‘Purely of their own manufacture’: the adoption and appropriation of cricket in Samoa, c. 1879-1939

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I, Benjamin Sacks, certify that:

This thesis has been substantially accomplished during enrolment in the degree.

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Abstract

This thesis considers how Samoans embraced, reshaped and reoriented the English game of cricket in the sixty years following its introduction to the islands in 1879. It proceeds from the conviction that studying the game provides a valuable opportunity to explore the nature of everyday contestation in Samoa specifically and at the edges of empire more generally. Its principal contention, therefore, is that cricket’s history in the islands constitutes a distinctive and yet instructive example of how different groups within Samoa sought to control the meaning and function of sport during the broadly defined colonial period.

The study contributes to the historiographies of Oceania and particularly Samoa, a body of scholarship that has traditionally fixed on high politics and religion. In exploring the history of cricket in Samoa, the study constitutes precisely the kind of social history that has previously been neglected. Despite sport’s economic and social importance in contemporary Oceania, historians have overwhelmingly ignored its significance in the region before – at least – World War II. The thesis also seeks to contribute to the more general history of sport. While the relationship between sport and empire has been a productive research area, comparatively little work has considered sport – including cricket – outside of the Americas, Southern Africa, South Asia and the Antipodes. By considering cricket’s history in Samoa, the present study begins to address this deficit.

Drawing on Mary Louise Pratt’s conception of ‘contact zones’ – sites of intercultural engagement and confrontation, often in the context of highly asymmetrical relations of power – this study argues that cricket in Samoa signified and embodied multi-layered social contestation. Almost as soon as they began playing the sport, Samoans radically altered cricket’s method and meaning and recast it as the distinctive Samoan game of kirikiti. This initial act of appropriation established the cricket pitch as a ‘contested space’ between Samoans and foreigners, who were wary of kirikiti’s association with ‘disruptive’ Samoan politics and ‘wasteful’ customary exchange.

This was only the broadest confrontation manifested on the pitch, however. As was the case in Samoa more generally, the struggle over cricket was not neatly divided between Samoans and foreigners. Instead, groups and individuals within and between the categories of ‘coloniser’ and ‘colonised’ used both cricket and kirikiti in myriad different ways to pursue their own interests in the flux and uncertainty of the contact zone. As such, the thesis contends, the game reflected the complexities and blurred boundaries created by imperial expansion and subsequent colonial rule. In so doing, it suggests alternative frameworks for understanding processes of sporting transfer and adoption, and refines and advances scholarly understandings of how power, politics, identity and cultural resistance were manifested through sport – in Samoa and elsewhere.
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Glossary of terms

‘afakasi  
A Samoan transliteration of the English ‘half-caste’, but not necessarily with the same pejorative connotations.

‘aiga  
A family, referring to extended family, descent group and kinship as well as immediate family.

aigofie  
A competitive fight between contestants using wooden clubs.

fa’a Samoa  
Literally ‘in the way of the Samoans’, the term denotes any activity done according to Samoan custom and tradition.

fa’a’ai  
A ‘food fine’ paid by the loser of a game; more generally, the forced contributions of food given by the vanquished to the victorious party in a conflict.

fa’afafine  
Literally ‘in the way of a woman’, someone who is male at birth but who takes on both male and overtly female gender traits.

fa’amasino  
A judge or consul; in the context of kirikiti, an umpire.

faiaoga  
In the context of kirikiti, a coach or leader of the team who notably leads chanting and dancing in the field.

faife’au  
A pastor or minister in a church.

faipule  
Literally ‘to have authority’, the name given to a class of Samoan officials under various colonial governments.

fale  
An inhabited house, typically of Samoan design and construction.

fautası  
A Samoan longboat – usually around 80 feet long and carrying 50 or so oarsmen – used for racing. The design was originally adapted from European rowing boats.

feagaiga  
A covenant or sacred bond between two parties, often used to describe the relationship between brother and sister.

fitafita (fita)  
Literally ‘very courageous’, the Fitafita Guard is a special unit the US Navy comprising Samoan men. Under American administration they performed a series of policing and defence roles.

fono  
The governing council of a village comprising its constituent matai.

fuaiala  
One division of a single village.
‘ie toga

Usually translated as ‘fine mats’ in English. They are not truly ‘mats’, however, but rather finely plaited cloth of bleached fibres bordered with red feathers. They have ceremonial significance and were often given as gifts by travelling parties and at weddings.

kava (also ‘ava)

A narcotic drink prepared from the roots of the ‘ava plant (piper methisticum). In Samoa, the drink is reserved for ceremonial occasions and important guests.

kirikiti

The Samoan transliteration of cricket, used here to delineate between cricket fa’a Samoa and the English form of the game.

lape

To sit and wish bad luck to an opposing party in the game of tagati’a.

malae

The central gathering place of a village; an open space in front of the main fale of the village where social gatherings – including sports – take place.

malaga

The act of visiting; a travelling party.

malo

The conquering party in a conflict; a government.

matai

The head of an extended family (‘aiga) who holds a title bestowed by the ‘aiga. Their responsibilities include overseeing the family’s land and property.

Mau

Literally ‘to be firm’ or to hold a firm opinion; usually refers to the Mau a Pule movement against German rule and – more frequently – the anti-colonial O le Mau movement that challenged the American and particularly New Zealand administrations in the 1920s and 1930s.

nu’u

The basic political unit in Samoan life, comprising members of different ‘aiga living in proximity to each other; a village.

papalagi

A foreigner, technically any non-Samoan person but usually describing someone of European or ‘white’ heritage. Equivalent of the term pākeha in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

pate

A wooden bat in kirikiti.

polo

A ball, in kirikiti made from congealed raw rubber.

poula

A ‘night dance’, particularly the dancing that took place after the formal ceremonies that accompanied the arrival of a malaga party. It served as a means for unmarried men and women from different villages to meet each other. Missionaries prohibited it because of its sexual content.

pulenu’u

Literally ‘village authority’, an appointed official under various colonial administrations who was the colonial administration’s representative in the village; a ‘village mayor’.
seuga lupe  A customary Samoan pastime, typically practiced by *matai*, in which pigeons were hunted using decoy birds and nets. Entire *nu’u* could be mobilised as part of the festivities.

siva  A dance accompanied by song, or less frequently the song itself.

tagati’a  A customary Samoan game in which participants threw a wooden ‘stick’ (the *ti’a*) and glanced it off a smooth ramp to impart maximum distance. It was an important antecedent to *kirikiti*.

tavasaga  An especially large tagati’a match played between two villages.

tologa  A customary Samoan game in which spears are thrown at a mark.

tulafale  A particular class of *matai*, often translated as ‘talking chief’ or ‘orator’.

va  Literally ‘the space in between’, but the term signifies ‘social space’ rather than emptiness; it is not a space that separates but rather space that *relates* two entities or individuals.
### List of abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>Archives New Zealand</td>
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<td>AGCA</td>
<td>Archives of the German Colonial Administration – Samoa (Archives New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATL</td>
<td>Alexander Turnbull Library (Wellington, New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMO</td>
<td>British Military Occupation of Samoa, 1914-1920 (Archives New Zealand)</td>
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<td>DHPG</td>
<td>Deutsche Handels-und Plantagen Gesellschaft der Südseeinseln zu Hamburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Department of Island Territories (Archives New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints</td>
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<td>LMS</td>
<td>London Missionary Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCC</td>
<td>Marylbone Cricket Club</td>
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<td>ML</td>
<td>Mitchell Library (Sydney, Australia)</td>
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<td>MMD</td>
<td>Mormon Missionary Diaries collection (Brigham Young University, United States)</td>
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<td>NARA</td>
<td>National Archives and Records Administration</td>
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<td>PMB</td>
<td>Pacific Manuscripts Bureau</td>
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<td>RG 284</td>
<td>Records of the Government of American Samoa, 1900-1966 (National Archives and Records Administration)</td>
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<td>RG 313</td>
<td>Records of Naval Operating Forces, 1849-1997 (National Archives and Records Administration)</td>
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Map of Samoa

“Samoan Playing Cricket”

From the photograph album 'The Cruise of the Equator' of Robert Louis Stevenson's travels around the Gilbert Islands and Samoa in 1889, held at the Edinburgh Writers’ Museum.
“Cricket match (native)”

“Assembled to witness the great Samoan game, cricket”

Lorena MacIntyre Quinn, ‘America’s South Sea Soldiers’, National Geographic 36:3 (September 1919), p. 270.
First Malifa cricket team, 1921

Introduction

“They are Christians, churchgoers, singers of hymns at family worship, [and] hardy cricketers… but in most other points they are the contemporaries of our tattooed ancestors who drove their chariots on the wrong side of the Roman wall”.

This thesis considers how the quintessentially English game of cricket was embraced, reshaped and reoriented in the islands of Samoa. It does so from the conviction that this apparently trivial episode – seemingly nothing more than a footnote to sport history – in fact provides a valuable opportunity to explore the nature of ‘everyday’ contestation in Samoa specifically and at the edges of empire more generally. Its central premise, therefore, is that cricket’s history in the islands constitutes a distinctive and yet instructive example of how groups within and between the broad categories of ‘coloniser’ and ‘colonised’ sought to control the meaning and function of sport during the broadly defined colonial period. As such, while it is unabashedly concerned with ‘cricket in Samoa’, the thesis intersects with broader themes and questions relating to imperial history and sport history as well as the histories of Samoa and Oceania.

If this preamble sounds like an apologia for esoteric enquiry, it is not meant as one. Even if status anxiety is what two practitioners call “the sports historian’s favourite topos”, cricket’s history in Samoa is a distinctive one worthy of narration. Sport emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as an important process of cultural transfer from Britain to its imperial possessions and interests. Through sport were disseminated dominant British beliefs regarding social behaviour and conformity. While many games performed these functions, cricket occupied a privileged place in Victorian England and the British Empire. Cricket was revered as the English game, prized for its unblemished heritage and its supposed edifying value for young men in the metropole and in the colonies. For British ‘agents of empire’ – missionaries, soldiers, colonists and officials – the cricket pitch was a site for affirming their identity in foreign lands. By learning the lessons that were implicit in cricket, moreover, colonised peoples could be marched forward, away from their ‘primitive’ state and towards the distant ideal of Englishness, serving as dutiful colonial subjects as they went. Cricket was useful not only for reaffirming colonisers’ identities, therefore, but also in reforming those of colonised peoples. Cricket thus truly was the Imperial Game.

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2 Kay Schiller and Christopher Young, ‘The History and Historiography of Sport in Germany: Social, Cultural and Political Perspectives’, German History 27:3 (2009), p. 315.
The first recorded match in Samoa was played in 1879, when officers from the HMS Cormorant challenged the expatriate British residents at the port town of Apia to a scratch match. In 1883 Samoans began to take up the game and within a few months it had attained widespread and lasting popularity throughout the islands. This reasonably orthodox narrative of sporting diffusion and adoption belies several distinctive features, however. Almost as soon as they began playing the sport, Samoans radically altered cricket’s method and meaning and recast it as the distinctive Samoan game of kirikiti. As can be inferred from the quotation that begins this thesis, the Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson saw the cricket pitch as a rare ‘shared space’ within which the broader contest between Samoans and foreigners – and particularly the British – could be suspended. Far from being an oasis of concordance, however, the meaning and practice of cricket was fiercely contested. Samoans infused ‘their’ variation of cricket with mass participation, singular local rules and a range of other practices, festivities and significations borrowed from customary athletic contests. This initial act of appropriation established the cricket pitch as a contested space between Samoans and papalagi (foreigners), who were wary of kirikiti’s association with ‘disruptive’ Samoan politics and ‘wasteful’ customary exchange. The game was no longer English cricket, but kirikiti fa’a Samoa – cricket played according to ‘the Samoan way’. Rather than escaping contestation, therefore, cricket in Samoa signified and embodied it.

This was only the broadest of many confrontations manifested on the pitch, however. As was the case in Samoa more generally, the struggle over cricket was not neatly divided between Samoans and papalagi. Instead, the ways that different groups used cricket and kirikiti reflected the complexities and blurred boundaries created by imperial expansion and subsequent colonial rule. In focusing on cricket and kirikiti, this thesis asks – why was cricket in Samoa embraced and then expressed in a distinctive and ‘transcultural’ form? How did various papalagi groups respond to this transcultural sporting form at different points in time? Why did they respond in these ways? How did Samoans use cricket and kirikiti to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the different colonialisms they faced during the period of study? By answering these questions, the thesis seeks to map the space of the cricket pitch and in so doing explore the multidimensional contests that took place in Samoa during the period of study.

The remainder of this introductory chapter is devoted to outlining the thesis itself, including discussion of the project’s scope, its methods and approach, the sources it draws on and several notes regarding terminology and nomenclature. This preamble concludes with Chapter One, a

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3 Kirikiti [latterly kilikiti] is simply the Samoan transliteration of cricket. I use it here and throughout the thesis to distinguish between the English and Samoan forms of the game.
discursive review of pertinent literature regarding the histories of empire, Oceania, Samoa and sport. In the course of this survey, it is argued that while a few researchers have critically examined the significance of imperial sports in the Pacific, this study clearly constitutes a significant, original project that makes contributions to each of the aforementioned fields. By examining the transmission, adoption and practice of sport at the edges of empire, moreover, this dissertation seeks to test and refine accepted understandings of how sport intersected with colonial power and authority, as well as with notions of group identity and cultural resistance to colonisation. In so doing, it underscores how apparently peripheral sporting histories can be more generally instructive to scholars of sport and empire – and beyond.

From this point, the thesis proceeds in a three-part structure that reflects its thematic focus. Firstly, it aims to describe and account for the distinctive adoption of cricket in Samoa. Chapters Two and Three are devoted to this task. Chapter Two considers processes of cultural transfer and change, and seeks to find a framework that can accommodate and account for how Samoans altered cricket’s method and meaning. Far from constituting an isolated instance of ‘mixing’, the reimagining of cricket is instead seen as part of a broader Samoan genius for adaptation. Chapter Three turns decisively to the genesis, method and meaning of kirikiti. After delineating some of the customary Samoan practices that informed kirikiti, it details some of the many ways in which Samoans reimagined ‘English cricket’ as a distinctive Samoan game. It contends, moreover, that this creative act can be understood as an implicit challenge to colonial authority and papalagi claims of cultural superiority.

The three chapters that comprise the dissertation’s second ‘movement’ consider how papalagi responded to this challenge. To ascribe a singular, coherent ‘papalagi experience’ of kirikiti would be misleading, however. Chapter Four considers colonial officials. Although their convictions differed in degree, colonial authorities – be they American, British, German or from New Zealand – associated kirikiti with economic disruption, property destruction, violence and political intrigue. As such, successive colonial authorities enacted ‘anti-cricket’ laws. Chapter Five is concerned with papalagi missionaries’ experience of and response to kirikiti. While missionaries were at first alarmed by the game, their response later shifted towards one of accommodation – kirikiti came to occupy an important place within increasingly ‘Samoa-lised’ churches. Chapter Six turns to three groups whose paths – if not interests – frequently converged on cricket pitches around Apia: white colonists; men and women with mixed Samoan and foreign ancestry, known locally as
and men from the naval and armed forces who visited or were stationed in Samoa. Their acutely divergent responses to kirikiti speak to underlying tensions and divisions within the broad category of ‘colonisers’.

The thesis’ final section returns to matters of Samoan agency. In effect, Chapters Seven and Eight answer the obverse question – how did Samoans use cricket and kirikiti to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by colonialism? Chapter Seven considers how Samoans used the game(s) instrumentally in several different ‘colonial’ contexts: in the fraught years before partition when the ‘three powers’ wrestled for supremacy; in the western islands under German administration between 1900 and 1914; and under the American naval control in the eastern islands after 1900. Chapter Eight applies the same rubric to Samoan use of cricket and kirikiti under New Zealand military and civilian administration in the western islands after 1914. Together, these chapters demonstrate that Samoans’ use of cricket and kirikiti – be it for building relationships, accommodation, resistance or protest – was always deliberate, purposive and instrumental.

The thesis concludes by gathering these discursive threads together to argue that the history of cricket in Samoa during the colonial period was defined by innovation, conflict and unceasing contestation. A varied cast of individuals and groups endeavoured to shape the game’s method and meaning in ways that suited their own interests, which were themselves neither uniform nor fixed. While the Samoan adaptation of cricket rendered the game a highly visible site of cross-cultural contest, this was only the broadest of many confrontations manifested on the pitch. In Samoa, the interests of missionaries, servicemen and colonists of various national allegiances were frequently misaligned and even at odds with each other. Similarly, a common language and culture should not obscure the very real divisions that characterised contemporaneous Samoan politics and society. In this fractured social context, the cricket pitch was a site of real and symbolic contest. As such, cricket’s history in Samoa can be read not as a simple process of ‘grappling’ between two discrete parties, but rather a multidimensional contest with indistinct boundaries and shifting allegiances.

Scope

This study is restricted to the islands of the Samoan archipelago during the period from 1879 to 1939. The study’s starting point reflects the first recorded instance of cricket being played in Samoa, even though it took a further four years before Samoans took up the game themselves. It closes with the outbreak of World War II, a global event that profoundly reshaped Samoa and the wider region. In between these dates the islands endured a succession of political arrangements.

4 The genesis, meaning and appropriateness of the ‘afakasi descriptor is discussed later in this chapter.
Samoa enjoyed nominal independence until 1890, but the preceding decades had featured ongoing tensions and internecine conflicts between different local factions. This state of affairs was further complicated by Germany, Great Britain and the United States of America continually intervening in Samoan affairs to secure favourable access to its ports, production and markets. The Treaty of Berlin – signed in late-1889 – ushered in a fraught attempt at formal power sharing between the three foreign governments in the 1890s. This condominium agreement sought to protect their own interests and only considered Samoan affairs in so far as they intruded on foreign concerns.\(^5\)

Conflict between shifting coalitions of Samoans and foreign powers continued unabated, however, culminating in the partition of the islands between Germany and the United States in 1900. The eastern islands – notably Tutuila and the Manu’a group – became a territory of the United States, while the much larger western islands – including Upolu, home to the European enclave of Apia, and Savai’i, the archipelago’s largest land mass – were gathered under the auspices of Germany.

Partition meant that Samoans experienced very different forms of colonialism: while German Samoa was administered as a conventional colony, the Americans established a naval station at Tutuila and delegated control to a series of naval officers stationed at Pago Pago on Tutuila until after the end of the Second World War. American authority has proved very durable, and American Samoa remains an unincorporated and unorganised territory of the United States. German Samoa was short-lived, however, as with the outbreak of the First World War it was occupied and administered by the New Zealand military on behalf of Great Britain. After receiving a League of Nations mandate in 1920, the New Zealand government established a civilian administration in an arrangement that endured until beyond the period of study. The Mau, a protest movement that had its origins before the New Zealand mandate and was also active in the American-controlled territories,\(^6\) was notably effective in undermining New Zealand rule from the

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\(^5\) The Treaty of Berlin was only to come into force after it was accepted and signed by the ‘king’ of Samoa, but this provision was rendered somewhat empty by the Treaty specifying which contender would be recognised as king – and hence would be Samoa’s signatory to it. The Treaty specified an important legislative and advisory role for the three consuls, an independent Chief Justice – appointed by the King of Sweden – demanded an annual per capita tax and re-established Apia as a separate municipality under European control. For further discussion of the provisions and structure of the condominium, see Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900: the politics of a multi-cultural community* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 396-424.

mid-1920s and into the 1930s. Partly as a result of the movement’s successes, the western islands attained independence from New Zealand in 1962 and are today known as the Independent State of Samoa, or more simply and controversially as ‘Samoa’.

In spite of these vagaries, I use the term ‘colonial’ to describe Samoa throughout the period of study. This usage is decidedly loose, given it was not until mid-1890 that ‘the three powers’ ratified the Treaty of Berlin and formally took on a custodial role in Samoa under the terms of the condominium. Before this, the Samoan government – itself a nebulous entity – ostensibly exercised independent political authority outside of Apia, which had exercised effective self-government since 1879. A further ten years elapsed, moreover, before the islands were partitioned under the 1899 Tripartite Convention and anything like a unitary ‘colonial government’ was established. Even so, I follow – amongst others – Jocelyn Linnekin and Damon Salesa in using the word ‘colonial’ as shorthand to characterise the quickening and deepening of papalagi interests and interference in Samoan affairs from the last quarter of the nineteenth century.7 Despite the historical fact of the islands’ partition in 1900, moreover, this thesis uses ‘Samoa’ to refer to each and every one of the islands that comprise the Samoan archipelago. As Janet Mageo has pointed out, differentiating between ‘the two Samoas’ is often unhelpful due to the permeability of the culture, language and system of customary social authority that mediates them.8 This unified approach is particularly pertinent in the discussion of kirikiti’s origins and socio-cultural role, which was largely established before partition. Of course, the divergent political and social realities created by partition had significant bearing on the histories of both ‘English’ cricket and kirikiti. As such, I have endeavoured to make explicit those occasions when discussion is limited to a particular geographic locale or colonial administration.

**Primary sources**

This thesis is principally concerned with the ways that cricket was understood and used instrumentally by several groups in Samoa in the sixty years between 1879 and 1939. While it engages with several scholarly literatures regarding empire, Oceania, Samoa and sport, it has also

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Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific* (Suva: Institute of the South Pacific, University of the South Pacific, 1984), especially pp. 18-43.


been shaped by the relative dearth or wealth of English-language primary sources documenting the game in the islands. In particular, English language discussion of the period between 1900 and 1914 – when Samoa’s western islands were administered by Germany – frequently looks to modern academic writing rather than contemporaneous sources. Conversely, the recent digitisation of Samoan newspapers from the late-1870s until 1920 has provided an abundance of material for this period. The relatively long period chosen – 1880 to 1939 – enables this project to take a comparative view of how the game was viewed and utilised in a variety of different ‘colonial’ contexts. It also has the happy advantage of allowing the greatest possible access to an eclectic range of written texts including diaries, newspapers – particularly digitised ones – and official records from the archives. Photographs, conversely, have been utilised here only in an auxiliary capacity. By drawing on this rather catholic collection of sources, the thesis seeks to piece together an account of cricket’s transformation into kirikiti, as well as providing evidence of how papalagi responded to the game and Samoans in turn used it to navigate various colonialisms.

Given this thesis is primarily a work of social history, contemporaneous newspaper and magazine reports comprise the greatest proportion of its historical sources. Fortuitously, the newspaper record in Samoa begins in 1877 – a few years before Samoans first took up the game and transformed it into kirikiti. With a brief gap in the 1880s, various newspapers continued to be published in Apia until the end of the period of study. The American-controlled islands, conversely, were not served by a dedicated English-language newspaper until the 1960s. Colonial Samoa’s newspapers were generally owned and operated by private papalagi residents and they catered to the European community of planters, merchants and tradespeople. All of the newspapers before 1900 were founded by British expatriates, published in the English-language and frequently supported British political and commercial interests in Samoa. This is reflected in their reporting of cricket, which was both regular and enthusiastic. When the German administration commenced in 1900, the sole surviving newspaper was rechristened the *Samoanische Zeitung* and produced bilingually to cater for both the German and English-speaking elements in the European community. Whereas British-owned newspapers were often critical of official policy and actions, the *Zeitung* almost invariably repeated the administration line on Samoan matters.9 Neither cricket nor kirikiti appeared as frequently in its pages, and when they did it was generally to cast the administration in a favourable light. The New Zealand occupation of German Samoa in 1914 meant that the *Zeitung* lost any semblance of editorial independence to military censorship. It was soon renamed the

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Samoa Times and the German-language section was consigned to a much-smaller supplement; it eventually disappeared completely. Due to New Zealand sensibilities and the soldiers’ recreational habits, the occupation-era Times provides a veritable trove of information about cricket; games often received detailed scorecards and sprawling match reports.

With the advent of civilian administration in 1920, the Samoa Times continued to exhibit a strongly pro-administration stance. Sport was again a regular feature, and cricket matches received ample coverage alongside golf, bowls, tennis and rugby. By 1934 the Samoa Herald had assumed the Times’ position as newspaper of record, and it too provides a detailed chronicle of sporting life in Apia, including cricket matches. Because the newspapers’ readership comprised the local papalagi community, kirikiti matches did not receive the same level of attention as did English cricket. When it did appear – principally in news stories and editorials – kirikiti was the subject of both amusement and exasperation, reflecting the broader attitudes of papalagi residents and officials towards the game. These articles were frequently reproduced in the popular presses of New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom, where their publication catered to the public’s taste for alterity and romance in ‘the South Seas’. Popular magazine publications – notably National Geographic and the Mid-Pacific Magazine – sometimes carried stories featuring kirikiti and presented it in much the same light.

Several archival collections also provided valuable material for this thesis: the National Archives (ANZ) in Wellington, New Zealand; the manuscripts collection at the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), also in Wellington; the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PMB), centred in Canberra; and the US National Archives and Records Administration – Pacific Region (NARA) at San Bruno. Archival sources are particularly relevant to the period between 1914 and 1939, during which time New Zealand administered the western islands of the Samoan group on behalf of Britain through a League of Nations mandate. In practice, the records used for these islands are sourced from three collections at the National Archives at Wellington: the Archives of the German Colonial Administration (AGCA), which contains documents inherited from the previous German administration; files from the period of British Military Occupation (BMO) from 1914-1920; and the Department of Island Territories (coded IT). While these official records contained valuable insights, the thesis drew more heavily on the manuscript collections located in the ATL at Wellington to reflect the official voice of empire. In particular, the official and private papers of several British and New Zealand officials were invaluable in reconstructing their experiences in Samoa. These sources were supplemented with microfilm reproductions from the PMB catalogue, of which the ATL is a member library. Together, the sources from ANZ, the ATL and the PMB
provide a broad and deep array of primary evidence from the nineteenth century and after 1900 under the German and New Zealand administrations.

These sources are comparatively silent, however, on the post-partition history of kirikiti in what is now known as American Samoa. To address this deficit, the thesis draws on two record groups located within the NARA at San Bruno, California: the Records of the American Samoa Government (RG 284) and the Records of Naval Operating Forces (RG 313) pertaining to the US naval station at Tutuila. Many of the documents originally from RG 284 were sourced from microfilm records (T1182). Together, documents from these collections provided relevant information regarding the recreational habits of US servicemen in the islands. They were also a source of reports by administrative personnel and detailed correspondence between American and Samoan officials in the naval government. In short, therefore, these archival sources fulfilled a similar function to those in New Zealand – providing a sense of how kirikiti intersected with colonialism beyond what could be ascertained from newspaper sources. After consultation with my supervisor and several other scholars, I decided not to pursue archival sources in Germany and Samoa itself. This decision was shaped by my own lack of German and Samoan language proficiency and uncertainty about whether I could readily access the relevant collections in Samoa. In addition, initial source reconnaissance – the ATL and ANZ both hold official government communications in both the Samoan and German languages – suggested that these sources were overwhelmingly similar to those found in English-language archives. In both cases, after all, the archives generally provided the voices of colonial and Samoan officials. While such sources might have added welcome detail, they were therefore not essential in shaping the arguments made in this dissertation. Finally, the absence of German records was substantively mitigated by the availability English summaries of many papers relating to the German Administration (PMB 479).

Finally, a range of missionary sources were consulted to inform the chapter on missionary responses to kirikiti and to provide more general information about the game and its place in contemporaneous Samoan society. Through a series of online repositories, the thesis draws on missionary magazines such as the London Missionary Society’s *Chronicle*, the Marist *Les Missions Catholiques* and the Mormon *Improvement Era*. Missionary diaries also provided an invaluable source of first-hand accounts, including those available via the PMB. The most substantive missionary accounts, however, were found in Brigham Young University’s unparalleled Mormon

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10 I did undertake a separate trip to Samoa in August and September 2014, but this was to attend the national Teuila festival so as to observe kirikiti in person and speak informally to Samoan men and women about the game, rather than to peruse the archives.
Missionary Diaries (MMD) digital collection. Missionary diaries – and indeed other private journals – are especially valuable because they were not written for public consumption. Their accounts of kirikiti and its associated festivities, therefore, were generally less affected and sensationalist than those found in books, newspapers and magazines.

The clearest advantage of this broad approach to sources is, of course, that it allows access to a part of Samoan life that did not always feature prominently in official archives. In general, cricket and kirikiti appeared in these records only when they intersected with ‘high politics’ and economic matters. As such, we must cast the net further to capture the game’s significance in the daily lives of Samoans and papalagi alike. There is far more to this approach than mere expedience, however. By drawing on a broad range of sources, this thesis is able to access more directly the ways that different groups and individuals viewed and responded to the cricket and especially kirikiti. This benefit is especially pregnant given the thesis’ emphasis on how kirikiti embodied contest within the broad categories of coloniser and colonised, as well as between them.

The approach to sources taken herein has several important concerns that need to be addressed and allayed, however. The first of these is the question of accuracy and authorial projection in contemporaneous accounts. While this problem is hardly unique to this thesis, it is especially pertinent to an account of kirikiti. The game’s departure from English cricket frequently confounded papalagi observers, as is evidenced from a report that appeared in the Australian Argus newspaper in 1939:

> the girls play cricket with teams of 40 a side. The bat is like a huge rolling-pin and the fieldswomen field with long sticks. Each player brings her friends along when she is batting in the matches, which often last a week. There is great feasting each evening after the close of the play. The Samoan men play baseball.11

While it is certainly true that Samoan girls played kirikiti matches marked by large-scale participation, the same cannot be said for the author’s description of a ‘huge rolling-pin’ and assertions that fielding was done with ‘long sticks’. That Samoan men played baseball rather than kirikiti, moreover, is almost as puzzling a claim.

This account provides a striking example of some of the more general problems of relying on ‘outsider’ texts. Not only is the report inaccurate, it also attests to the ways that papalagi have described Oceania and its peoples in terms of their divergence from familiar cultural images and practices. In this sense how Europeans saw Samoans, as Bernard Smith observed, was “conditioned by knowing”.12 By the late-nineteenth century – the point of departure for this thesis – Europeans

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11 ‘Different Kind of Cricket’, Argus, 19 June 1939, p. 3.
imagined Samoans as ‘childlike’ primitives who were generally agreeable but easily led astray and liable to act impulsively. This view, while not unchallenged, persisted throughout the period of study and thus informs the official and unofficial sources used in this thesis. Due to its distinctive rules and intense popularity, kirikiti was for Europeans a highly visible example of Samoan alterity and disregard for European practices and customs. The game was consequently often deployed in both popular accounts and official reports to demonstrate their purported childishness. Although this thesis operates firmly within the empirical-analytical tradition, it seeks to avoid reproducing the inequalities and inaccuracies of its sources by critically ‘reading around’ them and contextualising them – even as the messages within these texts are themselves significant in understanding papalagi attitudes towards kirikiti.

The obverse of this problem is a dearth of indigenous voice in most of the written texts that this thesis draws on. It is not that Samoans are uninterested in their history; the Samoan author Albert Wendt’s refrain that “we are what we remember” attests to the centrality of historical knowledge in fa’a Samoa. As Damon Salesa has noted, however, the ways that Samoans practice history – written and unwritten – are often not aligned with the academy. Rather than academic journals, “the lively and boisterous knowledge arenas of indigenous Samoan history” are ceremonies, family discussions and council meetings. As a consequence of this lack of conventional historical sources, historians of Samoa have often tended to speak for Samoans through the eyes of contemporary European observers. Even as well-intentioned historians attempt to ascribe agency, therefore, they deny Samoans a voice.

As Tony Ballantyne has pointed out, this is a challenge for any student of empire – most of the sources historians use to access the colonial past are “themselves constitutive of the inequalities of that past”. Some voices are privileged, while others “are only fleetingly recorded, surviving only as fragments, faint traces, or muffled in reported speech and translation”. He argues that

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researchers must therefore tread carefully when reading archival and other sources. To this end, this thesis draws on Samoan sources wherever possible and privileges their own accounts of Samoan cultural practices. In addition, the capacity of the archives to provide some Samoan voice – albeit overwhelmingly chiefly and male – should not be underestimated. Records from American Samoa provide an especially valuable correspondence between local Samoan officials and American naval personnel, while across colonial regimes the transcripts of fonos [village councils] and other official meetings frequently recorded statements made by Samoan leaders. Together with other texts, these archival sources therefore provide a rich, if unavoidably incomplete, picture of cricket’s place in Samoa during the period of study.

Approach

Following the greater number of sports and imperial historians, this thesis operates for the most part within the empirical-analytical tradition. In surveying a broad range of evidence and particularly primary sources, it aims to gain insights into decisions made by purposeful historical agents under specific circumstances. By laying out the evidence against pieces of other evidence through a process of contextualisation, moreover, it seeks to piece together an account of how different groups used cricket to pursue their distinctive interests in Samoa. The resulting thesis proceeds in three steps that are more logical than chronological: the Samoan appropriation of cricket, the European response to that act, and the Samoan use of the game to ‘navigate’ papalagi colonialism. This thematic approach was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, a more strictly chronological approach would have been challenging to conform to. As previously discussed, the decision to conduct archival research in New Zealand and the United States but not Samoa, Germany or the United Kingdom means that the record is significantly deeper at some points than others. A thematic approach is hence useful in that it obviates the need for awkwardly collating or dividing different periods to avoid overly short or long chapters. Within these thematic chapters, moreover, comparisons are frequently made between different periods and different colonial administrations. More importantly, the chosen approach draws attention to processes of contestation and Samoan agency, two of the strongest and most persistent themes in the thesis.

The first step in this structural gambit requires an interdisciplinary approach, however. As such, the empirical-analytical method is supplemented by theoretical insights drawn from sociology and anthropology to produce a more sophisticated account of how Samoans reimagined cricket as...
kirikiti. Historians have frequently drawn on a rich sociological literature that seeks to explain the mechanisms through which cultural practices spread between different groups. Sociologists define diffusion as the transmission, adoption, and eventual acculturation of an innovation by a recipient population, and they often stress the importance of similarities between diffusors and adopters in certain attributes, such as beliefs, education and social status. This framework is unable, however, to fully account for the distinctive elements that can arise when a practice is diffused from one society to another, as was the case in Samoa. This calls for an instrument of the anthropologist’s toolbox – and latterly that of linguists and literary scholars – namely the concept of transculturation. Following Mary Louise Pratt, the term ‘transcultural’ can be used to describe those ‘mixed’ social practices that emerge at sites of intercultural contact, engagement and confrontation. Languages, religious practices, written texts and – of course – sports can all be characterised as ‘transcultural’ in this way. These notions of diffusion and transculturation therefore provide a useful platform for discussing the adoption of cricket in Samoa and its transformation into kirikiti in Chapters Two and Three.

Writing in the empirical-analytical tradition, with or without a sprinkling of sociology and anthropology, is not without its pitfalls. As previously discussed, the thesis’ reliance on written documents – overwhelmingly authored by papalagi men – does not allow for a strong indigenous voice. This could be addressed to some extent by following an explicitly ‘Pacific Island methodology’ that prioritises information gathered in a group setting and offers participants a meaningful role in the research process. Given the historical scope of this particular study and potential language requirements, however, such an approach was deemed infeasible.

A more radical critique would deny that any ‘outsider’ has the ability and even the right to narrate Pacific or any indigenous history. The attempt to ‘indigenise’ Pacific history has analogous threads in other postcolonial locales, but is itself highly problematic. Linnekin notes that the concept of a ‘native point of view’ is not easily defined:

Is an anti-colonial stance sufficient to constitute a native voice? Even if the answer is no, it is difficult to specify the cultural credentials or social status that entitle one to speak for the group.

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Similarly, Doug Munro has argued that in the interconnected and multicultural twenty-first century context, both ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ have contributions to make in the joint project of constructing a fuller and more revealing historiography of the Pacific.\textsuperscript{21} Even the Samoan writer Albert Wendt, who questions whether an historian can ever “get into the brain and blood of someone whose culture is so different from his own”, insists that ‘outsider’ contributions are valuable provided scholars do not “pretend they can write from within us”.\textsuperscript{22}

On a personal note, I have received nothing but encouragement from scholars of the Pacific – particularly when I presented my work at the 2016 Pacific History Association conference in Guam and the ‘New Horizons in Samoan History’ conference later that year – and, equally importantly, from Samoan men and women outside the academy in Australia, New Zealand and Samoa itself. Their support and encouragement was not a given, of course, and I was mindful that I needed to earn it by undertaking extended archival research, engaging with and learning from Samoan men and women inside and outside the academy, and making what Munro calls “a serious and honest attempt to see things from the standpoint of the other”.\textsuperscript{23} Even so, no historian can ignore the sensitivities of writing Pacific history from an outsider perspective. As Ani Mikaere reminds us, writing a history that essentialises people or corrodes their sense of heritage and culture does violence to them in profound ways.\textsuperscript{24} As a papalagi man writing in the twenty-first century and situated some 7500km from Samoa, I have endeavoured to remain self-reflexive and sensitive throughout the research process. I am cognisant of the power and privilege I hold in writing history and of the responsibility that this requires. It is all I can do to approach the subject with caution and humility.

Notes on terminology

The approach adopted herein towards spelling has been to observe, as consistently as possible, contemporary usage. As such, italicisation of Samoan terms has been kept to a minimum where possible; brief definitions can be found at the point of first mention in the text, and again in the glossary. Kirikiti, the Samoan transliteration of cricket, is used to distinguish the Samoan adaptation of the game from its English counterpart. This delineation is upheld despite the occasionally indistinct reality of the game(s) in colonial Samoa. For the aurally inclined reader, it is

\textsuperscript{22} Wendt, ‘Novelists and Historians’, pp. 88-89.
\textsuperscript{23} Munro, ‘Who ‘owns’ Pacific History?’, especially pp. 235-236.
\textsuperscript{24} Ani Mikaere, ‘Contending with the weight of history: power, privilege and the predilection for presumption’, 2015 Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke Memorial Lecture, 2015 New Zealand Historical Association conference at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 3 December 2015.
worth noting that Samoan has several differences in pronunciation from what a papalagi might expect. Kirikiti itself uses two consonants – ‘k’ and ‘r’ – that are borrowed from European languages. Indeed, it is now more commonly spelled and pronounced as ‘kiliki’. The pronunciation of other Samoan words is outlined in the glossary.

This thesis uses the term ‘Oceania’ when referring to the islands of the Pacific Ocean, exclusive of Asia, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand.25 This move is prompted by the vagaries and associations of alternate nomenclatures. ‘The Pacific’ is often taken to include – and sometimes even be largely limited to – the continental borders of the Pacific Ocean, as well as some or all of the Malay archipelago. More generally, the term is disfavoured because it is often included as part of broader categories – the Asia-Pacific or the Pacific Rim – that obscure and minimise the peoples and places within the vast ocean itself.26 Another erstwhile alternative, ‘the South Seas’, has been obsolete for 150 years, save when deployed adjectivally to confer an aura of romance or isolation.27 These connotations have also permeated ‘the Pacific Islands’, a category that Katrina Gulliver claims “is often used to conjure some essentialised grass skirt/tiki image”.28 Following Salesa, therefore, ‘Oceania’ is the preferred terminology. Although the term carries its own bundle of troubles – for one thing, it shares provenance in the same historical moment as the division of the constituent islands into Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia – it centres attention on the islands, rather than seeing them as an appendage to larger, more important locales.29

More vexing questions of terminology are also a challenge for any student of the region. As occurred in other sites of imperial expansion, Europeans imposed artificial categories on indigenous peoples to better place them within their own understandings of the world and their own pre-eminence in it. In this context etymology may not be destiny, but it certainly is suggestive. The oft-used ‘Mela-Micro-Poly’ division, for instance, has its origins in crude eighteenth century theories of racial difference. This thesis largely avoids the perils of these particular categorisations, but it does utilise terms that possess what Linnekin terms “historicity and vulnerability”.30 In particular, its historical focus means that this thesis encounters and in some ways is shaped by contemporaneous

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discourses regarding race and ethnicity. As Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds have argued, race is best understood as an ideological tool *par excellence*, serving to naturalise and legitimise exploitation and domination in the context of empire and colonialism.31 In Oceania as elsewhere, however, race was never a purely abstract construct. Instead, it was defined by what Bronwen Douglas calls “the entanglement of discourse and experience”. Ideas about race were never static or uncontested, but rather “grounded in encounters, where racial ideas and representations were enacted, reworked, or forged”. 32 Given the historically contingent nature of race, Douglas and Chris Ballard contend that historians must locate racial discourse in historical and epistemological terms, and then subject it to rigorous critique. In so doing, scholars can challenge the ‘naturalness’ of race while exposing the tensions, inconsistencies and inherent instability which together characterise the concept.33

This thesis attempts to follow Douglas’s counsel. As in Oceania more generally, Europeans in Samoa emplaced a series of racial categories to exclude others and preserve their own position and relative advantage. Rather than neatly delineate Europeans from ‘natives’, however, racial categories were porous and inherently unstable. By the late-nineteenth century so-called ‘half-castes’, or *‘afakasi* in Samoan, were more numerous than Samoa’s nominally white population. Although both English and Samoan terms clearly have racist – though in the Samoan case not necessarily pejorative – connotations, they are useful in identifying a group whose members often moved between the legal and social categories of European and ‘native’ Samoan. As well as having ties to Samoans and Europeans, moreover, Salesa points out that ‘afakasi men and women in Apia had “their own clubs, balls and polo teams” and even spoke with “their own peculiar accent”’.34 Following the example of other historians of Samoa, particularly Malama Meleisea,35 this thesis uses the term ‘afakasi to refer to this group. On those rare occasions where expressions such as ‘half-caste’ or ‘mixed-race’ are unavoidable, inverted commas have been used to indicate that these and similar terms possess what Catherine Hall calls “historically located and discursively specific”

35 See Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, especially pp. 155-182. Meleisea also utilises other terms such as ‘part-Samoan’ and ‘mixed-race’. For the sake of consistency, however, this thesis largely persists with ‘afakasi to delineate the experiences of these men, women and children.
meanings. Less controversially, this thesis uses ‘European’ and ‘papalagi’ as synonyms. In a minor defiance of geography, both terms include white ‘agents of empire’ from the United States, Australia and New Zealand as well as Europe proper.

The challenge posed by racial classifications extends beyond mere nomenclature. Due to their unique and fluid classification in – and experience of – colonial Samoa, ‘afakasi do not easily fit within this thesis’ general structure, which first investigates Samoan appropriation of cricket, then colonisers’ responses, and finally Samoan uses of the game in the context of formal and informal colonialism. Indeed, it is no surprise that such arbitrary and artificial racial divisions are difficult to assimilate into a more general thematic framework. In his account of the Land and Titles Commission, for instance, Meleisea found it necessary to break from the chronological sequence of previous and subsequent chapters – that is, the rest of the monograph – in order to discuss the ways in which part-Samoans were classified and the historical consequences of this system of racial classification. This thesis discusses the ‘afakasi community in a similarly ‘grafted-on’ manner: their attitudes and responses to cricket and kirikiti are examined in a composite chapter alongside white colonists and foreign sailors and soldiers. This position in a chapter purportedly about ‘colonisers’ is a rich irony, of course, given their liminal and unstable status in colonial hierarchies of race was frequently reflected on the cricket pitch. These contradictions, which are explored more fully in Chapter Six, are emblematic of the inherent ambiguities and widespread contestation that characterises the history of cricket in Samoa.

Chapter One

Literature Review

“The South Sea Islands do not include among their outstanding qualities an excellence in the preservation of records... when I was searching for old records it was constantly found that a hurricane here had carried away to sea or jungle this flimsy pavilion with its collection of old prints, and a gigantic flood there had advanced and receded over that cool, airy building where ancient scorebooks still existed, it is true, but in watery, blurred, illegible form.”1

In the Preface to his account of cricket in Fiji, Philip Snow expressed his frustration at the silences he encountered in attempting to piece together the game’s history in the islands. As a member of the British Colonial Service who had already spent a decade in Fiji, Snow had served as aide-de-camp to the Governor at Suva, been posted to the isolated Lau archipelago and supervised the defence of Nadi airport after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Throughout, he was a devoted sportsman. Snow played table tennis and billiards with the local chiefs in Lau, but his most sustained efforts were on the cricket pitch: he founded the colony’s first multiracial sporting body, the Suva Cricket Association, and led a team of Fijians on tour to New Zealand in 1948. His efforts to record the game’s history, however, were blighted by the absence of records that could give voice to cricket’s history in Fiji. Not only were records frequently lost or spoiled in the tropical climate, many stories had never been documented at all. As such, he was left to piece together a narrative that could only incompletely fill the silences of this unrecorded past.

This chapter delineates a different kind of cricketing silence in Oceania. While the documentary record of ‘the Imperial Game’ in Samoa is relatively broad and deep, the same cannot be said of scholarly enquiries into its historical significance. This silence, therefore, reflects not a lack of records but rather the kinds of questions scholars have asked in producing history.2 To this end, the present chapter has two principal aims. First, by examining several broad, overlapping literatures – imperial and colonial history, the history of Oceania and Samoa, and the history of sport and particularly cricket – it seeks to establish that while scholars have engaged with the themes and approaches adopted in this thesis, it remains an original study. In so doing, moreover, it contends that this history is worthy of investigation. By exploring kirikiti, we can begin to

2 This discussion is informed by Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s meditation on how the past is selectively ‘silenced’ in producing history. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).
historicise present-centric accounts of sport’s significance in the region, reorient sporting histories that have often ignored ‘peripheral’ parts of empire, and enrich our understanding of ‘everyday’ Samoan history. As such, the chapter argues, this study will make a significant contribution to original knowledge across several fields of historical enquiry.

**Imperial and Colonial History**

This thesis explores one of the immeasurably many ‘contact zones’ created by the expansion of imperial powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³ It can therefore be firmly situated within the study of empire. Indeed, given the peculiarities of Samoa’s experience of foreign imperialism, it could be said to intersect with four distinct imperial scholarships – those of Britain, Germany, the United States of America, and New Zealand. Beneath such pat historiographical labels, however, lies a body of scholarship that is both vast and contentious, and that has experienced substantive revision and renewal in the last four decades. Indeed, as it existed in the 1960s, practitioners of imperial history would have had little time for a study such as this one. While historians of empire had already turned to ‘excentric’ explanations of imperialism that emphasised the role of colonised peoples in generating historical change, they remained resolutely focused on the economic, political and military dimensions of empire. As such, the notion that a serious work of imperial history could focus on sport and draw on insights from anthropology would have seemed fanciful at best.

Since the 1970s, however, a series of movements in the humanities and social sciences more generally have profoundly reshaped the methods and focuses of imperial historians.⁴ Practitioners of the new social history stressed structures and processes over actors and events, and increasingly turned to quantitative and demographic methods to provide insight into the lives of those whose voices were excluded from written archival sources. In addition, the so-called ‘cultural turn’ – which itself overlapped with and followed the move from social historians to write histories ‘from below’ – saw scholars eschewing positivist epistemology in favour of finding meaning in language and other modes of cultural representation. For historians of empire, the most visible interlopers

³ This designation is borrowed from Mary Louise Pratt, who uses it as an alternative to ‘colonial frontier’, and more generally to denote sites of intercultural engagement and confrontation, often in the context of highly asymmetrical relations of power. The term will be further defined and explored in Chapter Two. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturalisation* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 4-6.

were the so-called ‘postcolonial theorists’, who sought to untangle the structures of power and knowledge that defined colonial societies and, they argued, imperialism itself.\(^5\)

In pursuing this project, they increasingly blurred the boundaries between history and outside disciplines such as anthropology, literary criticism and gender studies. This incursion has of course been controversial. As Durba Ghosh has noted, postcolonial studies have “gained a reputation for being insufficiently careful about historical facts, empiricism, and archives”.\(^6\) Most historians would acknowledge, however, that postcolonial studies offers useful strategies for uncovering what she calls the “exceptions, margins, secrets, and anxieties” that marked colonial regimes. Even if my thesis employs these methods only sparingly, my invocation of concepts such as transculturation, syncretism and hybridity owes a debt of gratitude to postcolonial theory’s cross-disciplinary currents. Moreover, its foundational goal – privileging marginal narratives over those of the imperial ‘centre’ – strongly informs this thesis throughout.

More directly pertinent to this thesis, however, is how the analytic approaches of cultural and especially social history also precipitated a shift towards new subjects of historical inquiry. Rather than dealing in ‘high politics’ and economics, scholars of empire have in the past four decades or so retrained their focus onto matters that were absent in – or at best incidental to – previous historical accounts. As such, the ascendency of social and cultural history has pushed historians towards exploring the dynamics of class, race, ethnicity, gender, popular culture and sport to better understand imperial and colonial histories.\(^7\) Indeed, sport and leisure have been among the beneficiaries of this broader view of colonialism and empire. This trend has been evident since at least the mid-1980s, and such studies have retained currency even as the study of empire has been reinvigorated and redirected by recent movements to write ‘global’ and ‘transnational’ histories. In

\(^{5}\) While postcolonial scholarship has been influential since the Subaltern Studies collective used its techniques to challenge the status quo in South Asia studies during the 1980s, its effects before the mid-1990s were more significant in English (and other) literature departments than amongst historians of the British Empire. Over the past two decades, however, postcolonial studies have stormed the citadel of empiricist histories of British Empire and refashioned it from within. For examples of early and influential postcolonial scholarship, see the landmark collection Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (eds.), Selected Subaltern Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). For early attempts to synthesise postcolonial studies and imperial history, see Dane Kennedy, ‘Imperial History and Postcolonial Theory’, Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History 24:3 (1996), pp. 345–363; Mrinalini Sinha, ‘Historia Nervosa or Who’s Afraid of Colonial-Discourse Analysis?’ Journal of Victorian Culture 2:1 (1997), pp. 113–122.

\(^{6}\) Ghosh, ‘Another Set of Imperial Turns?’, p. 783.

sum, therefore, this thesis enters a vibrant and discordant field in which the social and cultural aspects of empire – of which sport and leisure are a part – are now afforded serious attention.

These new sites of investigation are most visible in the voluminous English-language scholarship of the British Empire. Indeed, scholars have rigorously explored the intersections between sport and contemporaneous ideas of race, masculinity and civilisation in the Empire in monographs and as part of compendia of ‘new imperial’ writing. These sites of investigation have also occupied scholars of other modern empires, however. In the case of Germany, for example, the ‘cultural turn’ has redirected scholarly attention towards metropolitan-colonial linkages in the Kaiserreich. For historians such as Sebastian Conrad, Sven Müller and Cornelius Torp, ‘colonial thinking’ shaped Germany and Germans despite the relatively limited temporal extent and political-economic importance of its external colonial possessions. Thematically, historians have turned to a diverse cast of concerns. The editor of a recent companion sampling German colonial and postcolonial studies, for instance, affirmed her intention to reproduce the varied landscape of the field by sampling both ‘core’ topics and more ‘marginal’ ones such as board games, languages, education and sport in the context of German colonialism.

