highlights the vast difference in both the styles of play and ideologies behind the cricket played regionally, even within the ECC. However, Holt has gone further by suggesting that in the North, spectator interest ‘centres on the appreciation – more so than the South – of certain qualities of team and individual play’.<sup>69</sup> Phelps’ work *The Southern Football Hero and the Shaping of Local and Regional Identity in the South of England* (2001) questions the validity of Holt’s notion that ‘the unforgiving duels of batsman and bowler, the strange mixture of guile and grit’<sup>70</sup> were aspects of cricket that appealed solely to audiences in the North. Phelps concluded that northern and southern spectators valued very similar characteristics in a player, and the survey data describing ‘*desired player characteristics*’ (Graph 1) clearly supports this.

**GRAPH 1: Desired player characteristics<sup>71</sup>**



The respondents also professed to the appreciation of the “consummate professionalism” and “totally professional” attributes of the club’s ‘best’ players. At the time of the survey these were Alec Stewart and Darren Lehman respectively. Similarly, both sets of respondents preferred ECC or Test Match cricket to the one-day variety, where “drunk” and “no-nothing” supporters were universal concerns.<sup>72</sup>

### **Literary Representations**

‘Sports-place images are communicated by a variety of media, including the press, television, radio, novels and... poetry’.<sup>73</sup> Cricket as an upper/middle-class sport from its earliest sportization has probably attracted more literary attention than any other sport, and the image of cricket and regional traits have been set by this literature, regardless of its accuracy.<sup>74</sup> Due to the limitations of this paper only a few examples may be cited here.

Two writers who contributed greatly to the enduring image of cricket were Mary Russell Mitford and John Nyren. Their famous (edited and published forty years after

they were written in Nyren's case)<sup>75</sup> pastoral descriptions symbolised cricket as a particularly genteel 'southern' sport, in tune with nature and representing all that is great and good about England and the English cricketing classes. The authors who have described specific identity traits associated with cricket regions have, like Mitford and Nyren, achieved this both by accident and the deliberate manipulation of myth and stereotypes.

As mentioned, Surrey has been left far behind Yorkshire in the literary stakes. Surrey has been, and still is, almost totally dependent on London for its cultural and media information and representation, the *Surrey Advertiser* (initially a monthly, but now weekly) not being established until 1864. Yorkshire on the other hand has had its own sources of identity, culture and their reproduction for nearly 300 years, which includes ten daily regional papers today.

The fact that so much has been written about Yorkshire 'folk' and their special attitudes, would imply that some form of unique 'character' does exist. Writing *Yorkshire Days and Yorkshire Ways* in 1935, J.Fairfax-Blakeborough highlights a famous Yorkshire motto... 'See all, hear all, say nowt. Eat all, drink all, pay nowt, and if thee diz owt for nowt, deea it for thee self'.<sup>76</sup> Mottos like this are legendary in Yorkshire, but unlike anywhere else, regional cricketing maxims such as 'we don't play it for fun'<sup>77</sup> are also well known.

The cricket supporters of Yorkshire, had numerous sources for the representation of both ECC and league cricket, including the reports of 'Old Ebor' in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. Surrey supporters on the other hand, had to rely on the 'national' dailies

for reports on their representative side's doings on the cricket field. Reports that had an 'enhanced power'<sup>78</sup> when presenting the ECC and the counties players, due to the absence of substantial audiences, radio or television coverage.