Research on American empire and colonialism has similarly explored these new sites of investigation, even if this scholarship has been constrained by the status of ‘empire’ and ‘imperialism’ as bogey words in the lexicon of American historiography. Despite this substantial impediment, the historiography of American imperialism has been enriched in recent years by methods and thematic influences drawn from imperial and colonial history more generally,

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including insights originally borrowed from literary scholars and anthropologists.\(^\text{12}\) Scholars of gender history, critical race studies and the history of the body have, moreover, frequently turned to sport and physical culture to examine the social and cultural history of America, both at home and abroad.\(^\text{13}\)

A similar pattern has emerged in writing about New Zealand’s empire. New Zealand is more familiar as a dominion of the United Kingdom rather than an imperial power in its own right, but a series of recent studies have emphasised that – both at home and abroad – it was a nation of colonisers. For the most part, these efforts were marked by vainglorious proclamations of civilising intent and distinctly ineffective administration. In his general history of New Zealand, for example, James Belich observes that its historians have tended to portray the country’s imperial aspirations as “baby playing emperor in the nursery” – a view he mostly endorses.\(^\text{14}\) New Zealand’s status as a colonising nation is more than a merely semantic point, however. As Damon Salesa has pointed out, “New Zealand gathered and ruled over dozens of overseas Pacific Islands, and tens of thousands of their people”.\(^\text{15}\) A steady flow of new scholarship has emerged to explore these gaps using the methods and thematic lenses of the ‘new imperial history’. The 2015 collection *New Zealand’s Empire*, for instance, included studies of travel and tourism in the Pacific alongside a discussion of the Empire Games (latterly the Commonwealth Games) as a site where New Zealanders refashioned ‘national identity’ in the second half of the twentieth century.\(^\text{16}\) As this range of examples from various imperial scholarships demonstrates, historians in the field are increasingly turning to sport and leisure to explore the contours of life in the ‘contact zones’ created by empire.


\(^{15}\) Damon Salesa, ‘New Zealand’s Pacific’, in Giselle Byrnes (ed.), *The new Oxford history of New Zealand* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 149. Salesa provides a useful overview of the historiography of New Zealand’s empire, arguing that twentieth century historians were generally happy to minimise and ‘quietly rehabilitate’ these exercises in colonial adventure.

The history of Oceania and of Samoa

In the course of exploring these issues my thesis will also engage with historical writing on Oceania in general and Samoa in particular. Salesa has recently called attention to two widely disparate views of the region’s place in the world. Among those who know it, he argues, Oceania is “as rich in significance, complexity, achievement and human experience as any region on earth”. For outsiders, however, it is “little known, marginalised, disavowed or excised”. These outside perspectives are not new – early European voyagers took many months to sail across the Pacific Ocean, which was understood as an incomprehensibly vast emptiness. Since then, the Pacific has – almost unfailingly – been viewed as an obstacle, a blank space that existed only as a long, deserted highway between the littoral markers at its borders.

The inhabitants of the islands within this apparently ‘empty’ expanse – and their histories – have similarly been rendered peripheral by this focus on the ‘edges’ of the Pacific Ocean. For many years histories of Oceania were blithely ignored outside of the region itself, reflecting a comfortable assumption that it offered little to history’s principal narratives. This perspective was not limited to European and American scholars; even historians from the ‘regional metropoles’ of Australian and New Zealand have, as Salesa puts it, regarded Oceania as “a distant, rustic, and unsophisticated cousin”. In addition, he argues, it is only the recent attention from scholars of the Atlantic, Mediterranean and other sites of ‘the new thalassology’ that has encouraged them to look outward to the islands of the Pacific. This latter move has indeed led to a sea change in ‘outsider’ perspectives of the region, albeit one that has been met with some ambivalence by its ‘insiders’. In the last decade or so, a series of monographs and edited collections have sought to induct ‘the Pacific’ into the broader currents of transnational and global history. In so doing they have drawn on the success of Atlanticists, who contend that the histories of peoples and empires on the Atlantic rim are best understood as a unified analytic unit from which integrated narratives can be drawn.

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While this upswing in scholarly attention is an exciting development for scholars of Oceania, they have remained equivocal about the utility of this sweeping approach to the islands within the so-called ‘Pacific world’. As was previously the case, these new histories focus more on littoral locales of the Pacific – particularly the west coast of North America, Japan and Australia – than on the geographically smaller islands in its midst. As such, Salesa is cautious about the ability of these meta-narratives to speak for the Oceanic experience: “Oceania now gets to be a part of the story, but still sings in the rear of the chorus, quietly, and to a tune chosen by far distant choirmasters”. Other scholars have been yet more strident in critiquing this aggregating project, arguing that assimilating Oceania into Euro-American intellectual traditions is a problematic exercise and one without clear value for understanding the region. For all the attention recently given to the Pacific, therefore, Oceania remains largely neglected by ‘metropolitan’ scholars and hence their audiences.

For those privileged enough to know it, however, Oceania – frequently referred to as the Pacific islands – has a mature and especial scholarship of its own. While histories of the region were written before the Second World War, the discipline of ‘Pacific history’ can trace its genealogy back to James Wightman Davidson’s appointment as Chair of Pacific History at the Australian National University in 1950. Under Davidson, the discipline was heavily research-driven and embraced radicalism and a commitment to decolonisation. Although his own research output was modest, Davidson’s exhortation for historians to train their focus on the colonised islands rather than the metropole profoundly influenced scholarship in and about the region. Starting in the late-1950s, historians produced a quarter-century of sustained scholarship characterised by an emphasis on local agency and focusing on ‘culture contact’ and ‘multicultural situations’, change and decolonisation, rather than ‘colonial history’ per se.

These historians employed a largely empirical method – complemented by occasional insights from structural anthropology – and privileged local language and culture in their analyses. In many ways, therefore, the field’s growth ran parallel to concurrent developments in the

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historiographies of Africa and Southeast Asia. Davidson’s founding of the *Journal of Pacific History* in 1966 further served to reinforce the primacy of this approach. The result was a steady stream of local studies – although very few regional or comparative histories – that placed the islands of Oceania firmly at the centre of academic inquiry. Indeed, by 1989 one historian felt moved to claim that its literature was “possibly greater in relation to population size than any other part of the world”.  

The paramountcy of the relatively uniform ‘island-centred’ method has been progressively challenged since the 1980s, however. While attempts to move to ‘national’ and ‘subaltern’ historical paradigms have not always sat easily with Oceania’s distinctive ethnic and linguistic cleavages, the same cluster of approaches that reshaped histories of empire – postmodernism, cultural studies and literary criticism – have become increasingly prominent in writing about Oceania. Rather than being limited to archival research, moreover, historical experience is frequently presented through film, literature, drama, museum exhibitions, and music. Many of the advocates of these new methods, moreover, are Islanders themselves rather than the coterie of predominantly white historians who had previously led the field. Much of their writing has been influenced by Epeli Hau’ofa’s conception of a mobile and connected Pacific, which has precipitated a series of studies on migration, diasporas and inter-island connections. The scholarship of Oceania has consequently taken on a more eclectic and fractured aspect. The foundation of the interdisciplinary journal *The Contemporary Pacific* in 1989 as a rival publication has also contributed to this greater diversity in methodology and outlook. As Peter Hempenstall has argued, the field today can thus be characterised as “series of conversations... going on, but not always meeting, in the crowded room of Pacific history”. 

While Hempenstall is right to call Oceania’s historiography ‘crowded’, it is by no means full. As Narelle McGlusky has noted, one striking commonality between the field’s disparate approaches is that the role of sport in Islanders’ experiences of empire has barely warranted any

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25 For discussion of the challenges of applying these paradigms to the context of Oceania, see Jocelyn Linnekin, ‘Contending Approaches’, pp. 1-36.
26 Lal and Munro, ‘The Text in Its Context’, p. 3.
This silence is unremarkable – while there is a considerable and growing body of work exploring colonisers’ sport and leisure in India, Southern Africa and the British West Indies, sport remains relatively marginalised in histories of colonised peoples more generally. The last decade has seen a growing cluster of studies exploring sport in Oceania, but these focus almost exclusively on the economic, social and cultural dynamics of Pacific Islander labour migration in the contemporary global sporting economy. Sport’s significance in the region is much older than this, however, and with few exceptions Oceania’s historians have not yet examined the place of sport and physical culture in the lives of Islanders before and during imperial rule. Sport was an important site where different peoples grappled with each other in the ‘contact zones’ created by the processes of empire and colonialism. This is particularly true in many parts of Oceania; along with religion, sport has been one of the most persistent vestiges of imperialism in the region. Despite increasing recognition of this significance, sport has yet to be integrated into broader historical analyses of colonialism and empire in Oceania. As such, while scholars have begun to explore the place of sport and physical culture in Oceania’s present, they have yet to examine its role in shaping the region’s past.

Samoan history

These general comments about the history of Oceania are also true of Samoa. Pre-war historical scholarship on Samoa was almost invariably ‘colonial history’ that denied indigenous agency and perpetuated the view that Samoans were bystanders to their own histories. The advent of foreign rule by Germany and the United States in 1900, for instance, was seen as an inevitable consequence of Samoans’ inability to rule themselves. A notable early exception to this rule was Te’o Tuvalue, a prominent Samoan scholar and a civil servant under the German administration from 1900 to 1914. In his Account of Samoan History up to 1918, Tuvalue detailed Samoan ancestry and genealogy, examined the origins and meanings of numerous cultural practices and explored the

30 For one notable exception, see Damon Salesa’s brief account of New Zealand officials’ attempts to control the bodies of young men in Samoa and Niue by directing them to ‘wholesome’ European games and athletic pursuits rather than their ‘defective’ indigenous equivalents. Salesa, ‘New Zealand’s Pacific’, p. 159.
31 For two examples of this genre, see Sylvia Masterman, The Origins of International Rivalry in Samoa, 1845-1884 (London: Allen & Unwin, 1934); Joseph Ellison, Opening and Penetration of Foreign Influence in Samoa to 1880 (Corvallis: Oregon State College, 1938).
causes of the conflict that arose in the 1880s from the potent mix of traditional rivalries and European interests.\textsuperscript{32}

Following the establishment of ‘Pacific history’ as a sub-discipline in the 1950s, however, historians turned decisively towards the islands and set about documenting Samoans’ experience of colonialism. These works were political histories that demonstrate the resilience of fa’a Samoa, the Samoan way, in the face of foreign influence. Two especially notable examples of this work were Davidson’s \textit{Samoa mo Samoa} and Richard Gilson’s \textit{Samoa 1830 to 1900: the politics of a multi-cultural community}.\textsuperscript{33} Gilson’s account – published in 1970 but written primarily in the 1950s – is a political history of Samoa in the nineteenth century, and stands as an exemplar of the ‘culture contact’ genre of Pacific Islands historiography. According to Doug Munro, Gilson’s monograph is most notable for “its rare combination of historical research and anthropological insight” and its unwavering commitment to finding and detailing Samoan agency in their engagements with papalagi.\textsuperscript{34} Davidson’s book, which was published before but written after Gilson’s work, broadly narrates how Samoans lost and then regained their independence over the course of 125 years of concerted interactions with papalagi. Davidson’s account was informed by his role as participant in many of the events in question – he was a trusteeship officer leading up to self-government in 1962 – and is characterised by an overt identification with Samoan causes and trenchant criticism of aspects of New Zealand’s colonial rule in the islands.\textsuperscript{35}

Several general histories of Samoa have been published in the proceeding decades. Perhaps the most significant of these are the two works authored by Malama Meleisea in 1987. The more academic-orientated of these texts was \textit{The Making of Modern Samoa}, which was published from Meleisea’s doctoral thesis.\textsuperscript{36} In it, he examined the historical function of the Land and Titles Commission, which was from 1903 charged with resolving disputes involving chiefly titles and authority over land. For Meleisea, the Commission reflected a wider clash between the ‘rationalist’ legal and social models of Western societies and those of Samoa, which were frequently incongruent with such interpretations. \textit{Lagaga}, in which Meleisea collaborated with other Samoan

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\textsuperscript{32} ‘Te’o Tuvalae, An Account of Samoan History up to 1918. Translated into English by E. Riddell, 1930-1935, with essays on Samoan life, customs and vocabulary. Also map showing political divisions of Samoa’ in Papers concerning the history of Samoa, 1887-1935, MSS 39 [microfilm], Mitchell Library (ML).
\textsuperscript{35} ibid., pp. 229-233.
\textsuperscript{36} Malama Meleisea, \textit{The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the History of Western Samoa} (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1987).
intellectuals in the same year, was written as a more accessible point of entry for students of Samoan history. Together with Gilson’s account and a range of primary sources, Meleisea’s work provides much of the conceptual and historical setting for this thesis.

In spite of these rich general accounts, the scholarship of Samoa has remained stubbornly focused on a few subjects of enquiry to the exclusion of many others. In particular, while historians have repeatedly investigated politics – both indigenous and colonial – and religion in Samoa, there remain few studies in the social or cultural history tradition. To this end, many stories of ‘everyday’ Samoan history remain untold. Topics that would typically fall into this category, such as labour, food, music, language and sport, have therefore received only fleeting scholarly attention. These silences are to some extent understandable: in a relatively small field such as Samoan history, attention is invariably drawn to those topics where archival evidence is most substantial; while the political and religious histories of Samoa are worthy of attention in their own right. Nevertheless, it is only in exploring other histories – everyday histories – that we can establish a clearer picture of how Samoans went about their lives and those activities and pursuits that gave them meaning.

Unsurprisingly given the wider absence of social histories of Samoa, sport features only sparingly in the islands’ wider historical literature. Even so, the relative absence of sport – and particularly that of kirikiti – in Samoan historiography is especially striking given the myriad instances of Samoans using it to navigate papalagi colonialism, often through resistance and protest. Samoa has long been a favourite case study for scholars of Oceania seeking instances of organised anti-colonial resistance, but they have been content to portray this instrumental use of sport as incidental rather than systematic. In describing the activities of the anti-colonial Mau movement, for example, Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford surmise that Samoan women played cricket

37 Malama Meleisea and Penelope Schoeffel (eds.), Lagaga: a short history of Western Samoa (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987).
matches as a means of protest in the 1930s. They do not, however, consider the particular significance of the women’s actions or the game’s established tradition as a means of anti-colonial protest.\(^{40}\) Similarly, scholars whose work focuses on different colonialisms in Samoa – most frequently those of Germany and New Zealand – have turned to sport and physical culture only infrequently.\(^{41}\) Of these accounts, Paul Steinmetz’s account of German colonial policy provides the most substantive discussion. For Steinmetz, kirikiti was one of several Samoan practices that German officials sought to both preserve and control as part of a broader project of ‘salvage colonialism’.\(^{42}\) This thesis builds upon and extends Steinmetz’s arguments, which are instructive but somewhat limited by the insubstantial attention he devotes to the game itself.

If this thesis leans heavily on Meleisea and Gilson for their framing of Samoan political and social history, its intellectual debt in understanding kirikiti’s incongruence with papalagi colonialism is primarily to Damon Salesa. Colonial officials, settlers and missionaries, Salesa argues, were persistently troubled by Samoan practices that compromised their shared objective of controlling and regulating Samoan movement and customary politics.\(^{43}\) In order to make Samoans into a ‘legible people’, their ‘travel happy’ political and social practices had to be dismantled or at least disciplined. Although Salesa focuses primarily on colonial responses to customary visits, known as malaga, these same arguments are applicable to the communal sporting contests that were a feature of Samoan social and political life. Salesa’s arguments are particularly revealing as kirikiti became the centrepiece of many malaga expeditions almost as soon as Samoans took to the game. The game appears only incidentally in Salesa’s account, however; he devotes two sentences and a single footnote to kirikiti’s induction into customary Samoan politics and its subsequent dissonance with papalagi colonialism.

As can be evinced from this brief survey of Samoan historiography, Salesa is not alone: very few scholars of Samoa have considered the significance of sport to the Samoan experience of colonialism. This is a significant omission. Sport in general and kirikiti in particular were – and continue to be – especially pregnant examples of Samoans engaging with papalagi cultural forms and claiming them as their own. Through kirikiti Samoans affirmed social relationships, created and

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43 Salesa, ‘‘Travel-happy’ Samoa’, pp. 171-188.
settled disputes and resisted the attempts of colonial authorities to control their labour and movement. By reimagining cricket with innovations ‘of their own manufacture’, they recast it as an instrument for pursuing agendas that were equally their own.

**Sport history and the academic study of sport**

Due to its subject matter, this thesis also seeks to build upon and contribute to the history of sport. Sport and leisure are increasingly prominent features in research across a range of academic disciplines. Until relatively recently, however, this writing about the sporting past was largely limited to two categories: what Paul Stearns terms “antiquarian account[s] of some past team or game”,\(^{44}\) or otherwise journalistic and hagiographic work that sought to glorify events and athletes. With one or two exceptions, sport has only been afforded serious academic attention since the late-1970s. Indeed this latent criticism continues to haunt the sub-discipline, and 35 years on many sports historians still devote a great deal of time denying that they are what the Oxford-trained practitioner Mike Cronin calls “fans with typewriters”.\(^{45}\)

As with other topics of study formerly thought of as ‘trivial’, sport and leisure studies grew out of the movement to write social histories ‘from below’ during the 1960s and 1970s. A trickle of national level analyses eventually led to what Steven Pope and John Nauright describe as “an explosion of studies from the 1980s onward”, both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.\(^{46}\) An early critical approach was that of C.L.R. James, the Trinidadian social theorist and essayist. In his 1963 memoir *Beyond a Boundary*, James explored the place of cricket in England and the then-British West Indies after posing the rhetorical question “what do they know of cricket who only cricket know?”. Despite James’ protestations that his work was “neither cricket reminiscences nor autobiography” but rather a work of social history,\(^{47}\) it took another fifteen years before his voice was joined by a chorus from within the academy. These voices often belonged not to historians but rather sociologists, who sought to explain changes in sporting practice in terms of transformations in the broader social structure.\(^{48}\)

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\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 7.

\(^{47}\) C.L.R. James, Preface to *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Yellow Jersey, 2005), originally published 1963.

\(^{48}\) According to Pierre Bourdieu, for example, elite ‘sports’ were distinguished from folk ‘games’ by disconnecting bodily exercises from their ordinary social occasions – such as agrarian feasts – and divesting them of their socio-religious functions. Similarly, Allen Guttmann identified seven characteristics – secularism, equality, specialisation, rationalisation, bureaucracy, quantification and records – that delineate ‘modern sports’ from their ‘folk’ antecedents.
Once its importance was established, first in figurative sociology and then increasingly in other disciplines in the 1980s, studies of sport proliferated. Many pioneering historical studies investigated modern sporting origins in nineteenth-century Britain, focusing particularly on how particular sports spread – or did not spread – across class and geographic divides, as well as the ways sports took on different and often contradictory meanings for employers and social authorities on the one hand, and workers, fans and players on the other. Indeed, these themes have remained prominent in subsequent scholarship outside the United Kingdom. In the decades since, scholars have used sport as a medium through which they can examine issues of power and politics, culture, difference and identity.

Within this diverse field of competing themes, the relationship between sport and empire has been one of the most productive research areas for historians of sport. J.A. Mangan pioneered this line of inquiry in the early-1980s by tracing the rise of the so-called ‘games ethic’ and the cult of athleticism to British public schools in the mid-nineteenth century. According to Mangan, school sport was the centrepiece of reforms designed to improve education by imposing social control, order and discipline on unruly pupils. Games served to bring order and discipline and to convey ‘manly moral ideals’ such as teamwork, courage and toughness. While Mangan’s work centred on sport’s social significance within Britain, he also suggested – and later expounded on – sport’s significance in the British Empire. Because public schools served as a training field for the governing class and other ‘agents of empire’ – missionaries, educators, military officers and administrators – the ‘games ethic’ was diffused into the empire as they served and lived in it. As these men – Mangan amusedly terms them *homo ludens imperiosus* – encountered indigenous peoples and colonial communities, they played and patronised sport with something approaching evangelical fervour. Mangan’s formidable oeuvre, built over the following three decades, has


encouraged several generations of scholars to continue examining sport’s place “close to the heart of British imperial culture”.  

While Mangan’s work established the significance of sport in the British Empire, this thesis owes a particular intellectual debt to his contemporary, Brian Stoddart. Writing in 1988, he noted that coercion was very rarely deployed in maintaining Britain’s imperial preserve and preventing revolt; instead, various forms of cultural power were deployed to ‘convince’ colonised populations that certain modes of behaviour and social ordering were appropriate and even beneficial to them. For Stoddart, sport was an exemplar of this hegemonic cultural power that underpinned the Empire. Drawing on the wider theoretical context of Gramscian hegemony and Pierre Bourdieu’s arguments about the efficacy of cultural institutions in promoting established class relations, he proposed that sport was a particularly successful means of ‘manufacturing consent’:

Through sport were transferred dominant British beliefs as to social behaviour, standards, relations, and conformity, all of which persisted beyond the end of the formal empire, and with considerable consequence for the postcolonial order. Sport owed its success in this capacity to an ill-founded reputation as an egalitarian and apolitical activity that could transcend the divisions implicit in colonial social orders. Instead, Stoddart argues, sport created shared beliefs and attitudes between colonisers and colonised even as it reinforced the social distance between them. Stoddart accepted that colonised peoples had routinely used sport as a site of symbolic resistance to ‘beat the colonisers at their own game’. For the most part, however, he saw these victories as a substitute for substantive challenges to imperial hegemony, rather than an example of it; in no way did they diminish sport’s efficacy as an instrument of ideological domination.

Stoddart’s arguments constitute the starting point for this thesis and brought me to my research topic in the first place. His view of sport’s overwhelming success as a means of social control has, however, been repeatedly questioned by other scholars. Patrick McDevitt, for example, accepts that British officials intended that sport would convey moral lessons and inscribe practices with masculine significance to maintain their dominance in imperial relations. He is deeply sceptical about their success in this endeavour, however:

Just as frequently, the colonial pupils took these basic lessons, read them through the prism of their own experience and developed a culture and athletic masculinities which were something new… just


53 Ibid., p. 651.
as different British men played and promoted games for varied personal reasons, colonial subjects also brought their own agendas and meanings to the playing fields of the Empire. As such, he characterises imperial sport as an inherently contested activity through which elites and colonised peoples pursued their own interests in different ways. McDevitt hence argues that we should not conflate the successful diffusion of team sports with hegemony and social control.

This attempt to subvert the notion of totalising imperial ideologies has been pursued most aggressively by postcolonial literary scholars. According to Neil Lazarus, for example, West Indians substantively revised cricket’s ideological protocols and used the game as a means of ‘speaking for themselves’ in the modern world. Far from acting as a Trojan horse for the diffusion of dominant ideology, therefore, black West Indians made cricket “carry the weight of their social desires and speak their language”. Following Richard Cashman, these dissonant perspectives reflect the difficulty in adjudicating where the “promoting hand of the colonial master” gives way to “adaptation and assimilating indigenous tradition”.

The interplay between these obverse narratives – hegemonic intention versus subordinate invention – continues to inform histories of sport in myriad imperial contexts. This scholarship is overwhelmingly in the English language, however. Indeed, Evelyne Combeau-Mari laments that the dynamic research on sport in the Francophone colonies emanating from French universities remains underrepresented in international publications. Combeau-Mari’s own research on the transmission of sport and leisure activities in the French empire indicates that the British example may have been distinctive in terms of its preoccupation with team sports and the particular gendered and class-based values associated with them – and the sheer quantity of sport played – but it was certainly not unique. For the French, sport, and particularly gymnastics, was a means of fashioning colonial subjects by imbuing discipline, order and self-control. As in the British colonial context, moreover,

54 Patrick F. McDevitt, "May the Best Man Win": Sport, Masculinity and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935 (New York: Palgrave McMillian, 2004), p. 3.
different groups – the military, churches, local elites and later non-elites – attempted to ‘capture’ the contested space of sport in the Francophone Indian Ocean and use it to their own advantage.58

The English-language literature on sport in Imperial Germany’s colonies is yet sparser still. Gertrud Pfister’s study of Turnen – a kind of non-competitive gymnastics strongly associated with German nationalism – in German South West Africa remains the only recent contribution of note.59 Historians of German colonialism have generally argued that German overseas clubs were important sites for the enactment of German national identity abroad.60 Pfister shows, however, that Turnen clubs were significant only in the lives of German men, who denied admission to women and non-Germans. Rather than being deployed as a means of ‘disciplining, controlling, and educating’ colonised populations, therefore, Turnen was rather an instrument of segregation and exclusion.

These same patterns are evident in the emergent literature on sport in the context of American empire. As has been the case in scholarship about American empire more generally, this historiography has long been encumbered by a reticence to acknowledge that America possessed an empire in the ‘long nineteenth century’.61 The notable exception to this silence is Allen Guttmann, whose contributions to the field over thirty years are impressively broad and deep.62 For the most part, however, sports historians have only in the past decade begun to examine the significance of sport in the context of the ‘external’ American empire. Gerald Gems, for instance, has argued that ‘WASP’ males saw sport – and particularly baseball – as a means of ‘teaching’ desirable virtues to colonised peoples in the Pacific and Latin America from the late-nineteenth century.63 As was the case in Britain’s empire, however, sport also created opportunities for colonised peoples to defeat the Americans and to adapt American sports in ways that privileged their own cultural values.

60 See for example Birthe Kundrus, Moderne Imperialisten: das Kaiserreich im Spiegel seiner Kolonien (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003), p. 176; Conrad, German Colonialism, pp. 103-105.
62 For Guttmann’s most focused discussion of sport in the context of American – and British – imperialism, see Allen Guttmann, Games and Empires (New York: Colombia University Press, 1994).
Steven Pope has similarly detailed sport’s place in American efforts at colonisation at home and abroad. American officials saw sport as an instrument for state-funded boarding schools to assimilate Indians into white-American society. These same designs were apparent from 1898 until 1945, he contends, when sport was deployed as a means through which Filipinos, Hawaiians, Cubans and Puerto Ricans could selectively be inducted into the American nation. Even as Americans extolled the ‘civilising’ value of their sports, however, colonised peoples revelled in the chance to ‘beat the whites at their own game’ and construct a sense of collective identity, culture and memory. Pope surmises, therefore, that while power is invariably skewed in favour of colonisers in such milieu, “colonised peoples negotiate prevailing parameters – albeit within delineated spaces”. The work of Gems, Pope and others reflects an incipient consensus that sport in the context of American colonialism was – and is – a site of negotiation, where elites and subordinate groups alike sought to further their interests and find meaning.

Even bearing in mind these developments, the literature has been and continues to be dominated by analyses of sport in the former British Empire, and – to a lesser degree – by histories of British sport outside the formal boundaries of the Empire. Indeed, in his review of writing on sport and imperialism, Pope wryly commented that Sir Charles Tennyson’s refrain that the British “taught the world to play” has been reduced almost to cliché by decades of relentless scholarship. Myriad studies have followed Stoddart in framing sport as a vessel of imperial ideology – as well as exploring its subsequent appropriation by local populations – wherever there was any substantial British settlement. Comparatively little work has considered the dissemination, displacement and adoption of imperial sports in ‘peripheral’ parts of the empire, however. As such, despite a substantial literature on the subject, many stories of sport and empire remain unexplored.

**Sport in Oceania**

Oceania constitutes one such ‘peripheral’ part of the world. Outside of the academy, Islanders have long been associated with athletic ability in the collective imagination of the metropolitan public. As Gary Osmond has argued, Islanders were first famed for their purportedly

65 Pope, ‘Rethinking Sport’, p. 98.
'natural' aptitude for aquatic activities such as swimming, diving and surfing. According to Osmond, the stereotype of this 'nimble savage' emerged from early European encounters with Islanders and was reified in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. It was eventually superseded by Islanders’ associations with rugby union, rugby league and American football – associations that retain popular currency today. Researchers were nevertheless relatively slow to attend to sport’s place in the lives of Islanders past and present, reflecting Oceania’s position on the outskirts of European empires and the subsequent scholarship of them.

Over the past decade or so scholars have begun to address this deficit in earnest. The vast majority of this research has been broadly focused on sport’s place in development programs and – most frequently – on framing and detailing Islanders’ experience of the global sporting economy, and particularly of rugby union. This focus on rugby reflects the game’s economic and social significance in contemporary Oceania. As Robert Dewey notes, fully a fifth of the participants in the 2011 Rugby World Cup were either born in Oceania or consider themselves to be Islanders. Given the economic realities in many Oceanic nations, he proclaims “the greatest export from the Islands is professional rugby players”.

As a result of rugby’s privileged place in the region, a growing congregation of anthropologists, sociologists and the odd historian have used it to explore Islander mobility, identity formation and the attendant tensions between global and local forces. In particular, scholars have interrogated the game’s meaning for local players and spectators in Oceania, explored the ways Islanders represent themselves through rugby and are represented through it by others, and examined the dynamics of labour migration from the Oceanic ‘periphery’ to the professional ‘cores’

in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Europe. This focused scholarship shows no signs of abating – in 2014 a special issue of the recently-founded Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science was dedicated to rugby-related research. In it, Dewey called for a ‘second wave’ of research on rugby in the region to explore more local contexts rather than global ones, and to employ new and more inclusive conceptual frameworks.

While rugby has undeniably been the subject of a preponderance of Oceania’s sporting scholarship, other sporting forms have not been entirely forgotten. Fa’anofo Lisaclaire Uperesa, for example, presents American football as “a significant path of transnational movement, and a source of social mobility, status and prestige” for inhabitants of American Samoa. She is ambivalent about its function, however, critiquing the capitalist logic that permeates the sport and its role in elevating iconographies of male authority and prestige that have diminished the range of possibility for gendered social relations. Joel Franks, Ty P. Kāwika Tengan and Jesse Makani Markham have similarly explored football’s role in expressing gendered and ethnic identities among Islander athletes. Away from rugby and football, surfing – along with other aquatic sports – has also been the subject of scholarly interrogation, often using the discursive techniques of cultural history. Gary Osmond and Murray Phillips have been particularly prominent in this regard. Their work, much of it focused on swimming, surfing and water polo, has frequently examined how Islanders’ sporting prowess was framed by – and indeed perpetuated and sometimes reoriented – constructions of Islanders in the dynamic racial discourses of twentieth century Australia.

This Antipodean focus is not simply historical, however; scholars in New Zealand and Australia have repeatedly investigated the important socio-cultural role that sport plays in the large Oceanic diaspora communities of these countries. Along with the arts, sport remains one of the few

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avenues where Islanders can ‘get ahead’ in the papalagi world. In New Zealand, Australia and other Pacific Island diasporas, participation is overwhelmingly centred on team sports such as rugby, netball, volleyball, softball and kirikiti, which are frequently organised and structured around church communities. According to Tasileta Te’evale, sport is pervasive in Islander communities within New Zealand, where it serves several important socio-cultural functions. For Te’evale, sport teams “maintain island group networks, to support people during settlement in, and integration into, New Zealand society and as an opportunity to transmit cultural knowledge and values”.

As this scholarship demonstrates, researchers are increasingly aware of sport’s place in Islanders’ lives – both in Oceania itself or just as frequently outside of it. The veritable explosion in regional research has left several conspicuous gaps, however. A 2014 special issue of The Contemporary Pacific demonstrated the contours of scholarly focus on global sport in the region. Thematically, the compendium centred on questions of agency and mobility; development and discipline; indigenisation, embodiment, and ethno-nationalism; and polyvalent imaginaries. In exploring these concerns, the authors drew predominantly on rugby league and rugby union, American football and surfing. As well as illustrating the emphases of contemporary scholarship, the weightings of this edition speak to its limits.

Firstly, it is notable that customary physical practices and sports were overlooked in favour of more internationally recognisable ones such as American football, both rugby codes and surfing. This ludic triumvirate excludes, however, a range of customary competitive recreational activities that retain great socio-cultural currency in Oceanic communities. In Samoa and Fiji, for instance, boat racing remains an immensely popular activity. Outrigger paddling is part of the quadrennial Pacific Games, and in recent years Fiji’s principal harbour has been the scene for annual races of traditional watercraft, with large crowds looking on from the foreshore. Fautasi


78 Te’evale, ‘We are what we play’, p. 220.


80 Surfing, of course, has its roots in the ‘Polynesian’ cultures of Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti and Hawai’i. In its modern incarnation, however, the sport can hardly be called ‘customary’.

races, themselves adapted from European rowing competitions, have a similarly robust heritage in Samoa. They took on great import during the colonial era, where they featured as the centrepiece of annual athletic competitions under German, American and New Zealand rule. In recent years, moreover, they have become prevalent in inter-school sports. Having struggled to find a clear vantage point at Apia harbour during the national Teuila Festival in 2014, I can personally attest to the ongoing popularity of such races in Samoa. This thesis will demonstrate repeatedly that kirikiti – which also finds no mention in this anthology – has just as storied a place in the lives of Samoans past and present.

Indeed, the absence of cricket in the Contemporary Pacific collection is indicative of a more general silence in recent scholarship with regards to the ‘Imperial Game’. Although cricket was the first sport that Islanders adopted and appropriated from Europeans, it has been seriously under-represented in recent analyses. This lack of attention is in some sense understandable – Islanders are not nearly as visible in international cricket as they are in both rugby codes or American football, while the game has not yet offered them the same economic opportunities as these sports have done. As we will see, however, it belies the ongoing significance that the game enjoys in Oceanic communities, both in the islands themselves and in the large diasporic communities scattered across the globe.

Perhaps the most significant omission, however, is that much of the present ‘wave’ of scholarship exhibits what Dewey calls ‘excessive presentism’ and a deficit of context. Indeed, Daryl Adair and Malcolm MacLean make a similar observation in their overview of sport history, culture and practice in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania. For Adair and MacLean, scholarship on the region is notably ‘uneven’, with a plethora of studies examining Australia and to a less extent New Zealand, but far fewer elsewhere. So sparse is historical scholarship on the islands of Oceania, they argue, that they feel unable to make “convincing commentary about their sport history”. This lack of scholarly work that interrogates the past is significant, because many of the themes that are prominent in Islanders’ contemporary experience of sport are not distinctively modern at all. Dewey himself has stated his intention to write a history of rugby in colonial Fiji, and to interrogate the interrelations between rugby and notions of identity, ethnicity, imperialism and masculinity. He

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deduces, therefore, that his project “engages many of the themes raised by social scientists, but from a historical perspective”.85

The history of cricket in Samoa similarly intersects with the thematic foci of recent studies. Since its genesis in the 1880s, kirikiti has shaped papalagi perceptions of Samoans in the islands – and indeed in the metropole. This thesis demonstrates, moreover, that sport has long been placed at the centre of Islanders’ lives, while they have a robust tradition of ‘indigenising’ foreign sporting forms in both method and meaning. Finally, as is the case with the rugby codes and American football today, Samoans used ‘English’ cricket and kirikiti to navigate the opportunities and challenges concomitant with contact with papalagi political and economic influence. These are but three of the parallels between Islanders’ historical experience of cricket and kirikiti on the one hand, and their contemporary engagement with rugby union, rugby league and American football on the other. By examining the history of cricket and kirikiti in Samoa, therefore, this thesis aims to look back to the colonial period in order to broaden and deepen our understanding of sport in Oceania’s past and present.

Cricket

While many games performed the cultural functions outlined by Stoddart, it was cricket that occupied a privileged place in Victorian England and in the British Empire. Cricket was – and is – considered to be the most quintessentially ‘English’ game as well as the ‘Imperial game’. It was prized firstly for purity of its origins in the idyllic English countryside of yesteryear, far away from the corrupting influence of foreigners and modernity. The game’s requirements also seemed to embody Victorian and Edwardian moral and social mores. In its advocates’ estimation, cricket was inherently ‘civilised’: this was a game of skill, ‘pluck’ and resolve, not one of aggression or physical violence. Indeed, the 1891 edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica suggested that the game’s “patience, calculation, and promptness of execution” made cricket “the national game of Englishmen”.86 Perhaps more significantly, cricket was also seen to imbue an exaggerated respect for authority, personal restraint in favour of collective success and a sense of ‘fair play’. Following John Simons, moreover, the distinction between ‘gentlemen’ amateurs and professional ‘players’ signified that while “social classes were to be encouraged to mix and to cooperate, they were not to merge, and proper distinctions were to be maintained”.87 As such, the game provided an exemplar

of correct adult conduct for English boys. Through cricket they learnt how to navigate the gendered and class-based expectations of Victorian and Edwardian society.

These lessons were considered to be equally valuable in an imperial context. Not only was cricket thought to provide a training in empire – the influential cricket administrator Lord Hawke claimed that the game’s moral code was “as invaluable in Imperial matters as in cricket”88 – but it was also a vehicle for disseminating and translating the British moral code to colonised peoples. Through cricket, indigenous peoples were selectively inducted into ‘Englishness’; it was, as Stoddart observes, “a ritual demonstration of British behaviour, standards, and moral codes both public and private”.89 For local elites, moreover, cricket upheld notions of social hierarchy and patronage and reaffirmed their authority, even as it provided a forum in which the social realities of class and race could be temporarily and partially suspended. Cricket thus truly was ‘the Imperial Game’.

This contemporaneous significance is reflected in the extensive literature devoted to cricket. Academic studies of cricket in empire have centred on the links between cricket, national identity and nationalism; the role of ‘agents of empire’ and local elites in introducing and supporting the game; and the indigenisation or domestication of the game, which ranged from minor adjustments to a complete transformation. These themes have taken historians throughout the former British Empire and even beyond it. As with the history of sport more generally, however, they have visited some climes more frequently than others – while others still have been virtually ignored. In particular, scholarly attention has overwhelmingly been devoted to exploring the game’s significance in the ten so-called ‘test-playing nations’: England, Australia, South Africa, West Indies, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh.90 Investigation of these cricketing ‘hot spots’ has established several apparently general narratives of how the ‘Imperial Game’ was introduced, practiced and appropriated in the Empire. In the Caribbean, for instance, cricket spread through orthodox channels – missionaries, educators, soldiers and settlers – and originally imagined as an exclusively ‘white’ game. Emancipation in 1833, however, saw freed slaves take to cricket, such that clubs were soon organised around race and class divisions. The result, as Orlando Patterson has insisted, is that cricket in the Caribbean was and remains “a social

90 The Test-playing teams represent individual nations except for England and the West Indies. In the former case, the ‘England’ team represents England and Wales, while Scotland has its own (non-Test) side and cricket in Ireland is organised on an all-Ireland basis. Its side has not yet been granted Test status. In the latter case, the ‘West Indies’ team is in fact a multi-national one representing a sporting confederation of 15 mainly English-speaking Caribbean countries, British dependencies and non-British dependencies.
drama in which almost all of the basic tensions and conflicts within the society are played out symbolically”. 91 Although vast and varied, the academic literature devoted to chronicling this drama has generally focused on social cleavages and their expression through cricket, as well as its role in fostering collective identity in a region that is fragmented along national, ethnic and political lines. 92

Outside of the Test-playing nations, conversely, there is a notable dearth of academic writing about cricket’s diffusion, adoption and meaning. With only a few exceptions, 93 scholars have left the writing of these histories to local enthusiasts. For vast tracts of the world where cricket was and is played, therefore, cricket scholarship does not exist beyond contributions that are heavy on amusing anecdotes but decidedly light on critical analysis – the very kinds of writing, indeed, that sports historians have expressly disavowed. 94 Nowhere is this paucity of historical scholarship so striking as in Oceania. In many imperial locales cricket remained the preserve of British administrators, sailors and settlers; in the islands of the Pacific, conversely, the game was – to varying degrees – successfully adopted by indigenous peoples. In local and diaspora Oceanic communities, moreover, cricket continues to hold great social and cultural significance. The Fijian squad that took part in the 2016 U-19 Cricket World Cup, for example, predominantly relied on players from the Lau Islands. In a nation where rugby is the sport of choice for most indigenous Fijians, cricket is firmly entrenched among the Lauan population; these 60 tiny islands have contributed around nine out of ten Fijian representatives despite comprising just over one per cent of its population. 95 Samoa’s annual Teuila festival, moreover, continues to draw sides from around the archipelago to compete for an annual championship. They are joined there by teams representing Samoan diasporas in New Zealand, Australia, American Samoa, and the United States,

93 The most notable exception is Tom Melville’s The Tented Field, which investigates why cricket failed to take root in the United States. Tom Melville, The Tented Field: A History of Cricket in America (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1998).
94 See for example the contributions in the 1980 compendium Barclay’s World of Cricket and a more recent tome, Elk Stopped Play, which both treat cricket in the region as little more than a curio. E.W. Swanton and John Woodcock (eds.), Barclay’s World of Cricket: The Game from A to Z (London: Collins in association with Barclays Bank International, 1980); Charlie Connerly (ed.), Elk Stopped Play: And Other Tales from Wisden’s ‘Cricket Round the World’ (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
where the game has emerged as an important site for affirming communal identity in foreign
lands.\textsuperscript{96} Clearly cricket in Oceania is, to borrow Patterson’s phrasing, a ‘social drama’ that is very
much ongoing.

As well as its ongoing cultural currency in the region, it is in Oceania that cricket has been
most radically transformed and reimagined. As was demonstrated in the example of Caribbean
cricket, scholars have long been attuned to the ways that different groups harnessed the game to
pursue their own interests in various imperial settings. In Oceania, however, indigenous peoples
transformed cricket’s form as well as its function. While the game was adopted in something like its
traditional guise in Fiji and – after several years of ‘unorthodoxy’ – in Tonga,\textsuperscript{97} in other locales it
was utterly reconfigured to align with local expectations of play. The most celebrated example of
this process occurred in the Trobriand Islands, an archipelago off the east coast of New Guinea.
Methodist missionaries introduced cricket to the Trobriands just after the turn of the twentieth
century, purportedly as an alternative to inter-village warfare and the perceived sexuality of harvest
dances. Local elements were integrated into the game: spear-throwing bowling actions, war dances,
gift exchange and discussion, and the convention that the home side always won, but not by so
many runs as to cause offence to the visitors.\textsuperscript{98} As captured in a 1975 documentary film by Gary
Kildea and Jerry Leach, the game provided a striking image of the familiar cloaked in alterity as
this most English of pastimes was reimagined to align with Trobriander cultural logic. The film’s
continued use in Anthropology classrooms has cemented Trobriand cricket’s reputation as an
example \textit{par excellence} of ‘culture contact’ and ‘cultural syncretism’.\textsuperscript{99}

Trobrianders are not the only Oceanic peoples to have refashioned cricket in this way,
however. In Tokelau, for instance, inter-atoll cricket remains one of the primary links between the

\textsuperscript{96} Gordon, Sauni and Tuagalu, ‘Sport means ‘family and church’’, pp. 49-63; Cluny Macpherson and Richard D.
Bedford, ‘The Structural Roots of Transformation of Pacific Identity in Aotearoa’, paper presented to the Out of
Paul Spickard, Joanne Rondilla and Debbie Hippolite Wright (eds.), \textit{Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United

\textsuperscript{97} In Fiji, for instance, from the 1870s until at least the mid-twentieth century the game was played barefoot and
wearing a sulu (a type of skirt considered to be the ‘national dress’ for Fijian men and women). Fijians also
incorporated their yagona [kava] drinking ceremony into cricketing etiquette. In Tonga the game was initially played in
much the same way as it was adapted in Samoa, but by 1912 Tongans had reverted to “cricket proper”. For Fiji, see
McGlusky, ‘The Willow and the Palm’, p. 106, 199, 223. For Tonga, see Basil Thompson, \textit{The Diversions of a Prime
Minister} (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1894), pp. 150-151; A.W. Mahaffy, ‘Cricket in Samoa and the
Islands of the South Seas’, in P.F. Warner (ed.), \textit{Imperial Cricket} (London: London & Counties Press Association,
1912), pp. 397-398.

\textsuperscript{98} Jerry W. Leach & Gary Kildea, \textit{Trobriand cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism} [video recording]
(Canberra: Ronin Films, 1976). Brian Stoddart provides a useful discussion of Trobriand cricket based on the film.

\textsuperscript{99} Robert J. Foster, ‘From Trobriand cricket to rugby nation: The mission of sport in Papua New Guinea’, \textit{International
three islands that comprise the group. These games are often played between sides of 55 or more and using heavy Samoan hardwood bats that resemble a baseball bat.\textsuperscript{100} Writing in 1971, moreover, the anthropologist Judith Huntsman reported that the inhabitants of each village are divided into two similar groups called \textit{faituu}, who are locked in “continual and unending competition” with each other. According to Huntsman, this competition has as its centrepiece cricket, “which most Tokelaus, male and female, young and old, play as soon as they become, and as long as they remain, physically able”.\textsuperscript{101} Participation has taken on a similar ‘whole-community’ flavour in Niue, where teams of 60 or 70 were not uncommon until the 1990s. Emigration and the introduction of rival sports saw competition cease by 1995, but in 2011 the game was revived with ten village sides comprising 25 players aged 12 to 65 – almost a quarter of the tiny island’s total population.\textsuperscript{102}

Significantly for this thesis, cricket as played in Tokelau and Niue – or kirikiti, as Islanders call it – bears a close resemblance to the game played in Samoa. This is unsurprising, as it is highly likely that Samoan missionaries were responsible for transmitting their own form of cricket as they did with Samoan songs, language and a host of other cultural practices.\textsuperscript{103} Cricket was the first successful sporting import to Samoa; it was present in Apia by at least 1879. It took several more years, however, before Samoans displayed any interest in this peculiar English pastime. Once they did so, in about 1883, cricket rapidly became a significant and highly visible part of Samoan social life. Unlike other ‘imperial’ sports – principally rugby union and American football – that later became important instruments for developing and reflecting local interests, cricket did not prosper in anything like its ‘orthodox’ form. Instead, the game was bifurcated and followed two nearly discrete paths. ‘English cricket’ largely remained the preserve of ‘Britishers’ in Apia, while Samoans took \textit{en masse} to the distinctive local game of kirikiti. Starting with the former British consul William Churchward, a series of incredulous accounts documented the game’s divergence from English cricket: participation was expanded, sometimes to sides of 100 or more; the bat, ball and other equipment and attire were revised to conform to local sensibilities and materials; and

\textsuperscript{103} Samoans served as missionaries throughout the Pacific, principally in New Guinea and Vanuatu. They also played an important role in establishing and leading churches in both Tokelau and especially Niue from at least the 1860s. See John Garrett, \textit{To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania} (Suva: World Council of Churches/Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1982), pp. 135-137. For an example of Samoan pastors’ influence on Tokelau culture, see Even Hovdhaugen, ‘Language Contact in the Pacific: Samoan Influence on Tokelauan’, in Ernst Håkon Jahr (ed.), \textit{Language Contact: Theoretical and Empirical Studies} (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 53-70.
kirikiti matches were seamlessly woven into the complex patterns of Samoan village life, customary exchange and politics. These links remain relevant in the twenty-first century, both in Samoa itself and in diaspora populations in New Zealand, Australia and the West coast of the United States.

Despite its distinctive form and ongoing social significance in Samoan communities around the globe, scholars have afforded little attention to kirikiti. Outside of the academy, photographer Glenn Jowitt’s 1990 book *Cricket in the Pacific* attempted to use kirikiti to teach primary school students in New Zealand about Oceanic cultures.104 The most notable Samoan-language publication on the game is Enele Sulufa’iga Samasoni’s *O Le Kirikiti Faa Samoa*.105 Replete with illustrations, Samasoni’s book provides an explanation of the game’s rules, its attendant social practices and their meanings. Within the academy, however, only two authors have devoted more than a paragraph or two to kirikiti. Writing in 1998, Stoddart used kirikiti as the centrepiece of his chapter on cricket’s manifestations outside the areas of formal British expansion. Unlike in most other imperial locales, Stoddart argued, the way that Samoans had “all but obliterated” ‘English’ cricket provided a unique demonstration of active resistance to the game’s embedded norms.106 Drawing on a range of historical events, moreover, he demonstrated that Samoans had rapidly integrated kirikiti into their socio-political fabric and even cosmology. More recently, Safua Akeli utilised several objects in the collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to explain the dynamics of ‘cricket culture’ in Samoa during the New Zealand military occupation and under subsequent civilian rule. She provides a brief survey of cricket’s social significance under the occupation, when both ‘English’ cricket and kirikiti were ascendant. For Akeli, the complexity of the game’s history in Samoa is exemplified by a kirikiti bat in the museum’s collection, which was originally gifted by Samoan players to a New Zealand official who had captained their school’s ‘English’ cricket side in the 1930s.107

While both contributions provide valuable insights into the diffusion, acculturation and ongoing significance of cricket in Samoa, together they have only just begun to explore the game’s rich history in the islands. Stoddart’s chapter describes kirikiti’s divergence from cricket and provides a brief account of how Samoans took up the game, made it their own, and used it to pursue political objectives. He is largely silent, however, on the question of why the Samoan form of the game diverged so radically from its English antecedent. This is an especially pertinent question

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given that Samoans adopted other imperial sports, particularly rugby union, in something approaching their orthodox form. The ten or so pages he devotes to the subject, moreover, is not nearly enough to explore the contours of kirikiti’s social and political significance for Samoans and papalagi alike. Similarly, Akeli’s essay, while a valuable ‘micro-history’, is narrowly focused and touches on the broader history of kirikiti only incidentally.

Simply put, cricket and kirikiti in Samoa have yet to be given anything like the scholarly attention they merit – particularly in light of the growing recognition of sport’s distinctive functions in the region. The present study intends to begin addressing this deficit. In so doing, it aims to contribute not only to the field of sports history, but also to the wider history of Samoa and Oceania – and the history of cultural adoption and adaptation in the British Empire more generally. In addition, the thesis has more general historiographical merit beyond simply addressing these omissions. In telling the story of cricket in Samoa, it critiques orthodox narratives of sporting diffusion and proposes an alternative approach, as well as stressing the multi-layered contestation that sport embodied. More broadly, it demonstrates how sporting histories at the ‘edges of empire’ can enrich and extend our understanding of themes pertaining to power, politics, identity and cultural resistance.
“This peculiar Samoan genius for modification”: transcultural adoption in Samoa – and in sport

“The Samoans are in truth a peculiar people. They never do anything like anybody else, and although they have adopted many things from the civilised world, from Christianity to cricket, everything has been altered by their racial eccentricities”.¹

In October 1901, with the cricket season looming, the Sydney Morning Herald published a lengthy feature designed to pique the curiosity of Australia’s sporting public. Simply entitled ‘A Samoan Cricket Match’, it described a fantastical game in which broomsticks were used for bats and umpiring decisions were settled “by a general scrimmage”. According to its author, teams of dancing, singing Samoans – sometimes several hundred per side – took part in monumental contests in “some glade in the cocoanut [sic] grove”. While this game may have originated with British sailors, he surmised, it had clearly undergone remarkable changes at the hands of the local inhabitants. The remainder of the article documented these changes to comedic effect. The questions of how and why Samoans enacted these changes were dismissed with vague reference to their ‘peculiarity’ and ‘racial eccentricities’:

It is not necessary to trace the gradual evolution of the game to its present state of Samoan perfection, but given the national traits, as above indicated, my readers will, I am sure, be able to follow in imagination its gradual development.²

‘A.W.T.’, as the author called himself, was certainly not alone in his approach. While Samoan cricket was a semi-regular feature in newspaper columns, magazine articles and after-dinner speeches, its principal purpose in these contexts was to amuse and bemuse. When metropolitan audiences encountered kirikiti on the page or from the mouth of some well-travelled raconteur, it served as evidence of the fundamental alterity of Samoa and its inhabitants. These were ‘peculiar’ folk who forever seemed to be causing all manner of trouble amongst themselves and even played cricket ‘wrong’ – albeit amusingly. Narrators and audiences were not especially interested in understanding the game’s origins or its significance for Samoans themselves. Indeed, any serious exposition might have raised uncomfortable questions regarding the limitations of

² Ibid.
European political and cultural power at the edges of empire. To point and laugh was therefore the best response.