'Old Ebor', produced reports that highlighted the YCCC players apparently dour, competitive, thrifty, hard, patient, conservative and unsentimental yet humorous natures, quotes would be written in the vernacular - an obvious class and regional signifier - forcing the reader to imagine or impersonate the subject's manner. This course of action even managed to 'democratise'<sup>79</sup> Lord Hawke, Yorkshire's aristocratic captain into the 'common culture of Yorkshire'.<sup>80</sup> This would have been tricky, for 'the social background of most of the county's pre 1939 captains hardly rendered them typical products of the imagined Yorkshire'.<sup>81</sup> Old Ebor's successor J.M. Kilburn wrote: 'Cricketers are products of their environment and grow as they do grow because of the impulse of their setting... To contemplate Arthur Mitchell in the acquisition of an *unsmiling, purposeful* century is to appreciate the *hard, unyielding* Yorkshire hills'.<sup>82</sup> This quote is interesting as an example of 'spin' when presenting a negative aspect of a player as a virtue, for Lord Hawke then President of YCCC lambasted Mitchell personally at the 1928 AGM for the 'dourness' of his batting.<sup>83</sup>

The Yorkshire media not only created its own self-image, it also created one for the south, with 'the most hostile images... reserved for London and the south, together often represented as the site of privilege, snobbery and unnecessary show and as a place that absorbed the north's skills, goods and talent, while giving little back in return'.<sup>84</sup> It is quite remarkable in this concern how often the "privileged", "toffee-nosed" and "southern superiority" aspects of the perceived '*middle-class*' nature of

Surrey supporters discussed previously featured in the Yorkshire data.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, Yorkshire pride has also been witnessed on the Yorkshire tourism website, which modestly stated that it was: 'the might of *our* industry [that] made Britain a world power'.<sup>86</sup>

Surrey has long been regarded as the playground and preferred place of residence of London's elite classes. Brandon quotes a poem that illustrates this point: 'four postes round my bed, oak beams overhead, old rugges on ye floor, no stockbroker could ask for more'.<sup>87</sup> This has been such a pervasive theme, that much of Surrey is now known as the 'stockbroker belt'. Brandon continues: 'so compelling has been the social 'cachet' of a Surrey home, that the county is much maligned for its pretensions and character'.<sup>88</sup> Examples such as this are rare, due to Surrey having no independent media and its geographical and cultural assimilation into London, and the apparently homogenous 'home-counties'. And yet despite having received comparatively little attention in literary or recent historical contexts, Surrey has, as a cricket club, managed (unlike Middlesex) to maintain some sort of link to a geographical space.<sup>89</sup>

Like the club itself, the players of SCCC have been afforded an image in keeping with the 'gentleman southerner'. Whether amateur or professional, Surrey's players were presented as modest decent chaps, who displayed not overt masculinity like their Yorkshire counterparts, but a 'moral manliness' in keeping with the South's amateur ethos. This image was often as bogus as the 'common culture' identity afforded to Lord Hawke. A particularly fine example is *Wisden* contributor Gordon Ross's description of the 'bloody minded',<sup>90</sup> professional Jim Laker. Ross describes the Yorkshire (Bradford) born spinner thus: 'in the man himself there lies the *casual* air

of a southerner; no visible hatred of a batsman as bred, shall we say, in a Trueman'.<sup>91</sup> This is allegedly describing a man who casually achieved nearly 1,400 wickets in 309 matches and upon retirement was banned from both the Oval and Lords! Despite overtly competitive exceptions, such as Douglas Jardine, the London press, like their counterparts in Yorkshire nurtured (and protected) these 'characters' to their own advantage, heroes and reputations born.<sup>92</sup>

Russell regards the 'democratisation'<sup>93</sup> of Yorkshire amateur captains in the media as a key constituent in the construction of the Yorkshire regional identity. The Yorkshire media presentation of southern amateurs as 'privileged' providing a hook for the sense of 'otherness' felt by Yorkshire supporters towards teams from different regions, but particularly the South. The opposite may be said of Surrey. The Surrey professionals have been 'assimilated,' into the 'amateur culture' advocated by the MCC, southern press and particularly *Wisden*. Unlike the Yorkshire media, this was not done in order to achieve a 'broadly agreed self-image',<sup>94</sup> but in order to maintain the façade of the South as a bastion of amateurism, amateur values, and distinct from the North in cricketing terms. While Russell suggests that the composition (working-class professionals and amateur captain) and juxtaposed presentation of a 'united' YCCC team against those of the 'privileged' 'amateur' elite of the South, 'pushed the issue of class difference *within* [Yorkshire] into the background'.<sup>95</sup> Working-class confidence and influence present in Yorkshire cricket outside of the ECC would lead us to believe that this was not necessarily the motive for this presentation.