This chapter seeks to clear the path for a more satisfactory account of how and why Samoans adopted cricket and then adapted it into a distinctive local form – a task that is undertaken more fully in Chapter Three. To do this, it first wades into wider discursive currents regarding the introduction and adoption of sport around the world. Historians of sport have for several decades relied on the idea of diffusion to explain how introduced sports and games spread between different communities. In recent years, however, several scholars have questioned whether the unidirectional language of diffusion is able to capture the complexity inherent in these sporting encounters. I will argue that this critique is especially pertinent with regards to Samoa, where the local population radically altered both cricket’s method and its meaning. We need to move beyond diffusion, therefore, in order to investigate kirikiti’s genesis and its place in Samoan life during the period of study. To this end, the chapter turns to notions of ‘mixing’ such as syncretism, hybridity and finally transculturation to situate and describe cricket’s transformation in Samoa. Such ‘mixing’ was not limited to cricket, of course; as with other colonised peoples, Samoans frequently adapted introduced ideas and practices to better align them with their own expectations and requirements. In their hands, papalagi songs and dances, language and religion became ‘Samoanised’ in much the same way as cricket was. Far from representing an isolated example of local modification, therefore, cricket’s fate is instead seen as further evidence of a more general Samoan capacity for transculturation – as well as a product of distinctive historical circumstances.

The diffusion of sport through empire

Although European imperialism is often understood as a political process, it had – and continues to have – important social, economic and especially cultural correlates and consequences. Empire and settler colonialism provided the setting in which local peoples and colonisers – officials, missionaries, soldiers and private colonists – influenced each other in many ways. This process was bidirectional, but occurred predominantly from colonisers to the colonised. In Samoa, for example, European colonialism led to the transmission and adoption of new forms of language, religion, food and – of course – sporting cultural forms such as cricket. Kirikiti has its origins in this general process, even if it soon diverged significantly from English cricket. As such, while it is clear that colonialism acted as a conduit for the game, a conceptual framework is still needed to explain how this happens.

Transcultural diffusion provides an established explanatory framework for this task. Originally borrowed from sociology and cultural anthropology, diffusion in its broadest sense
describes the socially mediated transmission of some practice within a population. As David Strang and John W. Meyer point out,

> Virtually everything seems to diffuse: rumors, prescription practices, boiled drinking water, totems, hybrid corn, job classification systems, organizational structures, church attendance, national sovereignty.³

Anthropologists focus more specifically on the origins of *culture traits* and their spread from one community or society to another through migration, trade or other contact. Modern diffusion studies usually consider two principal factors. Firstly, they seek to identify the ‘structural aspects’ of diffusion, which Jason Kaufman and Orlando Patterson describe as “the existence of tangible points of contact between adopters and adoptees, as well as the environmental contexts that modulate such interactions”⁴. A second ‘culturally minded’ approach focuses on how the *nature* of a particular practice makes it more or less likely to diffuse. In general, adoption is more likely when a practice accords with local cultural frames or understandings and is thus “rendered salient, familiar and compelling”.⁵ Both approaches are hence relevant to kirikiti; together they provide an initial framework for understanding how cricket was introduced to Samoa, and why Samoans took it up so rapidly.

Sports historians have long turned to the diffusion model to explain the transmission of sporting culture and of particular sports in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Both inside and outside the academy, a standard narrative holds sway: modern sports and sporting culture originated in Britain, whereupon the British exported them throughout the world through both direct colonisation and the broader cultural influences of British imperialism. According to this account, moreover, the United States usurped Britain’s status as “the prime mover in the global diffusion of modern sports” in the early twentieth century, reflecting shifts in their respective geopolitical influence.⁶ The most authoritative exposition of this process comes from Allen Guttmann, who posited that the most important factors in ‘ludic diffusion’ are structural. To a large degree, the speed or slowness of any given sport’s diffusion depends on the relative political, economic and

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cultural power of the societies involved.⁷ Both within and between societies, dominant groups normally transmit more of their own culture than they accept from others. As such, the power disparities implicit in imperialism facilitated the diffusion of the colonisers’ cultural forms, including sport. In Guttmann’s explanation, ludic diffusion takes place in two stages. First ‘horizontal diffusion’ occurs, whereby colonisers took cultural practices to colonial milieux and ‘sold’ them to indigenous elites. This process was later followed by ‘vertical diffusion’ from the local elites to those of lower socio-political status.⁸ It is this second step that acculturation occurs, whereby the meaning and cultural significance of sports was transformed and taken on by the wider local population as a national pastime.

A contending view of diffusion focuses on how changes in sporting culture in the nineteenth century represented and advanced elite interests both in the metropole and later outside of it. In this account, sport is seen as an instrument of hegemonic influence that brought young people and subordinate groups – women, lower classes and colonised peoples – into supporting a dominant male, middle-class and metropolitan world view. J.A. Mangan was an early advocate of this thesis, arguing that public school-educated representatives of the British Empire took with them the ‘games ethic’, “a hugely influential moralistic ideology” that imbued various sporting pursuits with an almost-spiritual significance.⁹ Across the empire they aggressively disseminated these physical and moral lessons to indigenous elites. Mangan’s work was only one of many examples of sports historians using the diffusion model to describe how particular sports were transmitted to, and then adopted by, colonised peoples. Despite differences between the ‘modernisation’ and ‘hegemony’ approaches, within the field of sports history the debate over diffusion – intense though it was in the 1980s and 1990s – never questioned whether it constituted a valid interpretative framework. Instead, as John G. Reid and Robert Reid argue, it was fought over the framing of diffusion. Was it best understood as a process of global modernisation; or was it more accurate to describe it as part of the “imperial outreach of global capitalism and its hegemonic agents”?¹⁰ While these questions continue to attract attention, diffusion thus remains the ‘default’ explanatory tool for historians writing about the transmission and adoption of sport.

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This more general claim is also true of cricket scholarship. Historians of cricket have frequently utilised the language of transcultural diffusion to explain its origins as a ‘national sport’ throughout much of the former British Empire. In India, for example, the game’s first ‘converts’ were the Parsis, who acted as ‘cultural brokers’ between the British and Indian society. In part, they used cricket and other British cultural forms to demonstrate their readiness for collaboration. By the turn of the twentieth century Indian princes were building cricket grounds and inviting guests to watch them play. These princes encouraged non-elites to play and sponsored talented players, precipitating vertical diffusion of cricket. The subsequent acculturation of cricket and its transformation into a national pastime with distinctive local meanings gathered pace in the twentieth century. Richard Cashman and later Arjun Appadurai have identified the importance of media in this process, as the vernacular language and meaning of the game was disseminated to the wider Indian public through radio and later magazines and television.11

The most theoretically-minded and general study of the diffusion of cricket in the empire, however, is provided by Jason Kaufman and Orlando Patterson.12 Whereas other studies have generally focused on local diffusion narratives, Kaufman and Patterson seek to identify the general factors that made the vertical diffusion and acculturation of cricket successful in some contexts and unsuccessful in others. They too follow Guttmann’s model of initial horizontal transmission and the subsequent role of intermediaries – local elites and ‘cultural entrepreneurs’ – who spread the game to lower-ranking members of the receiving society. They argue that the behaviour of these ‘change agents’ is thus the key determinant of successful sporting acculturation. In their account, “status differences and the attendant mechanisms of distancing and inclusion” are decisive.13 Where elites promoted cricket to the wider population and persisted in lending their prestige by practicing it, the game flourished. Where they did not, the game either became a fad after being abandoned by the elite, or it was ‘captured’ by status-insecure elites and its diffusion into the population at large impeded as a result. In either situation, cricket was not retained as what the authors call a ‘hegemonic sport’.

According to Kaufman and Patterson, this willingness by local elites to act as ‘change agents’ was in turn determined by the social system in a receiving society. They isolate four principal aspects of adopting countries’ social systems “that appear to mitigate the potential diffusion of a cultural practice” from a ‘dominant’ power to its ‘subordinates’: social stratification;

12 Kaufman and Patterson, ‘Cross-National Cultural Diffusion’, pp. 82-110.
13 Ibid., p. 84.
secondary education, particularly the presence of exclusive schools with an emphasis on the moral lessons of Victorian England; entrepreneurship by individuals carrying the game to the wider populace; and indexical nationalism, or “the frame of reference in which citizens measure their own national accomplishments”. Of these, social stratification had the most widespread impact on the game’s diffusion, “although this occurred at least partially through indirect effects related to the other three”.

These conditions were manifest in numerous colonial milieux, such as the British Caribbean and Indian subcontinent, Southern Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Although the specific criteria of social stratification differed in each example – race, ethnicity, class and religion were variously significant – it was “the existence of a cohesive vertical hierarchy in the receiver nation” that was decisive in the decision by elites to promote cricket’s acculturation among lower social strata. Even in ostensibly class-egalitarian settler societies such as Australia and New Zealand, the small size and profound isolation of their European settlements limited the extent to which they could exclude white settlers. Cultivating ‘Englishness’ through cricket was thus necessarily a joint endeavour. In the United States and Canada, however, high-status groups showed no such inclination in sharing the game with “those of lower orders”. Some authors, such as Tom Melville, have argued that it was cricket’s inherently rigid system of rules and playing style that made it unsuitable as an American game. For Kaufman and Patterson, conversely, cricket failed to become widely popular because the local elites who first took on the game jealously guarded the game as a symbol of their heritage and class superiority; “equality of economic opportunity promoted elite efforts to limit equality of cultural opportunity”. The game thus withered in the hands of its exclusivist patrons.

Returning to Oceania, Narelle McGlusky presents a similar narrative in her study of cricket in Fiji. Cricket was initially transmitted by colonial officials to high-ranking chiefs in the 1870s but was largely confined to the local elite until the 1930s. Thereafter ‘commoner’ players gained some measure of access to cricket through chiefly patrons of the sport, such as the New Zealand- and later Oxford-educated Ratu Edward Tuigi Tuivanuavou Cakobau. This process was only partial.

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14 Ibid., p. 84.
15 Ibid., p. 99.
17 Kaufman and Patterson, ‘Cross-National Cultural Diffusion’, 2005, p. 106. John and Robert Reid offer a different perspective. By their reckoning, in some eastern Canadian provinces the notion that cricket remained an ‘elite sport’ is a “half-truth that obscures a more complex historical reality”. Reid and Reid, ‘Diffusion and Discursive Stabilisation’, pp. 92-99.
however; by the 1960s interest in cricket waned as chiefs became increasingly concerned with the politics of independence. Without systematic vertical diffusion, “the game remained a chiefly game and did not become popular with the general population”.19 McGlusky also attributes the game’s decline to its complexity, the equipment required, as well as Fiji’s climate and geography and the competition provided by rugby union and association football. These examples show that diffusion has served to explain not only those instances where cricket was successfully transmitted, adopted and acculturated, but also those instances where it was not.

The limits of diffusion

In recent years, however, scholars have become increasingly dissatisfied with these success/failure diffusionist explanations. Strang and Meyer acknowledge that diffusion research in sociology and anthropology is “grounded in the study of marginally modern peoples exposed to modern processes”.20 As such, it is predicated on ideas of innovation, modernity and progress. Ideas and practices flow from the ‘modern’ core to the ‘primitive’ periphery, effecting change in receiving societies and moving them away from their previous, un-modern state. Recent sporting scholarship has succeeded to some extent in refining the picture presented by orthodox diffusion narratives. Shohei Sato, for example, has argued that judo’s globalisation contradicts pat models of transmission from ‘the West to the rest’. By his reckoning, the global process of sporting diffusion was “more of a collective construct with multiple strands expanding in various directions and fusing with each other”.21 According to Matthew Taylor, these kinds of studies highlight “the pluri-centred context” in which international sport developed and shift attention to the role of Germany, Japan and France as centres of sporting diffusion.22

More pertinent to this thesis, however, are critiques that centre on how diffusion narratives can accommodate change in introduced practices. Even in the 1980s, these approaches sometimes engendered discontent among scholars of sport and empire. In Richard Cashman’s estimation, for instance, historians who wished to examine sport’s history ‘from below’ were ill served by diffusion. For Cashman, simple descriptions of transmission and adoption held little value in answering a series of important questions:

19 Ibid., pp. 215-216.
Where does the promoting hand of the colonial master stop and where does the adapting and assimilating indigenous tradition start? Is it merely adaptation and domestication or does it go beyond that to constitute resistance and even subversion? 23

In the past decade or so these concerns have attracted more focused scholarly attention as historians have questioned diffusion’s underlying assumptions regarding the extent of local influence in the adoption and adaptation of imperial sporting practices and culture. Much of this work seeks to build complexity into the idea of diffusion, rather than to disrupt it. In their study of ice hockey and cricket in Canada’s Maritime Provinces, for example, Reid and Reid argue that while diffusion retains a general explanatory power,

Those historians who have sought to complicate interpretations of the diffusion process by emphasising the cultural factors involved and the distinct nature of adaptation from one society to another have productively launched a discussion of the profound variations involved. 24

They situate their study alongside these more ‘complicated’ interpretations, contending that diffusion invariably entails ‘cultural remaking’ rather than mere duplication.

The most sustained critique of sporting diffusion, however, comes from Maarten van Bottenburg. Imagining what a “comprehensive, synthetic volume on the history of European sport” might look like, he observes that any such endeavour would need to move beyond orthodox modes of thinking about the ‘transfer’ of sport. 25 For van Bottenburg, diffusion made sense in the context of simple circa-1980s theories of globalisation that presented social, political and cultural development as a one-way process ‘from the West to the rest’. It is increasingly incongruent, however, with newer languages of globalisation that frame cultural transfer as “an active, complex process of interpretation, translation, modification, mutation, and adaptation”. 26 Instead, cultural theorists such as Arjun Appadurai, John Urry and Barbara Aboe-El-Haj favour the language of ‘scapes’ and ‘flows’ to express cultural streams in less unidirectional terms. Similarly, while the language of ‘transfer’ seems to indicate a smooth relocation of cultural forms such as cricket, comparative sociologists and cultural historians deploy it very differently. Following Michel Espagne and others, ‘cultural transfers’ imply forms of cultural mixing, interpenetration and reinterpretation – “to transfer”, Espagne argues, “is not to transport”. 27 As such, it can be used

24 Reid and Reid, ‘Diffusion and Discursive Stabilisation’, p. 107.
26 Ibid., p. 42.
alongside terms such as ‘cultural exchange’ and ‘entangled histories’ to describe colonialism as an extended process of mutual influence rather than one-sided suppression.

Given these developments, van Bottenburg argues, sports historians need to fundamentally rethink their approach. One of the most important considerations for new analyses, he claims, is that so-called ‘diffusion’ almost always disguises more complex processes of adaptation, reinterpretation, contestation – and even rejection. As such, van Bottenburg infers, “every country evolved its own sports tradition, with its own values, its own styles of play, its own idols, and its own collective memories”.28 He concludes with a call to abstain from general and systematic explanations in favour of more localised, complex and particular ones:

On the one hand, we can still find general patterns, like hierarchical and contagious diffusion, produced by unequal balances of power and critical junctures in this process; on the other hand, we have to rethink our concepts and theories to meet complexity and diversity of the rich sports histories of peoples all over Europe.29 As the title of his paper – ‘Beyond Diffusion’ – implies, diffusion needs to be at least augmented, and possibly replaced, with an alternative phraseology that can better capture the complexities inherent in ludic dissemination, translation and adoption. Scholars’ best efforts notwithstanding, the language of diffusion remains stubbornly unidirectional and fails to capture changes that occur in process of cultural transfer; it thus constrains analysis as much as advancing it.

This general critique has particular resonance with regards to cricket.30 Perhaps because of its exaggerated association with ‘Englishness’ and Empire, cricket’s acculturation in colonial societies habitually changed the game’s attendant meanings in significant ways. Ian Baucom makes this very argument. For Baucom, the cricket field constituted one of the most persistent metaphors of English identity; it was a ‘metonym of Englishness’.31 Colonists thus saw the game as a means to preserve their own identities and to reform those of their subjects. In spite of this status, the game was vulnerable to colonial acts of reinvention. Far from replicating English values throughout the British Empire, cricket – and the ‘English’ values it signified – was refashioned as it encountered “other cultural locales, other local knowledges and local memories”.32

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28 Ibid., p. 47
29 Ibid., p. 50
30 This discussion focuses exclusively on the literature pertaining to the indigenisation of cricket in the context of empire and colonialism. Similar themes are apparent in the ways that indigenous peoples have appropriated other foreign sports, however. For instance, while Malcolm MacLean acknowledges that Maori rugby in Aotearoa/New Zealand has not been overtly transformed, he demonstrates that Maori have used the game as an instrument for pursuing a diverse range of social ends that are fundamentally their own. Malcolm MacLean, ‘Of Warriors and Blokes: The Problem of Maori Rugby for Pakeha Masculinity in New Zealand’, in Timothy J.L. Chandler and John Nauright (eds.), Making the Rugby World: Race, Gender, Commerce (London: Frank Cass, 1999), pp. 8-10.
32 Ibid., p. 39
In India, for instance, Appadurai has shown that cricket became profoundly indigenised in spite of its symbolic associations with the core moral values of Victorian England. A crucial part of this process was the ‘vernacularisation’ of cricket in various local media, through which the game was ‘liberated from its Englishness’ and made accessible to speakers of Hindi, Tamil and Bengali. For Appadurai, cricket in India has long since been wrenched away from its original moral and social significance. It has instead come to mean a very many different things to Indians, not least a sense that they have ‘hijacked’ the game from the English. Neil Lazarus has similarly claimed that in the West Indies, the locals’ enthusiastic adoption of cricket masked a substantive challenge to the game’s underlying values. Although the game itself remained largely unchanged, players and spectators in the Caribbean created distinctive ‘modes of play’ and engaged in an ironic maintenance of cricket’s professed principles in order to expose the hypocrisies of colonial society. For Baucom and Appadurai, such disruption to cricket’s embedded cultural meanings was profound and often subversive. In their accounts, therefore, ‘successful diffusion’ gives way to talk of hybridity and indigenisation, creating a privileged position for acts of local innovation and contestation.

Kaufman and Patterson’s binary diffusion framework accords even less neatly with cricket’s history in Samoa. On a superficial level, the game does seem to follow their model of successful diffusion. Contemporaneous accounts indicate that – as elsewhere in the empire – British officials, colonisers and soldiers brought cricket to Samoa and encouraged the locals to join in their matches. The first recorded instance of cricket in the islands took place in September 1879, when officers from the British Cormorant challenged Apia’s European residents – or more precisely, the expatriate ‘Britishers’ among them – to a scratch match. After several such encounters the Apia Cricket Club was established in June 1881, with a committee comprising several prominent British residents and the sitting British consul, J.H. Graves, who occupied the chair as President. The Club quickly set about procuring the necessary materials and facilities to ensure that “there is nothing to hinder members at once engaging in the grandest of all English out-door amusements”.

Cricket’s diffusion to Samoans also followed a superficially orthodox path. The classic account comes from William Churchward, who served as the British consul to Samoa from March 1882 until November 1885. According to Churchward, Samoans at first rebuffed the entreaties of British officials and residents to join in cricket. This initial indifference gave way around 1883,

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33 Appadurai, Modernity at Large, p. 90.
35 ‘Cricket’, Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, 30 August 1879, p. 2.
36 Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, 4 June 1881, p. 2; Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, 11 June 1881, p. 2.
however. After visitors from neighbouring Tonga derided their ignorance of the game, a group of Samoan men approached Churchward and his compatriots for some initial instruction. Although Churchward’s account is silent as to the social station of these initial Samoan players, high-ranking matai (chiefs) certainly were some of the earliest Samoan practitioners of the game. In 1885, for instance, Churchward recalled that members of the Samoan government – led by the paramount chief Malietoa Laupepa – organised a large match at the seat of government in what he interpreted as a show of defiance against German interference in their affairs. Unlike in Fiji, Churchward leaves little doubt that this initial transmission was rapidly followed by diffusion throughout the wider Samoan population:

    Soon all the neighbouring towns were playing and cricket at last becoming quite an epidemic, it not only took possession of the island of its origin, Upolu, but crossing the straits on both sides, spread all over Tutuila and Savaii, until the whole group was infected with it. Age, sex and dignity alike fell under its influence, until at last there was not a village in which it was not vigorously practised. 38

The acculturation of cricket was similarly expeditious. Almost immediately, the game was thoroughly indigenised and framed in terms of local meanings and practices. Thereafter it remained the favourite sporting pastime of Samoan communities throughout the period of study and indeed well beyond it. For Kaufman and Patterson, therefore, cricket in Samoa seems to conform to the paradigm of successful diffusion that they identify in Australia, the West Indies and elsewhere.

    This apparently straightforward narrative is complicated, however, by the sheer scale of change that accompanied cricket’s acculturation in Samoa. While models of diffusion can accommodate subtle changes in a cultural form and its associated meaning, they are inconsonant with more fundamental shifts in character and especially content. In the case of kirikiti, the game constituted a radical departure from its English forebear. Most notably, the rules of English cricket were largely cast aside in favour of local variations drawn from existing Samoan pastimes. In addition, kirikiti rapidly became the centrepiece of malaga (ceremonial journeys) undertaken by Samoan villages. As Churchward noted, within a short time of their adoption of cricket the only recognisable feature was “the practice of one man bowling a ball to another man trying to hit it”. 39

    Even then, the bat and ball in question were strikingly different from those used in the English game, and the man could just as easily have been a woman, boy or girl. In effect, the game had been thoroughly ‘Samoanised’; this was no longer English cricket, but rather Samoan kirikiti.

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37 William B. Churchward, My Consulate in Samoa: A Record of Four Years’ Sojourn in the Navigators Islands, with Personal Experiences of King Malietoa Laupepa, his Country, and his Men (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1887), pp. 142-143.
38 Ibid., pp. 143-144.
39 Ibid., p. 143.
These already-murky theoretical waters are further muddied, moreover, by the fate of English cricket in the islands. Even as Samoans took to kirikiti, cricket clubs and official matches remained the preserve of British expatriates, self-identified members of the native-born ‘European’ community and – occasionally – those high-ranking Samoans with close ties to it. In the aforementioned maiden encounter between the officers of the *Cormorant* and the ‘shore folk’, the visitors secured an easy victory thanks to the efforts of a former Oxford Blue, who outscored the entire Apia side himself and took 11 wickets for good measure.\(^{40}\) This established the pattern of cricketing encounters in the islands for the next twenty years: games were organised around the visit of British ships to Apia harbour; Samoan involvement was usually limited; and matches almost invariably ended in heavy defeat for the local side.

Notwithstanding the establishment of the Apia Cricket Club in 1881, ongoing political unrest and Apia’s small European community – and its smaller British contingent – meant that the game never became self-supporting. In 1890, for example, the Club’s secretary explained at a public meeting that its activities “had been practically non-existent for over eighteen months” due to the ongoing conflict between rival Samoan factions.\(^{41}\) Despite something of a revival in the 1890s, cricket largely remained the preserve of the British element in Apia and was sustained only by the infrequent visitations of British warships. It was only much later – when New Zealand occupied Samoa during the First World War – that cricket ever experienced anything like large-scale Samoan participation. Even then it was largely limited to government employees and those living near the European enclave of Apia. Within a few years Samoan participation dwindled and cricket once again became an overwhelmingly European game. In short, therefore, the diffusion of ‘English cricket’ itself was not very successful at all. Understood in this way, the fate of cricket in Samoa is more analogous to the paradigm of ‘failed diffusion’ observed in North America and Fiji.

As such, the Samoan case seems to occupy a curious position in the diffusion narrative. Both horizontal transmission to Samoan elites and vertical diffusion to the general Samoan population were successful. The later process was accompanied, however, by fundamental changes to not only the meaning of cricket, but also the content and constituent rules of the game itself. Simply put, the acculturation of cricket was so dramatic as to constitute bifurcation into two (almost) separate games. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, kirikiti thrived even as cricket remained a papalagi game in which prominent Samoans occasionally partook. While the diffusion model provides a framework for understanding the initial uptake of cricket in Samoa,

\(^{40}\) ‘Cricket’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette*, 6 September 1879, p. 2.

\(^{41}\) ‘Sport in Apia’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*, 14 June 1890, p. 2.
therefore, it is largely silent on the defining feature of the Samoan experience. Any account of the Samoan experience demands recourse to a language of ‘mixing’ that can account for the divergence between cricket and kirikiti. Exploring and accounting for kirikiti’s distinctive elements hence requires a different approach.

**Beyond diffusion**

There are several credible candidates for this role. Terms such as syncretism and hybridity provide two promising but somewhat problematic frameworks. Alongside terms such as bricolage and creolisation, anthropologists use syncretism and hybridity to denote cultural ‘mixing’. Although syncretism is predominantly used to designate religious systems, its application is broad; language, ideology and cultural practices can similarly be described as ‘syncretic’ when they combine two or more distinct traditions.42 Hybridity – originally borrowed from biology and botany – similarly designates the creation of something new through the mixture of two discrete forms. Since the 1990s it has enjoyed broad acceptance in sociology and anthropology, where it is frequently employed as a model for globalisation.43

Scholars have frequently drawn on both terms in describing cultural flows in Oceania. In the case of hybridity, Emma Kruse Va’ai has used the term to characterise the emergence of distinctive modes of writing and speaking in Samoa. Va’ai shows that foreign languages – particularly English – did not simply replace the indigenous Samoan language; nor did they exist alongside it as discrete entities. Instead, she argues, indigenous and introduced languages and cultures were “interacting and impacting on each other” almost as soon as Samoans and papalagi encountered one another. Given this ongoing process of mutual borrowing and interweaving, she finds “the notion of

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hybridity is much more useful for describing this diversity of linguistic and cultural appropriation in post-colonial Samoa".44

Syncretism, conversely, is useful because it already has indelible associations with cricket in Oceania. Since the release of a celebrated anthropological documentary in 1976,45 anthropologists have frequently used cricket in Papua New Guinea’s Trobriand Islands to illustrate the concept of syncretism.46 In the Trobriands, Methodist missionaries introduced cricket as part of broader efforts to ‘civilise’ the indigenous population and divert their energies away from the ‘wild’ and erotic dancing and ritual fighting associated with harvest festivals. However, the Islanders ‘rubbished’ the English rules and made cricket into a distinctly Trobriand form. Bowling was remodelled on the motion of throwing a spear, the stumps were shortened and limits on player numbers were abolished. In addition, games were played in full battle dress, incorporated erotic dance and magic and became a part of integrated practices regarding exchange and the accumulation of prestige. As had been the case in ritual competition before cricket, the home side was always victorious – but not by so many runs as to cause offence to their opponents.47 Given the similarly heterodox features of ‘syncretic’ Trobriand cricket and Samoan kirikiti, the language of syncretism has a strong and recognisable precedent in the region.

As well as this undeniable utility, however, both terms are also conspicuously problematic. As with many notions of ‘mixing’, the language of hybridity and syncretism is complicated by the pejorative connotations historically attached to them – particularly in the context of race and colonialism. In his discussion of various terminologies of ‘mixture’, Charles Stewart points out that the provenance of ‘hybridity’ includes a place in the vocabulary of nineteenth century scientific racism.48 While nowadays ‘hybrid’ is generally understood to mean a “cross between two things”, its racist past is easily reconstructed:

In nineteenth-century racial thinking the hybrid was deemed to be weak and sterile – proof that human "races" were different species that could not mix… [Even today] in some formulations hybridity indicates weakness, homelessness, and alienation.49

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49 Stewart, ‘Syncretism and Its Synonyms’, p. 45.
In the context of Oceania, moreover, some scholars have been wary about blithely rehabilitating hybridity. The most prominent example of this cautious approach is Albert Wendt, who deliberately forgoes the terms hybrid/hybridity precisely because of their historical associations. Wendt instead favours the more neutral language of ‘blends’ and ‘new developments’, which unlike hybridity avoids etymological ties to

[T]hat outmoded body of colonial theories to do with race, wherein if you were not pure Caucasian or 'full-blooded' Samoan or what-have-you, you were called 'half-caste,' 'quadroon,' 'mixed race,' 'coloured,' 'a clever part-Maori,' and inferior to the pure product.50

Syncretism is similarly afflicted by these difficulties. While Plutarch originally used the term favourably, it acquired negative connotations in the wake of the Reformation when orthodox Lutherans and many Catholics used ‘syncretism’ to describe efforts to reunite Christianity under “a heretical and inconsistent jumble of theologies” that threatened doctrinal ‘purity’ and ‘integrity’.51 Missionaries to Africa similarly denigrated as ‘syncretic’ local amalgamations of Christian teachings with indigenous religions. Contemporary anthropologists such as Lamont Lindstrom have also expressed concern that the language of syncretism wrongly implies the existence of pure, holistic traditions. As such, it is insufficiently commodious to describe the complexities of cultural ‘mixing’.52 Conversely, Stewart denies that syncretism has any such requirement of ‘purity’; instead, we only need to accept that the traditions involved must be seen as different or discrete at the moment that they encounter one another.53 Thereafter the new ‘syncretic’ form continues to borrow from other forms in an ongoing process of mutual borrowing and adaptation. Stewart’s protestations notwithstanding, however, syncretism retains at least some of its association with ‘impurity’ and an unwelcome departure from orthodoxy.

Given these persistent issues, the dual notions of ‘contact zones’ and ‘transculturation’ provide a more viable alternative.54 Originally developed by Fernando Ortiz in the 1940s to depict cultural ‘mixing’ in his native Cuba, transculturation emphasises the inevitability of change in situations of cross-cultural contact. As Stewart describes it, transculturation “involves a simultaneous loss and acquisition of culture… a continuing, creative flux, never a finished

54 Matthew Stephen uses the language of ‘contact zones’ in his analysis of cricket’s role in establishing an imagined community of white, British, middle-class men and women in those parts of Australia where such settlers were a small minority. Rather than indicating a site where transculturation could or did take place, however, his use of ‘contact zone’ simply denotes the isolated areas of white Australian settlement. Matthew Stephen, ‘Cricket in the ‘contact zone’; Australia’s colonial far North frontier, 1869–1914’, Identities 22:2 (2015), pp. 183-198.
synthesis”. Ortiz favoured this framing of ‘mixing’ over the idea of the United States’ ‘melting pot’, which he felt implied a movement towards a cultural or ethnic dominant standard. Rather than a melting pot, he described Cuba as an ajiaco, a stew of meats and vegetables seasoned with hot pepper:

"The characteristic thing about Cuba...is that since it is an ajiaco, its people are not a finished stew, but a constant [process of] cooking. ... Hence the change of its composition, and [the fact] that cubanidad has a different flavor and consistency depending on whether one tastes what is at the middle [of the pot], or at its surface, where the foods (viandas) are still raw, and the bubbling liquid still clear."

While Ortiz’s conception of transculturation has been influential in anthropology, its use in this thesis owes more to the way it is deployed by the literary scholar Mary Louis Pratt. For Pratt, distinctive, ‘mixed’ social practices will invariably emerge at sites of intercultural engagement and confrontation – which she calls ‘contact zones’ – such as nineteenth- and twentieth-century Samoa. Her principal example of this process is the New Chronicle and Good Government and Justice, a sixteenth-century manuscript written by the Quechan nobleman Guaman Poma. In Pratt’s estimation, the Chronicle is remarkable both for its mix of local and introduced elements and for its subversive nature. In his text, Poma makes a sustained critique of Spanish colonial rule and conducts a hypothetical dialogue with the King of Spain in which he proposes a new form of government that would combine Incan and European features. Even as he does so, moreover, he interlaces an array of Incan and European written and visual elements. Not only is Quechan language and phrasing woven into his principally Spanish account, the illustrations themselves embody this ‘transcultural’ character:

The genre of the four hundred line drawings is European – there seems to have been no tradition of representational drawing among the Incas – but in their execution they deploy specifically Andean systems of spatial symbolism that express Andean values and aspirations. In sum, Pratt argues, “Guaman Poma’s text is truly a product of the contact zone”.

Transculturation in Samoa

This language of contact zones and transculturation has particular resonance in Samoa. As was the case in colonial contact zones throughout the world, engagement with papalagi meant that

57 Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturalisation (London: Routledge, 1992). By Pratt’s definition, a contact zone is a social space “where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination”. Ibid., p. 4.
Samoans encountered an array of unfamiliar ideas and practices. Rather than passively accept these practices, however, they modified and subsequently integrated them into their own cultural framework. Visitors to the islands have frequently commented on Samoans’ adeptness in integrating foreign innovations into their own cultural framework, albeit with significant modifications. Frank Grattan, a long-serving official in Samoa’s New Zealand colonial administration, observed that everything from religion, music, dance and games was subjected to “this peculiar Samoan genius for modification”. Samoan dancing incorporated elements from European, Hawaiian and Tokelau traditions, such that newcomers could never be sure whether they were witnessing ‘authentic’ Samoan performances.

Papalagi music often underwent a similar transformation. At the turn of the twentieth century, for instance, the anthropologist Augustin Krämer related the fate that befell a German song he had performed in Apia in the 1890s. Two years later he found that a Samoan group touring Germany was offering an almost unrecognisably ‘Samoanised’ rendition of the song to metropolitan audiences. Even today, popular papalagi tunes are repackaged with distinctly local lyrics and rhythms, then unleashed by the drivers of one of Samoa’s brightly coloured buses. According to Pratt, of course, this creation of new, ‘mixed’ cultural practices is a defining feature of cross-cultural engagement. Although indigenous groups cannot readily control what emanates from the metropolitan culture, “they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for”.

Papalagi language has been another source of transcultural appropriation. Va’ai notes that Samoan and English have been ‘mixed’ to create new forms in playgrounds, public service departments and other subgroups in Samoa. Children disregard ‘correct’ pronunciation in favour of enjoying the sound and rhythm of words, and maintain Samoan phonetical rules by disregarding consonant endings. Conversely, ‘mixed’ language in the workplace is used to identify people who acquired English as part of their formal education. Fa’afafine – “effeminate males who dress, act and identify themselves as ‘would be’ women” – use a distinctive synthesis of English and Samoan in their speech both to signify their identity and rejoice in the creative potential of language. This indigenisation of language is not restricted to speech, of course. Alongside other authors from Oceania, Samoans have written novels, poetry and plays quite as transcultural as Poma’s

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61 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 6
63 Ibid., p. 53.
As such, Wendt argues, “English is a Pacific language now. The colonists brought it, but now we’ve taken it over and made it ours”. Similar arguments have been made with regards to the ‘Samoanisation’ of food, clothing and all manner of initially alien cultural forms.

The most oft-cited example of transculturation in Samoa, however, is the distinctive adoption of Christianity in the islands. While Christianity undoubtedly influenced Samoan thinking and reshaped daily life in the islands, scholars have largely followed Richard Gilson in emphasising how Samoans adapted Christianity to their own local context. To this end, Va’ai argues that while the practice of Christianity in Samoa may not be ‘more hybrid’ than its expression elsewhere, “its particular character lies in the ability to maintain a strong religious observance in the context of a strong social structure”. Indeed, the history of Christianity in Samoa is in many ways analogous to that of cricket. The first papalagi missionaries, John Williams and Charles Barff, landed at Savai’i in 1830 along with six Tahitian and two Aitutakian teachers. They were warmly received by the prominent chief Malietoa Vai’inupo, who converted to Christianity and sent the teachers into the villages of his district. By the time Williams returned in 1832, however, he found that Christian practices had already been affected by local custom. Most troublingly from his perspective, Samoan women had taken the tunes of hymns and were using them for their provocative ‘night dances’. Although European customs and attitudes were present in these new forms, John Garrett observes that “the inner life of the churches was increasingly of Samoa for Samoans”.

Christian theology and practices were also rapidly altered and incorporated into local institutions and used instrumentally to pursue customary social and political goals. Samoan chiefs exploited Christianity as a new source of ‘sacred power’; their authority and the hierarchical social framework of fa’a Samoa remained unshaken, but was now sanctioned by the new God rather than their own deity. Similarly, the faife’au (pastor) assumed the place of the priests and prophets of pre-Christian Samoan religion as mediators with the spiritual world and took on a status comparable to that of high-ranking chiefs. Even church building was touched by Samoan political sensibilities.

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65 See for example, Young Leslie and Addo, ‘Pacific Textiles’; Nancy Y.M. Tom, The Chinese in Western Samoa 1875-1985: The Dragon Came from Afar (Western Samoa: Western Samoa Historical Trust, 1986).
67 Kruse Va’ai, Producing the Text of Culture, p. 40.
69 Ibid., p. 278.
71 Kruse Va’ai, Producing the Text of Culture, p. 39.
Indeed, a visitor to Samoa in 1912 observed that some missionaries concurred with the German governor’s restrictions on building new churches:

If there is a village in Samoa that does not possess from one to half a dozen solidly built coral rock church edifices I do not recall having passed through its single street. Villages have gone bankrupt, mortgaging their incomes for years to build a church a little more imposing than the one in the next village. These formidable structures were, according to Garrett, one of two “signs of prevailing English Protestant addictions of the period” to become ubiquitous in Samoan villages. The other, of course, was cricket, which was subject to much the same kind of transcultural adaptation as Christianity had been. It is to the latter of these ‘addictions’ that we now turn.

**Explaining kirikiti’s transculturality**

Kirikiti’s clear provenance in – and radical departure from – English cricket shows that it sits comfortably alongside Christianity and other instances of Samoan indigenisation. Observers of the game very quickly realised that Samoans had made it their own, even if their response was generally expressed by ridiculing its unorthodoxy rather than acknowledging a complex cultural process of change at work. Certainly this was the case for ‘A.W.T’, whose account of the game provided the point of entry for this chapter. Adopting the language of transculturation – and to a lesser degree diffusion – enables us to frame and understand kirikiti in a way that A.W.T. and his ilk could not. Nevertheless, there is no simple consensus on this question.

For Va’ai it is the inherent dynamism and resilience of Samoan social structures that enables Samoans to absorb colonising influences and adapt them to the local context. She describes fa’a Samoa as “flexible yet solid” and identifies an instinctual “appropriating dynamic” that has been applied to religion, political institutions, architecture, language and many other areas of life. These sentiments echo those of Margaret Mead, who claimed that Samoans possessed “all the strength of the tough willows, which bend and swing to every passing breeze, but do not break”. Although this perspective holds some force in light of the aforementioned examples of Samoan appropriation, it cannot account entirely for cricket’s reconfiguration into kirikiti. Indeed, we should be mindful that such arguments echo those made by ‘A.W.T.’ in 1901, albeit substituting the more palatable language of ‘cultural distinctiveness’ for outmoded notions of ‘racial eccentricity’. Such accounts are further limited by a cursory look at other contact zones created by imperial expansion. The

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73 Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars*, p. 278.
transculturation of introduced cultural forms – particularly religion – is hardly the preserve of Samoans, even within Oceania. With very few exceptions, however, cricket’s transformation in Samoa is exceptional, matched only perhaps by Trobriand cricket in its radical departure from the English game. Developing a more complete explanation therefore requires a wider view of sporting adoption and adaptation – transcultural or otherwise – in Samoa and Oceania more generally.

Firstly, it is notable that the most striking departures from English cricket were undertaken in Oceania. This can only partly be attributed to the resilience of the region’s populations and their ways of life. It is also testament to the practical difficulties implicit in diffusing and especially maintaining cultural practices in their original form at the ‘periphery of empire’. Indeed, the anthropologist Felix Keesing speculated that the continuity of local practices and beliefs after more than a century of contact with papalagi was largely explained by Samoa’s smallness and isolation, as well as a unique set of local and papalagi political rivalries that undermined any effort at centralised and systematic colonial rule.76 With regards to kirikiti, Greg Ryan has argued that the game’s transformation serves as evidence of frayed imperial influence in the region; so far away from concerted imperial influence, cricket could only be preserved in its traditional form by establishing clubs and maintaining regular competition. Without these elements the game “was easily naturalised to local circumstances”.77 It is hence no surprise that cricket has been most profoundly altered in Oceania, whose far-flung island chains were not easily bound together by the chains of European empire.

These bonds were especially tenuous in Samoa. Throughout the period of study, political instability and competing interests chronically undermined attempts at effective colonial governance. During the 1880s and 1890s, the lack of unitary authority amongst Samoans themselves meant that successive attempts to restrict kirikiti – first through the churches and later by government decree – invariably failed. This situation was further complicated by competition between different papalagi groups in Samoa. Most notably, the ongoing presence of Germany and the United States diminished direct British influence in Samoa during the late-nineteenth century. Under these circumstances, contest between and among shifting coalitions of Samoans and papalagi was pervasive; modulating cricket’s transmission was rendered an impossible task as British cultural influence was challenged at every turn.

It was further abridged when Britain abjured its claim to Samoa in 1899, and it was not until 1914 that British influence was reasserted by means of New Zealand’s occupation of German

Samoa. The large presence of young men from the Dominion resulted in some gains for English cricket around Apia, but these were mostly reversed as the occupying force dwindled. The subsequent civilian administration, moreover, was both under-resourced and plagued by a resistance movement that limited its influence. Unsurprisingly, papalagi officials, settlers and missionaries were unable to ‘reclaim’ cricket from Samoan hands. Kirikiti’s continued primacy in the American-controlled islands is equally unsurprising, particularly in light of the relatively ‘hands-off’ approach that the naval authorities took to administering the territory. In effect, then, Samoa was not just at the very periphery of British influence; it was often existentially outside of it.

These circumstances were not replicated to the same degree in the neighbouring island groups of Tonga and Fiji, where cricket took a more conventional form. The Tongan case is particularly instructive. Cricket came to Tonga around the same time it appeared in Samoa – during the late 1870s. Tongans took to the game more readily than did Samoans; as indicated in Churchward’s account, they in fact pioneered many of the innovations later practiced and perfected in Samoa. Indeed, contemporaneous sources often described cricket fa’a Tonga in similar terms to the Samoan game: entire villages played cricket “from dawn to dusk”, while the wicketkeeper was not so much an active participant as “an ornamental personage who encourages the field by his cries”. As in Samoa, moreover, these large matches frequently endured for several weeks to the detriment of local plantations. Such unfettered play was not tolerated for long, however. By late 1881, the government of George Tupou I enacted ‘The Regulations Concerning Cricket’ and limited the game to Tuesdays and Thursdays only. While such regulations had little effect in Samoa amidst the ongoing political tumult, they were far more effective in Tonga, where law and order prevailed and Tupou’s political control was relatively uncontested. By the 1890s, therefore, one observer claimed that “the heat of the cricket-passion” had cooled. Instead, the Tongans increasingly focused their considerable cricketing energies on the English form of the game. They were very successful in these endeavours, routinely defeating any British naval crew that dared moor their ship in Tongan waters.

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78 Basil Thompson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1894), pp. 150-151; see also ‘Cricket in Tonga’, Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic, 15 February 1902, p. 7.
81 Thompson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p. 151.
English cricket’s pre-eminence in Tonga was further secured by ongoing British presence and influence in Tonga, as well as the actions and attitudes of successive monarchs. Whereas British influence in Samoa was diluted and then disrupted by German and American presence, Tonga’s status as a British protectorate from 1900 secured British primacy in the islands. British ships thereafter regularly visited Tonga until the end of the protectorate agreement in 1970. According to Lia Maka, the effects of British presence were as much cultural as political:

British influence pervaded day-to-day life in the country, particularly in religious worship, education and social etiquette, to the extent that it could be said it produced second-class Victorians rather than first-class Tongans.83 English cricket was one beneficiary of this influence, and by the 1920s a visiting novelist noted that the inhabitants of every Tongan village played cricket on a concrete pitch with “real English bats”.84

Cricket’s cause was similarly aided by the patronage of its leaders. When George Tupou died in 1893, his grandson – also George, or Siaosi in Tongan – succeeded him. The new King had been educated in Auckland and possessed “a taste for boating, cricket and mechanical toys”.85 During his reign, cricket matches were frequently played at the palace grounds between local papalagi, visiting naval crews and various Tongan sides. In one match in 1898, for instance, the King led a Nukualofa eleven to victory against a team from the country:

Tubou [sic] proved himself a good all-round cricketer, making a long stand, and running up a good score against somewhat difficult bowling. Tubou is a good bowler himself, and a very good wicket-keeper, and on the occasion in question was playing under the disadvantage of a finger injured the previous week at cricket.86

After Siaosi’s death in the 1918 influenza epidemic, his daughter Sālote took the throne alongside her husband, the Prince Consort Filiame Tungi. Both Sālote and her husband were determinedly pro-British and comfortable in papalagi circles as well as Tongan ones.87 For Tungi, this inevitably led to a keen interest in cricket. When the couple toured Australia in 1933, Tungi told local reporters that Tonga was “thoroughly civilised”, as demonstrated by its low murder rate, its balanced budgets – and the locals’ keenness for cricket.88 One newspaper also noted that Tungi intended to take time out of the royal visit to pursue his cricket in Sydney.89 Unlike in Samoa, therefore, several factors conspired to ‘reclaim’ the form – if not the function – of English cricket from Tongan modifications. In particular, the combination of stable and established local authority,

85 ‘King George of Tonga’, Leader, 3 August 1918, p. 52.
87 See Elizabeth Wood-Ellem, Queen Salote of Tonga: the story of an era, 1900-1965 (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001), especially pp. 70-83.
89 ‘Tonga up-to-date’, Daily Mercury, 6 February 1933, p. 11.
relatively unfettered British influence and royal patronage meant that cricket returned to something like its original form, albeit with distinctive local nuances and meanings.

In Fiji, British influence was more tangible still. While anecdotal evidence suggests Fijians initially played their cricket in a manner reminiscent of their Tongan and Samoan neighbours, they soon reverted to something like the ‘English’ style of play. Cricket first appeared around 1874, when a group of merchants and professionals formed the Levuka Cricket Club in response to ‘the absence of athletic amusement’ in the town. A British colonial administration was established the following year after the formal cession of Fiji, and conventional cricket flourished in the hands of the relatively large white population at Levuka and later Suva. As Narelle McGlusky points out, however, it was only in the 1880s that any effort was made to introduce the game to indigenous Fijians – probably due to a desire to ‘protect’ Fijian society from change.90

The first such effort took place under the stewardship of Fiji’s third Governor, William Des Voeux, whose private secretary Josceline Amherst taught the young chiefs in Fiji’s Armed Native Constabulary to play the game. Amherst’s successor, moreover, was Edward Wallington – the same ‘crack Oxford bat’ who had almost singlehandedly defeated the Apia XI in its inaugural match in 1879. Men like Amherst and Wallington encouraged cricket amongst their charges, who in turn took the game to the wider Fijian population. According to one long-time colonial official in Fiji, the game also benefited from strong support by members of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and its position in elite schools such as Suva Grammar and Queen Victoria School, which catered to the sons of high-ranking chiefs.91 A similar narrative emerged in more remote parts of the Fijian archipelago, where the uninterrupted presence of British officials, missionaries and traders meant that the game was frequently reinforced in its traditional form. Had Samoa been a British colony rather than Fiji, conversely, it is conceivable that Wallington could have been stationed in Apia rather than Suva. Equally, the presence of more Wallingtons in Samoa – especially in the context of a stable and uninterrupted colonial administration – would have gone some way to keeping local innovations at bay.

More entrenched British influence was not the only determinant of cricketing orthodoxy, of course. Equally important was the way that hierarchies in Fijian society militated against ‘vertical diffusion’ of the game beyond chiefs. While chiefly authority was important in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, their position in Fiji was amplified by an administrative system that encouraged what one critical official called government ‘by the Chiefs, for the Chiefs’. After secession, British officials

attempted to preserve Fijian society as they saw it. In so doing, however, they codified and enforced customary authority in ways that expanded and distorted chiefs’ prerogatives and the concomitant obligations of commoners.\footnote{Brij Lal, Broken Waves: A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), pp. 19-21.} This ‘neotraditional’ hierarchism had significant bearing on cricket. Fijian cricketers, who had disproportionate access to British officials, were almost invariably high-ranking chiefs who were unwilling to share the pitch with commoners. According to McGlusky, ‘chiefs would often bat for as long as they liked, refusing to be dismissed, and decline to participate in bowling and fielding’.\footnote{McGlusky, ‘The Willow and the Palm’, p. 93.} In one extreme example, a high chief at Taveuni called off a match after he was dismissed first ball and subsequently forbade “the miserable game from being played again in his domains”.\footnote{Snow, Cricket in the Fiji Islands, p. 87, cited in McGlusky, ‘The Willow and the Palm’, p. 179.} In addition to hindering the diffusion of the game – cricket in Fiji never became a ‘national’ game as it was in Samoa and even Tonga – such exclusivity meant cricket was unlikely to undergo the same kinds of radical changes that took place in Samoa. This proved to be the case: after the 1890s, cricket was principally played in the ‘English’ style, albeit often barefoot and wearing the local \textit{sulu} (a unisex garment worn like a skirt) instead of trousers.\footnote{McGlusky, ‘The Willow and the Palm’, p. 199.}

In sum, therefore, these structural elements seem to account for the transculturation of cricket in Samoa but not in the neighbouring island groups of Tonga and Fiji. In each instance, the basic ingredients for transculturation were present: imperial expansion created sites of intercultural engagement and confrontation – contact zones – in which indigenous peoples encountered alien cultural practices. While distinctive cultural traditions existed between – and within – these island groups, moreover, each possessed an array of customary performances and games that served important social functions.\footnote{There are many excellent accounts of customary recreational and athletic activities in Fiji and Tonga. Narelle McGlusky’s thesis on cricket in Fiji provides a synthesis of many Fijian sources, while Sione Lātūkefu’s work is valuable with regards to pastimes in Tonga. As an aside, the existence of athletic competition and pastimes across Samoa, Tonga and Fiji is significant because it undermines McGlusky’s contention that the position of \textit{meke} (a kind of customary performative dance) in Fiji precluded cricket’s acceptance among the general population. Sione Lātūkefu, ‘The opposition to the influence of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries in Tonga’, Historical Studies 12:46 (1966), pp. 248-264; McGlusky, ‘The Willow and the Palm’, especially pp. 133-155.} Instead, cricket’s divergent path in Samoa was forged and framed by the wider contest that enveloped the islands. Compared to its neighbours, colonial power in Samoa was unusually fractured and the British were never able to truly embed their influence. During the 1880s and 1890s, moreover, attempts to control kirikiti were confounded by the ongoing political discord in Samoa. In Fiji and Tonga, conversely, centralised control was exercised more effectively such that cricketing ‘excesses’ and ‘deviations’ could be remedied – including by Tongans and Fijians themselves. This argument also accounts for transculturation in wider Oceania. Even in Fiji,
local innovations were more common on outlying islands and in the hilly interior than near spheres of British influence like Levuka and Suva. In those island groups where papalagi presence was more tenuous still – notably in the Trobriand Islands of New Guinea, but also in Niue and Tokelau – the locals transformed the game as strikingly as was the case in Samoa. In the latter two examples, moreover, Samoan missionaries were likely responsible for some of the variations that emerged.