While it may be true the YCCC committee, members and spectators were, and remain, predominantly middle/upper-class, the values presented were what may be

regarded as egalitarian or originating from Yorkshire's 'working-class'. A Yorkshire working-class I would suggest, as witnessed in Rugby Union prior to the split of 1895,<sup>96</sup> that had an influence in their regions cricketing destiny and wider society generally following the social reforms of the industrial revolution. But why should the respective regional media choose to present their representative cricket teams and cricketers in such specifically different ways?

Cricket's presentation has always relied on 'class' to act as a point of distinction. Both amateurs and professionals and the cricket regions of Yorkshire and Surrey have been portrayed using class or class values as the 'discriminating' factor. In this respect Pierre Bourdieu argued that working-class (professional) values associated with sport, such as competitiveness, effort, strength (of body and character), as allegedly witnessed in Yorkshire by its media, contrast with the upper-class (amateur) values of disinterest, form and grace as advocated by *Wisden* the southern amateur elite and their biographers.<sup>97</sup> 'These attributes, [although] not universally shared by members of each class who played the game',<sup>98</sup> were clearly influential.

The 'specific subjectivities'<sup>99</sup> of the press and literature above, like the 'fictionalised descriptions'<sup>100</sup> of Mitford and Nyren before them, were invented to some degree in order to distinguish each region and its cricket from the other – *Wisden's* editorial attitude towards the leagues is certainly snobbery of the highest order, and the northern media to the South the reverse. One needs to question whether the press reports or the literature accurately reflect these sportsmen, the regions they profess to describe or indeed true public opinion. While this is clearly not a new concept, the extent, reasons for and influence this 'invention' has had on regional identity

formation, has been underestimated. Making much of the work on the construction of regional identities to this point flawed.

## **Conclusion**

The survey of contemporary supporters has assisted in highlighting both actual differences, and similarities inherent in the cricket regions of Yorkshire and Surrey. When juxtaposed against each other, the different regional histories of cricket development lead us to conclude that reasons other than a purely 'working-class' or 'middle-class' support in a given region have created regional differences in cricket identities.

The industrial revolution and its subsequent social and legal reforms enabled the working-class of Yorkshire to gain autonomous control of cricket, outside of the ECC. It was this 'league' cricket that enabled much of Yorkshires working-class to establish their own regionally motivated meanings and values for cricket if they wished. This autonomy within cricket and wider society, combined with a regional press happy to represent working-class values, helped to develop and promote a uniformed identity for YCCC, both amateur and professional players, southern counties and their representative ECC teams. This 'agreed' and uniformed projection of Yorkshire and Yorkshire cricket – highly influenced by a strong Yorkshire working-class - has created a uniquely defined regional identity, which has been largely accepted within Yorkshire and Surrey. This acceptance is based both upon the consistency of the regions presentation and possible elements of 'truth' inherent in the perceived identity of Yorkshire.



In light of the working-class influence in Yorkshire, the opposite may be said of Surrey's comparatively small and unorganized working-classes. Without industry wide patronage, large-scale union membership or representation in the regions media, Surrey's working-classes appear to have been unable to develop their own hierarchies within cricket or wider society. Further research is required as to who was playing 'local' cricket in Surrey, but as far as cricket's meaning to Surrey supporters is concerned, the values associated with 'friendly' styles of play and the associated ideologies of the cricketing middle/upper-classes of the South have prevailed. Surprisingly, it does not appear that these styles of play or values came under any form of successful challenge until the second-half of the twentieth century.