Finally – but no less importantly – any explanation of kirikiti’s origins must account for its distinctive status within Samoa, where other papalagi sports such as rugby union, American football, basketball and baseball were not subject to equivalent transcultural adoption. In each case, these sports – particularly rugby and American football – did take on distinctive meanings and styles of play. For example, New Zealanders popularised rugby in the 1920s, and in the decades since it has steadily become a significant marker of national and village identity for many Samoans. Julien Clément argues that the addition of ritual exchange and embedding of village rivalries has created “a Samoan game of rugby”. Even so, he admits, rugby’s form is still recognisably British:

It is not a new form of rugby as in kilikiti, a version of cricket in which bats, rules, number of players, and so on are different from the original game. Nor is it just a reiteration of the original game. It is the same form, but with Samoan elements inscribed within the game itself.

American football, which has become the ‘national game’ in the American-controlled islands, serves as a different example again. Although Samoans played football as early as 1930, it only surged in popularity in the 1960s on the back of widespread media coverage and the economic opportunities it offered. Unlike rugby and kirikiti, however, American football was not assimilated into customary modes of social organisation: there are no ‘village football teams’.

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101 Athletic Officer [Chief Pay Clerk F.P. Brown], Memorandum for the Captain of the Yard: ‘Football Game between Naval Station and Fagatoga – at 3:30pm 27 November 1930’, 24 November 1930; P10 Amusement and Recreation [14]; General Correspondence, 1921-1949, Box 28 (NN-373-91); RG 313: Records of Naval Operating Forces, 1849-1997, National Archives and Records Administration–Pacific Region (NARA), San Bruno.

which instead cut across the traditional sectional divides of Samoan society. Even so, the game has become an important signifier of identity, status and prestige. Along with other transnational influences, football success has both reshaped and been shaped by existing social hierarchies and the relations of power that structure them. For all its undoubted significance, however, American football never became an explicitly transcultural sporting form in the same way kirikiti did. Children may have played what one former player recalled as “50 on 50, tackle” at “the muddy malae”, but this mode of play was revised in more institutionalised settings such as clubs and schools. Indeed, kirikiti’s closest analogue is probably the Samoan tradition of fautasi races, in which Samoans adapted the design of papalagi rowing boats and used the vessels for inter-village racing.

These more orthodox diffusion narratives demonstrate that kirikiti’s transcultural character cannot simply be explained with reference to some abstract notion of Samoan cultural adaptability. While fa’a Samoa certainly did – and does – possess this quality, kirikiti also owes its ‘mixed’ form to the fractured socio-political context that coincided with cricket’s arrival in the islands. Conversely, papalagi introduced both rugby and American football to Samoans after the end of the First World War, when colonial authority was clearly – if not unproblematically – exercised by the United States in the eastern islands and New Zealand in the west. They were principally disseminated, moreover, through schools and clubs in deliberate processes encouraged and overseen by papalagi teachers, officials and enthusiasts. The result was a greater capacity for centralised control, and thus for restricting the kinds of local influences that were manifest in Samoan cricket before they could become pervasive. Together with the more general fate of cricket in Oceania, this evidence indicates that kirikiti’s transcultural form requires a two-fold explanation: while Samoans may have been especially inclined and equipped to transform introduced cultural forms, their distinctive experience of fragmented and distant imperialism also left them uniquely positioned to do so at a particular historical moment.

**Conclusion**

Cricket’s introduction and adoption in Samoa came during an especially charged chapter in

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103 Ibid.
104 Ibid., pp. 97-98.
the islands’ history. Indeed, the advent of the ‘Imperial game’ was symptomatic of deepening papalagi interest in Samoa after 1875. Although sporadic encounters between Samoans and papalagi had taken place since the eighteenth century, foreign settlement only began in the 1840s and was centred at Apia bay. Papalagi interests and settlement increased, and soon both the British and Americans established consulates in the foreign enclave to mediate their disputes with Samoans. In the second half of the nineteenth century other Europeans – notably Germans – arrived to seek their fortunes. These deepening interests prompted regular intrusions in Samoan politics by the ‘three powers’ after 1875, and burgeoning papalagi presence in the islands meant that Samoa increasingly aligned with Pratt’s definition of a ‘contact zone’. In this context of engagement and confrontation, we should therefore expect to find acts of ‘mixing’, or transculturation, such as kirikiti.

Whatever the language used to describe the game, we leave this chapter with an altogether different view of cricket’s origins in Samoa to that which we entertained at its outset. While the concept of diffusion displayed some utility in explaining the transmission of cricket to the islands, it ultimately failed to speak to the complexity and contest inherent in this process. It was only by turning to notions of ‘mixing’ – first hybridity and syncretism, and finally transculturation – that we were able to situate cricket, or rather kirikiti, within a broader context of Samoan innovation and appropriation. Set alongside similar acts within the framework of transculturation, kirikiti can hence be understood as part of a broader pattern of deliberate and subversive modification in Samoa. Having advanced this general argument, however, this chapter has largely avoided particular analysis of kirikiti itself as a transcultural form. The contours and complexities of this particular modification will therefore be more fully explored in the next chapter.
Chapter Three

From cricket to kirikiti: delineating a transcultural sporting form

“For a time all went on very smoothly, but the quiet and serious English style did not suit them long. One by one, innovations of their own and Tongan manufacture crept into the game, until soon nothing remained of cricket, pur et simple, but the practice of one man bowling a ball to another man trying to hit it. All the rest of the proceedings were purely of their own manufacture.”

Tales of Samoan cricket first reached metropolitan audiences in 1887 via the pen of William Brown Churchward. In many ways Churchward – who later listed his recreations as “all English sports” – embodied the kind of individual who took cricket around the globe. The son of prominent parents in Dover, Churchward was educated in private schools and at the Lycée Imperiale in Paris before joining the army as an officer in 1863 and serving in the New Zealand Wars. After leaving the army in 1872, he undertook “an interim of diamond digging in South Africa and sheep farming in Tasmania” and found his way back to New Zealand. In mid-1881 he sought out Sir Arthur Gordon, then Governor of New Zealand, with a mind to finding a colonial posting. Gordon, who was also Consul General and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, sent Churchward to Samoa with vague promises that he could fill the position of British Consul when its current occupant went on leave. Upon his arrival in Apia, Churchward was struck by the “cabbage-like existence” that many Europeans residents seemed to lead in the tropical climate. Only his fellow ‘Britishers’ shared his ludic enthusiasm:

Two or three times a week in the evening we had cricket or lawn-tennis; but such parodies on the real thing – the former played on a rough grass road, and the latter in a veritable sand-pit! […] Neither love nor money would persuade a Samoan or anyone of other than British nationality to join us in either game.

With little sport and a temporary lull in local political intrigue, Churchward grumbled, “nothing stirred to vary the monotony of the place”.

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 135.
This all changed sometime in 1883. “All at once”, Churchward recalled, “the village of Apia Samoa was seized with a most frantic desire to fathom the mysteries of the game [of cricket], and to become proficient in its practice”. For all their encouragement, British efforts had little to do with this belated interest. Instead, Samoan participation was apparently precipitated by an encounter with a group of Tongan visitors, who “twitted them on the subject of their ignorance of so grand an amusement”. Their response was decisive:

A deputation attended on the Judge, a Britisher, and myself, requesting us to instruct them in the strict ‘Fa’a Peritania’ – British manner – of playing cricket, for that was the version they wanted to learn, and not the ‘Fa’a Tonga’ – Tongan – one. They explained that as it was a British sport, we as British were likely to know more about it than the Tongans, and they thought that we could teach them in such a way that they might be able to beat these boasting men. Churchward and his compatriots set about their mission, but any adherence to cricketing orthodoxy was short-lived. The locals expanded participation, instituted new rules and modes of play and wove the game into the broader social fabric of Samoan life. The result was a game that British audiences would barely have recognised; Samoan antics on the field, Churchward spluttered, “beggar description”. ‘The rest of the proceedings’, as Churchward termed their innovations, constituted changes that were both general and profound. As he himself surely appreciated, however, such changes to cricket’s form and function did not arise ex nihilo. Instead, many of them were adapted from established Samoan recreational practices and more general social configurations. The game Churchward described was in fact no longer English cricket, but a thoroughly transcultural practice – kirikiti – forged in the contact zone of nineteenth century Samoa.

This chapter traces the genesis, method and meaning of this transcultural sporting form. To do so, it first considers the wider social context and specific social practices that Samoans drew on as they reimagined cricket. Following Orbitz’s analogy, we need to identify the particular ingredients that made this distinctive sporting ‘stew’. Well before the arrival of papalagi, contests and pastimes featured prominently in Samoa’s wider system of social, political and economic relations. Amongst other functions, they helped modulate relationships within and between village and kinship groups and served as expressions of rivalry and amity. Not only did Samoans swiftly induct cricket into this framework, they also transposed many features of pre-existing contests into the new papalagi game. The chapter then turns to kirikiti’s other principal influence – English cricket circa 1880 – and traces some of the ways that kirikiti departed from it. In particular, the chapter considers four principal dimensions of kirikiti’s ‘transculturality’: modes of participation; the equipment used and techniques employed; the attendant elements and social context; and the

6 Ibid., p. 142.
7 Ibid., 143.
institution of a forfeit owed to the victor. This wider process of ‘mixing’ was not merely superficial, of course. As such, the chapter concludes by framing cricket’s transformation into kirikiti as an implicit challenge to papalagi influence and an embodiment of wider contest in contemporaneous Samoa.

Fa’a Samoa and customary athletic contests

If Churchward and his countrymen were surprised by cricket’s sudden and seemingly boundless popularity in Samoa, they probably should not have been. Games and athletic contests held a significant position in the broader framework of fa’a Samoa well before contact with papalagi. Fa’a Samoa, literally ‘the Samoan way’, is a broad term that describes the socio-political organisation of Samoa and the values that underpin it. Malama Meleisea, for instance, describes fa’a Samoa as providing “a framework for action based upon the social structure of the ‘aiga [family] and the nu'u [village] and the authority of matai [chiefs] and fono [village councils]”.

These pillars support an associated system of behaviours in which authority, respect, reciprocity and communality are paramount. While the term itself invokes ‘traditional’ modes of organisation and action, fa’a Samoa itself is of course dynamic rather than static. Nicholas Thomas points out that while the notion of fa’a Samoa certainly existed in pre-colonial settings, it signified an entirely different set of behaviours including local dress, adornment and singing. With the arrival of papalagi missionaries and traders, however, fa’a Samoa took on a broader social and political meaning. Nevertheless, the continuity and resilience of certain cultural values, social structures and attitudes in Samoa is not in dispute. Describing something as ‘fa’a Samoa’ therefore provides salient means of delineating ‘Samoan’ behaviours and institutions from those of the known ‘other’, be they Fijian, Tongan or – as is now most often the case – papalagi. As such, Meleisea notes that almost anything can be done fa’a Samoa – the term “conveys a deep meaning to Samoans: clear in essentials, flexible in detail”.

Fa’a Samoa socio-political configurations were – and are – centred on notions of kinship and locality. In his account of customary authority, Meleisea notes that Samoa was at the time of

10 Thomas, In Oceania, pp. 192-193.
contact with papalagi “a unitary system of dispersed power”. The foundational political unit in Samoan life was the nu’u, each one an independent entity comprising a group of ‘aiga with a shared history and a series of chiefly titles connecting them. Each ‘aiga ‘owned’ its own matai titles and its members selected one of their number to hold each title. As well as exercising authority within their ‘aiga, the various matai in each nu’u formed a village council to organise and control conduct within the village itself. These modes of authority were hardly discrete, either: each ‘aiga was likely to have members in several nu’u, so there was no neat correlation between kin and village identity. Historically, this led to what Peter Hempenstall calls “tangled lines of authority” and consequently conflict between rival kinship groups, villages, districts or claimants to an important matai title.

Beyond the local level, villages joined each other in loose confederations to form sub-districts and districts, which in turn formed shifting coalitions to contest power at the ‘national’ level. As such, Meleisea argues, “the idea, if not the reality, of a centralised Samoa has existed for many centuries”.

As a result of these linkages, Samoan politics was dependent on mobility and reciprocity to function beyond a strictly local level. Fa’a Samoa configurations were more than simply political, however; they fundamentally framed social identity. Maintaining kin- and village-based relationships remains a central concern for Samoans in the islands and throughout the world. For Albert Wendt, the concept of va (the space between two entities) is useful in explaining the fundamentally relational nature of Samoan reality. Although va describes ‘in betweenness’, it is “not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together”. Indeed, the well-known Samoan expression ‘ia teu le va’ – an enjoinder to cherish or nurture the social space ‘between’ people – attests to the importance of tending to these ties in Samoa’s strongly communal culture. Not all relationships were amicable in this way of course, and social space – particularly between different villages or between the supporters of rival claimants to important titles – was frequently marked by rivalry, conflict and even warfare.

In the twentieth century, a series of papalagi anthropologists sought to define the cultural features of fa’a Samoa and describe the structural dimensions of Samoan social relationships. For

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Margaret Mead, who made her name in the late-1920s with the famous but flawed *Coming of Age in Samoa*, group affiliation shaped the lives of Samoan boys and girls from early childhood. In her account, which centred on adolescent girls, all Samoan social relationships are mediated by reciprocal obligations and formalised social dynamics. These obligations are in turn framed by a combination of rank, kinship and village relationships. Indeed, Mead argues that the very practice of *friendship* between women is institutionalised within the village- and kinship-based social structure. She maintains, therefore, that with few exceptions, “friendship is so patterned as to be meaningless”.18

The significance of such structured social relations was similarly apparent to Derek Freeman, who later earned a reputation as perhaps the most strident critic of Mead’s work.19 In his 1948 thesis, Freeman provided a detailed account of social organisation in Sa’anapu village on Upolu’s southern coast. He observed that while kinship ties are in theory the most important determinants of Samoan social life, village loyalty was often equally significant. In his estimation, many villages “developed sentiments of group solidarity so potent as to appear inconsistent with the wider lineage obligations of their constituent lineages”. The result, Freeman claimed, was that neighbouring villages often engaged in “the most intense of rivalries”.20 Indeed, Freeman was well attuned to the finely balanced rivalries between families, villages and districts – often pertaining to competing claims to titles, authority and prestige. In one instance, he noted that each household competed vigorously for the honour of donating the most money to the village pastor and the activities of the foreign missionary societies. An even more intense rivalry took place at district meetings at which the sums raised by each village community were announced; donating less than a neighbouring village was unthinkable.21

Perhaps the most sophisticated anthropological account of Samoan social practices and cultural models comes from Bradd Shore. Between 1968 and 1978, Shore spent a combined five years residing in Samoa. He lived in “virtually every part of the archipelago” and collected a formidable amount of information from field notes, interviews, questionnaires, written materials,

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18 Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, p. 72.
19 Freeman’s criticism of Mead is most clearly borne out in his controversial polemic, *Margaret Mead: the Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983). For a brief overview of Freeman’s work and his attitudes towards Mead and her research, see Peter Hempenstall’s ‘Editor’s Introduction’ in Derek Freeman, *The Social Structure of a Samoan Village Community* (Canberra: Target Oceania, 2006), pp. xi-xxv.
20 Freeman, *A Samoan Village Community*, p. 34.
21 Ibid., pp. 126-128.
and recordings from village meetings and cultural events. His 1982 monograph examined aspects of status and social control in Samoa, with a particular focus on titles and property, village councils and the naming of chiefly titles, and village law and sanctions. Using interpretive anthropology, Shore explored these practices in relation to Samoan cultural models of person and action. He also highlighted the underlying tensions that exist between behaviours originating in selfish individual desires, and other behaviours that are socially approved and required.

In terms of this thesis, however, Shore’s most valuable insight is in developing a dualistic typology of relationships in Samoa. In particular, he delineates ‘symmetrical’ and ‘asymmetrical’ relationships, which correspond to ‘competitive’ and ‘complementary’ behaviours and outcomes. According to Shore, the relationships between symmetrically related units – such as two villages, or two persons of the same gender and rank – are “inherently competitive and conflict-ridden”. Conversely, asymmetrical relationships – such as between a brother and sister, or between a pastor and his congregation – are characterised by complementary exchanges. For Samoans, overt competition between asymmetrical individuals or groups is considered inappropriate. Indeed, he observes that several Samoan proverbs speak to the salience of this symmetrical/asymmetrical distinction – and the different rules of appropriateness surrounding them. For instance, the idiom *Ua fa'afeagai sega 'ula*’ (the red sega birds face each other) suggests those who are confronting each other are equals – the same. This would be the reaction to two high chiefs facing each other in a meeting, or to two orators engaged in an oratorical contest. When those of different status face each other competitively, however, the applicable expression is *O le fa'afagatua e le tutusa* (those locked in wrestling combat are not the same), indicating the inappropriateness of the relationship. Together with the work of Mead, Freeman and others, therefore, Shore’s account is invaluable in establishing a ‘starting point’ for understanding Samoan social structures, relationships and cultural concerns. The view of Samoan social life that emerges from these accounts is at once highly structured and formalised; but also with swirling undercurrents of kinship- and village-based rivalries, and ever-present tensions regarding titles, authority and individualism.

Sporting contests constituted an important part of this broader social framework. Upon their arrival in Samoa, papalagi were immediately struck by the amount of time the local inhabitants appeared to spend at play. In the 1830s, for example, John Williams found that Samoans devoted “a considerable portion of their time and attention” to games and pastimes including wrestling, boxing,

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23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., pp. 198-201.
26 Ibid., p. 199.
pigeon hunting and canoeing.\footnote{27} This ludic spirit – and attendant accusations of laziness – became a recurring feature of European accounts throughout the nineteenth century. Robert Louis Stevenson famously described Samoans as “the gayest and the best entertained inhabitants of our planet”; their lives were spent in “perpetual song and dance, perpetual games, journeys and pleasures”.\footnote{28} While these games were sometimes undertaken for purely recreational purposes, they also served several important social and political functions. Firstly, papalagi missionaries reported that Samoans undertook games and athletic contests as part of customary religious worship. John Stair, for instance, recalled that in the district of A’ana, games and sham-fights accompanied an annual feast to honour their ‘war gods’. These festivities lasted for days on end.\footnote{29} Within villages, moreover, athletic contests served to delineate group affiliation. Some pastimes were generally reserved for matai, while in others different social groups – such as the young single men and matai – competed against one another.\footnote{30}

Twentieth century anthropological accounts are again helpful in identifying the abiding significance of games and play in Samoan social life. In comparing the lives of Samoan children to their American counterparts, Mead was struck by their fundamentally different attitudes towards work and play. American children, she claimed, were taught to distinguish between work – the activity of adults – and children’s play. In her estimation, no such dichotomy existed in Samoa:

But the distinctions between work as something one has to do but dislikes, and play as something one wants to do; of work as the main business of adults, play as the main concern of children, are conspicuously absent.\footnote{31} Because games and play were not considered to be ‘childish’, they infused many aspects of Samoan social life. Games of forfeit were especially prevalent, particularly at formal meetings of village youth groups and during the festivities incident to a visit by another village.\footnote{32} Nevertheless, participation in games also reflected the appropriate relationship between the individuals and groups involved. Mead reported that one young matai bemoaned how his status precluded him from playing games with the young men of the village.\footnote{33} According to one of Shore’s informants, moreover, girls tended to play different games to boys; girls were notably absent from ‘rougher’ games such as rugby. Shore surmises that these differences reflect broader differences in the kinds

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\footnote{27} John Williams, \textit{A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands} (London: John Snow, 1865), p. 138.  
\footnote{31} Mead, \textit{Coming of Age in Samoa}, pp. 229-230.  
\footnote{32} Mead, \textit{Social Organization of Manu’u}, pp. 109-110; 149.  
\footnote{33} Mead, \textit{Coming of Age in Samoa}, p. 36.
of work and social responsibilities afforded to males and females. Within the village and familial context, participation in sports and games therefore signified the nature of the relationship between individuals within the collective.

Most importantly, however, such contests were deeply embedded in the traditional exchange and *malaga* (ritual journeys) that served to maintain the connections between Samoan villages and kinship groups. Malaga was an indispensable part of the traditional Samoan political economy: visits were used to build and reaffirm alliances, arrange and celebrate marriages and to redistribute surplus food and specialist products. More generally, malaga provided opportunities to honour guests and hosts, and to engage in enjoyable ‘social intercourse’ through “feasting, dancing, games, oratory, political machinations, ceremonials and courtship”. Games allowed the expression of rivalry as well as amity, of course, and some of the ceremonial aspects associated with these competitions – particularly the ‘hazing’ of the conquered side and the penalties imposed on them by the victors – had their roots in more serious contests. Indeed, Shore observes that the relationship between different villages is perhaps the archetypal ‘symmetrical’ relationship – and thus associated with “competition, one-upmanship, and various forms of mutual aggression such as sports competitions, war, or competition for political titles”. Within the context of malaga, inter-village sporting contests thus provided an outlet for local rivalries in a festive setting, and were part of a broader project of strengthening and reaffirming the fa’a Samoa political economy and its attendant social institutions of kin, village and traditional authority.

Among the games contested between villages in the nineteenth century were pigeon netting (*seuga lupe*), dart throwing (*tagati’a*), spear throwing (*tologa*) and physical contests such as club matches (*aigofie*) and various forms of wrestling. Of these, kirikiti’s distinctive character is most indebted to the first two practices, and particularly to *tagati’a*. Both pigeon netting and *tagati’a* contests were important fixtures in Samoan life, as indicated by their frequent appearance in Samoan idioms and their incorporation into legends, songs and stories. Although pigeons were at

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36 Shore, *Sala’i lua*, p. 199.
first hunted solely for food, the practice was later monopolised by chiefs and became a highly stylised and ceremonial pursuit that could last for months on end. Matai sat atop purpose-built earth platforms and used trained decoy birds to lure wild pigeons into their nets. Entire villages could be mobilised to prepare for an expedition and to provide and partake in festivities during the intervals between netting.39

While pigeon netting was largely the preserve of matai, the game of tagati’a had no such restrictions. Indeed, contemporaneous accounts indicate that large inter-village tagati’a matches known as tavasaga could frequently exceed 100 players a side. According to Richard Moyle, who conducted fieldwork in Samoa in the 1970s, “modern informants claim that even this figure was small in some cases”.40 Although Te Rangi Hiroa refers to the game as ‘dart throwing’ to distinguish it from other Samoan throwing sports, the game was actually played with crafted wooden javelins (ti’a) ranging between twenty inches and five feet long. Samoans played tagati’a in both formal and informal settings. For example, Augustin Krämer recounted games in which boys would “simply cut themselves a couple of sticks… and start to compete”.41 In its formal expression, however, the game was played on a cleared area 100-150 feet long, at the ends of which sloped ramps were built. These ramps were constructed so as to provide a solid, smooth surface off which to glance the ti’a. An ideal throw would carry a trajectory that allowed the ti’a to glance the ramp and fly straight on, imparting maximum distance.42 An important feature of the game – as in many Samoan sporting contests – was the payment of a forfeit by the losing side. Just as cricket represented an ‘English’ cultural form, Samoan antecedents such as pigeon netting and tagati’a constituted distinct Samoan traditions of ludic competition. Samoans drew on these practices – both their methods and meanings – to reimagine cricket as the transcultural game of kirikiti.

The transculturation of ‘English’ cricket

The game that Churchward and his compatriots introduced was a simple activity increasingly overlain with a series of complex rules governing movement and conduct.43 At its most

41 Krämer, The Samoa Islands, p. 382.
43 Note that this account describes the game as it was played in the 1870s and 1880s, rather than modern cricket. I am indebted to Narelle McGlusky’s extended discussion of cricket for this general passage. Narelle McGlusky, ‘The Willow and the Palm: an exploration of the role of cricket in Fiji’ (PhD diss., James Cook University, 2005).
basic level, a cricket match involved – as it still does – two sides, which take turns at batting and fielding. The batting side attempts to score ‘runs’ by hitting the ball and running between the wickets situated at each end of the pitch, or by hitting the ball to the boundary that sometimes surrounded the field of play.\textsuperscript{44} The fielding side aims to prevent runs being scored and to get the batsmen ‘out’ by effecting one of several forms of dismissal. The contest is overseen and adjudicated by two umpires, who occupy a position of unquestioned authority on the field. This apparently straightforward activity is marked, however, by a complex and heavily symbolic set of Laws. By obeying these rules players implicitly take on the social values associated with the game.\textsuperscript{45}

Although local variations abounded in the eighteenth century, several clubs in the South of England published rules for use in their own matches. The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) produced the most influential of these efforts in 1788, which are the antecedent of the Laws that govern the game today. While Derek Birley dismisses the notion that the MCC “at once, or even soon, became some kind of supreme governing body”,\textsuperscript{46} the wealth and prestige of its members meant that it assumed an authoritative position within twenty years. Between 1788 and 1835 the MCC Committee had delivered rulings regarding the dimensions and composition of bat, ball and wickets; and issued several edicts regarding what constituted a legal delivery.\textsuperscript{47} By the time the British introduced cricket to Samoa, the game’s rules of play – known as the Laws of the Game – were well established and understood, although several important regulations were only formalised in the 1884 Code of Laws.\textsuperscript{48}

While kirikiti of course departed from these Laws in a number of specific ways, there is little to be gained by cataloguing Samoan non-adherence to each of the 54 constituent Laws in the 1884 Code. Indeed, such an enterprise is rendered nonsensical by the contradictory nature of papalagi accounts, reflecting both a lack of rule standardisation in kirikiti and their frequent incomprehension of the game they were witnessing. Instead, we can better sketch kirikiti’s transcultural character by focusing on a few general features where local and introduced cultural practices were ‘mixed’ to create something new. Four such features are worthy of concerted

\textsuperscript{44} The boundary line was first mentioned in the 1884 MCC Code of Laws, although they were certainly in use for many years beforehand, probably to protect prominent spectators from injury. See Don Oslear, \textit{Wisden’s The Laws of Cricket} (London: Random House, 2000), pp. 19-20.


\textsuperscript{46} Derek Birley, \textit{A Social History of English Cricket} (London: Aurum, 1999), p. 48.

\textsuperscript{47} Derek Birley, \textit{A Social History of English Cricket}, pp. 64-67.

\textsuperscript{48} Before 1884, for instance, the number of players was only fixed at eleven-a-side by convention, while there was no strict ruling about the size of the ball. Previously only its weight had been set.
attention: modes of participation, apparel and techniques, the social context and festivities associated with the game, and the forfeit due to the victors.

**Participation**

For papalagi observers, kirikiti’s revised modes of participation constituted the most overt manifestation of the game’s transcultural character. By cricketing convention, sides comprised eleven players – even if this was only formalised in the 1884 edition of the Laws. At any one time, a cricket match would hence involve 11 fielders, two batsmen and two umpires on the field of play at any one time. In addition, the game was in the nineteenth century an overwhelmingly male domain. Women certainly played the game in England from at least 1745, and the first women’s club was established in 1887 by a group of noblewomen. For the most part, however, cricket in the nineteenth century was a ‘manly’ game; women were spectators and occasionally scorers, but rarely players. Certainly this was the case in Samoa, where papalagi women frequently partook in lawn tennis, fives and croquet – and occasionally polo – but almost never cricket.

In kirikiti, however, these formal and implicit restrictions were largely abandoned. As was the case in tagati’a, there was no set limit to the number of contestants. Teams were instead assembled according to social affiliation. In the largest matches – which closely paralleled the tavasaga described by Moyle and others – the participants could include every able-bodied man, woman and child from one village or district against those of another. In 1892, for example, a Mormon missionary complained that the entire village had decamped for the match, and that “every person from the oldest man that is able to bat down to the 4 year old baby” was required to bat and field. Those who were not present forfeited a pig. Social station was no defence against participation – even the most venerable matai, some who “could no more catch a ball than fly”, were expected to turn out and play as a sign of respect for the community.

The sheer scale of these inter-village matches gave rise to some of the more incredible reports of kirikiti. Donald Sloan, an American who visited Manu’a in the 1930s, claimed to have seen “as many as seven hundred men playing on the field at one time” – with twice that number

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49 According to Law 1, a game may by agreement be played between sides of more than, or fewer than, eleven players. Only eleven players are permitted to field at any one time, however.


51 A Ladies Cricket Club was formed at Apia in October 1922 but thereafter there is no record of its activities; it is likely that the Club was a short-lived venture. See ‘Local and General’, *Samoa Times*, 20 October 1922, p. 5.

52 Joseph H. Merrill, Journal entry for 18 January 1892, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PMB) 717: Merrill, Joseph H. - Journals, 1890-1903, Micro-MS-Col-08-0717, Australian National University (ANU), Canberra.

looking on. If Sloan’s account is probably exaggerated, the kirikiti field was certainly a crowded place. The two ‘in’ batsmen were joined at any one time by several umpires, a bowler and wicketkeeper at each end and any number of ‘runners’ – chosen for their speed and agility – who sprinted between the wickets while the batsmen stayed in their places. Fielders, moreover, stood so close together that run scoring – and indeed fielding – was very difficult. According to Arthur Mahaffy, who spent time in Samoa during the 1890s as one of a series of official postings in Oceania, the sight was an impressive one:

They took their places — all over the place — they could do nothing else; they formed a ring around the village square, they clustered thick in the slips, and some were cunningly placed among the surrounding cocoanut [sic] trees wherever there was a clear space into which a well-hit ball might drop.

Other matches were not played on quite so grand a scale. Even so, they usually featured the same principle of group affiliation and participation. In January 1893, for instance, the Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser drew attention to a ‘Matrons vs. Maidens’ match that had recently taken place at Vaiala, in which 16 married women challenged a side of 15 ‘single Fairies’ to a game. Karl W. Brewer, who served as a missionary in Samoa during the 1920s, similarly recalled that intra-village matches were played between teams comprising young, single men and the matai. Again, such contests were strongly reminiscent of the tagati’a matches played between “the divisions of a town” observed by the missionary George Brown in the 1860s and 1870s. Still other matches were played between ‘representative sides’. In 1893, for example, the Samoa Weekly Herald reported that a “lively cricket match” had taken place over the course of several days at Sogi, near Apia. A local side, led by the Samoan wives of two prominent European residents, emerged victorious against forty women and girls from a nearby district. Almost thirty years later Colonel Robert Ward Tate, who served as Administrator of Western Samoa from 1919 until 1923, was invited to attend a similar match between the women of Matautu village and Apia village. He described a game of “40 a side; women of all ages, heights, and sizes. Some ancient dames were

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55 As with many aspects of kirikiti, the number of runners involved at any one time seemed to vary from match to match. For example, Christian reports each batsman had “three or four” runners, while ‘A.W.T’ puts the number at “six to eight”. See F.W. Christian, ‘Cricket As She Is Played in Samoa’, Star, 15 May 1896, p. 4; ‘A.W.T’, ‘A Samoan Cricket Match’, Sydney Morning Herald, 30 November 1901, p. 7.
57 ‘Cricket’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 14 January 1893, p. 2.
very large and very fat, others were mere girls”. These episodes were entirely unexceptional – Samoan women and girls frequently participated in competitive inter-village kirikiti matches, albeit generally in female-only contests.

Indeed, the gendered dynamics of kirikiti merit further discussion. There is no immediately obvious explanation for why Samoan women took up the game so enthusiastically: cricket was an overwhelmingly male domain in late-nineteenth century England, while there is little evidence that Samoan women and girls participated in customary athletic pastimes such as tagati’a and pigeon netting that strongly informed kirikiti. Instead, they had their own games – including juggling games and a stick game called fiti where players aimed to flick a single stick clear of a pile – and assumed a leading role in the singing, dancing and antics that accompanied male athletic pastimes. On the one hand, this separation reflected the reciprocal and complementary social roles expected of men and women: masculinity was associated with aggression, independence and a capacity to protect, while reticence and dependence – and also sacred power – were coded as ‘feminine’. Given the martial insinuations of many customary games involving spears, darts and clubs, it is therefore not entirely surprising that girls and women did not play them. This clear demarcation between ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ pastimes did not discourage Samoan girls and women taking

61 Robert Ward Tate, Diary – 14 May 1919, MS-Papers-0264-44: Diary, Apr-Jul 1919, Robert Ward Tate Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), Wellington.
62 While early papalagi accounts made mention of various sporting endeavours, the only mention of female participation comes from George Turner, who claimed to have seen women involved in boxing contests. Turner, Samoa: A Hundred Years and Long Before, p. 126. While it is possible that foreigners systematically underreported or ignored women undertaking athletic pastimes, other sources suggest that most games were coded as male activities. For instance, Kipeni Su’apa’ia recalled that tagati’a was “played between the villages by all the male adults. The women are allowed to join in dancing and cheering”. Su’apa’ia, Samoa: The Polynesian Paradise, p. 61. This view of customary pastimes is confirmed by eyewitness accounts, which invariably describe such games being played by men only. See P. L. Violette, ‘Notes d’un missionnaire sur l’archipel de Samoa (Océanie centrale)’, Les Missions Catholiques 3:101 (27 May 1870), p. 174; C.F. Gordon-Cumming, ‘A Glimpse at Samoa’, The Wesleyan-Methodist magazine 105 (July 1882), p. 540; Willis, The Story of Laulii, pp. 144-145. Even legends and proverbial sayings feature male protagonists playing tagati’a and other customary games. See for example E. Schultz and Brother Herman, ‘Proverbial expressions of the Samoans (Continued)’, Journal of the Polynesian Society 59:3 (1950), pp. 226-227.
63 For accounts of juggling games played by women and girls, see Stair, Old Samoa, p. 138; Krämer, The Samoan Islands, p. 382. Te Rangi Hiroa gives the best description of fiti, which he refers to as ‘jackstraws’. See Te Rangi Hiroa, Samoan Material Culture, p. 563. For discussion of the different games played by young Samoan boys and girls in the mid- to late-twentieth century, see Lowell D. Holmes, Quest for the Real Samoa: The Mead-Freeman Controversy and Beyond (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey, 1987), pp. 74-75.
65 Women were not usually combatants in Samoan warfare. See for example Turner, Samoa: A Hundred Years and Long Before, p. 20. Robert Louis Stevenson, A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa (London: Cassell, 1892), p. 11.
part in kirikiti, however, possibly because of the game’s foreign origins and its lack of clear association with skills associated with traditionally masculine activities. Even so, the documentary evidence suggests that kirikiti matches were almost always divided along gendered lines.

Female participation in kirikiti, as players and in other roles, also reflected more general patterns in Samoan social life. The taupou – a ceremonial hostess of chiefly descent who formally received and entertained visitors in a village – took a leading role in inter-village matches, preparing the kava or ‘ava, a narcotic drink reserved for such important social occasions. This echoed her earlier role in customary Samoan athletic contests. The taupou’s elevated social position was also reflected in women’s kirikiti matches in the late-nineteenth century, where she often led the women of the village against rival sides. As with contests between matai and untitled men within a village, ‘matrons versus maidens’ matches reflected existing social divisions within a village. In particular, it is likely that they delineated the aualuma – a group comprising the sisters and daughters of local men – from those women who had ‘married into’ the village.

Even as the influence of missionaries and colonisation reshaped their role in the twentieth century, women’s groups continued to play an important part in Samoan village life – including entertaining and providing hospitality for visiting parties in kirikiti. Indeed, writing in the 1970s, Penelope Schoeffel remarked that the role of women’s groups in sourcing uniforms for large kirikiti matches demonstrated the continuity of the aualuma’s traditional role in inter-village hospitality. Throughout the twentieth century, moreover, women’s matches remained a site where girls and women could partake in ribaldry and suggestive choreography – behaviour that was common in pre-Christian Samoa but which has been increasingly circumscribed by post-Christian strictures on female exhibitionism. In sum, therefore, women’s participation in kirikiti as players, entertainers...

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71 In 1919, for instance, Colonel Robert Ward Tate witnessed a women’s match in which the team’s leader led her side in a series of comedic choreographed manoeuvres. He described her as “a bit of a wag, quite a comedy lady”. Tate, Diary – 14 May 1919, MS-Papers-0264-44, ATL. Jeanette Mageo, who conducted fieldwork in Samoa in the 1980s, observed that this kind of bawdy humour was now only permissible in the context of girls’ cricket games. On each side, one player would – upon the fall of an opposition wicket – blow a whistle and make a choreographic joke to be imitated by her team. This role was frequently occupied by a fa’afine – a male who dresses, acts and identifies as a woman. Mageo relates that one such fa’afine who played for the Leone cricket team in American Samoa “was notorious for her choreographic jokes”. Jeanette Mageo, ‘Male Transvestism and Cultural Change in Samoa’, *American Ethnologist* 19:3 (1992), pp. 443-459, especially p. 455.
and hosts reflected notions of gendered behaviour and group membership – even as these ideas were reformulated over the course of the period of study and beyond.

These Samoan modes of group participation can be thought of as the first dimension of kirikiti’s transculturality. Just as Pratt points to the Andean spatial symbolism in Guaman Poma’s ‘European’ line drawings, it is clear that Samoans transposed onto cricket their own understandings of group membership and belonging. Conventions regarding participation in English cricket were shaped by the particular context in which the game arose and developed. The division of labour within a team reflected the game’s origins in England – commoners served as fielders and bowlers, while the positions of leading batsman and captain were reserved for gentlemen. Indeed, cricket’s ties to commerce, politics, patronage and an urbanising society shaped the game’s standardisation; wealthy gentlemen players began demanding standardised rules and playing numbers in the mid-eighteenth century so they could place sizeable wagers with confidence.72 As Allen Guttmann has argued about modern sports in general, the standardisation of team numbers and rules also reflected a broader ‘modernisation’ of traditional games that took place in Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.73 These complex socio-economic forces were not replicated in Samoa, however, where identity was framed by fa’a Samoa relationships. By configuring participation along the lines of kin, village and social group affiliation, therefore, Samoans reoriented cricket to better reflect their own social reality.74 This act of ‘mixing in’ local elements and understandings was the first of several steps to creating a new, transcultural practice – kirikiti.

**Equipment and techniques**

Participation was only the first such aspect of transculturation, however. The techniques deployed in the game – and the equipment used to play it – also reflected Samoan ludic traditions, expectations and locally available materials. English cricket was in the 1880s a slow-moving game pregnant with decorum and conventions about the ‘correct’ way to play – an observation that largely holds true today. These characteristics were evident in batting and bowling. A bowler would deliver the ball in sets of four, called an over.75 At the end of each over, another bowler would begin a new over the other end after the fielding side and umpires changed positions; the batsmen would

75 The number of balls in an over changed to five in 1889, then to six in 1900.
stay in their positions. The ball was hence relatively infrequently ‘live’ in play and refreshment breaks were taken often.

Cricketing equipment and attire also shaped the game’s dynamics. The ball contained a cork core, tightly wound with string and covered by leather, while bats were by the mid-1800s of a similar shape to their modern equivalent and made from English willow. Their width and length were restricted to less than 4 ¼ and 38 inches respectively.76 The hard leather ball meant that batsmen and wicketkeepers wore additional protective equipment in the form of pads and gloves. Bowling techniques changed markedly in the nineteenth century, but bowlers generally aimed to deliver the ball so that it bounced, or ‘pitched’, a few yards before reaching the batsman.77 This approach brought the vagaries of the pitch into play. As a result of this approach to bowling, batsmen usually stepped forward and employed a vertical swing of the bat to counter the bounce off the pitch. This allowed them to protect their wickets or drive the ball through the covers for runs. Balls that pitched outside the leg stump were ignored. Indeed, driving through the off-side was considered the only ‘correct’ manner of scoring until at least the 1880s – to hit ‘to leg’ was considered ungentlemanly.78 These conventions meant that cricket in the late-nineteenth century was a relatively sedate game with strongly defined conventions about how runs were scored that restricted the game’s pace and variety.

In Samoa, however, the apparatus and technique required for the game were rapidly adapted to produce a contest better attuned to Samoan expectations of play and the natural materials available. Rather than a single bowler delivering an over from one end, Samoans allowed the ball to be bowled from whichever end it was returned to by the fielders, such that the ball remained ‘live’ as often as possible.79 This pursuit of sustained action was aided by changes to the bat and ball. Creating the ball involved bleeding a rubber tree and winding, layer after layer, the coagulated juice to make a sphere of raw rubber.80 The resulting ball (polo) was not as heavy or hard as its leather counterpart, which allowed kirikiti players to disregard pads and gloves entirely. The rubber ball also meant that Samoans could look beyond English willow in procuring their bats. Local woods were carved into distinctively shaped bats (pate) that papalagi variously described as resembling

79 For an account that stresses this feature of kirikiti, see A.W.T., ‘A Samoan Cricket Match’, _Sydney Morning Herald_, 30 November 1901, p. 7.
’war clubs’, baseball bats or even broomsticks. When the New Zealand Administrator Robert Ward Tate examined several bats during a match, for instance, he found that they were made of very light wood, flat on the batting side, and round on the other side, about four inches wide at the base tapering away to about 2 inches at the top of the handle and without any shoulder like we have on our bats. The club was about 4 inches thick at the thickest part, the handle was all bound with sinnet, which gave a good grip, and the instrument was about four feet long.\(^8\)

The use of these long, light bats and the rubber ball resulted in a revised *modus operandi* for both bowlers and batsmen. The shape and length of kirikiti bats – they exceeded most cricket bats by more than a foot – rendered them entirely unsuitable for the English style of batting. A vertical swing of the bat was almost impossible and so defensive shots with a ‘straight bat’ were abandoned in favour of a method closer to a baseball swing. The aim was to hit each and every delivery as far as possible – ideally into the vegetation surrounding the field – so as to avoid the massed fielders. As the LMS missionary Victor Barradale noted, “You cannot cut and snick and place, and drive beautifully along the ground. It is all a matter of ”slogging,” and the one who can slog the highest and furthest gets the biggest scores”\(^8\). Indeed, papalagi routinely disparaged Samoan batting as ‘slogging’, ‘swiping’ and ‘heaving’. In the context of kirikiti, however, orthodox cricket technique was as inimical to the ‘spirit’ of the game as Samoan batsmanship would have been to an Oxford Blue. Arthur Mahaffy found this point neatly illustrated when he joined a game of kirikiti – probably with a more traditional bat:

The contempt of the natives for anyone so unsporting as not to try to hit a six off everything was politely veiled, and their wonder that anyone should think of placing the end of his bat on the ground was openly expressed. None the less they were polite in their congratulations, and admitted that ideas of how to play cricket might vary in different countries.\(^8\)

Bowling also departed from cricketing orthodoxy. Pitching the ball ‘on a length’ was not likely to get a wicket due to the extra bounce of the rubber polo, which would take it over the stumps or into the arc of a fierce bat swing. Instead, the principal method was to bowl – or indeed throw – the ball as fast as possible and land it at ‘yorker’ length at the feet of the batsman or batswoman.\(^8\) These deliveries were difficult to hit with the long, thin bat, quite aside from avoiding the ubiquitous fielders. As a result, wickets fell regularly and the game moved at a brisk pace.

These changes in style and tempo, not to mention bat and ball, constituted a striking departure from English cricket. It is important to recognise, moreover, that they were not merely superficial. As was the case with participation, these revisions allowed Samoans to express local

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\(^8\) Tate, Diary – 14 May 1919, MS-Papers-0264-44, ATL.
\(^8\) Mahaffy, ‘Cricket in Samoan’, p. 396.
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 393; F.W. Christian, ‘Cricket As She Is Played In Samoa’, *Star*, 15 May 1896, p. 4.
‘values and aspirations’ in a way that ‘English cricket’ could not. In particular, Samoans utilised local materials and altered the game in ways that encouraged unceasing play and excitement. As Tasileta Te’evale has noted about modern kirikiti in New Zealand, “the ball, the bowlers and the fielders are moving constantly” to guarantee “maximum involvement and maximum action”.85 This same essential feature was apparent to one papalagi observer in the 1940s, who marvelled that while the speed of English cricket “compet[e]d with chess”, the tempo and entertainment associated with the Samoan game meant it was “more like a non-stop revue”.86 Altering the game in these ways, therefore, can be understood as part of broader Samoan efforts to create a new, more culturally resonant sporting form.

Attendant elements and social context

It was not the game itself, however, that inspired descriptions of kirikiti as a ‘revue’. Instead, papalagi observers were struck by the game’s attendant elements: singing, dancing and clowning by spectators and players; feasting and ceremony; and the payment of enormous forfeits. Such conduct was incongruous with contemporary English cricket but wholly consonant with fa’a Samoa. ‘Correct’ conduct as defined by Victorian society was an integral part of playing and watching cricket. Indeed, cricket’s advocates in the nineteenth century evinced great pride that the game remained relatively free of the “vicious rivalry and bad sportsmanship” that had corrupted football and other sports.87 They attributed the persistence of ‘good manners’ and self-restraint on the field to the traditional authority that resided with gentlemen amateur captains.

Crowd behaviour was, in general, similarly restrained. Although cricket crowds in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were frequently boisterous and even violent, by the 1870s English spectatorship could be described as reserved and orderly. Guttmann characterises cricket crowds in Victorian England as “usually quite civilised”, while Keith Sandiford compares them favourably to contemporary crowds at other sporting contests.88 By convention, English spectators showed their appreciation for good play with polite applause and ‘studied silence’ rather than more

85 Te’evale, ‘We are what we play’, p. 219.
86 Gibbings, Over the Reefs, p. 78.
exuberant displays of support. 89 Whereas many scholars attribute this ‘passive’ style of spectatorship to cricket’s ‘nature’ as a slow-moving game without physical contact, Dominic Malcolm argues that the obverse is true: “it is the behaviour of the spectators which makes for the quiet and decorum stereotypically characteristic of the English game”. 90 Instead, he attributes Victorian cricket’s quiet and decorous model of spectatorship to cricketing crowds’ increasing class-exclusiveness, as well as changes in the game – particularly the introduction of boundaries during the 1860s – that created an increasingly clear demarcation between participants and non-participants. Whatever the cause, by the time cricket was introduced to Samoans this dominant mode of quiet and passive cricketing spectatorship had been ‘invented’ and the older tradition deliberately ‘forgotten’.

If the Victorians had succeeded in delineating ‘active’ participants and ‘passive’ spectators, Samoans quickly dismantled these boundaries. They also drew on the attendant features of fa’a Samoa social gatherings to imbue kirikiti with a carnival-like atmosphere. Early papalagi accounts indicate that visits between Samoan villages frequently featured singing and dancing, plentiful food, magniloquent speeches, gift exchange and the ceremonial drinking of kava. 91 These activities were, of course, an important part of Samoan sporting contests. In his study of Samoan material culture, Te Rangi Hiroa commented that competitors and spectators at customary contests “feasted as the foundation of enjoyment”, while singing and dancing augmented the festive nature of the occasion. 92

Indeed, many Samoan games had particular songs and dances associated with them, to be performed by both players and spectators. In tagati’a, for example, Moyle observed numerous songs that encouraged a good throw or taunted an opponent. When one player was preparing to throw,

Other members and supporters of the team sat together… and provided dances and singing to spur on their fellows’ efforts… [meanwhile] the other party might also resort to providing sudden distractions at the very last moment of throwing, to put off the thrower or spoil his effort. 93

89 Note that this asserted norm was not necessarily observed elsewhere in the Empire, or indeed in some parts of England. ‘Barracking’ and other forms of active crowd behaviour were common in Yorkshire, Australia and the Caribbean. See Richard Cashman, ‘Cricket and Colonialism: Colonial Hegemony and Indigenous Subversion?’, in J.A. Mangan (ed.), Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British culture and sport at home and abroad, 1700-1914 (London: Frank Cass, 1988), pp. 266-270; Mike Huggins and Jack Williams, Sport and the English, 1918-1939: Between the Wars (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 106-107.
92 Te Rangi Hiroa, Samoan Material Culture, p. 574.
According to Te Rangi Hiroa, these distracting antics – known as *lape* – constituted an integral part of the game. In order to lead and coordinate such efforts, each team was led by an individual whose principal role was to “exhort and encourage his team from the other end”. He was “usually a mediocre player, but a humourist gifted with eloquence and an adept at posturing and grimacing”. If his team won a point, he would transmit the good news “by wild capers and the yell of ‘Mauia!’ (meaning a point)”, which was repeated by his side. Indeed, fa’a Samoa festivities regularly featured humorists of this ilk, particularly when they were attended by important figures. As a result of such features, tagati’a and other communal sporting contests were loud, joyful occasions in which both contestants and spectators were ‘active’ participants.

These roisterous modes of play and spectating strongly informed kirikiti. According to Mahaffy, a match he attended in the 1890s opened with speeches in which the hosts welcomed their visiting side “with every epithet of courtesy… and with devoutly expressed wishes that the game might proceed without dispute, in harmony and happiness, and for the pleasure of spectators”. After the visitors returned thanks a preliminary feast was held. Thereafter the match commenced only to break for a second meal “on the usual lavish scale of Samoan entertainment”. This arrangement continued for four days, with a two-hour ‘refreshment’ interval during the day’s play followed by a more substantial feast in the evenings. The Irish author Robert Gibbings observed similar festivities at a tournament organised to mark the opening of a new kirikiti pitch at Saluafata on Upolu. The first day of the meet was entirely devoted to “an elaborate pageantry” including fooling by the *faʻaluma* (jesters), dancing and marching. The day also included “vast presentations of food and much speech-making, praying, and hymn singing”. In total, Gibbings estimated that over two thousand people had gathered for the festival.