The inability to challenge 'establishment' values has resulted in a rather ambiguous and ill-defined regional cricket identity for Surrey. The Surrey respondents' regard themselves very differently to how they are perceived by others. Although adopting the cultural values and meanings of cricket promoted by those who have controlled the game in their region, they do not display the class demographic inherent in the perceived Surrey of the northern media. One must conclude from the data that the perceived regional identity of Surrey supporters is lacking in the elements of 'truth' evident in Yorkshire. Resulting in the Surrey respondents not really knowing who they are supposed to be, or how they are expected to act.

Regional differences in the meaning of cricket reveal more about the values of those who have had influence over cricket provision and its presentation in each region for more than 150 years, much more than it does any particular 'class values' of the respondents. The longer a group has had influence, the more universal and 'natural'

these regional attitudes and identities appear. With this in mind, the acceptance of (particularly *Wisden's*) 'institutional memories'<sup>101</sup> or 'ideals' by historians, have resulted in certain falsehoods regarding aspects of regional cricket and regional identities being advocated. Without questioning how and why these identities have been forged over time, myths concerning differences in the appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of the game, player characteristics, levels of competitiveness and professionalism have persisted.

This paper has barely scratched the surface of the causal affects in the generation and reproduction of regional identities. Causal affects which are clearly numerous and overlapping. However, it is clear that some of the major influences upon the development of these cricket regional identities include:

1. Location: with regard to a regions geographical 'independence' from the national centre of power, influence and culture.
2. The industrial revolution and its inherent population growth in the North.
3. Social and legal reforms and the increasing levels of power and influence acquired by the working-classes.
4. The patronage, provision and presentation of cricket, and which class/demographic controlled or influenced the game, at county and more local levels.
5. The media: a region either having an early autonomous regional press - or a 'representative' journal, and how these media presented themselves, their players and other regions.

Finally, I would suggest that future work may need to focus upon specific locations and leagues, rather than a homogenous 'North' or 'South'. The obsession with 'English' identity, Yorkshire cricket, northern sport generally (at the expense of potentially fruitful work on the South) and neat data sets such as the 'Barmy Army' do not tell the whole story.

A more 'orally historical' approach may help in the explanation of identity formation and reproduction within regions or groups previously thought to represent either 'commonality' or indeed 'difference'. Questioning who has influenced a sport's provision, image and presentation in specific regions, can only help in explaining national identities further and better than before. As Bale astutely stated as far back as 1982: 'appraisals of the forms of regional and local identities, associated with sport in different parts of England are a prerequisite for any study of sport and English national identity – Understanding Englishness requires [an] appreciation of what divides, as well as unites, those who regard themselves as English.'<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hargreaves, 'Sport and Hegemony: some theoretical problems,' 71.

<sup>2</sup> Archer, *We'll Support You Evermore*. Jarvie, 'Sport, Nationalism and Cultural Identity'. Allison, 'Sport and Nationalism'.

<sup>3</sup> Maguire, 'Globalisation, Sport and National Identities: The Empire Strikes Back?' Mellor, 'English Cricket, Amateurism and National Identity: A Sociological and Historical Study' Williams, *Cricket and England*, Wagg, 'To Be an Englishman': Nation, Ethnicity and English Cricket in the Global Age'.

<sup>4</sup> Russell, 'Sport and Identity: The Case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939'. Holt, 'Heroes of the North: Sport and the Shaping of Regional Identity'. Williams, 'Churches Sport and Identities'.

<sup>5</sup> Struna, 'Social History and Sport'.

<sup>6</sup> 400 questionnaires were distributed to supporters of YCCC and SCCC. 200 Surrey questionnaires were distributed at Surrey versus Warwickshire at the Oval (10th and 11th of July 2002), and Surrey versus Yorkshire at Guildford (24th to 26th of July 2002). The Yorkshire questionnaires were distributed at Yorkshire versus Lancashire at Headingley (19th and 20th of July 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Bale, *Sport and Place*, 68.

<sup>8</sup> Holt, 'Cricket and Englishness: The Batsman as Hero', 62.

<sup>9</sup> Bale, *Sport and Place*, 69.

<sup>10</sup> Russell, 'Amateurs, Professionals and the Construction of Social Identity', 52. Holt, *Sport and the British: a Modern History*, 177. <http://www.yorkshire.com>. Field research: 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> July 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Williams, *Cricket and England*. 123. Brookes, *English Cricket: The Game and its Players through the Ages*, 7-8. Field research: 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July, and 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Hendricks, cited in Struna, 'Social History and Sport', 191.

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- <sup>13</sup> Unless you include the sarcastic mockery of Surrey schoolboys witnessed at the Oval during the research (10/7/02). The Oval is the home ground of the Surrey County Cricket Club.
- <sup>14</sup> Mellor, 'English Cricket, Amateurism and National Identity: A Sociological and Historical Study'
- <sup>15</sup> Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-1875*, 227.
- <sup>16</sup> Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 44.
- <sup>17</sup> Cited in Bale, *Sport and Place*, 72.
- <sup>18</sup> Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 29.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid. 85.
- <sup>20</sup> Sissons, *The Players: A Social History of the Professional Cricketer*, 9-10.
- <sup>21</sup> Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain*, 216.
- <sup>22</sup> Marshall, *Headingley*, 3.
- <sup>23</sup> Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 96.
- <sup>24</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British: a Modern History*, 177.
- <sup>25</sup> Marshall, *Headingley*, 40.
- <sup>26</sup> This is not wholly accurate, as the YCCC archive lists 32 pre-1992 players who were born outside of the county.
- <sup>27</sup> Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 214.
- <sup>28</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, 176.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid. 242.
- <sup>30</sup> Williams, *Sport in Britain*, 121.
- <sup>31</sup> Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 152.
- <sup>32</sup> Williams, *Sport in Britain*, 30.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid. 32.
- <sup>34</sup> Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 152.
- <sup>35</sup> Sissons, *The Players*, 4.
- <sup>36</sup> Population Tables I, Volume II. England and Wales Divisions VII – IX and Scottish Islands, Census of 1851.
- <sup>37</sup> Dennis, Henriques, Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life: An analysis of a Yorkshire mining community*, 122.
- <sup>38</sup> Williams, 'Churches Sport and Identities', 124.
- <sup>39</sup> Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 252.
- <sup>40</sup> Williams, 'Churches Sport and Identities', 125.
- <sup>41</sup> Parratt, 'The making of a healthy happy home': recreation, education, and the production of working-class womanhood at the Rowntree Cocoa Works', 69.
- <sup>42</sup> Williams, 'Churches Sport and Identities', 123.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid, 123.
- <sup>44</sup> Parratt, 'The making of a healthy happy home', 69.
- <sup>45</sup> Russell, 'Sport and Identity: The Case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939', 210
- <sup>46</sup> Woodhouse, *The History of Yorkshire County Cricket Club*, 3. George Herbert Hirst and Wilfred Rhodes were Yorkshire and England cricketers.
- <sup>47</sup> These clubs included: Addington, Barnes, Bramley, Cheam, Chertsey, Clapham, Croydon, Egham, Kingston, Lambeth, Mousley Hurst, Putney, Richmond, Ripley and Wandsworth. Ross, *A History of County Cricket: Surrey*, 11.
- <sup>48</sup> Ross, *A History of County Cricket: Surrey*, 10-11.
- <sup>49</sup> Bale, *Sport and Place*, 70-71.
- <sup>50</sup> Brookes, *English Cricket: The Game and its Players through the Ages*, 7-8.
- <sup>51</sup> Horn, *Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside*, 146.
- <sup>52</sup> Cited in Bale, *Sport and Place*, 70.
- <sup>53</sup> Surrey History Centre, Ref 7506/1.
- <sup>54</sup> Ross, *A History of County Cricket: Surrey*, 13 and 19.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid. 15.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid. 15.
- <sup>57</sup> Brookes, *English Cricket: The Game and its Players through the Ages*, 111.
- <sup>58</sup> Brandon, *A History of Surrey*, 14.
- <sup>59</sup> <http://www.weybridgecc.co.uk/history.asp> accessed 22 June 2002 and <http://www.concordecc.co.uk/club/history.html> accessed 15 January 2008.
- <sup>60</sup> Preliminary archive searches in Surrey have revealed very minor industrial patronage. At time of publication, this is still 'work-in-progress'.
- <sup>61</sup> Malden, *The Victoria History of Surrey* Vol 2, 536.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid, 536. [www.westendcc.co.uk](http://www.westendcc.co.uk) accessed 15 January 2008.