Singing and dancing were not limited to the evening festivities, however. As in games such as tagati’a, both players and spectators participated in song and dance during the kirikiti match itself. The batting side and their followers would dance and sing to a rhythmic drumbeat in order to encourage their side. This performance was so ‘vigorous’ at one match in 1919 that Colonel Tate wondered if a batting side could “possibly be rested by their cessation from fielding”. Fielding was indeed a physically taxing prospect in the tropical heat. As well as the process of retrieving and catching the ball, fielders were expected to partake in frequent singing and celebrations at the fall of

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97 Gibbings, *Over the Reefs*, p. 80.
98 Tate, ‘Diary – 17 May 1919’, MS-Papers-0264-44, ATL.
a wicket, or sometimes even when a ball was bowled without a run being scored. Referring to the same match, Tate wryly remarked, “the effort in the antics was really greater than the effort in the cricket”. In fact, these antics were an important part of the game itself. As was the case in tagati’a, dancing and singing were used to distract the opposing side. Edgar Brien Blake, a Methodist missionary in the 1920s, recalled that the young women in a side would seek to “disconcert the opposing batsmen” through “vivacious movements in the direct line of the batsman’s vision”. He called this the lapelape or “dance of bad luck”. Indeed, the word appears to be derived from lape, which the missionary George Pratt defined in the 1870s as the act of sitting and wishing bad luck to the opposite party in tagati’a.

The fielding side was led in these endeavours by an individual variously described in papalagi accounts as a ‘captain’, ‘choir master’ or ‘clown’. As in tagati’a, this individual was charged with encouraging his or her side, disparaging their opponents and maintaining standards on the field. At the fall of a wicket, for instance, the fielders would turn to the ‘captain’ and follow his or her example. This performance could entail anything from sitting down and clapping rhythmically to more exuberant actions such as dancing, jumping high into the air and yelling, or even crawling on all fours barking like a dog. Displays of derision towards opponents were not unheard of either. Tate described one occasion where, on a signal from their captain, the fielding side “all rushed to where the opposing team were seated, fell on the ground in front of them and then poked out their tongues in derision”. Such accounts are by no means uncommon, and indeed papalagi observers devoted a great deal of attention to these efforts due to their radical incongruity with conventions of player behaviour in English cricket. As well as coordinating cheering and ‘sledging’, the captain also ensured fielding standards were maintained. According to a New Zealand visitor to Samoa in the 1890s, the principal method was for this ‘merry-andrew’ character to arm himself with a long cane, “which he industriously plies to the back of the fielder unlucky enough to miss a catch”.

101 In modern kirikiti, this is analogous to the faiaoga, who leads the cheering and ‘sledging’ in a team. See, for example, ‘New Zealand Kilikiti Association, ‘History of Kilikiti’, http://www.sportsground.co.nz/kilikiti_nz_international/81369/ (accessed 10 February 2015).
102 ‘Christianity in Samoa’, West Australian, 9 September 1931, p. 11.
103 Tate, Diary – 17 May 1919, MS-Papers-0264-44, ATL.
104 ‘A Trip to the South Seas’, Supplement to the New Zealand Herald, 8 February 1896.
an official unknown in English cricket [who] presided over the field armed with a long and business-like-looking whip, which he used quite relentlessly upon the backs and legs of any fieldsman who did not do his part well.105

The same practice was also described by a series of New Zealand soldiers who spent time in Samoa after 1914.106

Mahaffy was right – the role of this ‘official’ owed nothing to English cricket, but everything to the fa’a Samoa tradition of ‘clowning’ at social and sporting occasions. While Samoans were clearly excited by cricket’s possibilities, they were also determined to absorb the game on their terms. Much the same was true of Samoan approaches to ‘active’ spectatorship, and the attendant activities of feasting, speechmaking, singing and dancing that accompanied large matches. Samoans rendered this alien practice familiar by wrenching cricket away from Victorian expectations regarding spectatorship and decorous conduct. This departure from Victorian modes of social conduct did not always lend itself to a more convivial game, however. Kirikiti also served as a vehicle for settling pre-existing rivalries and grievances between villages and districts, and papalagi accounts suggest contests on the pitch sometimes precipitated more serious confrontations involving violence and property destruction.107

If such violence was generally the exception, it was also indicative of a more general shift in cricket’s social meaning in Samoa. Cricket’s great strength, its admirers claimed, was that it fostered “a friendly feeling between parties at other times widely separated, and that without destroying the respect and deference due to rank and wealth”.108 For Samoans, however, the game served very different purposes; it hence had to be aligned with their own expectations of what recreation should be – a communal affair filled with song, dance, laughter and action. In their hands, moreover, the kirikiti pitch also became a space where rivalries could be played out – for the most part without resorting to violence. As was the case in Poma’s New Chronicle, therefore, the

107 For examples of violence and property destruction arising from kirikiti matches, see ‘Malietoa Signs the Treaty’, Morning Call, 11 May 1890, p. 8; ‘Amenities of Samoan Cricket’, Samoan Weekly Herald, 25 March 1893, p. 2; ‘An Extraordinary Affair at Samoa’, Sydney Morning Herald, 5 March 1900, p. 8; Lorena MacIntryre Quinn, ‘America’s South Sea Soldiers’, National Geographic 36:3 (September 1919), p. 272; Nelson Eustis, Aggie Grey of Samoa (Adelaide: Hobby Investments, 1979), pp. 89-90; and J. Tim O’Meara, Samoan planters: tradition and economic development in Polynesia (Fort Worth, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1990), pp. 120-125. Although it describes events in the 1980s, O’Meara’s account provides useful insight into the circumstances that could lead to such violence – as well as the mechanisms in place to enact reconciliation between the parties.
108 Delabere P. Blaine, An encyclopaedia of rural sports: or a complete account, historical, practical, and descriptive, of hunting, shooting, fishing, racing, and other field sports and athletic amusements of the present day (London: Orme, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1840), p. 134.
interweaving of these local elements into a metropolitan cultural form created a recognisably transcultural practice.

The forfeit

This thesis considers one further aspect of kirikiti’s transcultural character: the institution of a ‘forfeit’ – usually a combination of degrading tasks and a more formal ‘food fine’, or fa’a’ai – owed by the losing side. As much as any feature of kirikiti, papalagi did not understand the forfeit at all well. In their accounts of kirikiti and other Samoan athletic contests, papalagi presented this practice as a form of gambling and subjected it to opprobrium and proscription. Evangelical missionaries took particular umbrage at these wagers, which they saw as a form of stealing because ‘winnings’ were obtained without giving goods or services in return. This was inimical to the Evangelical ethic of self-improvement though diligent hard work.109 More generally, papalagi lamented the apparent waste of produce involved in such forfeits. ‘Britishers’ also saw in this Samoan practice a reflection of the sport’s past, before it was reformed and redeemed in the nineteenth century.110

By the time the game was introduced to Samoa, gambling on cricket matches was actively discouraged in England. This was not always the case, however. Indeed, the unwelcome place of gambling in cricket was transformed along similar lines to accepted modes of spectatorship and player conduct. Although gambling was practised across class lines, it was a particular passion of the English upper classes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Prominent nobles wagered extraordinary sums of money on early cricket matches; one match in 1735 involving the Earls of Dorset and Middlesex, for instance, was played for £1000 per side.111 During the nineteenth century, however, cricket became the ‘sport of the middle class’ and gambling was increasingly disavowed. Bookmakers were probably excluded from the Lord’s pavilion during the 1820s, while James Pycroft described gambling as “A Dark Chapter in the History of Cricket” in 1851.112

110 For concerns over time wasting, see for example Tate, Diary – 14 May 1919, MS-Papers-0264-44, ATL. For instances of papalagi alarm at this apparent gambling, see for example George Cousins, ‘The Past and Present of Samoa’, The Sunday at home: a family magazine for Sabbath reading 1835 (29 June 1889), pp. 410-411.
112 Malcolm, ‘Cricket Spectator Disorder’, p. 32.
Sandiford argues that this was because Victorians played cricket as much “for their spiritual and mental regeneration” as for their enjoyment. Victorian puritanism thus demanded that cricket be ‘cleansed’ of its Georgian impurities, particularly corruption and gambling.  

For Samoans, however, the payment of a forfeit was a part of any sporting contest. Indeed, its presence extended well beyond games. In his influential compendium of Samoan vocabulary and grammar, Pratt defined the word as both a “forfeit of food paid by the loser of a game” and the “forced contributions of food given to the malo [the conquering party in a conflict]”. The concept of a forfeit paid to the victor – sporting or otherwise – was thus well established in Samoa and furnished the accounts of many papalagi who witnessed Samoan games. The early missionary John B. Stair, for instance, recalled that the winning side in taloga – a spear throwing game – was owed a food prize, “as in most other games”. George Turner, who also served as a missionary for the LMS in the 1840s and 1850s, wrote that the practice was observed even in games of rhyming and repeating ‘tongue-twisters’.  

Formal tagati’a encounters between villages or districts were also settled by the payment of a ‘food fine’. According to Moyle, the details of the forfeit – which was usually equivalent to a full meal for each of the victors – would be finalised before the match and a time limit set for payment thereof. On the appointed date, the losing side would return and the food would be distributed throughout the village after the requisite speeches and ceremony. The food fine itself was only the formal denouement of a more general penalty, however. In the immediate aftermath of a game, the losers were obliged to obey every request and demand of their conquerors. As told by Lauli’i Willis, the daughter of a prominent chief, the victors would delight in teasing the defeated party and impose on them a series of “queer ideas” and ridiculous tasks. A weak or thin man on the losing side, for instance, could be made to “carry some great fat man down to the river side to bathe”.  

As was the case with other attendant activities and ceremonial aspects of fa’a Samoa games, the forfeit was adopted as an integral part of kirikiti. Even in intra-village games some kind of penalty seems often to have been imposed on the losing side. A papalagi traveller in the early twentieth century describes watching the losing side performing “a step dance on the grass” for

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115 Stair, Old Samoa, p. 137.
116 Turner, Samou, A Hundred Years Ago And Long Before, pp. 131-132.
117 Moyle, ‘An Account of the Game of Tagati’a’, p. 239.
118 Willis, The Story of Laulii, p. 145.
their opponents. The Mormon missionary Karl Brewer similarly observed that matches between the young, single men of the village and the matai involved a forfeit of this kind. Indeed, in his account the young men spent a good deal of time debating which arduous chores they should impose on their opponents.120

For large inter-village matches, however, the stakes were much higher. As in tagati’a and other Samoan games, the forfeit in these contests contained both an informal and formal component. Immediately after the game was finished, speeches were given and the losing side was obliged to perform for the amusement of the victors. This often took the form of dancing, but also extended submitting to jocular insults and undertaking degrading tasks.121 For example, in 1892 Joseph Carpenter witnessed a tulafale [talking chief] of one losing side “rolling over until he reached their flag which he then took on his hands & knees to the victorious side of Saleaula”. Thereafter two other players “carried their bats over, making out they were very heavy & made gestures accordingly”.122 Donald Sloan reported a similar scene after a match on Manu’a in the 1930s. In his account, the teams faced one another so that each person faced someone of equivalent social rank. The losing side then stoically accepted a barrage of verbal taunts and about their lack of skill, “accompanied by spontaneous but well-placed slaps and blows to the face and body”. The victors then commanded them to perform a series of humiliating tasks.

One player, who Sloan describes as having been “somewhat of a loud-mouth bully all during the game”, was made to fetch an especially fat pig and rub noses with it. Other penalties included players being made to “stand on their heads until they dropped”, having to “drink an even dozen ripe coconuts”, and being sent “shuffling around the square on all fours, displaying a canine interest in various tree trunks”. The ‘crowning’ insult was served in the post-match meal, which saw the losers having “both to furnish the food and wait upon the victors hand and foot all during the meal. Not until they were finished could the losers eat”.123 These antics were only ‘play hazing’, however. As in other Samoan contests, a large payment of food and other items constituted the official forfeit. These food-fines were significant, although their size was probably exaggerated in some papalagi accounts. F.W. Christian, for instance, claimed that one eighty-a-side match saw two

120 Brewer, Armed With the Spirit, pp. 86-87.
122 Carpenter, Diary – 14 January 1892, MSS 349, vol. 2, MMD.
123 Sloan, Polynesian Paradise, pp. 219-221.
thousand fish and two thousand taro roots change hands.\textsuperscript{124} By the turn of the twentieth century, papalagi foodstuffs – particularly kegs of corned beef – were a regular unit of wagers in kirikiti games.\textsuperscript{125} Numerous papalagi accounts indicate that the kirikiti bats, balls and uniforms of the vanquished side were also frequently included in the forfeit.\textsuperscript{126}

As was the case with other Samoan influences, the forfeit demonstrated a conspicuous usurpation of contemporary cricketing convention and practice. Ubiquitous hazing sat uneasily with the Victorian ideal of stoicism in victory and defeat, while enormous food wagers were inconsonant with contemporaneous attitudes toward gambling in the game. ‘Mixing in’ these local practices therefore signified both a more general ‘Samoanisation’ of cricket’s method and also its meaning. While it would be a mistake to view cricketing culture in Victorian times as homogenous, the weight of historical evidence confirms that puritanical attitudes surrounding ‘correct’ conduct and gambling in the late-19\textsuperscript{th} century were intimately bound up in cricket’s increasingly English middle-class morality.\textsuperscript{127} While gambling and indecorous conduct might have occasionally occurred, Victorians clearly understood and acknowledged that such behaviour was ‘not cricket’. This Victorian morality made little sense, however, in the context of Samoan social practices and modes of behaviour pertaining to contest and rivalry. Far from being a mere appendage to cricket, therefore, the forfeit in kirikiti constituted a fundamental challenge to the introduced game’s function. As such, it can be placed alongside changes in participation, equipment, techniques and attendant social activities as a significant dimension of kirikiti’s transculturality.

**Continuity, change and kirikiti’s transculturality**

The above discussion demonstrates that the changes to kirikiti’s method were general and profound. Kirikiti’s genesis and development was not quite as simple as ‘mixing’ English cricket and Samoan antecedents, however. Following Orbitz’s analogy of transculturation, kirikiti was a stew with more than just two ingredients. Indeed, as Churchward noted, many of the innovations in

\textsuperscript{124} F.W. Christian, ‘Cricket As She Is Played In Samoa’, *Star*, 15 May 1896, p. 4.


\textsuperscript{126} See for example, Mahaffy, ‘Cricket in Samoa’, p. 395; Tate, Diary – 24 May 1919, MS-Papers-0264-44, ATL.; George Irwin, ‘Samoan Odyssey – 1’, *Blackwood’s Magazine* 293 (March 1963), pp. 225-226.

\textsuperscript{127} Certainly contemporaneous observers and recent scholarship considered this rejection of gambling – and other markers of ‘respectable’ and subdued conduct – to be synonymous with cricket as opposed to other sports. This was most notable in comparisons between crowd and player behaviour in cricket and association football, which was associated with violence and unbecoming social conduct. Even if players and spectators did not always live up to cricket’s exacting standards of conduct, moreover, that they should do so was almost universally accepted. For further discussion see Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*, pp. 144-145; Wray Vamplew, ‘Sports Crowd Disorder in Britain, 1870-1914: Causes and Controls’, *Journal of Sport History* 7:1 (1980), p. 11, pp. 15-16; Sandiford, ‘Cricket and the Victorian Society’, pp. 303-317, especially pp. 303-304.
kirikiti were actually of Tongan origin and only emerged in Samoa after cricket was regulated in Tonga. Orbitz’s notion of a ‘still-cooking’ stew with variable flavour and consistency also speaks to the ways that kirikiti continued to change during the period of study and indeed beyond it. Kirikiti was neither static nor monolithic, and the apparently neat divide between cricket and kirikiti was often blurred by contests that included elements of both games. On one occasion in 1891, for instance, the British naval ship Cordelia spent several weeks at Apia, during which time the crew played a series of cricket matches against “the natives of Vaiala” in which the locals “used clubs instead of bats”.

Such fluidity is also evident in kirikiti’s continued capacity to absorb outside influences and innovations. This ongoing adaptation was evident to an American journalist as early as 1919, when she noted that the inhabitants on the island of Tutuila had recently incorporated the ‘Serpentine Dance’ – a staple of stage shows and early films in America and Europe – into their post-match celebrations. As members of the Samoan diaspora practice it, moreover, kirikiti has been altered in more substantive ways. In New Zealand, for example, kirikiti gradually became a “serious, competitive sport” with adherents drawn from the country’s different Oceanic communities. A set of mutually intelligible ‘compromise rules’ were first drawn up in the late-1980s to encourage participation by Samoans, Cook Islanders, Tongans and Niueans. These were subsequently revised and a professional league established in 2001.

For all these changes – Samoan, Tongan, American or otherwise – Churchward was nevertheless mistaken to claim that all that remained of cricket was “the practice of one man bowling a ball to another man trying to hit it”. Samoans may have altered cricket to suit their own expectations and social context, but this ‘mixing’ was a selective exercise rather than wholesale rejection. Where cricket was consonant with Samoan expectations and goals, they were unlikely to change the game. In his description of kirikiti, ‘A.W.T.’ facetiously suggested that the initial Samoan interest in cricket could be explained by its accordance with Samoan sensibilities:

The running about and batting, the inevitable shouting, inevitable even in the best regulated matches, the opportunities for sleep afforded to the side that was not fielding, and the prescribed luncheon hour, appealed to them irresistibly.

Although ‘A.W.T.’ was almost certainly writing in jest, part of cricket’s attraction certainly did lie in its redolence of Samoan recreational activities and – more importantly – their social functions.

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128 Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith, Diary – 7 to 14 May 1891, MSX-2759: Diary (1891), Cusack-Smith, Thomas Berry (Sir), 1859-1929: Papers, MS-Group-0066, ATL.
129 Quinn, ‘America’s South Sea Soldiers’, p. 274.
Perhaps a more apposite illustration of this, however, was the retention of cricket’s implicit reverence for authority. Among other ways, these values were manifest in cricket through the privileged role of the captain, who invariably held a higher social rank than the other players, and the inviolable authority of umpires. Cricket had numerous mechanisms for demarcating social status. Bowling and fielding was the (often paid) work of commoners, while gentlemen amateurs held the positions of lead batsman and especially captain.\footnote{Andrew Smith, ‘Beyond a Boundary’ (of a ‘Field of Cultural Production’): Reading C.L.R. James with Bourdieu’, \textit{Theory, Culture & Society}, vol. 23, no. 4, 2006, p. 105.} Captains selected the side, determined the order of batting, set the field, decided which bowlers to use and were responsible for their side’s conduct on the field. The captain therefore commanded absolute authority, whether or not he was a competent player. Although this distinction would have been less pronounced in Samoa, an officer always captained the XI of a visiting British warship. The position of umpires was similarly sacrosanct. By convention, the captains together agreed on two umpires to be the sole arbiters over whether a batsman was out or not. Their judgement was not to be questioned or challenged, even implicitly. Indeed Abraham Bass, the so-called ‘father of Midlands cricket’, reminded the ‘rising generation’ of cricketers of this truth in his 1849 address: “the cricketer must obey the laws, and never question the judgement either of his captain or the umpire; a revolutionary spirit not being more subversive of kingdoms than of cricket clubs”\footnote{Abraham Bass, cited in ‘The Game of Cricket’, \textit{The Sporting Review}, October 1865, p. 296.}

These lessons were, of course, concordant with the fa’a Samoa framework of behaviour and the respect afforded to matai and the fono. Indeed, large inter-village tagati’a matches were preceded by a formal kava drinking ceremony at which speeches were made and the particulars of the match – such as the points required for a win, the size of sides, and prizes – were established by the respective matai.\footnote{Richard Moyle, ‘An Account of the Game of Tagati’a’, pp. 235-239.} Sloan and other observers described a strikingly similar procedure at kirikiti matches played between two villages or districts.\footnote{Sloan, \textit{Polynesian Paradise}, pp. 216-217; Lewis R. Freeman, ‘Cricket in Samoa’, \textit{The Mid-Pacific Magazine}, April 1922, p. 347.} Matai also played an important role in maintaining order when disagreements led to arguments and fights. In 1919, for instance, a fight broke out after a spectator had the temerity to question an umpire’s decision. Punches and stones were thrown before chiefs from both sides stepped in to calm proceedings. After some consideration they fined the principal perpetrators a pig each and then arranged a feast to celebrate the reconciliation.\footnote{‘Affray in Samoa’, \textit{New Zealand Herald}, 29 November 1919, p. 12.}
The position of umpires was similarly consonant with Samoan expectations regarding traditional authority. In inter-village kirikiti matches, several umpires known as *fa’amasinos* (judges) were chosen from the elders of both sides to oversee important games. During the course of the match, any doubtful decision was decided after consultation among the umpires. According to Mahaffy, their authority was reflected in their decorous conduct and the respect afforded their decisions:

> Upon a question arising as to whether a batsman was run out, and on an appeal to the umpires, that august body advanced to the centre of the pitch and proceeded, with every ceremonious form and title of honour given to the opposing party, to deliver themselves of their opinion. The decisions, although they took some time to arrive at, seemed fair, and were always accepted by the players and spectators.137

Mahaffy’s impression was confirmed by F.W. Christian, a British lexicographer who lived in Samoa for several years in the 1890s. Despite some “rather peculiar” interpretations, he mused, disputed decisions were virtually unknown.138 In this way, the respect afforded to umpires in English cricket was recast in kirikiti as confirmation of customary authority in Samoan life.

This approach to authority reflects the broader attitude Samoans took in reimagining cricket as kirikiti. The implicit respect afforded to umpires and captains made sense within the underlying logic of fa’a Samoa, and so these institutions were adopted in something like their original expression. Other aspects of cricket’s method – participation, the style of play and attendant elements and the forfeit – accorded less neatly with local expectations, and so these were reconfigured. By both adopting *and* adapting cricket, therefore, Samoans placed fa’a Samoa at the centre of the game. Indeed, at the hands of Samoans cricket was refashioned and played such that it actively strengthened the fa’a Samoa political economy and traditional social relationships. In so doing, Samoans created a thoroughly transcultural game – kirikiti.

**Kirikiti, customary significance and indigenous subversion**

Thus reimagined, kirikiti assumed an important position in Samoan life. As has previously been argued in this chapter, pre-existing Samoan sporting contests such as tagati’a were an important component of malaga, and thus part of an institution that reinforced foundational social relationships and the fa’a Samoa political economy. Kirikiti joined and quickly superseded tagati’a in this role: as early as the 1890s a village cricket pitch was invariably found in front of the *malae* (public meeting place) where malaga parties were received. Such matches were so prominent that

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papalagi observers described malaga as ‘cricketing tours’. Early kirikiti matches also took place as part of wedding festivities, and even as a front for political councils and the movement of war parties. Kirikiti continued to serve important social and economic functions in the first half of the twentieth century. By the 1930s, when Frank Grattan was serving as a government official in Apia, the opening of a new pitch was “generally the occasion for a grand competition”. These meetings were attended by “large teams from all over the country” and lasted for several days. Defeated sides could rejoin the tournament upon performing a ‘forfeit’ dance and paying another entrance fee to their hosts.

This significance was also reflected in how other Samoan cultural forms were increasingly infused with references to the game. Although kirikiti’s ‘latecomer’ status diminished its overall impact relative to more established contests such as pigeon netting, the game did begin to feature in songs, proverbial sayings and legends soon after its introduction. In the 1890s, for example, representations of kirikiti sometimes appeared in the siva (dances) that Samoans used to greet papalagi visitors. Erich Schultz, a senior official in the German administration, recorded another example of kirikiti’s burgeoning cultural immersion in 1906. According to Schultz, the phrase ‘Ua se vi e toli’ – ‘like the fruits shaken off the vi tree’ – had in earlier times been used to compare the dropping of the fruit to the fall of men struck down in a club fight. Since this sport was no longer practiced, however, the term had come to refer to “a defeated cricketer or the victims in an epidemic”.

Perhaps the most striking demonstration of kirikiti’s rapid acquisition of cultural currency was documented in 1896. Oskar Stuebel, who served as German consul in Apia at several points in the 1880s, included a story entitled ‘O le tala i le taua o Aitu o ‘Upolu ma Savai’i’ (“The battle between the spirits of Upolu and Savai’i”) in a collection of Samoan tales. The story chronicles “a flood of terrifying signs” as the spirits of Upolu were at war with those of Savai’i. The conflict began after “bad feelings had arisen over a dance competition and a cricket match” and was now

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140 Carpenter, Diary – 14 March 1893, MSS 349, vol. 3, MMD.
143 By way of comparison, expressions connected with customary games remained conspicuous in oratory and less formal settings well into the twentieth century. See for example the work of Martin Orans and Daniel Pouesi with regards to Lafonga Tupe, an indoor throwing game in which only chiefs partook. Martin Orans and Daniel Pouesi, ‘Lafoga Tupe: an Ethno-Historical Account of a Polynesian Game’, *Anthropos* 82:1 (1987), pp. 35-45.
144 See Marie Fraser *In Stevenson’s Samoa* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1895), p. 35; ‘A Trip to the South Seas’, *Supplement to the New Zealand Herald*, 15 February 1896.
beginning to influence the human world. A “great cataclysm” was expected as a result of these cosmic disturbances.\textsuperscript{146} Stuebel recorded the story at the end of 1890, when three factions – alongside foreign powers – were competing for control of the islands. Indeed, John Charlot argues that the story emerged from the context of this “dangerous and complicated” period in Samoan politics.\textsuperscript{147} For Charlot, the text is remarkable for “its assimilation of post-contact elements: cricket, guns, barbed wire, Western medicine and Christianity” into a traditional storytelling form. This is especially true of kirikiti, which featured in the story a decade after the British first played the game in Samoa. As Brian Stoddart has asserted, kirikiti had by 1890 become “noted as an activity of the gods” and employed as “a device for the telling of human needs and actions”.\textsuperscript{148} By the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, kirikiti was firmly entrenched in the broader Samoan cultural consciousness.

Kirikiti retained its position in Samoan social life well after the end of the Second World War. In the 1970s, for example, Penelope Schoeffel described the social and economic value of malaga to Samoans, and lamented its partial erosion over the course of the twentieth century. By her reckoning, the feasting, ceremonial aspects and entertainments in inter-village kirikiti matches meant that they were “the closest thing in contemporary society to the traditional malaga”.\textsuperscript{149} Writing in 2000, Tasileta Te’evale reiterates the continued relevance that kirikiti has for Samoans and other Islanders living in New Zealand. She identifies several values that remain embedded in kirikiti in the twenty-first century: the importance of being part of a group; the value in building and maintaining relationships with others; and the importance of knowing where you come from, such that individual social identity is framed by district, village, church and family connections.\textsuperscript{150} For Samoans, kirikiti was thus an alien practice, rendered familiar. While sport in the context of empire frequently served as a conduit for propagating dominant behaviours, Samoans inverted this paradigm – and the game itself – to reinforce the tenets of fa’a Samoa.

Needless to say, changing the game in this way also profoundly affected how papalagi understood and responded to it. This new ‘Samoanised’ cricket immediately recast the cricket pitch as a site of symbolic and substantive challenge to papalagi influence in the islands. We saw in Chapter Two that the adoption and appropriation of metropolitan sporting practices in other contact zones often subverted their intended meanings. As was the case with other practices and symbols

\textsuperscript{146} John Charlot, ‘The War between the Gods of ‘Upolu and Savai‘i’, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{148} Brian Stoddart, ‘Other Cultures’ in Brian Stoddart and Keith A. Sandiford (eds.), \textit{The Imperial Game: Cricket, Culture and Society} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 143.
\textsuperscript{149} Schoeffel, ‘Daughters of Sina’, pp. 498-499.
\textsuperscript{150} Te’evale, ‘We are what we play’, p. 220.
that supposedly exemplified Englishness, therefore, cricket’s dissemination through the British Empire in fact exposed the game to forces that undermined and reformed its meaning. The different rationality expressed in Samoan cricket – as was the case in India, the Caribbean and elsewhere – reflects a rebellion against cricket’s ideological protocols. In Samoa, where British influence was notably tenuous and sometimes non-existent, this ‘differing rationality’ was expressed much more overtly – by refashioning the form of the ‘Imperial game’ itself.

Subversion was more than symbolic in Samoa, however. Not only did Samoans fundamentally change the game’s method and meaning, they did so in ways that antagonised papalagi and established the cricket pitch as a conspicuously contested space. As Pratt herself has noted with regards to writing in the contact zone, transcultural forms frequently engender utter incomprehension. Kirikiti certainly provoked this sentiment among papalagi, but the game’s popularity also generated widespread vexation. As we will see in Chapters Four, Five and Six, foreigners frequently found that kirikiti undermined their interests. Kirikiti disrupted industry and trade, led to ‘un-Christian’ behaviour and was associated with ‘troublesome’ Samoan politics. Consequently numerous attempts were made to control and proscribe the game as part of broader efforts to discipline Samoan movement, exchange and traditional politics.

In Pratt’s words, therefore, kirikiti signified and embodied the wider ‘grappling’ between Samoans and papalagi that enveloped the islands in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and continued thereafter. Even in the Trobriand Islands, perhaps the only place where the locals reshaped cricket as conspicuously, the local form of cricket did not engender the same level of sustained opposition from foreigners. While ‘their’ game can certainly be read as a rejection of European cultural influence, British officials and missionaries were largely untroubled by a practice they saw as far less objectionable than what it had replaced. In Samoa, conversely, the ongoing contest surrounding kirikiti was a direct consequence of the game’s transformation and its rapid integration into the broader Samoan social framework. It was precisely because of kirikiti’s expanded participation, enormous wagers and other perceived excesses that papalagi sought to

151 A number of postcolonial studies scholars have explored the ways that cricket’s meaning was challenged through imperial expansion. See for example Ian Baucom, Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), especially pp. 3-7; Neil Lazarus, Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), especially pp. 163-164.

152 This is not to say that the objectives of missionaries and officials were completely in accordance with Trobrianders’ intentions, of course. According to H.A. Powell, who wrote about the game in the 1950s, the local version of cricket did at first attract official attention following reports of matches lasting ‘weeks at a time’. The game was soon suitably tempered, however. Similarly, the Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, who visited the islands in the 1920s and 1930s, recalled that a dispute over a cricket match led to a fight between two villages. See H.A. Powell, ‘Cricket in Kiriwina’, The Listener 48:1227 (4 September 1952), p. 384; Bronislaw Malinowski, Coral Gardens and Their Magic: A Study of the Methods of Tilling the Soil and of Agricultural Rites in the Trobriand Islands, vol. 1, (London: Routledge, 2013), originally published 1935, pp. 211-212.
control it. The notion of transculturation – and the assumption of contestation that underpins it – is therefore particularly apposite to cricket’s history in Samoa.

Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, the cricket Samoans played was very different in method and meaning from the game Churchward and his compatriots demonstrated in 1883. However familiar the game’s origins, it soon followed a distinctive path in the contact zone of nineteenth-century Samoa. Drawing on their own – and Tongan – ludic customs, therefore, Samoans refashioned cricket into a decidedly transcultural sporting practice. Although most of these changes were established within five years or so, this process of ‘mixing’ persisted thereafter – Samoans continued to refine and adapt kirikiti until the Second World War, and indeed far beyond it. Among other changes, Samoans amended cricket’s modes of participation, revised its equipment and techniques, reconfigured its attendant elements and social context, and instituted a forfeit. These and other changes to cricket’s method also profoundly changed its meaning; as was frequently the case in the context of Empire, cricket ceased to be an ‘English’ game and became an expression of fundamentally local identities, desires and aspirations. Thus reimagined, cricket became a site of cultural affirmation for Samoans throughout the period of study and well beyond it. In this way, Samoans refashioned the Imperial Game as a uniquely Samoan activity; in their hands, it was transformed from cricket to kirikiti.

This initial act of transculturation also established the cricket pitch as a contested space between Samoans and papalagi. As well as its inherent challenge to papalagi influence, kirikiti’s distinctive features undermined papalagi economic, political and proselytising objectives. In keeping with the principal argument of this thesis, therefore, kirikiti embodied and signified the broader contest between Samoans and papalagi in the 1880s and 1890s – and it continued to do so even after the islands were partitioned and colonial administrations established in 1900. Yet even as this broader contest was being played out, the game took on significance as a site of contestation within these broader categories as well as across them. The picture established in Chapters One and Two – of kirikiti as a product and representation of ‘grappling’ between colonised and coloniser – hence requires some refinement. To this end, the remainder of the thesis turns its attention to the ways that different groups within these categories understood both ‘English’ cricket and Samoan kirikiti and used them to pursue their particular interests in the flux and uncertainty of the contact zone. In so doing, it seeks to untangle and redefine the dimensions of cricketing contest in the islands.
Deconstructing ‘the colonial response’ to kirikiti

If kirikiti was a singularly Samoan game, its ascent to ubiquity in the islands meant that others soon felt its effects in very tangible ways. Different groups within the category of papalagi – as well as those ‘afakasi men, women and children who were confined to its borders – found that the game’s explosive popularity intersected with their respective interests, be they political, economic or proselytistic. As the previous two chapters have intimated, kirikiti’s rapid absorption into Samoan social, political and economic life often undermined papalagi intentions in the islands. Given this observation, we might reasonably expect the following three chapters to possess a steady narrative of general bemusement, frequent frustration, and unrelenting contest.

To ascribe a singular, coherent ‘papalagi experience’ of kirikiti would be misleading, however. As Ann Laura Stoler and Nicholas Thomas have argued, identifying a uniform and homogenous ‘colonial perspective’ is a fraught process. According to Stoler,

The terms colonial state, colonial policy, foreign capital and the white enclave are often used interchangeably... colonisers and their communities are frequently treated as diverse but unproblematic, viewed as unified in a fashion that would disturb our ethnographic sensibilities if applied to ruling elites of the colonised.1

For Stoler, therefore, historians must be mindful not to take “colonialism and its European agents as an abstract force”, but rather as distinctive groups and individuals with disparate and often-conflicting interests. Thomas strongly endorses Stoler’s position and applies it to the context of Oceania. Not only, he argues, is the notion of a coherent colonial order historically inaccurate, it is also pernicious. Such attitudes are harmful as they suggest a ‘pervasively efficacious’ colonialism, whereas indigenous resistance and accommodation frequently shaped encounters. Instead, he proposes “a far more differentiated vision – of colonialisms rather than colonialism”.2

This image of numerous complex, ambiguous and conflicting ‘colonialisms’ is especially pertinent with regards to this thesis. Papalagi colonisation of Samoa was incremental and complicated by the competing claims of the three Great Powers – Britain, Germany and the United States. Despite longstanding papalagi presence and influence in the islands, it was only in 1900 that

a European power instituted formal colonial rule. Even then, the islands were partitioned at 171 degrees west longitude with the western islands, principally Upolu and Savai‘i, coming under German administration and those to the east, namely Tutuila and the Manu‘a group, designated an American naval possession. This was complicated still further when New Zealand occupied and governed German Samoa on behalf of Britain after 1914. Quite aside from these distinct colonial administrations, the interests and perspectives of each of the groups considered in this section—officials, missionaries, colonists, foreign residents and soldiers—were rarely uniform at any single historical moment, let alone static over time. Any attempt to synthesise the diverse papalagi interests during the period of study would hence be futile.

Thomas’ premise of diverse ‘colonialisms’ informs the following three chapters. Each chapter considers the manner and extent to which the interests of a different group were affected by kirikiti, and how that group responded to its influence: Chapter Four is concerned with colonial officials, administrators and consular representatives; Chapter Five is devoted to papalagi missionaries in Samoan; and Chapter Six turns to an eclectic cast of soldiers and sailors, papalagi colonists and the ‘afakasi men and women who moved in between imposed categories of racial status throughout the period of study. Together, these chapters demonstrate that kirikiti intersected with papalagi interests in many different ways. Clearly, the game often elicited papalagi opposition because it frustrated their economic and political ambitions. On several occasions, however, foreigners seized upon kirikiti as a valuable instrument with which they could further their own ends. The following chapters will demonstrate, therefore, that these diverse responses reflected the fractured nature of ‘colonialism’ in Samoa, where different foreign elements grappled with Samoans and amongst themselves to further their interests at the edges of empire.
Chapter Four

Play halted “in the interests of industry and progress”: administrators, officials and kirikiti

“Too much attention is now being given to cricket, between villages, and not enough to necessary work on the plantations to keep them clean, and insure an adequate supply of food. Games may be played between villages on Saturday afternoons, and on national holidays, without obtaining the permission of the Governor. Until further orders, the Governor will not grant permission, to play games between villages, at any other time.”

Henry Francis Bryan, the 17th Governor of American Samoa, faced a series of challenges during his two-and-a-half year term at Tutuila. Within nine months of his arrival, a cyclone bore down on Pago Pago harbour and caused serious damage to the Customs office, the officers’ quarters and – almost mockingly – the Governor’s house itself. According to the New Zealand Herald, a large section of the building’s roofing “was picked up by the wind in remarkable fashion, carried high into the air and, like an aeroplane, sailed away over the hills completely out of sight”. The weather was the least of Bryan’s worries, however. A local protest movement that simmered throughout his tenure frustrated efforts to implement his plans. He was, moreover, consistently exasperated at the distinct lack of enthusiasm Samoans displayed for paying their taxes, and the subsequent lack of progress made in various government endeavours. Following the cyclone, local matai asked for government support because of damage to their plantations. Even as they did so, however, the populations in some districts were engaged in ‘improvident’ church building. In April 1926 Bryan hence asked the Secretary of Native Affairs to relay his displeasure:

Inform the County Chief of Leasina County and the Pulenu’u of Aoloau that it has been reported to me that the people of Aoloau are neglecting their plantations and all other work; and that men, women and children (except a small number attending school) are all at work on a new church, and that the entire village has been working on the church for a long time. The plantations must not be neglected. No government food will be issued to Aoloau.

4 Governor to Secretary of Native Affairs, ‘AOLOAU – Failure to work on Plantations’, 10 April 1926, Reel 2 (Unclassified Papers, 1902-1936…), T1182: Records of the Government of American Samoa, 1900-1958 [microfilm], NARA.
These punitive measures did not have the desired effect; the plantations remained stubbornly underworked – but now because of endemic kirikiti matches. By January 1927 Bryan was increasingly exasperated and passed an emergency order effectively restricting inter-village matches to weekends and public holidays. Once again, however, these actions were ineffective and matches continued to the detriment of production. In desperation, the Governor prohibited all inter-village matches – and any other form of malaga – on 8 March.5

Bryan’s tribulations speak to the general concerns that papalagi officials and administrators held with regards to kirikiti. Bryan, a retired naval officer from Ohio who had fought in the Spanish-American War, was hardly an inveterate caviller of Samoan pastimes. He took an active interest in organising sports for the Fourth of July celebrations in 1927, even writing to District Governors Mauga and Tuitele to express his desire for Samoan participation in the siva dancing, singing contests and fautasi races.6 As with papalagi officials throughout the period of study, however, he was troubled by kirikiti’s disruptive effects and hence sought to regulate and restrict it. Although specific historical circumstances informed the particular ways that papalagi officials understood and responded to the game, one general truth persisted: kirikiti needed to be subdued as part of a more general effort to discipline Samoan movement and control Samoan labour, exchange and politics.

This chapter seeks to locate and account for continuities and variations in how papalagi officials understood and responded to kirikiti. In so doing, it proceeds roughly chronologically. First, it considers kirikiti’s standing before partition in 1900, when papalagi officials overwhelmingly understood kirikiti in terms of its ‘wastefulness’ and association with political disruption. By the late-1880s, therefore, officials tried to convince Samoan leaders to regulate the game – even if this was rarely effective. This general opposition was modulated to some extent, however, by rivalry between the Great Powers. The chapter then turns to kirikiti’s standing under the German administration of Samoa’s western islands from 1900 to 1914. A confluence of commercial and ideological reasons meant that leaders in the German administration sought to regulate kirikiti, even if they did not always uphold such regulations with any great rigour or consistency. Next, the chapter turns eastward to the American-controlled islands. American

officials had comparatively modest ambitions of changing Samoan life. As Governor Bryan’s experience suggests, however, kirikiti posed a chronic challenge to whatever attempts they did make to control Samoan labour and movement. Finally, the chapter considers the lot of New Zealand officials. While officers in the military administration showed little appetite or capability for regulating the game, their successors in the 1920s imposed a range of measures that sought to fundamentally reshape Samoan society. Kirikiti was, of course, utterly inconsonant with their vision; it was consequently targeted alongside other ‘inefficient’ social practices. After appraising the general and specific factors that shaped official responses, the chapter concludes that Bryan’s response to kirikiti was entirely unremarkable. Even as they promoted other kinds of sporting activity, colonial officials uniformly attempted to restrict the game as part of broader efforts to control Samoan bodies and politics.

**Officials and kirikiti before partition (1883-1899)**

For colonial officials, kirikiti was born into an already-tumultuous historical moment. Deepening commercial investment in Samoa meant that by the 1880s, European colonists and firms demanded more extensive measures from consular officials to uphold their economic and political interests. This required a concerted effort to discipline Samoan bodies and politics, and from the 1880s papalagi officials encouraged Samoan leaders to institute a series of measures – including anti-kirikiti laws – to achieve these goals. Due to ‘Great Power’ rivalry, moreover, kirikiti assumed a political character in British and German eyes. Kirikiti’s association with English cricket meant that German officials were deeply suspicious of the game, while the politico-economic concerns of their British counterparts were somewhat – but not fully – ameliorated by the link to ‘their’ pastime.

While Samoa was only formally subjected to ‘colonial’ administration in 1900, papalagi officials were significant figures for several decades beforehand. Beachcombers and early missionaries aside, foreign settlement only began in the 1840s. Most settlers were British or American and they soon established a foreign enclave at Apia bay. As part of this process, their respective governments established consulates. Consuls performed a variety of tasks: interpreting, performing administrative work, arbitrating in matters pertaining to port control and trade, and mediating any disputes between their nationals and Samoans. From the 1850s other Europeans increasingly joined Anglophone migrants in search of prosperity. The defining arrival was that of the Hamburg firm J.C. Godeffroy und Sohn, which dominated the plantation enterprise after

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establishing an agency in Apia in 1857. Indeed, Godeffroy’s manager in Apia, August Unshelm, was soon appointed the first Consul for Hamburg to safeguard these commercial interests. By the time of German unification in 1870, the company had expanded both within Samoa and throughout Oceania. For the remainder of the nineteenth century, therefore, the British, American and German consuls constituted the most important arbiters of foreign influence in Samoa.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, consular officials faced an increasingly difficult task. As foreign land acquisition quickened in the 1860s, the interests of Samoans and papalagi became further intertwined and the three powers increasingly sought to shape Samoan politics to their own advantage. Indeed, Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford characterise the period until partition as “three decades of attempts to dictate the outcome of Samoan factional rivalries in ways most favourable to European commercial interests”. These deepening interests induced the ‘three powers’ to intrude in Samoan politics with increasing regularity after 1875. Although their particular interests varied, each Great Power sought to create conditions under which its interests – be they commercial, strategic or otherwise – could be preserved. What each wanted, therefore, was a compliant unitary government that could uphold law and order and coax Samoans to provide labour. What they experienced, conversely, was ongoing political discord, frequent skirmishes between rival factions and a chronic labour shortage due to lack of Samoan supply.

These ambitions were not new, of course. From at least the 1850s papalagi attempted to draw Samoans into the global economy as producers of copra and consumers of traded goods. These efforts were impeded throughout the nineteenth century, however, by various Samoan practices that precluded their participation in a ‘colonial’ economy. Chief among these was Samoan habit of forming visiting parties, or malaga. As Damon Salesa has noted, papalagi opposition to malaga was based on its deleterious effects on industry and trade – persistent journeying would leave the host village impoverished and the travelling one deserted. Malaga was also seen to encourage idleness and “wantonness with property”. It was already difficult to secure Samoan labour on European-owned plantations. In Samoan eyes, work was to be done for the community; to work for oneself as a wage labourer was contemptible. Instead, papalagi traders were forced to rely on village production and left the volume, scheduling and quality of copra supplies in Samoan

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8 This position later evolved into that of German consul.
9 Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford, Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific (Suva: Institute of the South Pacific, University of the South Pacific, 1984), p. 21.
Malaga exacerbated the problem because Samoans could not be relied upon as producers, even in their own villages. The Samoan political economy, with its emphasis on mobility and ritual exchange, thus rendered Samoans wholly unsuitable as plantation labourers.

This strictly commercial imperative was only one part of the problem of Samoan mobility, however. More generally, malaga troubled papalagi intentions of controlling and disciplining Samoans and Samoan politics. Salesa argues that “the real dangers stemming from malaga related to a more general unruliness when malaga were seen as sources of mischief or trouble, as political occurrences”.

Malaga was fundamental to traditional Samoan politics at the island-wide level: alliances were forged, reaffirmed or modified and key relationships – including political marriages – were secured. In officials’ eyes, however, Samoan politics was a violent, unpredictable affair that frequently precipitated conflict and threatened European livelihoods – and occasionally their very lives. Together, these economic and political concerns meant that malaga was an ongoing source of opprobrium and undermined the general interests of British, American and – particularly – German officials before partition.

This same ill-feeling characterised official attitudes towards kirikiti. The game’s epic scale and its place within the Samoan political economy rendered it a direct threat to foreign interests. For papalagi officials, and particularly for the German Consuls whose task it was to protect the interests of Godeffroy’s and its successor the Deutsche Handels-und Plantagen Gesellschaft der Südseeinseln zu Hamburg (DHPG), kirikiti was part of the more general problem of Samoan waste and disorder. In June 1890, for instance, Steven J. Cusack, a British citizen and the editor of the Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, opined that Samoans were “almost wholly engaged in the game of cricket”. So complete was their dedication, he claimed, that “the industries of the country have to give place to this game, and its evil effects are telling on the productions of the islands”.

The DHPG felt these ‘evil effects’ most keenly of all: as the largest trading firm in Samoa it had a particular interest in maintaining a steady supply of copra. Kirikiti matches were also marred by their association with Samoan ‘political occurrences’ and general unruliness. According to one account, the supporters of one of the paramount chiefs, Malietoa, used a match in 1885 as cover for a proposed ambush on his opponents. As well as kirikiti bats, their canoes were filled with “an accompanying Snider or Winchester rifle” and “balls of not quite so harmless a nature”. It was only

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13 Ibid., p. 175. Emphasis in original.
14 ‘Local and General News’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*, 14 June 1890, p. 2.
the personal intervention of Malietoa that obviated the raid. Such trouble was not entirely uncommon. In 1891 a German consular official reported to Malietoa that rebels from throughout Samoa had gathered at the village of Malie. This group included some 110 men and ten women from Lepa village, who were engaged in a match with their hosts. Although they protested otherwise, he was convinced that ‘nearly all the men have a rifle hidden away’ and were planning insurrection. While these episodes each resulted in near misses, kirikiti contests did sometimes result in fights and property damage. In 1893 a series of games descended into “an extremely lively shindy” after the losing side took their defeat in bad grace. The matter was only settled after fifteen houses had been burnt to the ground.

Together, such economic disruption and political disorder meant that kirikiti undermined officials’ impulse to constrain the ‘travel-happy’ Samoans. Their efforts to do so reached a head in the mid-1880s – successive German consuls sought to promote the DHPG’s interests more aggressively, culminating in German support for Tamasese’s claim to the crown over Malietoa, the incumbent, in 1887. Their support was conditional on Eugen Brandeis, an ex-soldier and current DHPG employee, acting as Premier to Tamasese under German consular instruction.

Unsurprisingly, the Tamasese-Brandeis government vigorously defended the DHPG’s commercial interests. German warships and marines were deployed to enforce heavy poll taxes and the retrieval of debts to the DHPG. Indeed, repayment of other debts was disallowed until the amount owed to the German firm had been settled. Alongside such measures, in January 1888 Tamasese and Brandeis passed a typically severe law prohibiting kirikiti. Individuals who broke the law were liable to be fined five dollars; village-wide matches would attract a collective fine of $100.

If this particular prohibition was a German initiative, kirikiti attracted censure from all manner of papalagi officials and similar proscriptions survived beyond Tamasese’s brief reign. Tamasese’s tenuous legitimacy and the ‘cruelties’ associated with his government led to open

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15 William B. Churchward, My Consulate in Samoa: A Record of Four Years’ Sojourn in the Navigators Islands, with Personal Experiences of King Malietoa Laupepa, his Country, and his Men (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1887), pp. 147-149.
16 F. Rose to Malietoa, 27 August 1891, MS-Papers-4879-014: Correspondence, Grattan, Frederick James Henry, 1909-1983: Papers relating to his government service in Western Samoa, MS-Group-0091, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), Wellington.
rebellion in September 1888. The resulting conflict drew in European interests and might have led to armed conflict between foreign forces if a cyclone had not wrecked six of the seven warships moored at Apia in March 1889. A settlement negotiated at Berlin a few months later restored Malietoa to the kingship and established a condominium, whereby the three powers enjoyed equivalent status as ‘protectors’ of Samoa. Efforts to curtail Samoan movement were reinforced; in 1891 a law was passed forbidding Samoans from travelling beyond the limits of the islands “unless permitted so to do by the authority alone of the King”.

Anti-kirikiti laws also featured prominently under the condominium, which endured until partition in 1900. Malietoa passed one such law in 1890 after cricket had become “an intolerable nuisance” to European interests, and repeated it in 1892 under pressure from the Swedish Chief Justice, Conrad Cederkrantz. These measures were not simply a reflection of the DHPG’s influence – even local ‘Britishers’ had lobbied the government to “put a stop” to time-consuming kirikiti tours. Seen in context, Brandeis’ and Cederkrantz’s interventions are indicative of a broader attempt by papalagi officials to curtail ‘unproductive’ and ‘unruly’ Samoan behaviours in the 1880s and 1890s. To a significant degree then, these early anti-kirikiti laws were in fact attempts to restrict Samoan mobility and in so doing render ‘controllable’ Samoan bodies and politics. Papalagi officials – be they German, British, American or even Swedish – thus concurred that the game had to be constrained.