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- <sup>63</sup> Dobbs, *Edwardians at Play: Sport 1890-1914*, 129.
- <sup>64</sup> Williams, *Cricket and England*, 123.
- <sup>65</sup> Birley, *A Social History*, 208.
- <sup>66</sup> White cited in Bale, *Sport and Place*, 75.
- <sup>67</sup> Birley, *A Social History*, 307. Wynne-Thomas, *The History of Cricket: From the Weald to the World*, 223.
- <sup>68</sup> The I' Anson Cup professes to be the oldest continuously-operating village cricket league in England and possibly the world is played across Surrey, Hampshire and Sussex.
- <sup>69</sup> Phelps, 'The Southern Football Hero', 44.
- <sup>70</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, 266.
- <sup>71</sup> Aspects other than a player's level of skill, which was assumed to be universal across both supporter groups, were deemed more relevant.
- <sup>72</sup> Field research: 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July, and 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2002.
- <sup>73</sup> Bale, *Sport and Place*, 177.
- <sup>74</sup> See Dobbs critique of Neville Cardus in Dobbs, *Edwardians at Play*, 119-136.
- <sup>75</sup> Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 36.
- <sup>76</sup> Fairfax-Blakeborough, *Yorkshire Days and Yorkshire Ways*, 34.
- <sup>77</sup> Holt, 'Heroes of the North: Sport and the Shaping of Regional Identity', 147.
- <sup>78</sup> Russell, 'Amateurs, Professionals and the Construction of Social Identity', 60.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid. 60.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid. 60.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid. 58.
- <sup>82</sup> Cited in Holt, 'Heroes of the North: Sport and the Shaping of Regional Identity', 146 (italics added).
- <sup>83</sup> Russell, 'Amateurs, Professionals and the Construction of Social Identity', 57.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid. 53.
- <sup>85</sup> Field research, 19th and 20th of July 2002.
- <sup>86</sup> [www.ytb.org/why\\_yorkshire/](http://www.ytb.org/why_yorkshire/) accessed in July of 2002, (italics added).
- <sup>87</sup> Lancaster cited in Brandon, *A History of Surrey*, 11.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid. 11.
- <sup>89</sup> Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 311.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid. 295.
- <sup>91</sup> Ross, *A History of County Cricket: Surrey*, 161 (italics added). Fred Trueman was a Yorkshire fast bowler, notorious for his pace and hostility.
- <sup>92</sup> Russell, 'Amateurs, Professionals and the Construction of Social Identity', 61.
- <sup>93</sup> Ibid. 60.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid. 51.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid. 65.
- <sup>96</sup> Collins, 'Myth and Reality in the 1895 Rugby Split', 24-26.
- <sup>97</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*.
- <sup>98</sup> Fraser, *The man in white is always right... Cricket and the Law*, 250.
- <sup>99</sup> Brabazon, *Playing on the Periphery*, 99.
- <sup>100</sup> Guttman, *Sports Spectators*, 79.
- <sup>101</sup> Brabazon, *Playing on the Pheriphery*, 101.
- <sup>102</sup> Bale, *Sport and Place*, 4-5.

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