The kirikiti pitch is also revealing, however, in illuminating the rivalries between the foreign powers that gripped Samoa during the 1880s and 1890s. Kirikiti emerged during the most fractious chapter of papalagi presence in Samoa. Indeed, Malama Meleisea and Penelope Schoeffel have described the twenty years from 1880 to 1900 as “a period in which the great powers were like three large dogs snarling over a very small bone”. American interests rested on the perceived value of Pago Pago harbour on Tutuila as a coaling station for naval ships, as well as securing the private commercial interests of American citizens. As such, American officials were relatively uninterested in the western islands of Upolu and Savaii, despite the protestations of American

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22 Memo #1 (translations of Malietoa Laupepa laws relating to courts), 1914 (XVII.A.I: Government and Administration of Justice, vol. 2), Pacific Manuscript Bureau (PMB) 479: Western Samoa: English Summaries of Papers Relating to the German Administration, Australian National University (ANU) [microfilm].
24 Malietoa Laupepa to Council [le au Faipule], 21 June 1892, MS-Papers–4879–027: Correspondence, Grattan Collection, ATL.
25 ‘A Trip to Lufilufi’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 3 May 1890, p. 2.
settlers there. For Germany, Samoa – and most particularly its western islands – was significant due to a combination of commercial and strategic factors, as well as the ‘prestige’ its acquisition would represent. The question of prestige was especially pertinent – newly-unified Germany sought to build a global empire, and Samoa represented an important step in German penetration of the Asia-Pacific region.\textsuperscript{28} As Christopher Balme points out, this quasi-strategic imperative was augmented by “a sense of Germany’s national and cultural role” in ‘protecting’ the Polynesian race and leading them to the heights of German civilisation.\textsuperscript{29} British interests, conversely, were relatively modest and centred on protecting the lot of its large expatriate community, primarily traders and missionaries. The protestations of these expatriates and their Antipodean cousins notwithstanding, the Foreign Office saw little strategic or commercial value in Samoa compared to Tonga and especially Fiji.\textsuperscript{30}

Inevitably, this medley of competing interests rendered ‘political’ many apparently innocuous activities – including sport. As representatives of their communities in Apia, the consuls frequently took a leading role in organising sporting contests on public holidays and when one of ‘their’ warships visited the islands. In 1879, for instance, the \textit{Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette} reported that a Committee including the British Consul J.H. Graves and his German counterpart Theodor Weber had arranged a full sporting program for Boxing Day including horse racing, foot racing, donkey racing, jumping, and various other sports. The brass band of the visiting \textit{H.I.G.M.S. Bismarck} was to “discourse sweet music throughout the day”.\textsuperscript{31} The following year Graves and T.M. Dawson, the American Consul, were respectively chair and treasurer of the Boxing Day Committee. Dawson also acted as a judge on the day itself.\textsuperscript{32} As we will see in Chapter Six, moreover, the visit of a naval ship – most especially a British one – called for the consul in question to arrange all manner of sporting amusements for the bored crew.

Sport did not always lend itself to such conviviality, however. Germany’s growing assertiveness in Samoan affairs in the 1880s aggravated British and American colonists and officials. As we have seen, the DHPG’s landholdings and operations meant that Germany possessed the most significant commercial stake in Samoa. It was consequently the most active of the three


\textsuperscript{30} Meleisea and Schoeffel (eds.), \textit{Lagaga}, pp. 48-49; see also Overlack, ‘Bless the queen and curse the Colonial Office’.

\textsuperscript{31} ‘Boxing Day Sports’, \textit{Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette}, 20 December 1879, p. 2

\textsuperscript{32} ‘Boxing Day Sports’, \textit{Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette}, 27 November 1880, p. 2; ‘Apia Annual Sports’, \textit{Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette}, 4 December 1880, p. 3.
powers in trying to extract concessions and shape Samoan politics to its advantage. This
determination made Samoans wary of German influence and aroused vocal opposition from Apia's
British and American residents. There were hence continued calls for their respective governments
to intervene more decisively against German ‘aggression’, and German officials were thus sensitive
to any perceived subversion of their position.

In Samoa the proliferation of British sporting culture, and particularly ‘English’ cricket, was
understood squarely in these terms. When H.M.S. Cordelia visited Samoa in May 1891, the British
Consul T.B. Cusack-Smith arranged a full sporting programme for the crew, including three
‘English’ cricket matches against a Samoan side from Vaiala. The games took place on a field
adjacent to the American Consulate, whose veranda “made a most popular pavilion” from which the
American Consul-General Harold Sewall “dispensed hospitality to all comers”. German officials
were conspicuously absent from such cricket matches, however. In 1884, moreover, the German
Consul Stuebel succeeded in restricting play in Apia, ostensibly because a stray hit could be
hazardous to passers-by. Because the law prohibited play “within 8 fathoms of the public road” and
required such distance to be “marked by a rope on all occasions”, his British counterpart William
Churchward complained that in “the most popular play-places it was rendered impossible to carry it
on”. German officials viewed kirikiti in an even less sympathetic light than they did cricket. As
we have seen, kirikiti’s effects on production formed the primary basis of German opposition to the
game. As well as distracting Samoans from work, the DHPG claimed that matches “would spill
over into neighbouring plantations where bloody fights often took place between [indentured]
labourers and the Samoans stealing their food”. One such instance in 1893 saw two Samoan men,
Situ and Vili, convicted of assaulting four DHPG-employed labourers with clubs and cricket
bats. In addition, German officials considered kirikiti to be a vehicle of English cultural influence
whose popularity presaged British influence in Samoan affairs. As we will see, their misgivings
were well founded – Samoans did often signal opposition to German interests by playing kirikiti.

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33 Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith, Diary – 7 to 14 May 1891, MSX-2759: Diary (1891), Cusack-Smith, Thomas Berry
(Sir), 1859-1929: Papers, MS-Group-0066, ATL.
34 ‘Concerning Cricket (CXXXIII)’, Foreign Office, Correspondence respecting the affairs of Samoa, 1885-89, edited,
35 William B. Churchward, My Consulate in Samoa: A Record of Four Years' Sojourn in the Navigators Islands, with
Personal Experiences of King Malietoa Laupepa, his Country, and his Men, London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1887, p.
144.
36 Stewart Firth and Doug Munro, German Regulation and Employment of Plantation Labour in Samoa, 1864-1914,
(Bedford Park: Flinders University of South Australia, 1990), p. 22.
37 ‘Supreme Court’, Samoa Weekly Herald, 11 March 1893, p. 3.
38 Paul Kennedy, The Samoan Tangle: A Study of Anglo-German-American Relations, 1878-1900 (St. Lucia: University
The result was a series of German interdictions against the game. After Stuebel’s ultimatum to the Samoan government at Mulini’u to “keep quiet” was ignored in 1885, he forbade “the game usually called cricket” from being played at the seat of government. Three years later, German officials supported the paramount chief Tamasese’s political cause in exchange for his backing of DHPG and other German interests. Within four months his government had passed the first law prohibiting kirikiti throughout the islands. German opposition to kirikiti during this period was thus twofold: not only did it undermine German commercial interests and particularly those of the DHPG, but its continued presence also constituted evidence that the tentacles of British cultural influence had enveloped Samoa.

For their part, British officials were ambivalent about kirikiti. On the one hand, the game’s popularity served as confirmation of British sporting and cultural chauvinism. As one might expect, a succession of British consuls were avid cricketers: Graves was the inaugural President of the Apia Cricket Club in mid-1881, while his successor Churchward regularly played the game and along with the British Chief Magistrate inducted the indigenous population into cricket’s method and rules. The most conspicuous example of official sporting fervour, however, was Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith, who served as British Consul from 1890 to 1898. As well as organising and playing in cricket matches against visiting warships, he introduced polo to Samoa, founded racing and tennis clubs, and frequently spent afternoons hunting or playing croquet and fives.

Men of Cusack-Smith’s ilk are a familiar trope in sporting histories of the British Empire. From the mid-nineteenth century until the First World War, athleticism emerged and then consolidated its position as the dominant educational philosophy in British public schools such as Rugby, Eton and Harrow. Because colonial officials, military officers and other ‘agents of empire’ were overwhelmingly reared in such elite institutions, these men carried the ideals of athleticism into the farthest reaches of the Empire. In so doing, they were also disproportionately responsible for spreading British sports and games to indigenous peoples across the globe – including, of course, in Oceania.

Cusack-Smith provides an instructive example of athleticism’s abiding influence. The heir-
presumptive to a Baronetcy in Ireland, he was educated at Eton in the mid-1870s before becoming a lawyer – like his father and grandfather before him. Cusack-Smith’s Eton days coincided with the tenure of J.J. Hornby, a renowned oarsman and Alpine climber who served as Headmaster at the school between 1868 and 1884. Perhaps unsurprisingly, athleticism flourished under his stewardship – often to the detriment of intellectual pursuits. One Eton student in the early-1870s was moved to complain: “What, in our estimation, is mind, intellect, hard and successful cultivation of the faculties? Nothing. What is cricket, rowing, athletics, football? Everything. And our school is meanwhile being degraded almost to the level of an Athletic Club”. For his part, Cusack-Smith does not appear to have held such reservations. Not only did he exhibit an insatiable appetite for games in Samoa – and later as British Consul-General in Chile – but he was also a keen supporter of football in his youth. Indeed, his annotated copy of the 1882 FA Cup final programme – the oldest on record – sold for £35,250 at auction in 2013. If Cusack-Smith was an exceptionally zealous sportsman, however, the subject of his zeal was not. Throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century, British officials were among the staunchest patrons of British sport in Samoa.

Unsurprisingly, this proclivity for identifiably ‘British’ sports – and particularly cricket – informed British officials’ personal attitudes towards kirikiti. Whereas Samoan enthusiasm for the game aroused suspicion among German officials, their British counterparts saw it as confirmation of the superiority of their national sport and culture. In his account of the game, Churchward gleefully reported that kirikiti’s popularity suggested “an inclination to favour things British”. Indeed, he was convinced that German opposition to the game was based entirely on the game’s association with British culture, “which it always was their studied practice to condemn and underrate, to the glorification of their own importance”. Kirikiti was also celebrated by Arthur Mahaffy, whose time in Samoa during the 1890s was one of a series of official postings in Oceania. While admitting that cricketing ‘rigorists’ might be disturbed by kirikiti, he argued that its popularity was “gratifying to us as a race, and a high tribute to the excellence of the sport”.

47 Churchward, My Consulate in Samoa, 1887, p. 144.
Mahaffy himself took part in a four-day match at Lufilufi village on Upolu, during which he bewildered his fellow players by playing in the English style.\textsuperscript{49}

Such affection for kirikiti was not absolute, however, as commercial pragmatism frequently got the better of ludic enthusiasm. Churchward himself acknowledged that kirikiti’s popularity had begun to “seriously interfere with domestic affairs” in villages and resulted in a “reduced supply of native produce”, even as he fulminated against “Teutonic opposition” to the game.\textsuperscript{50} A more severe assessment was given in 1895 by the Acting Consul Charles Woodford. Reporting on British trade in Samoa, he cited Samoan idleness and ‘time wasting’ as the most intractable barriers to British economic prospects in the islands. The residents of one village, he claimed, had mortgaged their land to purchase several large European rowing boats. Rather than producing copra to pay off the sum, however,

they have for the last four months been playing, almost weekly, cricket matches, with 30 or 40 players a side, for stakes consisting of pigs and kegs of salt beef, to the accompaniment of a band of savage music and general disorganisation of their affairs. I believe the amount of money expended on cricket in this village since February would have paid off, not only the interest, but a large part of the principal of the mortgage.\textsuperscript{51}

The contrast between Woodford’s exasperation and Mahaffy’s exaltation captures the ambivalence with which British officials viewed kirikiti in the 1880s and 1890s. Kirikiti was both a vindication of the British colonial project and a threat to its success. Insofar as it was ‘cricket’, kirikiti seemed to confirm that Samoans held British culture and political influence in high regard – especially compared to the German alternative. As we have seen, however, this resemblance was only partial. The ‘Samoanisation’ of cricket meant that many of the game’s supposed benefits were undermined. Woodford’s fixation on kirikiti’s apparent disorder and waste shows that British officials were cognisant of the fraying bonds between Samoan ‘cricket’ and ‘civilised’ values. On a more quotidian level, therefore, kirikiti was emblematic of the difficulties that papalagi officials of all nationalities faced in controlling Samoan labour and politics before partition.

**Officials and kirikiti under German administration (1900-1914)**

With the formal abnegation of British claims in 1899, kirikiti lost its perceived status as an expression of anti-German ‘subversion’. Officials in the newly formed German administration

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\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 396

\textsuperscript{50} Churchward, *My Consulate in Samoa*, 1887, p. 144

remained suspicious of the Samoan game, however. Like their predecessors, their concerns were partly informed by a desire to protect the DHPG’s commercial interests. Moreover, kirikiti was seen as one of several Samoan practices that threatened colonial efforts to ‘contain’ and ‘preserve’ officials’ understanding of fa’a Samoa while vigorously upholding German political authority. In light of these concerns, German officials enacted a series of restrictions on kirikiti during their fourteen-year administration. Their relative restraint in prosecuting offenders reflects a commitment to maintaining the status quo and avoiding actions that might unnecessarily precipitate Samoan unrest.

After a decade of ongoing conflict in Samoa – with the opposing Samoan factions often backed by papalagi protagonists – the ‘Three Powers’ agreed that the compromise ‘joint protectorate’ was unworkable and served none of their respective interests. Control of the islands was decided by Tripartite Convention of 1899, which recognised US authority on the islands east of 171 degrees longitude. The islands west of this longitude – including Upolu and Savai’i, the two principal islands in the group – were declared a German protectorate after Britain relinquished its claims in exchange for recognition of its interests elsewhere. This imperial ‘horse-trading’ concluded with the German flag being raised at Apia in March 1900.

With the question of Anglo-German control now settled, officials in the new colonial administration were more tolerant of British culture so long as it was compatible with their vision for Samoa. As such, while the administration insisted that mission schools – including the LMS – teach German to Samoan pupils, they were less perturbed by the manifestation of British sporting culture. Indeed, sports and games were increasingly integrated into official events. Before partition, German officials had shown little interest in sporting matters compared to their British and American counterparts. For instance, the celebrations of the centenary of Wilhelm I’s birth was marked in April 1897 with services, music, dinner and dancing – but no sport. Two months later, conversely, the British Consul Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith arranged a regatta and all manner of races and sports for Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee. As Udo Merkel has argued with regards to Wilhelmine Germany more generally, this relative reluctance probably reflected German

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53 One notable exception was horse racing, which enjoyed the patronage of several German consuls and officials from the DHPG in the 1880s and 1890s. See for example ‘Sport in Apia’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*, 14 June 1890, p. 2.
54 ‘Celebration’, *Samoa Weekly Herald*, 2 April 1897
55 Cusack-Smith diary, 19 June 1897, MSX-2765, ATL.
suspicion of – and unfamiliarity with – modern sports in the context of broader political and economic competition between the two nations.  

Under the German administration, however, swimming and track events for Samoan boys and girls became an important feature of Kaiser’s Birthday celebrations. In part, this was due to a change in personnel: the first Governor of German Samoa, Wilhelm Solf, was an “urbane and thoughtful Berliner” who eschewed simple notions of economic exploitation and hoped to guide Samoans “to adopt the rational, cultural ideals of Enlightenment Europe”. He also admired British sporting culture. Solf was a staunch patron of Apia’s racing scene; one prominent British resident recalled him as being “one of our chief supporters” in the club’s endeavours. Indeed, his patronage was recognised when the club acquired its own ground and named the complex ‘Solf-feld’. When the Apia Sports Club was reformed some two years into the German period, Solf served as its first President; he later donated and presented prizes for race meets and accepted honorary protectorship. Moreover, whereas he demanded that German be taught in schools, Solf insisted that Club’s meeting notes should be kept “in English of course… English is the language of sport”. Solf’s successor as governor, Erich Schultz, also acted as the Club’s protector during his tenure. Samoans participated as both contestants and spectators, although a law forbade them placing bets.

This official sanction did not extend to kirikiti, however. The game was first targeted by the Chief Justice, Heinrich Schnee, in 1902 as part of a set of restrictions on malaga, courting parties and ceremonial exchange. The law forbade cricket at functions where fa’a Samoa exchanges took place, “unless those things are limited to two hours’ duration and only twenty on a side”. Thereafter the laws were revised and reissued in 1906 and again in 1909 and 1912 after kirikiti ‘outbreaks’. The first such revision outlawed “challenges or cricket matches between towns”, and limited intra-village matches to the afternoon. Individuals found to have broken the law were liable to a fine “not exceeding one hundred marks” or in default of which, imprisonment. Collective punishments could also be imposed on villages. The 1909 edition was more stringent still: it limited intra-village matches to Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and “strictly prohibited”

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58 Hempenstall, ‘Germany’s Pacific Pearl’, p. 41.  
60 Ibid. For contemporary accounts of Solf’s role in the racing community see for example Samoanische Zeitung, 16 April 1904; 16 July 1904; 13 August 1904; 30 October 1909.  
62 Memo #40 (Mat to Schnee, 13.8.02, from Samoan), Malo in Mulunu’u, PMB 479.  
63 ‘Tulafono mo le Kilikiti’, Eingeborenenverhältnisse - A. Allgemeine Verwaltung – Allgemeine Verwaltung und Rechtspflege, pp. 79-80, German Colonial Administration – Samoa (AGCA) 6051 Box 77, 1908-1912, National Archives of New Zealand (NANZ), Wellington.
playing cricket for money or other stakes. Although this was the final revision, a rash of illegal matches resulted in Schultz reissuing the law in the April 1912 edition of the Samoan language newsletter O Le Savali. Despite these regular laws and public proclamations, however, prosecutions were rare and punishments were meted out with even less frequency.

This persistent – albeit relatively restrained – opposition to the game is best understood in the context of the German administration’s strategy in Samoa. Firstly, colonial rule explicitly favoured the interests of the DHPG. As had been the case since J.C. Godeffroy & Sohn expanded its operations into Oceania in the mid-1850s, the economic interests of the German firm suffused the strategic calculations of German officials. This paradigm continued under the German administration, and the DHPG’s interests were a critical determinant of German policy in Samoa. Indeed, the DHPG’s influence touched sporting life in Apia – the racing club’s efforts to acquire its own grounds were “aided by the favourable opinion of the DHPG, whose manager was then President of the Club”. As we have seen, however, large-scale kirikiti matches had been a consistent menace to the interests of the DHPG since the 1880s. After 1900 the game continued to perturb the firm – and thus the administration – due to its effects on copra production in Samoan villages. As the purchaser of nearly half of the Samoans’ copra, the DHPG had the single greatest stake in better harvests.

These concerns are borne out in the stated rationale for anti-kirikiti laws. In the first instance, kirikiti undermined Samoan participation in the colonial economy as reliable labourers and debtors. This commercial imperative was embedded in the first restrictions on the game under German rule, which centred on the number of players involved and the time taken to complete a match. Later, Richard Williams, the Resident Magistrate and Native Commissioner on Savai’i, confided to Solf that kirikiti was keeping Samoans “away from work for days and sometimes weeks” on end. A subsequent memo confirmed that revised regulations were required because such interminable inter-village matches were causing the Samoans to neglect plantations. Officials were far more tolerant of kirikiti when Samoan participation in the colonial economy was not adversely affected. Solf granted special permission for villages in Aleipata to play kirikiti against

64 ‘Tulafono Fou mo le Kilikiti’, AGCA 6051 Box 77, pp. 81-85, NANZ.
65 O le Savali Apelila 1912, ‘Tulafono Fou mo le Kilikiti’, AGCA 6051 Box 77, p. 240, NANZ.
66 For a brief discussion of German action – and lack of action – regarding kirikiti, see George Steinmetz, The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), pp. 331-332, p. 342. This observation is also supported by my own source reconnaissance when examining the PMB 479 microfilm (Western Samoa: English Summaries of Papers Relating to the German Administration, 1900-1914).
68 Solf memo, 7 May 1904, XVII.A.I.: Government and Administration of Justice (vol. 4), PMB 479.
69 Taylor memo, 16 June 1904, XVII.A.I. (vol. 4), PMB 479.
one another because they are “like fuaiala [a division of one village] of one large village”. He only did so, however, on the condition that ‘abuses’ such as gambling and incurring and neglecting debts were avoided.70 Schultz was similarly accommodating when a Catholic priest asked if the children of his congregation could play kirikiti on Sundays. He acquiesced, and clarified that the restrictions on the game covered working days only.71 Further restrictions on Samoan mobility – such as proscriptions against ‘singing practice companies’ travelling between districts – similarly attempted to restrain Samoan mobility to mitigate the economic costs and general disruption associated with their ‘travel-happy’ ways.

Such a narrow reading of the DHPG’s economic interests only provides a partial explanation of its attitudes towards kirikiti, however. By 1900 the firm was the largest landholder and the single most important producer of copra in Samoa. Since the late-1880s, the DHPG had increasingly relied on its privileged access to cheap labour from German New Guinea in order to retain profit margins on its plantations. As such, the firm did not depend on Samoans for forced labour; indeed, the experience of the Tamasese-Brandeis government stood as a reminder that any attempt to conscript Samoans might lead to open revolt. Instead, the firm’s profits depended on a combination of plantations, village-produced copra and trade in European goods. Stewart Firth notes that annual Samoan copra production was two or three times as much as the firm’s own output, and that this was sold to the DHPG and other European buyers for export. Because the DHPG purchased nearly half of their crop, it had no desire to lose this guaranteed supply while running the gauntlet of probable Samoan resistance.72 Harsh laws might have also endangered the tidy profit the firm made from selling European goods to Samoans. As such, whereas smaller enterprises and individual planters demanded harsher laws to encourage Samoan wage labour, the DHPG “had a special interest in a ‘soft’ native policy which kept the Samoans where they were: in the village making copra”.73

This desire for ‘soft’ native policy is reflected in the leniency Solf and Schultz showed in prosecuting illegal kirikiti matches. When the kirikiti ‘epidemic’ came to Solf’s attention late in 1904, he did not at first enact stricter proscriptions against the game. Following the counsel of his Samoan advisors, he instead waited for the outbreak to die down of its own accord.74 The Samoanische Zeitung reported that this had caused some unrest amongst planters, who pushed for

70 Solf to Tafua, 18 February 1909, XVII.B.1: District Administration: Atua (vol. 5), PMB 479.
71 Schultz to Bellwald, 17 November 1913, XVII.A.I.: Government and Administration of Justice (vol. 6), PMB 479.
73 Ibid., p. 159.
74 Taylor memo, 16.8.04, XVII.A.I.: Government and Administration of Justice (vol. 4), PMB 479.
an outright prohibition amidst claims that it affected Samoan production and consumption. Solf, however, continued with his ‘hands-off’ approach and was willing to turn a blind eye so long as games did not involve large stakes of money or goods. Even as these matches continued, the Zeitung – which served as a mouthpiece for Solf and the administration – claimed that the Governor had “used his influence” to quietly pacify the kirikiti problem. Schultz showed similar restraint. After being informed that the people of Lalomauga and Uafato had played three kirikiti matches in violation of the law, Schultz had the matter investigated and the guilty parties were fined four marks each. A month later, however, he pardoned the offenders “because of their goodwill towards him” and the reception he received when travelling through the area. This leniency is indicative of a desire to maintain the status quo. More than anything, the DHPG’s prosperity depended on maintaining both order and Samoan cooperation. German officials recognised that coercion could be used only very sparingly under such circumstances; laws were consequently enacted and announced with more vigour than they were enforced.

At least as important as the DHPG’s interests, however, was kirikiti’s incongruence with the broader colonial project as envisaged by Solf and Schultz. Neither man saw his role as protecting the interests of small German planters, but rather as custodians of the Samoan ‘race’ and culture. The DHPG’s interest in keeping Samoans working in their villages thus accorded with the administration’s more general vision for the colony. While acknowledging the DHPG’s privileged place in their calculations, historians have until recently characterised the German administration under Solf and then Schultz as ‘pro-Samoan’. This appraisal is true, to a point: German officials extolled the virtues of Samoan culture and often interdicted against small German planters in their efforts to attain land and labour in Samoa. Such apparent support for Samoan interests was, however, rooted in notions of prestige and a sense of Germany’s national and cultural responsibilities to them. Indeed, Balme characterises the German administration’s ethos as one that “surpassed mere paternalism” to express “a mythic affinity” between the two ‘martial races’.

These sentiments clearly influenced the approach taken by Solf and Schultz. Both men were concerned with preserving Samoan ‘racial purity’, which informed the restrictions they placed on

75 Sam. Zeitung, 15.4.05, XVII.A.I.: Government and Administration of Justice (vol. 4), PMB 479.
76 Sam. Zeitung, 6.5.05, XVII.A.I.: Government and Administration of Justice (vol. 4), PMB 479.
77 Schultz to Lalomauga and Uafato people, 16.01.09, XVII.B.1: District Administration: Atua (vol. 5), PMB 479.
Chinese labour and ‘mingling’ and marriages between different imposed racial categories. Censuses in 1906 and 1911 were intended to measure the success of such policies in preserving the Samoan population, and halting what some thought was an inevitable slide towards ‘racial extinction’. By 1910, moreover, this desire to protect Samoans was increasingly coupled with a desire to uphold the ‘Rassenhygiene’ – racial hygiene – of European and especially German residents in Samoa. According to Evelyn Wareham, both Solf and Schultz become fixated on preventing racial ‘mixing’ – notably by preventing marriage between Europeans and Samoans – and preserving German purity. Significant steps were also taken to safeguard Samoan cultural practices in what the Germans considered to be their ‘true’ form. Indeed, George Steinmetz argues that officials set out to “stabilise an imagined corpus of Samoan custom and to protect Samoans against induction into a culture-levelling version of capitalist modernity”.

Of course, this program of cultural preservation – which Steinmetz calls ‘salvage colonialism’ – necessarily involved stabilising and controlling Samoan practices so that they did not challenge German authority in any way. This two-step strategy is encapsulated in Schultz’s admission that he aimed to “preserve the Samoans’ social structure while destroying their political system”. Doing so required inserting German officials and regulations into potentially disruptive Samoan social practices such as fine-mat exchange, the distribution of titles and, of course, malaga and kirikiti.

In terms of titles and traditional authority, Solf and Schultz’s ostensible respect for Samoan custom obscured the radical changes they sought to impose on Samoan political organisation. Based on their experiences of Samoan politics in the nineteenth century, German officials were mistrustful of traditional authority, believing that it was inherently unstable and disruptive. As such, German policy subordinated the authority of matai to a series of government-appointed officials. Solf established a Land and Titles Office to discipline the titles system, such that Samoan authority only existed insofar as it was delegated. The distribution of fine mats (‘ie toga) followed a similar course. According to Steinmetz, ‘ie toga threatened German control of ceremonial power, as well as European notions of currency. For Samoans, the ceremony signified that the paramount chief – Mata’afa – owed his position to traditional sources of Samoan political authority. Rather than

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80 Steinmetz, The Devil's Handwriting, p. 346; Evelyn Wareham, Race and Realpolitik: the Politics of Colonisation in German Samoa (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002), especially pp. 31-41.
81 Wareham, Race and Realpolitik, p. 49.
82 Steinmetz, The Devil's Handwriting, p. 13.
prohibit distribution outright, Solf ordered that the ‘ie toga be equally apportioned to the chiefs representing each district, rather than in accordance with seniority and prior service. In so doing, Solf choreographed distribution ceremonies to underscore Mata’afa’s position “as a representative of German, and not Samoan authority”. An office was also created to determine the exact value of each mat and providing it with a government stamp.

Much the same logic was evident in German attempts to control kirikiti. Unlike Brandeis in 1887, German officials had no desire to issue a blanket proscription against the game. Solf, Schultz and their ilk were not intrinsically opposed to Samoans’ taste for sporting and athletic contests. Indeed, a memo discussing the rash of kirikiti matches in 1904 proposed setting a special day aside for cricket, “if it is played according to its merits as a game”. Similarly, the preamble to the revised 1909 law stated that “the game is certainly conducive to health, and should not be altogether prohibited”. Kirikiti had, however, been “played to excess” and was associated with economic disruption and, as a part of malaga and customary exchange, with traditional political authority. Large matches, the Germans feared, would lead to “poverty and quarrels amongst the parties and villages”.

These concerns regarding kirikiti can once again be understood in light of other measures aimed at disciplining Samoan mobility. In 1912, for example, Williams complained that Tongans were causing a disturbance by visiting Samoa to “introduce hymns and other tunes”. This was compounded when Samoans began travelling from their own villages to pass on their recently-acquired knowledge in the surrounding districts and islands. In short, they had found another pretext for malaga. Williams lamented the cost these journeys imposed on the host villages, claiming “it is just as bad as [with] the cricket” and warning that it would “end in some trouble”. The official response took the form of a law forbidding ‘theatrical performances’ and ‘singing practice companies’ by Tongans, as well as by Samoans outside of their own districts.

As was the case before partition, therefore, the attitudes and responses of German officials vis-à-vis kirikiti reflected a confluence of general and historically particular factors. Kirikiti was a constant source of annoyance for the DHPG, albeit one for which harsh punitive measures were both unnecessary and potentially ruinous. For officials such as Solf and Schultz, moreover, anti-kirikiti measures were part of a broader project of ‘controlling’ Samoan mobility and its association with traditional politics and exchange. These rationales, while distinctive, were certainly not

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87 Taylor memo, 16/06/04, XVII.A.I. : Government and Administration of Justice (vol. 4), PMB 479.
88 ‘Tulafono Fou mo le Kilikiti’, AGCA 6051 Box 77, pp. 81-85, NANZ.
89 Williams to Schnettain, 15 October 1912, AGCA 6051 Box 77, p. 273, NANZ.
90 Translation of proclamation in *O Le Savali*, December 1913, AGCA 6051 Box 77, p. 274, NANZ.
dramatically different from those of their predecessors in the nineteenth century. As such, it is unsurprising that German officials’ primary response to kirikiti was to attempt to restrict it.

**Officials and kirikiti under American rule**

Compared to their German – and later New Zealand – contemporaries to the west, American officials in the US-controlled islands were guided by a relatively narrow set of interests. Whereas the German administration pursued a dual strategy of ‘preserving’ Samoan social life while promoting the interests of the DHPG, American naval commandants were at least as interested in Pago Pago’s deep-water harbour as its inhabitants. As such, they were largely content to ‘keep things quiet’ by enacting a series of *ad hoc* provisions to preserve the peace and protect the copra crop, which provided most of the administration’s tax revenues. Papalagi sports sat easily within this limited strategic framework but, as ever, kirikiti was more problematic. Even in the absence of an activist colonial ethos, successive naval commandants hence saw fit to restrict and frequently prohibit the game.

Since at least the 1870s, American interests in Samoa had centred on the island of Tutuila and particularly the natural harbour at Pago Pago. A series of commissions and investigations confirmed the desirability of acquiring this “Gibraltar of the South Pacific” for use as a coaling station by the US navy.\(^91\) From the beginning, American rule was characterised by a series of *pro tempore* measures rather than any strategic imperative. President William McKinley authorised naval rule by Executive Order in February 1900 – almost two months before Samoan chiefs signed the deed of cession for Tutuila – and appointed Benjamin F. Tilley as the first naval commandant of the territory. Tilley himself negotiated the Deed of Cession and persuaded local leaders to sign it, but did not do so himself. The neighbouring Manu’a group, moreover, was only ceded four years later. This tenuous basis for American authority was compounded by the failure of the US Congress to ratify either document until 1929.\(^92\) For Washington – if not necessarily for the men who served as officials in the islands – American interests thus started and ended with the naval station in Pago Pago Harbour. The Assistant Secretary of the Navy confirmed these priorities in his initial directive to Tilley:

> While your position as commandant will invest you with authority over the islands embraced within the limits of the station, you will at all times exercise care to conciliate and cultivate friendly relations with the natives.\(^93\)

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93 Charles H. Allen to Benjamin F. Tilley, 17 February, 1900, General Interest, 1900-1919, Box 1, RG 284, NARA.
As such, the Navy expected “a simple, straightforward method of administration, such as to win and hold the confidence of the people”.

Tilley’s instructions evinced the three principal features of American rule in Samoa until after World War II. Firstly, commandants – later governors – were granted total discretionary power over the islands and their inhabitants. Even for its advocates and apologists, therefore, American rule was “completely autocratic”.94 Secondly, a governor’s unchecked powers were matched by the almost-total lack of direction he received in setting and executing policy. Upon his appointment in 1927, for instance, Governor Stephen Graham complained that the only mission he could discern from studying all naval orders past and present was “… to govern the people of American Samoa in such manner as to facilitate the maintenance of the naval station”.95 Until the 1930s, moreover, governors had little support from within the skeletal ranks of the administration. Finally, Tilley’s vague remit presaged the general lack of interest that the Navy – and the wider Washington establishment – would take in ‘developing’ the islands or reshaping Samoan modes of social, political or economic organisations. As a result, any pretentions at activist governance stemmed strictly from the governors themselves, and were almost invariably stalled by a lack of Federal funding. To this end, ‘budgetary limitations’ foiled Commandant Sebree’s plans to establish a public school system – and his hopes of importing and growing rubber and nutmeg to generate additional income.96 Governor William Crose’s educational reforms in 1912 also floundered due to funding restraints, and it was only in the 1930s that public education was put on firm footing after the administration received a generous private bequest.97 Governor Clark Stearns’ efforts at building and furnishing a public library were more successful, but only after he personally solicited 3,000 volumes from his friends in the United States.98

As a result of these circumstances, American ambitions in Samoa remained relatively limited; for all their untrammeled legal authority, commandants and governors largely left the task of governing the villages, counties and districts to local matai. Fa’a Samoa therefore continued to hold sway, at least until it clashed with the laws and desires of the American administration.99 Indeed, an American journalist who visited Tutuila in 1927 boasted that its inhabitants were the

95 Stephen Graham, cited in Gray, p. 231
98 Gray, p. 177.
99 Secretary of Native Affairs to Governor, ‘Report for the information of the public generally on American Samoa’, 25 April 1912, Reel 51, Records of the Governor’s Office, Series No. 7... Series No. 8, T1182.
envy of their neighbours in Western Samoa “due to the attitude in American Samoa of keeping hands off native affairs, maintaining a rigid sanitary inspection, and devoting its attention to keeping the natives free from all white man’s exploitation”. While this assessment undoubtedly reflected its author’s national allegiance, it is certainly true that the American administration was less interventionist than its New Zealand counterpart.

In practice, of course, even this limited remit engendered attempts to control Samoan movement and discipline ‘disruptive’ and unproductive Samoan behaviours. With little federal funding forthcoming, commandants and governors were reliant on customs and license fees, fines and – overwhelmingly – taxes to function. These taxes were paid in copra rather than cash, and so ‘protecting the crop’ was a strategic imperative that informed policymaking throughout the period of study. Addressing the assembled matai at the Fono in 1930, for instance, Governor Gatewood Lincoln explained that the copra crop was a barometer of the Administration’s wider relationship with the people. “If we have a good copra crop we can get along”, Lincoln told his audience, “but bigger production is required”. Lincoln’s exhortation was hardly unusual. As he ruefully admitted, thirty years of Government efforts had been largely ineffective:

Laws and regulations and speeches have had some effect but not much, they cannot be fully enforced unless the people are in sympathy with them. You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make him drink… you will have to do the work.

American officials hence employed various punitive strategies to secure the copra tax: in the event of non-payment in a village or district, government supplies could be frozen, reluctant taxpayers hauled into court, and uncooperative Samoan officials were liable to have their salaries withheld or even lose their jobs.

For the most part, however, American officials relied on a series of proscriptions to curtail undesirable Samoan behaviours. While various ‘disruptive’ and ‘obstructive’ practices attracted the ire of American officials – including fine mat exchange and, repeatedly, ‘improvident’ church building – the overwhelming majority of edicts targeted malaga. As early as 1902 Commandant

100 Clem Yore, cited in Gray, p. 231.
102 1930 Fono Proceedings, Reel 19 (Fono Proceedings, 1930-1938), T1192.
104 See, for example: E.W. Gurr (Secretary of Native Affairs), ‘Report on Native Government of Tutuila’, November 1901, Reel 1 (Records of the High Court, Series no. 5, Annual Reports of the Secretary of Native Affairs to the Governor, 1901, 1905, 1925), T1182; Governor to Secretary of Native Affairs, ‘AOLOA – Failure to work on Plantations’, 10 April 1926, Reel 2 (Unclassified Papers, 1902-1936...), T1182.
Sebree decreed that any malaga within the American territory required his personal permission. At the behest of his German counterpart, Sebree’s successor passed another law regulating travel between the American- and German-held islands because such visiting parties were “unsatisfactory and a cause of hindrance to the promotion of good order in the government”. Further restrictions targeted particular varieties of malaga. In 1921, for instance, Governor Waldo A. Evans forbade any company wishing “to leave its village for the purpose of giving an entertainment in any other village” without explicit gubernatorial permission.

Evans’ actions prefigured a series of anti-malaga measures. The following year Sydney D. Hall, the Secretary of Native Affairs, reported that a policy “of refusing permission to engage in useless malagas” was partly responsible for a bumper copra crop. To build on this success, he suggested all applications for malaga be carefully investigated before permission was granted. In 1923, therefore, Hall proposed an onerous new procedure for any prospective malaga:

[T]he people desirous of making a malaga [will] submit a request to the chief of their County, who, if approving, will in turn submit it to his District Governor. If the official approves of said malaga he will submit the request to the Secretary of Native Affairs. The S.N.A. if approving, will then enquire as to the desire of the County Chief and District Governor of the County and District to be visited and then make recommendation to the Governor that the request of the approved or disapproved, as he sees fit. These recommendations reflected an attempt to delineate between what Hall called “proper malagas”, which served a variety of useful social functions, and ‘useless’ ones, which did not.

This view continued to inform official policy throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In 1937, for instance, the papalagi principal of Feleti School requested the Governor’s permission for students to undertake a two-day malaga “to instruct the boys in certain aspects of Samoan custom… which can best be done on a malaga. From what knowledge I have of Samoan custom, I strongly approve of their suggestion”. This was unquestionably a ‘proper’ malaga, and it quickly received official authorisation. More generally, such procedures stand as a stark illustration of how American

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105 ‘A Regulation Relating to Samoan Traveling Parties Between the Islands of SAVAI’I and UPOLU and the Islands of TUTUILA and MANUA’ (The Malaga Regulation, 1903), 1903, Reel 10 (Village Resolutions, 1899-1919 and undated papers...), T1182.
106 Governor to Secretary of Native Affairs, no date, A “3” County Officials, Records of the High Court, General Files, 1907-1966, Box 48 (NN-370-59), RG 284.
107 Secretary of Native Affairs to the Governor, ‘Annual Report for the fiscal year ending 30 June, 1922’, 31 July 1922, Reel 1 (Records of the High Court, Series no. 5, Annual Reports of the Secretary of Native Affairs to the Governor, 1901, 1905, 1925), T1182.
108 Secretary of Native Affairs to the Governor, ‘Annual Report for the fiscal year ending 30 June, 1923’, 30 June, 1923, Reel 1, T1182.
109 Ibid. Emphasis in original.
110 Principal, Feleti School to the Governor, ‘Request to make a malaga’, 7 Jan 1937, 8-A Native Affairs, 1936-1937, Office of the Attorney General, Island Government Files, 1931-1964, Box 466 (NN-370-59), RG 284.
officials, despite their relatively limited ambitions, were deeply concerned with controlling Samoan movement, production and politics.

The notion that Samoan customs could be ‘proper’ in some cases and ‘useless’ in others also shaped official attitudes towards Samoan recreation. On the one hand, ‘proper’ recreational activities – those that did not interfere with copra or cause disturbances – were not only tolerated, but actively promoted. As early as 1901 public holidays such as Flag Day and the Fourth of July featured an array of American and Samoan sports. Although baseball, basketball and other American games often featured on these occasions, American officials also enthusiastically promoted Samoan sports. The administration routinely arranged prizes for inter-district siva and singing competitions, as well as the popular fautasi races. Officials also demonstrated support in other ways. In 1916, for instance, Governor Stearns informed the Secretary of the Navy that ‘Flag Raising Day’ had been a resounding success due to “the revival of numerous old Samoan games and customs”, including some war dances, sivas, and other sports “known only to the oldest living Samoans”.

This same sentiment was evident eight years later, when an American official wrote to local papalagi residents regarding a fautasi race at the upcoming Flag Raising Day celebrations. The race was to be held between crews representing the American and New Zealand-held islands, and local pride was at stake:

No more fitting contest could be held then this one of skill in the art of rowing, in which the Samoan people are famous, and contributions will be gratefully accepted and appreciated in any amount one desires to get. WE MUST WIN THIS RACE.

This attitude towards ‘proper’ Samoan recreation also permeated government schools, where teachers did their best to supervise and promote sport and physical activities – including the Scouts – in the face of inadequate facilities and equipment. These examples indicate that sport at official celebrations and in schools was entirely congruent with American officials’ broader strategic goals. In these officially sanctioned spaces, where Samoan behaviour could be monitored and controlled, sports and games were viewed in an entirely positive light.

Kirikiti’s status was inevitably less secure. For American officials, the game’s scale and capacity for disruption meant that it often fell firmly under the banner of ‘useless’ custom. This was

112 ‘Flag Day Apr 17/24’, I “1” Holidays, Programs, etc., Records of the High Court, General Files, 1907-1966, Box 49 (NN-370-59), RG 284.
certainly the view of Commandant Edmund Underwood, who in May 1904 observed a three-day kirikiti match between Tutuila’s two administrative districts. Underwood estimated that around 600 Samoan men, women and children had decamped from Pago Pago Bay to the other side of the island to witness the game and partake in feasting and other festivities. Their prolific cricketing and the associated waste of time and food, he felt, served as an example of Samoans’ natural ‘extravagance’.\footnote{Commandant (Edmund Beardsley Underwood) to Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 23 May 1904, Reel 23 (Series No. 5, Annual Reports on Government Affairs, 1902-1921...), T1182.} Other officials expressed similar sentiments. In 1916, a Hospital Steward visiting the Manu’a islands informed the Governor that the locals were making little effort to clear their plantations – or even plant food crops – due to a series of reciprocal cricketing malaga. “A great deal of food is consumed on these trips”, he reported, “and little work is done in either village while the guests remain”.\footnote{L.C. Sima, Hospital Steward, U.S.N to Governor, via Senior Medical Officer, ‘Manua Group: Plantations, etc.’, 3 August 1916, Reel 29, Series No. 6, General Interest Files, 1872-1948, T1182.} Unsurprisingly, these complaints invoked American officials’ broader concerns regarding ‘useless’ malaga. In effect, therefore, kirikiti was seen as a particularly pervasive manifestation of the Samoans’ ‘tendency to rove’.

American officials were also concerned by kirikiti-related violence and property destruction. While intra-village matches almost always passed without incident, matches between different villages sometimes precipitated serious confrontations. This was not a wholly uncommon occurrence: a missionary passing through Tutuila told of a cricket dispute which “threatened to end in bloodshed”,\footnote{Frank Lenwood, \textit{Pastels from the Pacific} (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1917), p. 66.} while the author of a 1919 \textit{National Geographic} feature claimed that one of the primary duties of \textit{Fitafitas} [a special Samoan naval guard] was to “settle fights” at inter-village games.\footnote{Lorena MacIntyre Quinn, ‘America’s South Sea Soldiers’, \textit{National Geographic} 36:3 (Sept 1919), p. 272.} American officials were disturbed by this apparent tendency towards disorder and destruction. An instructive incident took place during the term of John M. Poyer, who served as Naval Governor between 1915 and 1919. Poyer received word that hundreds of Samoans were “marching on each other” after an altercation at a kirikiti match and appeared intent to – at the very least – “burn each others’ villages”. He quickly had the leaders arrested and eventually forbade the villages from playing against each other for the remainder of his term, as well as recalling their allotment of hunting guns and ammunition.\footnote{Mary Poyer Kniskern, \textit{Life in Samoa from 1915 to 1919} (United States of America: self-published, 1993), pp. 6-7.} Together, such incidents confirmed American suspicions that kirikiti was a nuisance and even a menace: it threatened to undermine the copra harvest, and hence tax revenues; it diverted attention from more productive tasks such as tending to
food crops; and it seemed to encourage violence and other breaches of the peace. As such, they felt compelled to regulate and even prohibit it.

As Poyer’s executive action suggests, the most stringent restrictions were generally one-off responses to particular circumstances. Indeed, this chapter began by recounting Governor Bryan’s 1927 Executive Order, which limited kirikiti matches – and later prohibited them entirely – so as to stimulate production in the aftermath of a cyclone.119 Bryan’s gambit was repeated ten years later, when the Attorney General – a position that absorbed the non-judicial duties of the Secretary of Native Affairs – announced a crackdown on inter-village kirikiti matches as part of a more general effort to restrict unsanctioned malaga.120 A similar episode unfolded in February 1932, when a polio outbreak forced the Governor to establish a temporary quarantine within each village. Children were not permitted to attend church or any other assembly in any place, while adults were permitted to attend such gatherings in their own villages, but not elsewhere. Inter-village malaga was expressly forbidden.121 After the Governor received word that kirikiti matches were continuing despite the previous order, however, he added a clause reminding those in affected districts that the quarantine precluded not only malaga but also “playing any cricket games”.122

For the most part, however, American officials disavowed such comprehensive proscriptions and instead sought to regulate kirikiti in much the same way as they did malaga – by trimming its excesses and limiting its disruptive effects. These efforts were relatively simple in those spaces in which the administration’s authority was secure, such as in schools and at official celebrations. Kirikiti was unsurprisingly the most popular game in Samoan schools. Given the lack of organised sporting alternatives in schools – a product of inadequate funding – teachers and officials were loath to stop it completely. Even so, they grew frustrated with the time children spent at play in both intra- and inter-school games. In his 1935 annual review, therefore, the Director of Education was delighted to report that a compromise solution had been found:


A revised form of cricket is now being used by the Public School system and is very popular. It enables the games to be played in much less time than formerly, and provides good fun for the pupils without seriously interfering with their studies.123

This defanged kirikiti featured prominently on Public School Demonstration Day in the 1930s. In 1936, for instance, 20 players represented both Poyer School and the Leone high school – but only ten were permitted to bat in each innings.124 This desire to limit kirikiti’s scope and duration was even more conspicuous at official celebrations such as Flag Raising Day and the Fourth of July. An inter-district kirikiti match served as the centrepiece of Tutuila’s Flag Raising Day from at least 1907, with a $10 prize awarded to the winning side. The two sides were limited to 15 players each, however.125 Under these controlled circumstances, Americans officials were happy to promote kirikiti. In 1919, for instance, the programme for Flag Raising Day included a special notice advertising “a hotly contested cricket game, between the best teams to be found in the Eastern and Western Districts… EVERYBODY INVITED. GREAT EXCITEMENT”.126 After a brief hiatus in the early-1930s, the inter-district match was revived in 1934 – but only after the addition of a timekeeper to ensure the game was completed within four hours.127 By limiting the number of players and the time spent at play, American officials were thus able to curb kirikiti’s capacity for disruption – at least within those spaces where official authority was strongest. Played in this way and in these circumstances, kirikiti was a ‘proper’ custom to be allowed and even encouraged.

Outside of these confines, however, the game was more difficult to control. As was the case with malaga, American officials therefore instituted a permit system in which inter-village matches were forbidden without the governor’s written permission. The first such law, which was enacted in 1907, stipulated penalties for unauthorised inter-village matches ranging from “a fine not exceeding $15” to imprisonment for up to 60 days, with or without hard labour. This ordinance was amended seven years later due to the disruption kirikiti caused when played amongst the people of any one village. Such matches were only subject to censure when they were deemed to “interrupt or interfere with the ordinary labour of the people of the village or any general work for the

125 ‘Program of Sports’, 17 April 1907 (MISCELLANEOUS, 1907), Reel 23 (Series No. 5, Annual Reports on Government Affairs, 1902-1921...), T1182.
126 ‘Flag Raising Day, April 12, 1919 – Programme’, Reel 52, Series No. 12, Speeches & Ceremonies..., T1182.
government or village”. If any government official considered such interference to have occurred, however, it was incumbent on the accused to prove that he or she had performed the required work. Failure to do so would result in a fine of $1.\textsuperscript{128}

As was the case with travel more generally, procuring a permit for kirikiti journeys became more difficult in the 1920s and 1930s. At first, prospective players required the permission of the Governor alone. Even this was often denied; one Secretary of Native Affairs recalled that such permission in the mid-1910s was “seldom given except when the copra season is slack”. As a result, he remarked, during the last few months of the season his courtroom was often filled with ‘cricket-without-permit cases’.\textsuperscript{129} By the 1930s attaining a permit was rendered more difficult still when the administration determined that – as with malaga in general – a series of local officials also needed to agree to any inter-village game. In 1932, for instance, “the ladies of Aua” asked for permission to play at the malae in Pago Pago. Although the copra season was finished, the Attorney General wrote to District Governor Mauga asking if he, the local County Chief or the Pulenu’u of Aua had any objection to the game being played.\textsuperscript{130}

On other occasions permission was subject to strict conditions to limit its scale and any disruptive effects. In May 1936, the Attorney General H.A. Sailor gave his permission for a side from Pago Pago to play against Feleti School on Memorial Day – but only once the locals had found $8.75 to pay for recent damage to sanitation facilities. In addition, Sailor demanded that the game be completed by 6pm and that no players from any other villages be allowed to join in.\textsuperscript{131} Two months later Sailor’s successor rejected an initial request for a match between villages near Pago Pago and instead suggested they play on the malae at the Naval Station – but only for an hour and a half. As was frequently the case in such supervised matches, the game was to feature strictly 15 players on each side.\textsuperscript{132}

These steadily more onerous restrictions on kirikiti reflected American officials’ collective thinking regarding the game. American interests in Samoa were relatively modest, and officials took no issue with Samoan recreation as long as it did not interfere with the basic tasks of governance. Any possible insouciance was quickly overtaken, however, by the same general factors

\textsuperscript{128} Noble, Codification of the regulations of American Samoa, p. 25.


that had shaped official attitudes towards the game since its inception. By disrupting economic production, diminishing taxation receipts and bringing general tumult and trouble, kirikiti was antithetical to the aims of the US administration – limited though they were. Successive American officials consequently aimed to refashion what they saw as a ‘useless’ custom into a ‘proper’ one by limiting the size and duration of games. As was the case under other papalagi administrations in the islands, such measures were indicative of wider efforts to control Samoan politics, movement and labour so as to render Samoans less mobile, more productive and more governable.

**Officials and kirikiti under New Zealand rule**

Following the outbreak of war in Europe, New Zealand forces arrived at Apia in August 1914 to occupy German Samoa at the request of the British government. Inevitably, this intervention brought an influx of British sport to the islands, with New Zealand officials leading the way on and off the field. Official patronage of sport, including English cricket, continued after the occupation was replaced by civilian administration in 1920. In spite of this ludic spirit, New Zealand rule witnessed concerted efforts to restrict kirikiti. With the DHPG’s assets having been requisitioned during the war, there was no obvious commercial impetus for such measures. Rather, official attitudes towards kirikiti were framed by a determined paternalism – at least until Samoan resistance to interventionist policies forced the administration to retreat. Kirikiti was one of several Samoan practices seen as incompatible with New Zealand’s efforts to develop and modernise its protectorate. By the late 1920s, officials also saw the game as a front for political activity. As such, it attracted the scrutiny of a succession of administrators and officials.

Although it was itself a colony and from 1907 a dominion of the British Empire, New Zealanders had long set their sights on expansion into Oceania. In 1848 the Governor of New Zealand, George Grey, wrote to the Colonial Office requesting permission to annex Fiji and Tonga for the British Empire. Grey’s enquiries were by no means an anomaly; indeed, Damon Salesa argues that for almost all of its history as a colony, “prominent colonials, from all walks of life and regions, had yearned to bring one or other islands under New Zealand rule”. These advocates saw New Zealand as uniquely qualified to serve as Britain’s regent, fulfilling a so-called ‘Pacific Destiny’. The British Colonial Office, however, consistently dismissed New Zealand’s “Quixotic

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schemes” in the region.\textsuperscript{134} The agitators were nevertheless persistent, with Samoa a particular focus. Decades of diffuse support for New Zealand ‘surrogate colonialism’ in Samoa eventually culminated in a series of fantastic and public entreaties for British intervention in the islands during the 1880s and 1890s. When word came in 1899 that Britain had surrendered any claim to Samoa, acting governor Robert Stout warned the Colonial Office that it was to be ‘their Alsace’.\textsuperscript{135}

After all these unrequited overtures, New Zealand’s eventual imperial call to Samoa came somewhat abruptly. Within 48 hours of war being declared on Germany on 4 August 1914, the British government was urging New Zealand to undertake “a great and urgent Imperial Service” by capturing and occupying Samoa.\textsuperscript{136} Within weeks a convoy was sailing from Wellington bearing some men from territorial units and others with no military experience whatsoever. They arrived at Apia on 29 August and, facing no German resistance, raised the Union Jack the next morning. The landing party of 1413 men was led by Robert Logan, a Scottish-born sheep farmer who had lived in New Zealand for over thirty years. Logan was also a local councilman who had extensive experience leading volunteer infantry companies.\textsuperscript{137}

What he did not have, however, was any kind of strategic directive for administering Samoa. Logan had been broadly instructed to take whatever measures were necessary to hold Samoa and control its inhabitants, but further direction was not forthcoming. Mary Boyd characterises Logan’s predicament as follows:

\begin{quote}
Godley [at that time the Commander of New Zealand’s Armed Forces] had taken it for granted that the New Zealand government would give him [Logan] supplementary orders, but the government neglected to do so. They had despatched the expeditionary force in haste and in the exigencies of war. They were, moreover, inexperienced and only in the position of \textit{locum tenens}.
\end{quote}

This administrative muddle was exacerbated by the New Zealand government objecting to retaining Germans in official positions, and most of these officials objecting to serving under the occupation. Logan was consequently forced at three days’ notice to take over the entire civil service, with vacancies filled with members of the occupying force and a few local British subjects. The result was an administration reduced to ‘marking time’, a situation that largely persisted until New Zealand was given trusteeship of Samoa by the League of Nations in 1920.

Revitalising British sport in Samoa was one aspect of New Zealand’s ‘imperial service’ that was immediately successful. Soldiers leant heavily on sport to relieve the boredom of garrison life. This precipitated a dramatic upsurge in cricket and bowls in and around Apia. Some of the most avid sportsmen were found amongst the officers who made up the senior figures in the Administration. One notable example was Captain Alfred Loftus Tottenham, the scion of a prominent Anglo-Irish family, who immigrated to New Zealand after serving in the Boer War. Tottenham joined the Samoan expeditionary force as Provost Marshal and held several other appointments in Samoa, including Judge in the Department of Native Affairs. If the Samoa Times is to be believed, however, much of his time was spent dominating Apia’s emergent cricket scene with bat and ball.

Logan himself was a regular player and supporter of cricket in Samoa, as evidenced by a two-week period in September 1915. On 18 September, the Samoa Times reported that he had opened the batting for a side representing the military against a side comprising prominent Samoan matai and Samoan government officials. A week later the Times carried a notice from Logan, advising employers that they were to grant a half-holiday “to enable their employees to witness a cricket match against a [Samoan] team from the visiting American ship”. Quite apart from cricket, Logan’s keen interest in sporting matters precipitated a renaissance in British sporting culture in Apia. In November 1916 Logan arranged a public meeting in which he laid out an ambitious plan for ludic revival:

... [I]f we had three cricket pitches in the oval and a couple of tennis courts we would have 100 to 150 people meeting each Saturday to take part in these sports and as onlookers, and some revenue might be derived from tea rooms, which I am sure will be well patronised. The revenue from the Cricket Association and from race meetings and other sports should be sufficient to keep the ground in order and provide a sinking fund which would leave the park free of debt in a few years. A committee was duly elected and set about organising a race meet in time for Boxing Day – the first such sports since peace time.

Despite this enthusiasm for cricket and other papalagi sports, kirikiti frustrated New Zealand officials. For the most part, however, the ramshackle administration was powerless to stop the game when it was played away from Apia. As a result, kirikiti returned to the villages in force. When military officials did discover violations of the law, however, they were frequently severe. Within

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140 Tottenham’s cricketing exploits were frequently recorded in the Samoa Times. See for example ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Times, 25 March 1916, p. 3.
141 ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Times, 18 September 1915.
144 Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa, p. 110. The exception to this appears to have been in some parts of Savai’i, where the long-serving Deputy Administrator Richard Williams continued to exercise significant influence.
six months of his arrival in Apia, for instance, Colonel Logan stumbled upon a group of Samoans brazenly playing a match on the main road on a non-prescribed day of the week. He angrily wrote to the paramount chief Tamasese Lealofi – his ‘advisor’ for the area – and a number of local officials demanding an explanation and for the perpetrators to be fined. He reminded them, moreover, that several villages in Savai’i had recently been punished for breaching the law.145 Similarly, in his capacity as Judge of the Native Court, Captain Tottenham showed no leniency when the cricketing ordinance was contravened. In March 1916, for example, he fined several pulenu’u (a government-appointed ‘village mayor’) £1 each for allowing cricket to be played in their village contrary to the law. Three villages were also subjected to collective fines of £25 each – a very significant sum indeed.146

Patronage of papalagi sport continued to be a common theme for New Zealand officials under civilian administration. Both Colonel Robert Ward Tate, who succeeded Logan as Administrator, and Brigadier General Herbert Hart, who was appointed from 1931 to 1935, acted as patron to the Apia Cricket Club.147 Major General George Spafford Richardson, who succeeded Tate and oversaw the most interventionist phase of New Zealand rule in Samoa, gave his name to a number of sporting trophies and was a strong supporter of the Apia Rugby Union.148 Colonel Stephen Shepherd Allen performed a similar service for both golf and rugby during his term in Samoa from 1928 to 1931.149

Although these efforts centred on Apia’s European enclave, officials also made a conscious effort to promote European sports among Samoan boys and girls. In a memorandum to the Minister of External Affairs, Tate enthusiastically reported that the first troop of Boy Scouts comprising “pure-blooded Samoan boys” had been founded at the Malifa school. He was adamant that members had “reaped great benefit” from the combination of parades and excursions.150 While Tate approved of the Scouts, it was under Richardson that the movement was deployed to systematically shape the bodies and minds of young Samoans. In founding the ‘Fetu o Samoa’ (known simply as the Fetu), he attempted to shape Samoan boys into “true and good Samoans – good in mind, in body

145 Logan to Tamasese, 11 February 1915, Correspondence between Colonel R Logan and Tamasese, 1914-1917, Samoa-BMO 2, NANZ, translation courtesy of Tolu Fredericksen.
147 ‘Cricket Notes’, Samoa Herald, August 12 1932, p. 8.
148 ‘Rugby in Samoa’, Temuka Leader, 9 April 1927, p. 1; ‘Rugby in Samoa’, New Zealand Herald, 20 March 1928, p. 11. Interestingly, however, the ‘Richardson Cup’ for the local club cricket competition was not named after G.S. Richardson, but rather Major Andrew ‘Andy’ Richardson. The ‘first’ Richardson came with the expeditionary force and only left Samoa in 1920. He was known to be a keen sportsman and himself donated several trophies – and much time – to the cause of recreation in Samoa. See ‘A Soldier and a Man’, Samoa Times, 3 January 1920, p. 7.
150 Robert Ward Tate, ‘Memorandum for the Minister of External Affairs’, 28 March 1923, p. 13, MS-Papers-0264-34: Reports and Memoranda, 1922-1923, Tate, Robert Ward, 1864-1933: Papers, ATL.
and in character". The movement pursued this mission by building discipline and stressing obedience through drill and sports, and was made compulsory for all third grade pupils.

Colonial athletics and sports fulfilled a similar purpose. Richardson saw sport as a means of building ties between Samoa and New Zealand. In opening the 1928 rugby season, he expressed his hope that a Samoan team would soon be of the required standard to conduct a tour to New Zealand. Plans were also made to send a party of thirty or forty schoolboys to visit New Zealand, where they would “give musical performances and athletic displays, and will take part in cricket, rugby union and basketball matches”. These efforts continued under Richardson’s successors. The Evening Post reported that Allen had set out to stimulate Samoan interest in sports by “taking an active personal interest in games, as well as presenting handsome cups and trophies for competition among the youths of Western Samoa”. According to Salesa, initiatives such as the Fetu and colonial athletics were part of a concerted attempt to control the bodies and sentiments of young Samoans. Together with an education system that focused on “native bodies rather than native minds”, this new physical culture was a means of imposing discipline and order on Samoan children and adolescents – and ultimately readying them for a place in the modern colonial economy.

Paradoxically, then, the rationale for officials’ support of papalagi-style sport and athletics goes some way to explaining why kirikiti was problematic in the 1920s. To both its critics and apologists, the guiding principle of New Zealand’s administration in Samoa was ‘paternalism’. New Zealand officials saw their mission as one of guiding the ‘childlike’ Samoans towards the promises of a modern economy and Western-style political institutions, with or without their consent. This goal was framed by contemporary understandings of race and ‘civilisation’, which reflected and reinforced the spirit of the League of Nations mandate. New Zealand officials often equated Samoans with children, as evidenced by Allen’s remark that “the Samoan never grows up, but always retains the mind and intellect of a child, reasons like a child, and behaves like a spoilt

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155 ‘Samoan “Tourists”’, Evening Post, 14 January 1931, p. 11.
157 For an example of a sympathetic view of New Zealand’s record, see Ian Campbell’s work; a more critical approach is taken by other scholars of Oceania, including notably Damon Salesa. See Campbell, 'Resistance and colonial government', pp. 45-69; Salesa, 'New Zealand's Pacific', pp. 149-172.
child – as he essentially is”. Paternalism was also embedded in the mandate itself, which forbade the supply of “intoxicating spirits and beverages to the natives” and called on officials to “promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants”. 

The League of Nations mandate and contemporary understandings of racial hierarchies meant that ‘development’, ‘civilisation’ and ‘protection’ constituted what Salesa calls “the moral triangulations of New Zealand’s colonial rule”. These principles guided administrators after Logan, even if they were often constrained in their ability to enact change. Initially appointed as a temporary replacement for Logan, Tate oversaw the transition from military to civilian rule and was preoccupied with consolidating New Zealand authority in the aftermath of the November 1918 influenza epidemic. Despite these inauspicious beginnings, he began cautiously reforming the nature, functions and procedures of the ‘native administration’ to better align them with Western parliamentary models. In addition, he embarked on a project of restoring and extending public works, as well as maintaining and renovating the plantations that had been seized from the DHPG during the war. Through these policies – limited though they were – he sought to implement the mandate and enact the paternalistic ethos of New Zealand rule.

It was under Richardson that New Zealand paternalism had its fullest expression in Samoa, however. A military man like his predecessors, Richardson conducted policymaking with “almost unfettered discretion” in single-minded pursuit of Western-style ‘progress’ in Samoa. In order to increase agricultural output, his administration established production targets and promoted new crops and techniques. This focus on production was augmented by major projects to improve health services, extend education and improve public works projects. Richardson’s interventionist programme represented a dramatic challenge to established Samoan patterns of production, politics and social engagement: “overnight, as it were, he hoped to transform Samoans into healthy, hardworking and prosperous planters and good citizens”. As was the case under German rule, however, a number of Samoan social practices were seen as being incongruent with New Zealand’s ambitious plans for Samoa. During the 1920s, regulations were consequently passed to alter the cultural basis of Samoan production by encouraging a move away from customary land ownership.

159 League of Nations, Mandate for German Samoa (Geneva: Imprimerie Kundig, 1920).  
160 Salesa, ‘New Zealand’s Pacific’, p. 156.  
162 Ibid., p. 134.  
163 Ibid., p. 138.
and restricting mobility. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these restrictions included a renewed emphasis on anti-kirikiti laws.

New Zealand officials’ attempts to regulate kirikiti are best understood alongside similar attempts to increase Samoan production by restricting ‘wasteful’ and ‘primitive’ social practices. Richardson instituted measures to discourage matai managing communal lands, concerned that customary land ownership “does not make for individual effort or industry”. Instead, untitled men and their families were encouraged to take up land and cultivate it for themselves, rather than the community. This was part of a broader effort to subordinate the traditionally pre-eminent matai; Richardson extended Tate’s attempt to bring Samoan politics closer to Western forms. He saw customary decision-making processes as ceremonial only, and instead turned to governing through the Faipule – a kind of ‘native parliament’ with advisory functions – and Samoan government officials.

Samoan mobility was also subject to a number of restrictions. Ceremonies including weddings, the conferral of chiefly titles and even honouring the dead were controlled and curtailed. In addition, within months of beginning his term Richardson had reprised and extended German restrictions on fine-mat exchange as part of a broader suppression of malaga. A law passed in July 1923 suspended such malaga for three years, although fine mats could still be used as currency if no malaga was involved. The rationale for such restrictions was a familiar one, as officials were alarmed by the potential for economic disruption and ‘trouble’. According to the 1928 Royal Commission, exchange parties could lead to a “cycle of feasting” in which “the plantations of both the visitors and hosts were neglected”. Not only could this lead to poverty and lost production, for New Zealand officials – as for their German predecessors – it was associated with “quarrels and much difficulty” over equivalence and repayment.

Similar concerns informed New Zealand officials’ efforts to control kirikiti under their mandate. When Tate arrived in 1919, he found anti-kirikiti laws being broken with impunity. After being invited to attend three matches within a week, his diary entries conveyed a mixture of

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168 Ibid., p. 268.
amusement, bewilderment and concern. On the one hand, he was delighted with the skills and ‘antics’ on show and mused it was “a pity that Gilbert and Sullivan gave no attention to this place”. At the same time, he expressed his reservations about some of the associated elements. He was sure that there was “an immense amount of secret betting” of money and food, and noted with alarm that the forfeit had in previous times been “a fruitful cause of trouble, [with] chiefs taking deadly offence at such humiliation… fights with bloodshed were quite common”.

The potential for kirikiti to descend into violence was underscored by an incident that occurred later that year. An umpiring dispute at a match between women representing the villages of Samamea and Taelefaga led to a general mêlée, during which a stone struck one young man on the skull and knocked him out. He succumbed to tetanus two weeks later, whereupon two men were charged with manslaughter and nine others with taking part in the affray. In light of his concerns, Tate resolved to “lick the law into better shape”. In December 1921 he enacted a new regulation: policing kirikiti was the domain of the pulenu‘u, and any cases would be heard by the fa‘amasino, a local judge authorised to adjudicate cases between Samoans. Persistent disobedience was to be reported to the Secretary of Native Affairs. Similar events influenced New Zealand thinking about kirikiti for many years. Indeed, a 1936 report on law and order in Samoa claimed that kirikiti matches and other inter-village public gatherings sometimes led to disorderly acts and even serious affrays involving weapons.

These concerns augmented officials’ more general disquiet with the game’s capacity to disrupt production and upset economic development. Tate often justified anti-kirikiti laws in his public speaking engagements by telling of an apocryphal match that led to starvation for both sides. Moreover, he claimed his principal reason for interdicting against the game was because it was detrimental to Samoan plantations. Official disapprobation of kilikiti strengthened further during Richardson’s vigorously paternalistic tenure. In 1925 the law was once again revised at his request, with the New Zealand press reporting that this was “in the interests of industry and

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169 Officials were often invited to witness the spectacle of a kirikiti match. When Lord Bledisloe, the Governor General of New Zealand, visited Samoa in April 1933 he was entertained by a match at a local school. His participation in the game was met with “a roar of delighted applause”. ‘Sport at Apia’, *Auckland Star*, 24 April 1933, p. 9.
170 Robert Ward Tate, Diary for 14 and 24 May 1919, Diaries (MS-Papers-0264-43, MS-Papers–0264-44), Tate, Robert Ward, 1864-1933: Papers, ATL.
174 Robert Ward Tate, Papers and reports relating to Tate’s speech to the Victoria League, 13 May 1929, MS-Papers-0264-36: Speeches and Functions, 1925-1937, Tate, Robert Ward, 1864-1933: Papers, ATL.
progress” as “more profitable occupations” had been neglected. This rationale was confirmed by William Nosworthy, the Minister of External Affairs, who defended anti-kirikiti laws alongside more general restrictions on malaga during a visit to Samoa in 1927. He claimed that the economic disruption and ‘troubles’ caused by malaga had been curtailed by Richardson’s intervention, and that the same considerations had “forced the Administrations of both Samoas to restrict… the number and duration of cricket matches between villages”.

Richardson’s tenure marked the high-water mark of anti-kirikiti laws and other attempts to regulate ‘wasteful’ Samoan practices. As will be detailed more fully in Chapter Eight, however, his activist approach stirred significant discontent among the Samoans and Europeans alike. This feeling contributed to the emergent Mau protest movement, which significantly undermined the efforts of Richardson and his successors to continue an interventionist program. When Stephen Shepherd Allen replaced Richardson in 1928, he was forced to suspend the system of ‘native judges’ because Mau obstructionism meant their judgements could not be upheld. This meant the anti-kirikiti laws were effectively unenforceable; one contemporaneous observer noted that while Richardson’s tenure had left “a law governing their every act from building a house to playing cricket and going to church”, Allen “did not make any attempt to enforce these laws”.

This official inactivity – and impotence – continued under subsequent administrators. Under both Brigadier General Herbert Hart (1931-34) and Alfred Clarke Turnbull (1935-1946), New Zealand’s authority was seriously compromised outside of Apia. Cyril McKay, who performed several official roles in the Native Department in the 1930s, recalled that by 1935 the Government had given up intervening in the districts. Instead, local leaders took over the daily functions of government in villages, where they “passed much of their time in playing cards or cricket”. Indeed, kirikiti’s unchecked presence in the villages signified the broader decline of New Zealand authority in the 1930s. Boyd notes that ‘progressive’ social and economic policies had been seriously curtailed by the mid-1930s due to Mau opposition and the pecuniary effects of the Great Depression. After the anti-colonial Labour Party was elected for the first time in 1936, officials in Samoa were reduced to ‘marking time’ until a resolution to the mandate could be found. Even

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176 ‘Keen Cricketers’, Auckland Star, 22 April 1925, p. 5.
178 Boyd, ‘The Record in Western Samoa to 1945’, p. 162.
179 ‘E.R’ [Eric Riddell], ‘The Native department under New Zealand Administration’ from ‘Te’o Tuvalæ, An Account of Samoan History up to 1918. Translated into English by E. Riddell, 1930-1935, with essays on Samoan life, customs and vocabulary. Also map showing political divisions of Samoa’ in Papers concerning the history of Samoa, 1887-1935, MSS 39 [microfilm], Mitchell Library (ML).
before this, however, New Zealand’s efforts to reshape the cultural basis of Samoan production had been forcibly abandoned, and Samoans had successfully reaffirmed kirikiti’s place as an important feature of village life.

These ultimately unsuccessful attempts to regulate and constrain kirikiti indicate that New Zealand officials found the game every bit as frustrating as their German predecessors and American contemporaries. Indeed, their collective responses to the game reflected very similar concerns regarding kirikiti’s incompatibility with wider economic and political objectives. More specifically, New Zealand officials’ responses to kirikiti were shaped by their determination to drag Samoans towards modernity and ‘civilisation’. If rugby, athletics and especially the Fetu promoted behaviours and values concordant with this vision, kirikiti clearly did not. Indeed, the economic disruption, apparent wastefulness and general unruliness associated with the game meant that New Zealand officials saw it as an obstacle to fulfilling their mission. As a result, kirikiti was subjected to regulation alongside other practices that embodied the cultural basis of Samoan production. This interventionist ethos came under sustained pressure by the end of the 1920s, however, and officials’ appetite and capacity for regulating kirikiti and other ‘wasteful’ social practices declined accordingly.

Conclusion

In examining the attitudes and responses of papalagi officials from 1883 to 1939, this chapter has traversed a broad swathe of Samoan ‘colonial’ history: the period of consular authority in the 1880s, an attempt at tripartite rule in the 1890s – and, after partition in 1900 – German and later New Zealand administrations in the western islands and US naval administration in the east. It is unsurprising, therefore, to find some variation in the ways that officials perceived and responded to kirikiti across the period of study. Whereas imperial rivalries coloured the attitudes of German and British officials towards the game in the 1880s and 1890s, for instance, partition in 1900 rendered such intrigue void in the twentieth century. The relatively severe measures taken against kirikiti by New Zealand officials compared to their German counterparts, moreover, reflected deeper differences in their officials’ respective missions in the islands. More generally, official attitudes and responses to kirikiti were at any one time a function of a set of historically specific circumstances, as well as their effective capacity to use coercive force and the emphasis they placed on particular commercial, social and political goals.

What is more striking, however, is the consistent opposition to the game that persisted across these different milieux. Almost without exception, papalagi officials supported and enacted a
series of restrictions and even prohibitions on the game. It might at first seem puzzling that such a disparate cast of papalagi officials responded in fundamentally similar ways to kirikiti. As we have seen, however, these similarities arose due to officials’ common preoccupation with disciplining Samoan movement, politics and labour. Whatever their specific aims, papalagi officials shared an underlying desire to make Samoans less mobile, more governable and more productive. When the kirikiti ‘epidemic’ broke out in the 1880s, they saw the game as part of broader subset of Samoan behaviours and institutions that undermined such efforts to order and constrain Samoan life. Intervention was thus required, and it continued to be required under subsequent papalagi administrations. As such, while historically specific factors influenced officials’ perceptions of kirikiti, their responses were largely shaped by this general imperative; official attempts to bridle the game embodied this deeper desire for order and control. As we will see in Chapters Five and Six, however, these attitudes often differed from – and even conflicted with – those of missionaries, white colonists, Samoa’s ‘mixed-race’ community and visiting sailors and soldiers. These chapters will demonstrate, therefore, that kirikiti exposed the fissures between officials and other papalagi in the islands even as it epitomised those officials’ struggle to constrain and control Samoan life.
Chapter Five

“Very much that was distinctly heathenish”: Christian missionaries, rational recreation and kirikiti

“It will surprise some readers to know that one of the discipline regulations is a prohibition of cricket matches. Let the prohibition be explained... matches were arranged with two hundred a side, and the play was continued during the whole day for a month at a time, to the utter neglect of home, plantations, and worship”.¹

In December 1887, Sir Albert Spicer led a month-long deputation to Samoa alongside the Rev. Joseph King and the Rev. Archibald Murray to investigate the political and social factors that might have a bearing on religious life there. They comprised a formidable contingent; the deputation’s visit, one local missionary exalted, was nothing short of “a comet in our missionary firmament”.² Despite having only just turned forty, Spicer was already the Treasurer of the London Missionary Society (LMS) and a prominent figure in British business and political circles. Murray and King were similarly eminent, at least in Samoa. The now-elderly Murray had arrived at Tutuila in 1836 as one of the first white missionaries in Samoa and stayed for over 30 years, while King had served for a decade from 1862 before his wife’s ill-health compelled him to relocate to Australia. Upon Spicer’s return to London, he submitted a twenty-page report to the LMS’s directors. Amidst discussion of local politics and Samoan social organisation, the authors paused to explain a peculiar development. Owing to “the infantile weaknesses of Samoan character”, they wrote, missionaries and pastors throughout the group had been forced to jointly introduce a strict disciplinary code that included the prohibition of cricket matches. Rather than keeping to the conventional rules of cricket, Samoans were playing month-long games featuring two hundred players per side. This Samoan adaptation of cricket, they concluded, had led to “very much that was distinctly heathenish” and thus had to be curtailed.³

The LMS deputation’s report is indicative of the wider contest over the meaning and practice of sporting recreation that took place in Samoa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As we have seen in Chapter Four, papalagi officials sought to limit kirikiti as part of broader efforts to control Samoan bodies and movement from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They were joined and indeed preceded in these efforts by exasperated papalagi missionaries. Missionaries – particularly Evangelicals like Spicer, King and Murray – often shared officials’ concerns about Samoan ‘idleness’ and the detrimental effects of malaga. After observing the local pastors and congregation at Falealili station, for instance, Spicer complained that in both their religious and working lives, Samoans “were satisfied with a very partial weeding and working”. He thus extolled them to “put their best strength” into both their plantations and the cause of Christ. Missionary efforts were rendered more urgent, moreover, by the suggestive dancing, ‘gratuitous’ feasting and non-adherence of the Sabbath that accompanied inter-village kirikiti matches and other large-scale Samoan social occasions. As such, missionaries sought to discourage these practices and instead direct Samoans towards European forms of physical recreation that were better aligned with their expectations of discipline, order and decorum.

Yet as was the case with papalagi officials, ‘the missionary response’ to kirikiti was hardly a unified or unchanging one. While papalagi missionaries were some of the most vocal critics of the game, there was significant variation in the degree to which different denominations – and indeed individuals within a single denomination – were willing to tolerate it. Notably, the uncompromising view that Spicer, King and Murray took was typical of nineteenth century British Evangelicals. It was less pervasive, however, amongst French Marists or Mormons from the American West. As such despite their common distrust of the game, kirikiti frequently embodied contest between denominations as well as between papalagi missionaries and Samoan adherents. These struggles to control the nature and meaning of recreation are hence emblematic of broader religious divisions in Samoa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. More generally, while the LMS and other missionaries initially tried to proscribe such cricket, they were eventually forced to accept the game’s place in community life.

The present chapter explores the shifting and overlapping dimensions of these dual contests between white missionaries and Samoans, and between white missionaries themselves. To do so, it first delineates the different denominations that were active in Samoa during the period of study and examines their general attitudes towards recreation. Despite initial reservations, by the late-nineteenth century most missionaries considered papalagi sports to be inoffensive and even useful in furthering their objectives. Samoan pastimes, however, were irremediably bound to ‘un-Christian’ practices such as lewd dancing, revelry and excess. This neat dichotomy was disrupted,

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4 ‘A Deputation to Samoa’, p. 140.
however, by the manner in which Samoans adapted cricket into kirikiti. After initial efforts to proscribe the game proved fruitless, missionaries instead turned their attentions on assuaging the game’s most objectionable features and using the pitch to further their proselytising aims in the village. As such, they grew resigned to the game’s central place within increasingly ‘Samoanised’ churches – a position it would continue to hold throughout the twentieth century.

Missionaries and ‘rational recreation’

The first envoys of Christianity in Samoa were not European missionaries at all, but beachcombers, Tongan Methodists and Samoans returning from neighbouring archipelagos. Papalagi missionary presence in Samoa began, however, with the arrival in 1830 of John Williams and Charles Barff of the LMS alongside six teachers from the Society Islands and two from Aitutaki in what are now the Cook Islands. When Williams returned to Samoa in 1836, his party of five white missionaries included a youthful Rev. Archibald Murray on the way to Tutuila. In the interim, however, Tongan travellers and evangelists had established what John Garrett rather uncharitably calls a “vaguely Methodist cult” at Savai’i. By January 1835, the Tonga Wesleyan Synod felt compelled to support this nascent community with two white missionaries of its own, but within four years white Wesleyan missionaries were forced to withdraw from Samoa in a contentious agreement with the LMS that was signed without the field missionaries’ knowledge or assent. They only returned in 1857 after members of the new Australian Methodist Conference broke from the agreement. Aided by their early start and this temporary Wesleyan absence, the LMS established itself as by far the most populous mission in Samoa – a position it held throughout the period of study.

Meanwhile, French Marists had entered Samoa in 1845 from nearby Uvea in response to repeated requests from Samoan travellers and converts. Unsurprisingly, they received a cool reception from LMS missionaries, who had also taken the liberty of pre-emptively spreading anti-Catholic propaganda amongst the general population. They did make some inroads, however, aided at times by the rigidity of their Evangelical counterparts. “I thank them”, wrote one priest, “for by

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5 This historical outline is based on details from several histories of missionaries in Samoa and Oceania. See for example Niel Gunson, Messengers of Grace: evangelical missionaries in the South Seas, 1797-1860 (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1978); John Garrett, To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania (Suva: World Council of Churches/Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1982); John Garrett, Footsteps in the Sea: Christianity in Oceania to World War II (Suva: World Council of Churches/Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1992); and more recently Phyllis Herda, Michael Reilly and David Hilliard (eds.), Vision and Reality in Pacific Religion (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2005).

their exaggerated or ridiculous prohibitions they have made our work much easier”. These three denominations provided by far the greater number of missionaries and adherents in Samoa. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the Latter Day Saints (LDS, or Mormons) and Seventh Day Adventists had also established a presence in the islands. Two Hawaiian men, Kimo Belio and Samuela Manoa, pioneered the LDS effort in the 1860s, but a Samoan mission was only formally established in 1888 with the arrival of the first white missionaries from the United States. These distinct beginnings point to the difficulty in making comprehensive statements about missionary attitudes. Individuals within each church viewed recreation – both papalagi and Samoan – in different ways at various points in time.

Several overarching observations can be made, however. Evangelical Anglicans and non-conformists – that is to say LMS and Wesleyan missionaries – were initially suspicious of athletic amusements and recreation more generally. While the LMS was itself non-denominational, its loosely affiliated cast of Presbyterians, Independents, Episcopalians and other nonconformists held a common disdain for all but the most sober recreations. “The man who is bent upon what is called ‘enjoying himself,’” proclaimed one early director of the Society, “is on the high road to poverty in this world, and to hell in the next”. Wesleyans were no less resolute. The concept of leisure was an anathema to John Wesley himself, who in 1788 told his congregants that God would punish the frivolousness of the rich. “Laugh on; play on; sing on; dance on”, he warned, “but for all these things God will bring thee to judgement!” These views were commonplace among the first waves of Evangelical missionaries in Oceania. According to Niel Gunson, the middle-class, almost puritan convictions of early LMS and Wesleyan missionaries “bred an intolerance of all that savoured of excess or idleness”. The result was a general lack of interest in – and sometimes an outright antipathy towards – the arts, performance, and any pastime that did not have some clearly beneficial outcome within the narrow logic of the contemporary Evangelical worldview. As such sports and games were regarded as a waste of time.

These views held sway until at least the mid-nineteenth century. Over the course of the Victorian period, however, Evangelical opposition to leisure gradually subsided in response to broader changes in social attitudes and habits. This was certainly the case with regards to sport, and

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10 Gunson, Messengers of Grace, pp. 181-182.
by 1870 pragmatic Evangelicals increasingly recognised its potential as an adjunct to church life rather than a threat to it. According to Denis Molyneux, clergymen in the English Midlands often turned to team sports as ‘exercises in fraternity’ with present and potential congregants: during the 1870s and 1880s a fifth of the cricket clubs and a quarter of the football clubs around Birmingham had some affiliation with a religious organisation. More generally, Evangelicals, drawing inspiration from mid-century educators and reformists such as Thomas Hughes and Charles Kingsley, increasingly saw the ideal Christian as “a man who fears God and can walk a thousand miles in a thousand hours”. As part of this new ‘muscular Christianity’, sport and games earned a new respectability as a means of enforcing order and discipline and conveying ‘manly moral ideals’ such as teamwork, courage and toughness. Cricket was thought to perform these functions especially well, and Evangelicals – at home and abroad – frequently extolled the game’s value in developing physical and moral strength.

Evangelical attitudes evolved along similar lines in Australia, whose branch of the Methodist Missionary Society assumed responsibility for the mission in Oceania in 1855 and soon re-established its presence in Samoa. As late as 1863 the Methodist Conference fulminated against “such public amusements, games and entertainments, as cannot not be used to the glory of God”. This opposition ebbed away, however; within a decade or two “rational recreational activities” – with cricket holding pride of place – were actively encouraged in Australia. For all their newfound acceptance of sporting recreation and athletic pursuits, Evangelicals’ support for leisure was subject to certain conditions: gambling was abhorred; singing and dancing, which led to vice, were tightly regulated; Sabbatarianism was non-negotiable; and perceived idleness was still frowned upon. In an article appearing in the monthly Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine in 1900, for instance, Alfred Vine wrote approvingly of “rational” recreation such as cricket, tennis and cycling. He reminded his

14 Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australasia, Minutes of Several Conversations Between the Ministers of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church, at Their Ninth Annual Conference, Begun in Hobart Town, Tuesday, January 20, 1863, (Hobart: Pratt and Son, 1863), p. 33.
readers, however, that even the most salubrious recreation was strictly diversionary – “games and sports, after they have refreshed us a little, do not leave much advantage behind them”.16

This broader trend was certainly evidenced in Samoa. Early Evangelicals barely mentioned recreation in Samoa, save to castigate ‘heathen’ Samoan pastimes or the ‘wicked’ amusements favoured by sailors, traders and beachcombers. As late as 1878, Rev. Samuel Whitmee advised his successors to enjoy recreations – of a certain “rational” kind. Reading was his sole recommended indoor pursuit, while “Natural History observations” were the extent of his approved outdoor activities.17 By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, many Evangelical missions were actively promoting athletic recreation in Samoa. This effort was exemplified by the LMS’s William Goward, a domineering and energetic man who served in Samoa from 1887 until 1900. Goward was a staunch advocate and proponent of ‘muscular Christianity’ throughout his time in Samoa. Aside from the usual missionary work, he and his wife strove to provide ‘acceptable’ recreational outlets for Samoan men and boys. They established a Young Men’s Institute that included a yard for gymnastics and provided sports including tennis, cricket, football and fencing.18

After visiting Samoa in 1893, moreover, the New Zealand politician Robert Stout reported that the mostly-‘afakasi students at the LMS’s Apia school enjoyed a full program of ‘rational’ physical recreation. He was especially impressed with their performance of the ‘Swedish system’ of light gymnastic exercises to music.19 European sports continued to occupy an important place in church life in the first half of the twentieth century, and in the 1920s LMS mission schools encouraged cricket and held swimming sports and athletics carnivals.20 Evangelical missionaries also promoted the Boys Brigade and Scouts movements, whose combination of Christian values and athletic pursuits neatly aligned with their aims.21

Non-Evangelical missionaries were generally less concerned with disciplining leisure time, although they too objected to any activity that was liable to encourage ‘un-Christian’ behaviour. Catholic missionaries were notably less censorious.22 The Samoan mission was assigned to the

20 ‘Thirty ninth annual report of the Boys’ High School’, 1928, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PMB) 1278: LMS Samoan District Administrative Records, 1851-1873, Australian National University (ANU) [microfilm].
22 For an illuminating discussion of Marist attitudes towards recreation in Samoa, see Father Louis Violette’s writings in the Catholic weekly *Les Missions Catholiques*. Violette describes what he saw as the excessive strictures imposed by
French-based Society of Mary (Marists), for whom sporting recreation did not assume the same significance – either positive or negative – as it did for Evangelicals. Games and some dancing were tolerated so long as they did not interfere unduly with education, family and church life. Consequently in Oceania as elsewhere, accusations of laxity were a staple of anti-Catholic propaganda.\textsuperscript{23} In the twentieth century sport began to feature more prominently at Catholic schools as the French missionaries were succeeded by German- and later English-speaking priests. The latter development was particularly pertinent, as missionaries from Australia and New Zealand were far more predisposed to support sport and games.\textsuperscript{24}

Perhaps more than any other denomination, Catholic missionaries and educators were also awake to the sporting zeitgeist that characterised New Zealand military and civilian rule. Within a year of the Expeditionary Force’s arrival in August 1915, the Marist school at Mulivai held its “first annual athletic sports meeting” with events including the 100 yards dash and tug-of-war.\textsuperscript{25} From 1914 to 1920, moreover, there was a Catholic cricket club – perhaps the strongest in Apia’s emergent cricket scene – that played its games next to mission itself. By 1920 the Marist Brothers’ School boasted its first Boy Scouts troop, and the Samoa Times reported approvingly on their first outing to Moamoa where they engaged in “games and sports, drills etc.”.\textsuperscript{26} This wholehearted embrace of ‘rational’ recreation continued in the 1930s, when Br. Bernardine McCormack – the school’s first New Zealand-born director – introduced rugby and association football to the students and alumni.\textsuperscript{27}

Mormon missionaries were even more sanguine in their attitudes towards leisure. At the same time as white Mormon missionaries were first setting foot in Samoa, LDS leaders began to recognise that sport could perform important functions for both present and potential adherents.
From around 1890, the LDS used intra-church sport and recreation as a means of teaching ‘Mormon morals’ and behaviours to youth – particularly boys – and keeping them engaged with the church.\(^{28}\) In addition, sport was understood as a valuable instrument in ‘selling’ the Mormon message to potential converts. In Oceania as elsewhere, Mormons therefore actively encouraged social and recreational activities within their churches and sought out engagement with outsiders.\(^{29}\)

In 1898, for example, Edwin Hezekiah Smart and his colleagues devoted an afternoon to games and sports at the local Mormon school. Free admission meant that most of the village watched on, and Smart reported that the games “had a tendency to bring us much nearer together, and after they were over a better spirit existed among us”.\(^{30}\) A strikingly similar episode transpired in 1924, when LDS missionaries played a series of baseball matches against a team of experienced players either side of New Years’ Day. While the Secretary of the Samoa mission, Melvin Wagstaff, noted that the missionaries had bested their opponents in front of “a large and curious audience” in the second fixture, he was keen to stress the wider benefits of the encounters. “Our games were marked by good sportsmanship and clean playing”, he observed, and they had helped dispel “that lack of understanding which formerly existed between us and our good neighbours”. He hoped, moreover, that “this play may be the means of more friendly relations and better understanding between us ‘Mormon’ missionaries and the local people in charge here”.\(^{31}\)

The Seventh Day Adventists, conversely, were even more concerned with regulating recreation than were the Evangelicals. Adventist missionaries strongly objected to sports alongside most music, and all dancing and gambling. Sport was seen as a protracted waste of time with several unsavoury collateral effects: it fostered an overly competitive spirit, encouraged association with ‘unbelievers’ and was liable to excite the emotions of young adherents. Until at least 1945, therefore, there was little sporting recreation at Adventist centres in Samoa or indeed in Oceania more generally. Indeed, sport and games remained strictly regulated thereafter. At the Lalovaea day school on Upolu, for instance, recess was the only time where children could play football and other Samoan games during the 1950s. Even then, the Mission discouraged its members from playing kirikiti.\(^{32}\) The Adventists were very much the exception, however. By the end of the nineteenth

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century ‘rational’ – that is, European – sporting pastimes were seen by almost all papalagi missionaries as not only harmless, but a valuable means of engaging with Samoans and ultimately furthering their proselytising objectives.

**Missionaries, fa’a Samoa recreation and kirikiti**

Samoans understood and practiced sports and games in very different ways, however. The missionary view of sporting recreation was fundamentally instrumental: it was acceptable only to the extent that it instilled valuable morals and values, brought the faithful together and allowed missionaries to engage with potential adherents. This was especially true of Evangelicals, whose Puritan work ethic made them suspicious of any activity that did not have some clearly tangible benefit. Particularly for Evangelicals, these narrow parameters meant that they frequently disparaged and disallowed such pastimes in Oceania, where sport and games were intimately bound up in broader religious, social and economic relations.

In Tahiti, for instance, the LMS missionary William Ellis proscribed wrestling, boxing, kite flying and archery due to their associations with pre-Christian religious rituals and their lack of clear ‘purpose’. “When we consider the debasing tendency of many, and the inutility of others,” Ellis wrote, “we shall rejoice that much of the time… is [now] passed in more rational and beneficial pursuits”. 33 Wesleyan missionaries in Tonga during the 1860s were similarly disapproving with respect to Tongan pastimes such as foot races, boat races and *lafo* (a disc-throwing game). Rev. George Minns was unrepentant in his justification of their stance towards ‘heathen games’ – including expelling all members who had painted their faces and taken part in foot races. Due to “the character of the Tongan mind”, he explained,

> there must be a complete separation from, and abandonment of everything approaching the spirit of heathenism. Customs innocent in themselves, lead to heart-burnings and wickedness […] Innocent pastimes indeed! […] That which appears innocent in itself, is often a fruitful source of crimes in the islands.34

Much the same conflict ensued in Samoa, even if John Williams did not himself observe any clear association between local games and religious ceremonies when he visited the islands in the 1830s. Williams did, however, note that Samoans appeared to spend their days not at work but rather “in mirth”. He listed “Wrestling, boxing, club-fighting, canoe-rowing, fowling, and dancing”

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as their diversions of choice. As we have seen in Chapter Three, of course, these contests were not merely carefree amusements; they in fact served several important social functions. Perhaps most significantly, they were deeply embedded in the practice of malaga that helped maintain connections between Samoan villages and kinship groups. Far from constituting a ‘diversion’ from working life, as missionaries understood it, for Samoans sporting contests instead provided a means for strengthening the institutions of kin, village and customary authority.

Unwilling to accept this ‘irrational’ recreation, missionaries were frustrated and occasionally alarmed by large-scale Samoan pastimes throughout the nineteenth century. As was the case with other papalagi, much of their opposition reflected an underlying concern with malaga and its disruptive potential. In 1882, for instance, The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine published an account of Samoan life by the painter and travel writer Constance Gordon-Cumming. Gordon-Cumming, whose report was strongly informed by her conversations with Evangelical missionaries, was unconcerned by the small “party of lads” she saw practicing tologa (spear throwing) on the village green. She was less enamoured with pigeon netting, however. While this might sound like an ‘innocent’ amusement, she warned, it “was indulged in to such excess that the teachers found it necessary to discourage it, as it led to the schools being deserted, and all work at a standstill, for months at a time”.

This was not the missionaries’ only complaint. In addition to decrying the sheer scale and frequency of these journeys, missionaries were further alarmed at their association with ‘heathen’ customs such as large wagers, dancing and revelry. George Brown, a Methodist who spent 14 years in Samoa from 1860, recalled that inter-village pigeon netting contests aroused great fervour among participants and spectators alike. According to Brown, “the old Samoan who told him about it all would get into a paroxysm, almost, as he described the keenness of the sport and the intense absorption of everybody engaged in it”. This exuberance was not limited to the contest itself, or indeed to the post-match feasting that followed – the ‘fever heat’ excitement resulted in unnamed “subsequent happenings” that offended missionaries’ sense of propriety. Indeed, missionaries frequently expressed consternation at the festivities that took place after feasts during sporting malaga. They were particularly mortified by the poula (‘night dance’), which involved men and women dancing naked together and often led to ‘obscene’ behaviour. As such, the game was

regarded “as a snare, not only for pigeons, but for men’s souls” and was prohibited by the 1870s.\(^{39}\)

In 1904 Rev. Ernest Neil, a Methodist from South Australia, listed many of the same grievances with regards to Samoan social occasions. Malaga was “a curse to their country”, while dances were “semi-barbarian recreations” that were “degrading rather than elevating” due to their sexual character.\(^{40}\)

Catholic and Mormon missionaries were generally less averse to Samoan pastimes than were their Wesleyan and LMS counterparts. Nevertheless, Catholics shared Evangelical concerns regarding ‘improper’ night dances and endeavoured to put a stop to them. Malaga, meanwhile, was regarded as a noxious parasitism that impeded missionary work and improvement projects.\(^{41}\)

John Broadbent offers a similar assessment based on his archival research. Catholic missionaries, he argues, generally demonstrated “a greater tolerance” to local cultures and dances than did the Evangelicals – even if this did not translate into a more accepting attitude towards indigenous peoples more generally. Even in the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, the Marists were “troubled by the Polynesian proclivity for voyaging”.\(^{42}\)

Mormons were similarly accepting of Samoan games in principle. Because the LDS Mission was only established in the late-1880s, moreover, they did not encounter such games as frequently as had Evangelicals and Catholics. Even so, they too found the associated travelling and dancing disturbing. In 1891, for example, Br. Jesse Bennett ruefully reported that school was cancelled on account of a malaga to play tagati’a against a neighbouring village.\(^{43}\)

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, therefore, a clear dichotomy had emerged in papalagi missionaries’ attitudes towards sport and recreation, and especially those of Evangelicals. On the one hand, ‘rational’ sporting recreation was acceptable and could even be mobilised as part of the proselytising effort. Samoan pastimes, conversely, were time-consuming nuisances that were irretrievably bound to ‘un-Christian’ practices such as lewd dancing, revelry and excess. Consequently they were at best tolerated and more frequently disciplined and controlled.

This neat contradistinction was disrupted, however, by the way that Samoans adopted and practiced ostensibly ‘rational’ sporting forms with elements of fa’a Samoa embedded within them.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 101.

\(^{40}\) Ernest George Neil, Diary for 1 January 1903 and 7 January 1903, PMB 1198: Samoa Journal, 1902-1918.


Kirikiti was by far the most pervasive example of this process and missionaries of all denominations soon determined that it was incongruent with their proselytising and ‘civilising’ project. Some enjoyed watching – and in a few instances even playing – the game, but they quickly grew exasperated by the sheer length of time taken and the concomitant opportunity cost in terms of undertaking productive work and receiving religious and secular education. Missionaries also worried that kirikiti led to disorder, as well as ‘sinful’ behaviour such as breaking the Sabbath and immoral dancing.

The diaries of Mormon missionaries in the 1890s are testament to these frustrations. Abinadi Olsen, a Utah native who served in Samoa from 1894 to 1898, was clearly troubled by kirikiti’s raucousness and association with ‘uncivilised’ conduct. Writing in March 1896, he reported that several hundred Samoans had gathered to play cricket across the bay, with the associated festivities including “dancing, feasting and making as much noise as a band of howling wolves”.44 A few months later he was dismayed when a large match between the young women of the district descended into a fight.45 Olsen and his companions were also disturbed when they received word that an upcoming kirikiti match was to feature nude dancing.

Day to day, however, kirikiti was a source of missionary opprobrium simply because it precluded Samoans from doing anything else. The game’s full obstructive potential was documented by Joseph Carpenter, an LDS missionary who initially served in Samoa from 1890 to 1893. After a relatively quiet Christmas period in 1891, Carpenter’s work was halted for a full three weeks by a series of kirikiti matches associated with malaga. The festivities began in earnest on December 31 with speeches, gift exchange, feasting and dancing. A kirikiti match commenced during the afternoon against the visiting party and continued for several days.46 After a brief hiatus the kirikiti resumed in full force. At first, Carpenter saw no harm in the game itself – he described the spectacle of forty children in search of a lost ball as “quite a sight” and wrote approvingly of “some pretty good hits”. He was less enamoured, however, with the fascination the match seemed to hold for his converts:

One by one the Saints dropped in to see the match from our house & I had to lock the door to keep people running in & out & was put to much annoyance by the continual staring of the children in at [sic] the windows. The place seemed to be undergoing a regular siege.47

45 Olsen, Diary – 10 April 1896.
47 Carpenter, Diary – 9 January 1892.
By the 11th of January, however, his patience was increasingly frayed. He lamented that the anti-cricket laws were being overridden with impunity, and his mood was not improved when kirikiti continued until nightfall and resulted in only five Samoans attending prayers.\(^48\) Matters only worsened the following day:

I did usual translations & had a little peace until 11 am, when the cricket began again. Matautu [a nearby village] came streaming down & a big feast was made some 50 pigs killed. I then had no peace until end of the day with peeping children & bothering visitors… I could not have school because of cricket which upsets everything.\(^49\)

The next day the missionaries were forced to postpone their regular meeting on account of the match, which by dusk appeared to be entering its final throes. Amidst the roister – “such cricket, such talking and speechmaking I never saw” – Carpenter felt “virtually a prisoner”.\(^50\) He awoke the following morning to find the Samoans at another feast, after which the last innings of the kirikiti match took place. The last wicket was taken at around 5:30pm, January 14th, whereupon representatives from both teams made their concluding speeches and the losing side had to perform various forfeits. After one final meal the kirikiti storm finally seemed to have abated, much to Carpenter’s relief:

Thus ended a memorable 5 days cricket match. Saturday they exhausted a pile of fish. Monday 100 chickens killed. T[uesday] 14 pigs. Wed[nesday] 50 pigs T[hursday] 12 pigs & a pile of breadfruit. Such is fa’a Samoa, & nothing to show for it. In [the] evening had usual 5 & had dictation for we could not hold school while cricket was going on. I retired by 9.30, with my patience somewhat tired.\(^51\)

These sentiments attest to broader missionary concerns regarding kirikiti. As well as impeding missionary work, the game embodied ‘heathen’ behaviours such as idleness and a total lack of moderation in play, feasting and social intercourse. To proselytising eyes, the time and resources expended through kirikiti were entirely without value; Samoans never seemed further from papalagi missionaries than while playing the game.

Carpenter’s account speaks to contemporaneous missionaries’ more general exasperation with kirikiti. It was this disquiet that led Evangelical missionaries to prohibit the game, as was reported by Spicer, King and Murray after their 1887 visit. Missionary opposition continued through the 1890s, particularly after the *Samoa Weekly Herald* reported that cricket was interfering with Samoans’ observance of the Sabbath.\(^52\) In 1897 an LMS missionary visiting Auckland told an audience that he had “administered medicine to the players” after a fortnight-long match resulted in

\(^{48}\) Carpenter, Diary – 11 January 1892.

\(^{49}\) Carpenter, Diary – 12 January 1892.

\(^{50}\) Carpenter, Diary – 13 January 1892.

\(^{51}\) Carpenter, Diary – 14 January 1892.

starvation and exhaustion. “In consequence of this excess”, he continued, “the Church is obliged to condemn cricket.” LMS missionary feeling against kirikiti ran so deep, in fact, that details of its prohibition even appeared in Richard Lovett’s history of the Society in 1899. If Lovett’s recount shows the depths of missionary feeling against kirikiti, however, it also captures this sentiment at its zenith. After Samoa was partitioned in 1900 their opposition was gradually tempered and papalagi missionaries increasingly accepted the game. Indeed, the final day of the LMS centenary celebrations in 1930 was devoted to a sports meeting, the centrepiece of which was “a mighty cricket match, played between teams 100 strong, all batting, all fielding” and – crucially – “finished before sundown”.

Adapting recreation, negotiating change

This eventual acceptance of kirikiti is instructive in understanding broader patterns of change in Samoa and Oceania. Missionaries were among the first papalagi to encounter Islanders, and they hence represented a pivotal conduit for the transmission of European ideas and practices. As was indicated in Chapter Two, however, Christianity’s influence on Samoan life fell well short of replacing fa’a Samoa configurations. Instead, it is best conceived in terms of bidirectional exchange, ongoing negotiation and mutual reorientation. Social change in Samoa was negotiated rather than enforced, and what emerged invariably reflected local understandings and practices as well as foreign ones. The cultural forms that manifested through this process, moreover, possessed a decidedly transcultural flavour.

This pattern of negotiation was clearly evidenced in kirikiti’s rehabilitation into church community life. The game’s eventual acceptance in missionary eyes can be explained by three principal factors. Missionaries quickly recognised that kirikiti could be useful in furthering their broader proselytising aims in the community. The obverse was also true: some of its most objectionable features could be – and increasingly were – rendered less pronounced or even eliminated entirely. Even so, missionary acceptance of the game was frequently begrudging: ultimately their about-face can be seen as belated recognition that Samoans could not be coaxed to renounce ‘their’ sport in favour of more ‘rational’ pursuits.

Missionaries’ attitudinal shift was partly informed by recognition that while kirikiti was incongruent with some aspects of their endeavours, it was entirely consonant with others. Even as Lovett recirculated warnings about the perils of kirikiti in 1899, for instance, Samoans were using

the game to raise funds for an LMS church at Apia. At first the game was limited to LMS adherents, with players from the losing side – several hundred of them – being made to subscribe a shilling towards the construction costs. Soon these monies were augmented by contributions from participants outside the church, who could bat for an innings upon payment of a shilling. Foreign missionaries felt obliged to discourage the fundraiser after local papalagi inhabitants complained about the noise and nuisance.66

While this example was exceptional, kirikiti did align with the missionary project in more quotidian ways. Being involved in kirikiti – whether as players or spectators – helped papalagi missionaries interact with Samoans and build goodwill. From the early twentieth century, moreover, missionaries increasingly recognised that if the kirikiti pitch was a space in which village and communal ties were affirmed, then it was also a space where the church should be active. In 1913, for instance, Jean Edouard Bellwald, a Catholic missionary from Luxembourg, wrote to the German authorities asking for clarification regarding the latest anti-kirikiti law. The congregation’s young men and school children wanted to play the game on Sunday, which was technically in violation of the ordinance. Governor Schultz assured him that the game could proceed so long as it did not interfere with the Sunday service.57 The following year the LDS missionary Earl Stanley Paul led efforts to clear space for a new kirikiti pitch away from the front of the village meeting house, which was “looking like a pig pen” due to relentless games in poor weather.58 Facilitating the game in this way signified a striking departure from earlier missionary responses, even among his Mormon brethren.

Kirikiti also became firmly entrenched in Evangelical schools and training colleges. Victor Barradale, who taught at the LMS’ theological college for three years at the turn of the twentieth century, recalled participating in half-day matches with students.59 By 1928, the LMS high school reported that as well as ‘English cricket’ and Swedish Drill, students were encouraged to play kirikiti. Matches were organised between picked sides and with the nearby Theological College.60 The principal of Piula Theological College, a Methodist training institution on Upolu’s north coast, similarly recalled that kirikiti was often played and could end in “a prayer meeting, or a feast, or by

57 Bellwald of Catholic Mission to Schultz, 7 November 1913 (Memo #40), XVII.A:I: Government and Administration of Justice, vol. 6, PMB 479: Western Samoa: English Summaries of Papers Relating to the German Administration, 1900-1914.
59 V.A. Barradale, Pearls of the Pacific: Being Sketches of Missionary Life and Work in Samoa and Other Islands in the South Seas (London: London Missionary Society, 1907), pp. 78-79.
the losing team gradually vanishing into the bush”.61 Large matches also became a recurring feature of annual visits by papalagi missionaries to the villages in their district in what was in essence their own malaga. When Rev. Reginald Bartlett visited an LMS church on Manono as part of his official duties in November 1929, he happily noted that the occasion was concluded by a kirikiti match between “thirty-seven students from the college and thirty-seven Samoans from Manono”. The ‘Mission boys’ shaded a close contest, and their opponents were compelled to feed, dance and perform menial tasks for them.62

These contests were not always conducted in such a friendly spirit, however. If missionaries recognised that intra-communal ties could be strengthened on the kirikiti pitch, they also understood that the game could be used to demarcate between the different denominations. These disputes preceded kirikiti, of course, and nor were they limited to Samoa. From at least the 1850s Wesleyan Methodists in Tonga complained that priests at the Catholic mission had sanctioned and even encouraged ‘heathen’ entertainments in order to attract adherents. “Popery”, sniffed the Rev. John Thomas, was “much more suited to the Tongan easy flesh pleasing habit than the religion of the Bible”.63 Catholic missionaries faced similar accusations of laxity in Samoa. By the puritan standards of Evangelicals, there was probably some truth to these claims: the Catholic missionary Louis Violette described non-violent Samoan games as “innocent amusements” and even lamented that “Wesleyan intolerance” had seen many unobjectionable dances disappear from village life.64 For their part, Catholics attributed the continued presence of sexually suggestive night dances to “the painful ineffectiveness of Protestantism to correct morals”.65

This broader contest proceeded along similar lines with respect to kirikiti. Evangelicals were particularly perturbed when Catholic sports were held after Mass on Sunday afternoons – the so-called ‘continental Sunday’. In 1893, the editors of the Samoa Weekly Herald announced that the Catholic congregation at Sogi had commenced playing kirikiti on Sunday afternoons and confidently reported that “other Sunday matches will follow”.66 Indeed they did: four years later an irate correspondent again raised the matter and demanded that such matches be stopped – by law if

62 Bartlett, A man like Bati, p. 164.
necessary. This time his letter drew a swift response from a similarly indignant Catholic contributor, who defended their right to enjoy a “harmless recreation on a Sunday”.67

These skirmishes continued well into the twentieth century. As late as 1925 Rev. G.S. Shinkfield of the Samoan Methodist mission made a complaint against Catholic children who were playing cricket on Sunday in defiance of a law recently forbidding the practice in the name of increased copra production. The Secretary of Native Affairs, a former member of the LMS, fined the children and their teacher $30 for their troubles.68 More generally, the kirikiti pitch was a site where membership to a particular church could be publicly displayed, as was already the case for kinship groups and the village itself. This social function persisted well after the end of the Second World War. Penelope Schoeffel, for instance, describes the increasingly severe familial and community pressure that was brought to bear on a Samoan youth after he joined in meetings and kirikiti matches with his friends from a different Church group.69

Kirikiti’s undoubted utility as a means of inclusion – and exclusion – was not the sole reason for its rehabilitation, however. The game’s acceptance within missionary circles was also aided by the declining prevalence of those elements that they had found most objectionable. After partition in 1900, the establishment of a German colonial administration in the western islands and an American naval administration in the east meant that the state could more effectively – though still only partially – limit the kinds of month-long, village-wide malaga with which kirikiti was associated. Under such circumstances the game was less inimical to missionary aims. Where matches could not be contained within these temporal strictures, however, they continued to attract the ire of missionaries. As such, while Barradale enthused that an afternoon match was “great fun to play”, he cautioned “it is a serious thing in many ways when matches are prolonged for several weeks”.70 Even Earl Stanley Paul, who had earlier helped clear a playing field for kirikiti games, was troubled by its incessant demands on time. After the village’s young men told him they had been challenged to attend a kirikiti match at their opponents’ malae, Paul refused their request due to the disruption it would cause.71 These instances notwithstanding, missionaries were generally unperturbed by smaller-scale contests. Even though the movement away from prolonged games was

70 Barradale, Pearls of the Pacific, pp. 78-79.
71 Paul, Diary – 2 March 1914.
only partial, it was important in the context of what missionaries perceived as broader, welcome changes in the nature of the game.

The most decisive of these changes came about as a result of the ongoing campaign against ‘uncivilised’ and ‘heathenish’ conduct. Kirikiti’s rehabilitation coincided with the decline of ‘immoral’ dancing in the early twentieth century. Samoan congregants and church leaders frequently took the lead in suppressing such dancing. In 1903, for instance, the Naval Commandant in American Samoa reported that several villages had “voluntarily passed ordinances prohibiting sivas of an improper character”.72 In 1911, moreover, Leota, the Village Chief of Pago Pago, forced the District Judge, Mauga Taufaasau, to curtail a siva that was being performed at his home in Pago Pago. The high-ranking Mauga was furious, but Leota insisted that such dancing – in which participants were “careless with their lava lavas [skirt-like unisex garments]” – was contrary to the laws of the church and therefore had to be stopped.73 When elements of sexual expression did emerge, they continued to vex missionaries. Jennie Hill Leavitt Smith, who served the Mormon mission in Samoa and Tonga from 1918 to 1920, reported seeing Samoan women playing kirikiti and returning to her quarters “after being disgusted with their conduct”.74 Smith’s experience was generally the exception, however, and such complaints about ‘immoral’ conduct during matches were unusual after the turn of the twentieth century. By successfully framing such customary dances as ‘immoral’, therefore, sporting malaga was rendered significantly less threatening to missionaries’ moral sensibilities.

The single most decisive reason for changing missionary attitudes, however, was a pragmatic acceptance that anti-kirikiti regulations were futile. Kirikiti associated with malaga was not limited to a few ‘bad apples’ among the faithful; often the entire congregation was involved. This was certainly the view of the senior LMS missionary in Upolu’s A’ana District in the early twentieth century. In his 1904 report, he lamented the effects of malaga and festivities on the Society’s work. Poor school attendance, he argued, was largely attributable to malaga that took entire villages away for weeks on end. The visiting parties kept the villages they passed through “in a constant state of ferment”, further disrupting economic and church life. Worse still, even Samoan clergy partook in these expeditions:

\[73\] Secretary of Native Affairs to Governor, ‘Investigation of conduct of Pagopago Village Chief stopping siva at Pagopago’, Reel 9 (Village Affairs…), T1182.
Sad to say, pastors are not at all exempt from periodical attacks of this unrest, and their brethren along the route taken by them are expected to do the hospitable to them, whenever and wherever they may call.\textsuperscript{75}

Indeed, Samoan clergy frequently participated in kirikiti matches. One eyewitness recalled that local pastors wearing “spotless white drill” routinely kept the score in such contests, and he applauded “the accurate scoring of the Rev. John Charles Habbakkuk, the native teacher” during one inter-village affair.\textsuperscript{76} Samoan clergy even retransmitted kirikiti – complete with village-wide participation, feasting, singing and dancing – when they served in New Guinea missions in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{77} With senior matai also complicit in games, few Samoan congregants or leaders were above reproach. Under these circumstances effective church control was an impossibility.

It was this widespread disregard for proscription that was primarily responsible for the change in missionary attitudes. With censure no longer a viable position, missionaries instead focused on tempering kirikiti’s perceived excesses and using it to further entrench the church’s social importance. Their experience was a stark reminder that Samoans often chose to adopt papalagi practices in ways that undermined their underlying intentions. Rev. Bartlett invoked this lesson when he proposed establishing a charter for the Boys Brigade in 1940. While he hoped that the initial company of forty boys would “grow and expand”, he was also mindful that the combination of drill and recreational activities would “need great care lest it run away within itself, as cricket has done”.\textsuperscript{78}

\section*{Conclusion}

This chapter has demonstrated that in Samoa as elsewhere, papalagi missionaries sought to shape the ludic behaviours of indigenous peoples. If they expected Samoans to simply accept their own understandings of athletic recreation, however, then they were sorely disappointed. It is in this light that we can make sense of the unlikely scenario of English missionaries forbidding Samoans from playing cricket – or rather kirikiti. Equally, the eventual shift in missionary attitudes to kirikiti reflects the more general ‘Samoanisation’ of Christianity in the islands. Scholars of Samoa have long recognised that the Samoan experience of Christianity is fundamentally one of mixing, with

\textsuperscript{75} ‘Report of the A’ana District for the year ending December 31st, 1904’, PMB 1278.

\textsuperscript{76} F.W. Christian, ‘Cricket as she is played in Samoa’, \textit{Star}, 15 May 1896, p. 4.


\textsuperscript{78} Bartlett, \textit{A man like Bati}, p. 194.
indigenous and introduced elements coming together in what Damon Salesa calls “a confluence of rivers, a meeting of the waters”. Indeed, pre-Christian modes of exchange and styles of deference persist within Samoan churches to the present day. The same is true of kirikiti, for which churches became the principal organising force both in the islands and the Samoan diaspora in New Zealand, Australia and the United States. In this context, papalagi missionaries’ eventual acquiescence to kirikiti can be read as recognition of the limits of their influence over a game that was no longer English cricket, but kirikiti fa’a Samoa.

This broad narrative of conflict, negotiation and eventual compromise between papalagi missionaries and Samoans should not obscure other dimensions of contest, however. While missionaries’ desire to control kirikiti was generally congruent with that of papalagi officials, their concerns with the game were often very different – gambling, revelry and dancing were as much of a concern as labour and disruption. Because of these divergent considerations, their opposition receded after 1900 compared to those officials who were devoted to economic ‘efficiency’ and ‘progress’. Instead, missionaries were far more inclined to accept and promote kirikiti – suitably bridled, of course – as a means of fostering amity among congregants and potential converts. More strikingly, missionaries soon recognised that, for all its complications and pitfalls, the kirikiti pitch was a site where Samoan souls could be won and lost. As such, the game came to embody the wider inter-denominational contests that took place throughout the period of study. These instances of discord and discontinuity echo those of the previous chapter; for both papalagi officials and missionaries, kirikiti reveals ‘grappling’ not only between Samoans and papalagi, but also between papalagi themselves. As the next chapter will demonstrate, moreover, these divisions and contests are even more starkly apparent when we consider the ways that various other ‘colonisers’ – white colonists, ‘afakasi’ men and women and foreign ‘military men’ – viewed and responded to the game.

Chapter Six

Sundries on ‘the Beach’: colonists, ‘afakasi, military men and kirikiti

“A game was played at the Matautu ground on Saturday afternoon last, in which the ‘Rapid’ team competed with a local eleven. Originally it was intended to be a representative match, ‘Ship versus Shore Half-Castes,’ but, unfortunately, all of the latter did not turn up to time, consequently, instead of the match contemplated, a scratch eleven, composed of 1 White 6 Half-Castes and 4 Samoans, faced their formidable opponents”.

On 31 October 1893, the British sloop H.M.S. Rapid arrived at Apia harbour from Suva as part of its tour of duty in the region. For the next five weeks or so, according to the Sydney Morning Herald, the ship shuttled between Apia, Tutuila and Savai’i, “looking after native affairs or on administrative business”. In between official matters, however, the crew also threw themselves into sporting life at Apia’s papalagi settlement – known locally as ‘the Beach’ – with no little enthusiasm. On three successive Saturday afternoons they played cricket against the locals, winning comfortably each time. The first two matches were played against a combined ‘Shore’ eleven, but their opponents in the third encounter were to be a side composed entirely of men with both European and Samoan heritage – known locally as ‘afakasi’. In reality, this name was little more than a contrivance; more than half of the original ‘Shore’ side were ‘afakasi men. In any case, whatever pretentions they might have had were quietly abandoned when five of their number failed to arrive on time. The latecomers were replaced by four Samoan men – Tiotio, Leato, Vaā and Taliu – as well as Thomas P. Murray, who had recently arrived in Samoa from Auckland. Despite their best efforts and the absence of several of the Rapid’s best bowlers, the crew had “little trouble” in chasing down their score.

This episode is instructive when we consider the ways that different groups in Samoa used the cricket pitch to pursue their own distinctive interests. Even temporarily setting aside the four

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1 ‘Cricket’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 25 November 1893, p. 2.
3 ‘Afakasi is, of course, the Samoan transliteration of the inherently ugly term ‘half-caste’. Even so, I use it here because it does not necessarily have the derogatory connotations of its English antecedent and is useful in denoting a segment of population whose historical experiences in Samoa were unique. Their place in the colonial social order, moreover, was very frequently distinct from that of both Samoans and ‘Europeans’.
Samoan men who took part, the match featured three social groups – military men, ‘afakasi and white colonists – who understood both ‘English’ cricket and kirikiti in divergent and often contradictory ways. While cricket here constituted a site of mutual enjoyment, it also served other functions specific to each group: for the Rapid’s crew, the game was a welcome escape from the tedium of nine months at sea; for Murray, recently arrived from New Zealand, cricket rendered familiar Samoa’s alien surrounds; while for the ‘afakasi players, it allowed for a temporarily suspension of Apia’s racial boundaries as they joined the crew and white colonists in this most papalagi activity. Equally, albeit indirectly, this particular match also illustrates the manifold ways in which these diverse groups engaged with kirikiti. For Murray – who, among other vocations, found employment as Malietoa Laupepa’s tax collector in the districts – kirikiti was a hindrance to his occupation and more generally to the islands’ prosperity. Conversely, at least two latecomers were members of the extended Scanlan clan, one of Samoa’s most bountiful ‘afakasi families, who were known to join in kirikiti games with their Samoan neighbours and kin. Finally, while there is no record of the Rapid’s crew encountering kirikiti themselves, those military men who came before and after them suggest they would have delighted in watching and even participating in it.

Of course this snapshot is convenient rather than definitive. As was the case with papalagi officials and missionaries, a combination of general and historically specific factors determined how colonists, ‘afakasi and military men viewed kirikiti at any given time. As well as suggesting the diversity of ‘colonial’ responses to the game, moreover, this match also speaks to the difficulties implicit in delineating between these ostensibly discrete categories. As will become clear throughout this chapter, the lines demarcating ‘afakasi from ‘white’ colonists – and from Samoans – were frequently blurred, especially as the former group grew in relative and absolute numbers compared to nominal ‘whites’. In the context of this chapter, however, this problematic distinction is important because ‘afakasi status often shaped how men – and women – perceived cricket and especially kirikiti. Given these complications and caveats, the chapter largely eschews broad narratives and instead aims to demonstrate difference and diversity within the broad and porous category of ‘colonisers’. In so doing, it calls attention to those historical moments where particular groups of white colonists, ‘afakasi men and women and members of the military responded to kirikiti in ways that were at odds with papalagi officials and missionaries. In effect, therefore, it is structured as a loose confederation of comparative threads, whose overarching theme is not

4 Murray’s varied official roles, and particularly his relative success as a tax collector, meant that he featured prominently in the local newspapers until his death from typhoid in May 1897. See for example, ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Weekly Herald, 30 November 1895, p. 1; ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Weekly Herald, 18 April 1896, p. 2; ‘Obituary’, Samoa Weekly Herald, 8 May 1897, p. 2.
continuity or consistency but rather one of diversity and heterogeneity – of ‘colonialisms’, not colonialism.

The present chapter makes this argument in three steps. First, it considers how white colonists perceived and responded to kirikiti. Even more than papalagi officials, white colonists understood kirikiti as a menace to their prospects of commercial success in Samoa. Although their views mostly aligned with those of officials before partition, this concordance broke down when the German administration adopted a relatively ‘soft’ approach to kirikiti and other disruptive Samoan customs. The chapter then turns to consider Samoa’s ‘afakasi community. In Samoa as in other contact zones, ‘afakasi occupied a distinctive position – neither wholly indigenous nor entirely foreign. This liminal condition shaped their engagement with both ‘English’ cricket and kirikiti, which in turn served as a means of confirming their ties to the wider papalagi and Samoan communities. This was evident to some extent before partition, but most notably in the way that ‘afakasi leaders in the Mau protest movement used kirikiti to signal their belonging to the wider Samoan cause. Finally, military men demonstrated relatively straightforward attitudes towards cricket and kirikiti. While German sailors showed little interest in either game, their Anglophone counterparts – particularly British sailors and later New Zealand soldiers – saw them as an escape from long naval tours and garrison life. More importantly, their collective passion for cricket provided Samoans with opportunities to adopt and appropriate the game, and to pursue their own ambitions through it – subjects that will be explored more fully in Chapters Seven and Eight. Together, these contrasting and sometimes conflicting responses speak to the cricket pitch’s status as a site of real and symbolic contest in Samoa throughout the period of study. Together with the two previous chapters, therefore, this diversity confirms that Samoa was a contact zone in which contest took place within the broad categories of coloniser and colonised, as well as between them.

White colonists and kirikiti

During the second half of the nineteenth century white colonists like Thomas Murray emerged as a numerically small but increasingly influential demographic in Samoa. These men came to Samoa to seek their fortunes at the very edges of the European-known world. As such, they had a clear interest in a politically stable Samoa in which their commercial activities would be protected and Samoans ‘encouraged’ to provide inexpensive labour and plentiful copra for trade. Kirikiti undermined these interests due to the economic disruption caused by ‘cricketing malaga’ and its association with ‘unruly’ Samoan politics. With few exceptions, therefore, white colonists were among kirikiti’s most strident critics. This opposition was most striking at two particular times. In the 1880s and 1890s, kirikiti earned colonists’ ire in the midst of ongoing political unrest,
an economic downturn and a tightening labour market. As we have seen in Chapter Four, these sentiments strongly informed papalagi officials’ efforts to discipline and control Samoan bodies and politics in the period. Such alignment between colonists and officials was not always evident, however. Following partition, an influx of independent German colonists to German Samoa created a dynamic that was very different and distinctly adversarial. These colonists demanded assistance in procuring inexpensive labour, and were incensed at Governor Solf’s ‘soft’ approach to controlling kirikiti and other ‘disruptive’ Samoan customs. Kirikiti similarly reflected divisions between the New Zealand administration and Samoa’s ‘European’ residents, albeit for very different reasons.

Excluding missionaries, European settlement in Samoa began in the 1840s and was centred at Apia Bay. Trading and provisioning whaling ships were their principal concerns, and during the 1840s and 1850s the growing numbers of British and American settlers had established what Richard Gilson describes as an “emporium” on Apia’s beachfront. Although foreign presence was extremely limited in the districts, Apia increasingly took on a distinctly papalagi character. In 1854 its residents formed a ‘Foreign Residents Society’ to act as a municipal government in Apia, a step that established the residents’ claim to extraterritoriality from Samoa proper as well as autonomy from Samoan – and missionary – authority. This papalagi enclave became more cosmopolitan in the second half of the nineteenth century, with other Europeans – notably Germans – arriving to seek their fortunes as traders or to work in the supporting trades befitting a small mercantile hub. By 1856, Gilson observes, around 75 foreigners were in “more or less permanent residence” at Apia Bay; by 1860 there were more than 100.

Perhaps the defining arrival in Samoa was that of the Hamburg trading firm, J.C. Godeffroy und Sohn, which used Apia as its point of entry in a growing network of Pacific enterprise. ‘The firm’, as it was known, dominated the nascent plantation enterprise in Samoa after establishing an agency in Apia in 1857. Plantation interests deepened in the mid-1860s, when a confluence of international and domestic factors – a cotton boom precipitated by the American Civil War, together with warfare, droughts, storms and crop blights in Samoa – allowed colonists to obtain Samoan land. These dire circumstances also meant that, for the first time, Samoans were willing to

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5 This paragraph provides a brief, and selective, overview of European settlement in Samoa. Both Malama Meleisea and particularly Richard Gilson provide more thorough accounts of this process. See Malama Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the History of Western Samoa (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1987), pp. 31-34; Richard Gilson, Samoa 1830 to 1900: the politics of a multi-cultural community, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1970), especially pp. 162-290.

6 According to Gilson, moreover, the number of visitors and castaways frequently outnumbered ‘permanent’ residents. Ibid., p. 178.
work as wage labourers on papalagi-owned plantations.⁹ Although this was a false dawn for papalagi – Samoans largely gave up wage labour by 1868 as their plight eased – it was still significant. As Gilson points out, land in some of the ‘outer’ districts was now in the hands of “men of small capital, tradesmen and shopkeepers”;¹⁰ papalagi land ownership was now both deeper and wider, and their stake in Samoa’s political future was inevitably reinforced. Just as importantly, the tantalising promise of freely available land, labour and produce for trade – however fleeting – shaped the hopes and expectations of papalagi colonists until at least the end of the nineteenth century.

Amidst these developments, colonists showed little inclination for organised sporting activities until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Recreation on ‘the Beach’ took the form of bowling alleys, grog shops, billiard rooms and dancing houses, while those in search of more reputable divertissements contented themselves with ‘natural observations’, riding, shooting and picnics.¹¹ This began to change in the late-1870s. The papalagi community at this time was still small – perhaps 300 to 350, with only around 100 of those at Apia Bay.¹² Apia’s population was divided along broadly national lines, with 43 British residents, 31 Americans, 27 Germans and a smattering of Spanish, Portuguese and French citizens.

In this context, sport, musical recitals and other social occasions served to bring colonists together and relieve what an 1877 editorial in the Samoa Times called “the dull monotony of island life”.¹³ After several abortive sporting ventures, the Times enthused that “a considerable number of our townspeople” took part in the 1879 Boxing Day Sports. Notably, the attendance included a number of German residents alongside their more sporting-inclined British and American counterparts. Equestrian sports in particular were a unifying force throughout the 1880s and into 1890s. In 1890, for instance, the three consuls affirmed their mutual support for re-establishing the Apia Sporting Club after persistent armed conflict between rival Samoan factions had brought the town’s sporting life to a standstill.¹⁴ These unifying designs were short-lived, however: by 1894, the Club’s committee agreed to cease operations due to lack of public interest in its activities.¹⁵

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¹⁰ Gilson, Samoa 1830 to 1900, p. 257.
¹² Gilson, Samoa 1830 to 1900, p. 367; ‘Census List of Foreigners Residing in the Municipality of Apia’, Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, 7 February 1880, p. 2.
¹³ ‘Regatta and Sports for Boxing Day’, Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, 22 December 1877, p. 2.
¹⁴ ‘Sport in Apia’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 14 June 1890, p. 2.
¹⁵ ‘Apia Sports Club’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 20 January 1894, p. 3.
Perhaps unsurprisingly, sport functioned as a marker of these intra-communal boundaries as well as a means of traversing them. Team sports in particular remained the preserve of Americans and especially ‘Britishers’, who used such pastimes to render their surroundings familiar and reaffirm bonds with their ‘home’ culture. While several sports performed these functions, cricket was the cornerstone of Anglo-American sporting activity. The first recorded match, which took place in September 1879, saw a hastily assembled eleven take on a visiting British crew. Unsurprisingly, they were soundly beaten. “Many of our men had never picked up a boat [sic] before”, the Samoa Times’ editor explained, “while the remainder of the locals had not delivered a ball or made a strike since their school days”.16

After a few subsequent encounters ended in similar ignominy, the local residents founded the Apia Cricket Club in June 1881 and elected the British Consul as its Chairman. The game became steadily more popular in the 1880s, with colonists playing amongst themselves, against visiting naval crews and – from 1883 – occasionally against Samoan sides.17 After a brief hiatus following acute conflict in 1889, the club successfully recommenced its activities. A British colonist who lived in Apia in the 1890s later recalled the numerous matches played on the “sun-baked cricket and polo ground” situated between the British Consulate and the offices of the Samoa Times.18 In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, therefore, sport served both as a source of excitement for papalagi colonists and as a means of demarcating the parameters of the community itself.

An entirely different set of priorities informed their attitudes towards kirikiti. By the time the game emerged in 1883, colonists were increasingly concerned with ‘the labour question’. Land was in fact a relatively abundant resource – although certainly not as abundant as colonists, the DHPG and foreign speculators claimed.19 Affordable labour, conversely, was notably scarce. Aside from the aforementioned period in the 1860s, Samoans were completely uninterested in providing wage labour. Because their demand for most European goods was limited, moreover, Samoans did

16 ‘Talk About Town’, Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, 22 November 1879, p. 2.
17 Numerous examples of cricket’s place in the social lives of Apia’s British residents can be found in the local newspaper record. See ‘Sporting’, Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, 4 June 1881, p. 2; ‘News from Samoa’, Auckland Star, 2 March 1887, p. 5; ‘Page 3 Advertisements Column 1’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 6 October 1888, p. 3; ‘Cricket Match’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 9 March 1889.
18 Anon., A Samoan Cricket Match, 19--, MS-Papers-2702, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), Wellington.
19 As Gilson, Meleisea and others point out, papalagi claims to Samoan land reached ridiculous levels in the 1870s. Most transactions were made in times of war and involved chiefs selling land they had no authority over, or which had been won from their enemies. Indeed, different parties often sold the same land; the Lands Commission established after the Berlin Treaty of 1889 found that claims came to more than twice the total area of the islands. The Lands Commission eventually adjudged more than 90 percent of these claims invalid and prohibited further sales outside of the Apia Municipality. Even so, some 35 per cent of cultivable land came under papalagi ownership. See Gilson, Samoa 1830 to 1900, pp. 276-290, pp. 404-415; Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa, pp. 43-45.
not feel compelled to provide vast quantities of copra for papalagi merchants to sell on to overseas buyers. Godeffroy’s and its successor, the DHPG, resolved this issue by means of its privileged access to labour from the Gilbert Islands and, after 1882, parts of New Guinea and then the Solomon Islands.\textsuperscript{20} During the Tamasese-Brandeis regime of 1887-88, moreover, the DHPG’s interests were vigorously upheld with the backing of German warships. These advantages meant that even with depressed global copra prices and significant Samoan political unrest, the DHPG was able to post overall profits through the 1880s and 1890s.\textsuperscript{21}

Individual planters, traders and smaller firms had no recourse to the DHPG’s redoubtable political and commercial resources, however. For them, Samoans’ refusal to countenance plantation work – and their frequent reluctance to produce extra copra for trade – was a body blow to their livelihoods. Colonists of all nationalities hence argued that the only lasting resolution to the labour problem would be for some sympathetic foreign government to either make provisions for cheap labour to be imported, or to forcibly relocate the Samoans from their villages and onto the plantations – or at least ‘encourage’ them to produce more for trade. The 1880s saw the development of an especially tight labour market in the Pacific, such that the first of these options was infeasible.\textsuperscript{22} The second course of action required effective annexation, and indeed papalagi colonists made several entreaties to their governments during the 1870s and into the 1880s. Without decisive ‘Great Power’ intervention, however, Samoan labour was the only option for individual planters and merchants, even if they regarded Samoans as unreliable workers who were prone to engaging in bloody and destructive conflicts. As such, Samoan ‘idleness’ was an ongoing source of chagrin for white colonists.

Given these concerns, kirikiti was a most unwelcome development. The game’s scale and frequency resulted in precisely the kind of economic disruption that colonists so deplored. One notable exception to this antipathy was F.W. Christian, an Eton and Oxford-educated lexicographer who spent several years attempting to convince various Oceanic peoples to grow foreign crops and play ‘manly’ sports.\textsuperscript{23} Unusually for a papalagi, he actively took part in and promoted the ‘Samoanised’ version of the game. In 1892, Christian was among three papalagi who took part in a match on Tutuila. The \textit{Samoa Times} reported that Tuitele, a local chief, had placed his house at the

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 100.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 85.
\textsuperscript{23} After visiting the Marquesas Islands, Christian wrote that the ‘idle’ locals should be encouraged to take up “manly athletic sports and exercises, such as cricket… which in Samoa and Rarotonga have been introduced into the native life with very happy results”. F.W. Christian, \textit{Eastern Pacific Lands: Tahiti and the Marquesas islands} (London: Robert Scott, 1910), pp. 255-256.
disposal of the visiting side and that “kava [a narcotic drink shared at ceremonial occasions] flowed freely” after the match. This was not Christian’s only experience of kirikiti, and he later wrote a glowing account of the game based on his experiences as a player and captain in an inter-district match. Even Christian acknowledged, however, that large-scale kirikiti matches constituted an ongoing aggravation for his fellow colonists:

The plantations lie abandoned for weeks, the natives are behind hand in paying taxes, and the foreign trader in general can hardly get a Samoan to work on the wharf or in the store for love or money, to the huge disgust of the whole business community and to the great hindrance of trading generally. Contrary to some reports in Britain and the Antipodes, moreover, this opposition was not limited to German colonists and officials. A visitor to Samoa in 1888 reported that even “many Europeans with anti-German sympathies” approved the anti-kirikiti law imposed by the Tamasese-Brandeis regime, as the game was “conducive to idleness and immorality”.

The game was especially vexing for colonists as the labour crisis deepened in the early 1890s and global economic conditions soured. As a result, calls for intervention grew louder and more frequent. In mid-1890, a rash of large kirikiti matches prompted the Samoa Times – usually a reliable barometer of its mostly Anglo-American readers’ attitudes – to demand the Malietoa government “put a stop to it altogether” until the Samoans were able to “regulate their amusements with moderation”. After consular pressure, the King acceded to this request. By 1893, however, the same newspaper noted kirikiti was once again in full swing, and expressed its fear that without prompt regulation the copra crop “will not be a good one for our merchants”. A few months later the newspaper featured a long, exasperated editorial further detailing these ruinous effects. The author was responding to a satirical piece in the Times of London, which had flippantly attributed Samoa’s ongoing political instability to a recent anti-kirikiti law. While such legislation might appear amusing to Londoners, he explained, they were “evidently quite ignorant of the importance of the subject”. In his mind the prohibition on kirikiti was entirely warranted:

In Samoa, cricket, as played by the natives, is an institution that bears very considerably upon the export of produce, and, as absurd as it may appear to the uninitiated, any excess in the enjoyment of this pastime militates in no small degree against our prosperity…The Samoans have to be taught that life is something more than beer and skittles, and that if they have any desire to rise in the scale of humanity, they must devote a great part of their time to making their country productive and this certainly cannot be done by cricket malagas (journeys) the numerous members of which parties being as bad as a cloud of locusts; wherever they settle devouring all before them.

24 ‘Cricket in Tutuila’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 23 April 1892, p. 3.
26 Ibid.
27 ‘Affairs in Samoa’, Auckland Evening Star, 27 March 1888, p. 8
28 ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 14 June 1890, p. 2.
29 ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 8 April 1893, p. 2
30 Untitled, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 26 August 1893, p. 2.
This disruption exacerbated the broader labour restraints facing commercial ventures in Samoa. Indeed, a series of deputations sent to Samoa in the 1880s and 1890s to advise on the islands’ political and commercial prospects concluded that ‘the labour problem’ was the most serious impediment to the success of any such enterprise. In reply to one such report by the former New Zealand Premier, a British subject who had lived in Samoa for two years offered a more positive take on the islands’ prospects. He argued that Samoan communalism could be eroded if Samoans were taught in their churches and schools to “do a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay”. More pressing a problem than wages, he claimed, was that Samoans thought nothing of absenting themselves from work “for some trivial matter, such as a cricket match”. In response, he proposed that planters be allowed to enlist Samoans as contract labourers, then “boarding them on the plantation, and not allowing them to sleep in their villages or among their friends”. Increasingly, therefore, colonists saw kirikiti as one of several problematic Samoan behaviours that could only be resolved by a European administration with access to significant coercive authority.

With the partition of the islands in 1900, exactly such an administration seemed possible. This was not so much the case in the American-controlled islands to the east, which were operated by and for the US Navy. In any case, Tutuila had never been the site of significant papalagi settlement. The relatively large and nationally diverse colonist community in German Samoa, however, would have harboured hopes that their commercial interests would finally be protected. In 1900 there were perhaps 350 white colonists in German Samoa, comprising around one third each German and British nationals, with the largest part of the remainder being Americans. As had been the case before partition, sport could both bring these disparate elements together and keep them apart. By far the most popular sporting pastime was horse racing, which flourished under the auspices of the Apia Sports Club. The club emerged as one of the most successful sites for cooperation between the different elements of the papalagi community after it was re-established in 1903 – the Samoaische Zeitung described attendance at its 1904 Summer Meeting as “thoroughly representative”. Indeed, ten years after it was established the Zeitung proclaimed that “almost
every eligible person” was a member.\textsuperscript{35} Aside from racing, two athletics clubs were inaugurated in 1904,\textsuperscript{36} while British residents – usually in the guise of the British Club and the Apia Cricket Club – played cricket and football amongst themselves, albeit far less frequently than in the 1890s.\textsuperscript{37}

To some extent, these changes in Apia’s sporting life reflected the papalagi community’s changing composition. During the first two or three years of German rule, as independent German settlers “poured into the colony” after receiving exaggerated accounts of Samoa’s commercial prospects.\textsuperscript{38} Samoa’s population of adult German men increased from 113 to 148 during 1902, and the area of land under cacao – their crop of choice – more than doubled. They soon came to realise, however, that there was no source of inexpensive labour in Samoa for anyone but the DHPG, who maintained a monopoly on New Guinean workers.\textsuperscript{39} Led by the ex-Army officer Richard Deeken, these new German colonists lobbied both Governor Solf and the Colonial Office in Germany for improved access to labour. For the most part these efforts targeted Chinese labourers, and indeed indentured workers provided most of the labour for the new colonists. Importing Chinese labour was not without its complications, however, and at several points between 1903 and 1911 colonists were faced with the threat that they would have no labour source at all.\textsuperscript{40} As such, they demanded that Solf allow and even facilitate land alienation so as to compel Samoans to become what Stewart Firth terms “a rural proletariat”.\textsuperscript{41} In their eyes, the aim of German colonisation was to provide land, labour and security for white colonists. Together with other independent planters – of whom there were perhaps ten or so – and traders already in and around Apia, these new arrivals envisioned a Samoa governed in their interests.

As we have seen in Chapter Four, however, Solf and his successor Schultz had a very different vision for Samoa based on the DHPG’s interests and the principle of ‘salvage colonialism’. The result was what Firth calls a ‘soft’ native policy, one in which “the Samoan was to be left in his village, not dragooned on to the plantation”.\textsuperscript{42} These competing views of German colonisation led to a bitter, extended conflict between Solf and the new colonists. For their part, the

\textsuperscript{36} Untitled article, \textit{Samoanische Zeitung}, 17 December 1904.
\textsuperscript{38} Firth, ‘Governors Versus Settlers’, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{39} According to Stewart Firth, Samoans would only work for ten times the wages paid by the DHPG to its imported plantation workers; in good seasons Samoans were difficult to secure at any wage. Ibid., p. 157.
\textsuperscript{41} Firth, ‘Governors Versus Settlers’, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 178.
new planters criticised Solf in the German press and urged his removal as Governor. In 1903 one of the members of Deeken’s Planters’ Association took to a German newspaper to decry Solf’s insistence on giving Samoans “full freedom” and refusing to punish them properly. Instead, he proposed putting Samoans on public works for two years and thereafter “forcing every able-bodied Samoan from the age of fifteen to work for the whites at least three months each year”.43 Seven years later, the Planters’ Association made similar demands after the German Samoan government published a handbook that was unflattering in its assessments of commercial prospects for individual colonists in Samoa. They issued a rival publication, proposing that the government force Samoans off their lands so that they would be obliged to work on European plantations.44

Given their urgent interest in Samoan land and especially labour, it is no surprise that these new colonists were aggrieved by the Administration’s measured response to kirikiti. Whereas German officials sought the path of least resistance by enacting restrictions on the game and selectively enforcing them, colonists – new and old – demanded absolute prohibition, vigorously upheld.45 This was most clearly apparent in April 1905, when the Samoanische Zeitung – which was fiercely pro-Solf – reported that colonists were criticising him for not prohibiting the game. This criticism came from both the planters and Apia’s traders, who worried about the effects on ‘their’ copra harvest. The article then ridiculed this criticism, arguing that such a prohibition would not instil any willingness to work harder. Instead, “the time they have wasted before on playing cricket would now be free to do nothing”, which itself would lead to quarrels between the now-unoccupied Samoans. If traders wanted more copra, the author submitted, they first had to “introduce Samoans to greater needs, which will create an incentive to work harder”.46 The following month the Zeitung boasted that Solf’s light touch – apparently he had “used his influence” – had seen the kirikiti ‘epidemic’ subside.47 This claim came even as less ferocious matches continued in the districts, a result that suited the interests of the Administration and the DHPG but not those of the individual planters and traders. These divergent responses to kirikiti thus reflected broader differences in the ‘colonialisms’ imagined and practiced by officials and white colonists under German rule.

44 Firth, ‘Governors Versus Settlers’, p. 173.
45 George Steinmetz provides a brief but useful discussion of kirikiti laws in the context of these different conceptions of the colonial state. George Steinmetz, The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), p. 342.
46 ‘Sam. Zeitung, 15.4.05’, XVII.A.I.: Government and Administration of Justice (vol. 4), Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PMB) 479: English summaries of papers relating to Western Samoa: German Administration, Australian National University (ANU) [microfilm].
47 ‘Sam. Zeitung, 6.5.05’, XVII.A.I, PMB 479.
This disjuncture between white colonists and officials was generally less pronounced under New Zealand civilian rule – in economic terms, at least. Many Germans were deported during the First World War and in its immediate aftermath, with their estates and assets seized as ‘war reparations’. Apia’s newly de-Germanised community rapidly embraced the ludic instincts of the New Zealanders, and colonists saw the sports field as a ‘shared space’ in which they could engage with officials and soldiers during the First World War. This enthusiasm continued into the 1920s and 1930s. In 1924, Captain W.M Bell, aide de camp to General Richardson, told an audience in Wellington about Apia’s sporting calendar: equestrian sports were popular, cricket was played by “about four regular teams”, the privately-owned tennis courts claimed “many devotees”, while bowls had “an excellent following”.48 Association football and particularly rugby were also played, although by the 1930s the latter game was almost exclusively played by Samoan and ‘afakasi teams due to the overly ‘exacting’ weather.49 Confirmation that sporting life was flourishing came in September 1930, when the Samoa Herald published an article entitled ‘Glider Club for Apia’, followed by the rhetorical subheading ‘Why Not?’.

Although New Zealand rule brought a significant change in sporting culture, it did not bring a concomitant influx of private New Zealand colonists. As such, planting and trading coalesced in the hands of the existing British residents and particularly those of the increasingly ascendant ‘afakasi. For the most part, moreover, the economic policies of the 1920s and early-1930s were at least nominally aligned with colonist interests. After a hiatus in labour recruitment during the war, the New Zealand administration resumed the system of Chinese indentured labour in 1920. Given Samoa “had [already] gone in for indentured labour”, Prime Minister William Massey mused, New Zealand “had to go on where Germany had left off”.51 In addition, under the stewardship of George Spafford Richardson, kirikiti and other ‘disruptive’ Samoan practices were restricted in the name of productivity and progress. Such an interventionist approach to increasing Samoan production was precisely the course of action white colonists had called for 30 years previously, even if they expressed disquiet over government efforts to control the copra market.52 This alignment with colonists’ economic interests belied deep political fissures between the administration and the European community, however, and particularly its increasingly large and influential ‘afakasi

49 ‘Samoans at Sport’, Evening Post, 19 August 1936.
50 ‘Glider Club for Apia’, Samoa Herald, 19 September 1930.
51 ‘Local and General’, Samoa Times, 3 January 1920, p. 5.
contingent. As we will see later in this chapter, therefore, these political factors were more decisive in shaping their responses to kirikiti than purely economic concerns.53

As this brief survey demonstrates, white colonists’ attitudes towards kirikiti reflected its intersection with their interests throughout the period of study. Because these interests were for the most part commercial, colonists’ default position was unbridled exasperation. Indeed, the disruption and disorder associated with kirikiti came to embody papalagi colonists’ concerns about Samoan labour in the late-nineteenth century. While European sports gained a measure of popularity in the 1880s and 1890s, white colonists saw kirikiti as one of a series of work-obstructing Samoan behaviours that had to be curtailed amidst severe labour shortages and an economic downturn. As such, their response to kirikiti was to pressure their consuls for a more activist stance in subduing it.

Following partition, however, German officials placed Samoans and the DHPG at the heart of colonial policy, rather than independent colonists. Skirmishes between Governor Solf and disgruntled colonists regarding kirikiti thus reflected broader fractures in the different ‘colonialisms’ imagined and practiced by administrators and white colonists in German Samoa. A similar contest emerged under New Zealand rule but, as we will see, their attitudes to kirikiti were increasingly framed by changes in the now mostly ‘afakasi ‘European’ community’s interests – and the New Zealand administration’s dismissiveness of them. Together, these episodes stand as evidence of the many faces of ‘colonialism’ in Samoa, where the interests of those under the broad umbrella of ‘coloniser’ frequently overlapped and often collided, but were almost never exactly the same.

‘Afakasi and kirikiti

These overlapping interests and inherent ambiguities are most apparent, however, in the way that Samoa’s ‘mixed race’ community understood and responded to both cricket and kirikiti. The boundaries of racial difference in Samoa rested on considerations that were often social, political and legal rather than physical or genetic. As such, to speak of a discrete ‘mixed-race community’ and ‘their interests’ makes little sense; across the period of study ‘afakasi men, women and children variously identified – and were identified by others – as ‘European’, ‘Samoan’ or ‘part-European’. Indeed, despite the best efforts of papalagi officials, they were rarely content to stay within these prescribed boundaries and frequently moved between them. Even if their interests often elided with

53 This does not mean, of course, that Europeans – however conceived – suddenly ‘forgot’ their economic concerns with kirikiti. After the newly-elected Labour government ended the importation of Chinese labourers, the manager of the Crown Estates was forced to recruit Niueans because “local labour was not offering… news of a cricket match, feafea [celebration] or other social gathering will cause them to drop tools, no matter how important the work upon which they are engaged”. ‘Care-free Samoans’, New Zealand Herald, 6 October 1938, p. 10.
those of other groups, however, this liminal position between ‘coloniser’ and ‘colonised’ did frame their engagement with individuals in both of these diverse categories. It also shaped their recreational habits and informed their perception of both cricket and kirikiti, which they used to build and confirm ties with both papalagi and Samoans. This pattern was established before partition, but it continued under the subsequent German, American and New Zealand administrations. While the documentary evidence is unsurprisingly weighted towards those occasions where papalagi sports were used in this way, it also illustrates that on several occasions they used kirikiti to confirm – sometimes publicly and provocatively – their alignment with Samoan interests and their belonging within the Samoan ‘world’.

In Samoa and across the globe, so-called ‘half-castes’ were an inevitable product of the contact zone. Their very existence challenged the notion that the boundaries separating coloniser from colonised were easily drawn and unmistakable. As Damon Salesa points out, they “were a kind of human borderland, markers of the differences between the two populations”. ‘Afakasi were no trivial demographic in Samoa – from the last decades of the nineteenth century, they were more numerous than the nominally ‘white’ community. Even within this category, status was highly variegated: in the nineteenth century ‘foreign’ status was only afforded to those deemed to be legitimate offspring of papalagi fathers, while most were adjudged ‘natives’. Foreign status was eagerly sought as it carried clear advantages in matters of trade, bureaucracy, protection and status. Among those with this status, moreover, a distinct community emerged in Apia due to the colonial elite’s unwillingness to fully accept them as Europeans and – partly as a result – a tendency towards intermarriage amongst ‘afakasi families. According to Salesa, members of this community had “their own clubs, balls and polo teams… [and] their own peculiar accent”, even as they maintained social, economic and political connections to both ‘whites’ and Samoans.

These interlocking Samoan and papalagi influences shaped the identities of ‘afakasi men and women in distinctive ways. Malama Meleisea argues that an individual’s ‘cultural orientation’ was a product of their upbringing as well as whether they had foreign status or not. Thus the

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54 As Damon Salesa has argued, studying these histories allows scholars of empire to bring “metropole and colony, coloniser and colonised… into one analytic field”. Tooeolesulu Damon Salesa, ‘Half-castes between the Wars: Colonial Categories in New Zealand and Samoa’, New Zealand Journal of History 34:1 (2000), p. 99.
56 Salesa, ‘Half-castes between the Wars’, p. 98.
57 In most cases they were not, however, given foreign citizenship. Instead they were designated ‘resident aliens’ in Apia and subject to the ‘European’ laws of the Municipality rather than those of the rest of the islands. See Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa, pp. 159-160.
descendants of James ‘Monkey Jack’ Stowers, a British trader whose ‘mixed-race’ children married Samoans, retained “their British name and some sort of separate identity” even as their way of life became “largely Samoan in subsequent generations”.59 Jonas Coe, an American who arrived in Samoa in the 1840s and was at various times a trader, planter and foreign official, also founded a well-known family in Samoa with his first wife Ioana Taletale, herself from a distinguished Samoan family. In his biographical essay on two of Coe’s daughters with Iona, Emma and Phebe, Salesa notes that both girls retained an attachment with their Samoan family and heritage despite Jonas’ efforts to raise them as papalagi. Any attempt to gain unfettered access to this European ‘world’ was in any case delimited by prevailing racial attitudes: “ladies they may have become, but usually in a modified or contingent way – ‘half-caste Samoan ladies’”.60 As such, the sisters spent much of their lives “in a ‘world between’, tying together two worlds, native and European”; they were both, he argues, “weavers of the border”.61

Perhaps unsurprisingly, race and racial classification also shaped the modes of recreation that ‘afakasi engaged in during the late-nineteenth century. Because alcohol was reserved for foreign subjects, ‘afakasi with this status frequented Apia’s bars and billiards halls. They also engaged in more respectable papalagi leisure pursuits such as polo matches, amateur theatre and tennis to affirm their foreign credentials.62 Indeed, several prominent papalagi established clubs and institutes to promote these ‘wholesome’ forms of recreation and to prevent ‘afakasi men, women and children lapsing into ‘uncivilised’ habits and conduct. The most famous of these was the Royal Vine Ula Club, established by Robert Louis Stevenson and his wife Fanny, which aimed to teach Apia’s ‘afakasi men and women – and a select few Samoans – European manners, dress and comportment.”63 Although most similar efforts were centred at Apia, in March 1893 a similar initiative was launched at Matautu on Savai’i with the aim of improving “the intellectual and social status of this increasingly important part of the population”. To this end they planned to offer “evening classes, reading and recreation rooms, [a] gymnastic and sports club, lantern lectures, and

59 Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa, pp. 158-159. ‘Mad Jack’ Stowers lived on Savai’i from around 1840 and raised his children to be “wildly proud” of their British heritage. For further discussion of the Stowers family – and the complexities associated with maintaining ‘European’ status – see also Ibid., p. 176.
62 Salesa, ‘Samoas’s Half-Castes’, p. 85. For polo, see Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith, Diary – 25 March 1897, MSX-2765: Diary (1897), Cusack-Smith, Thomas Berry (Sir), 1859-1929: Papers, MS-Group-0066, ATL.
other entertainments”. For both ‘afakasi themselves and those concerned with ‘elevating’ them, recreation was thus a site for establishing and confirming ‘European-ness’.

Cricket frequently operated in much the same way. In 1889 an ‘afakasi side – the so-called Sogi Cricket Club – took the field against the Apia Cricket Club to mark the Prince of Wales’ Birthday. The Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser sniffly reported that the Apians were defeated despite being “undoubtedly the better cricketers”. A similar encounter before Christmas in 1893 saw several ‘afakasi men join a team “composed principally of European residents” against a Samoan side representing the district of Matautu. The ‘afakasi players made a notable impression in their side’s victory, with John Fruean top-scoring and Charles Scanlan – who had opened the batting for Sogi four years previously – making “two brilliant catches” in the outfield. Indeed, the Fruean men played a leading role in the match against the crew of H.M.S. Rapid with which this chapter commenced. Together, John, George and Charles scored 48 of their side’s 67 runs in the first innings. “A few more Frueans on the same terms”, declared the Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, “would have set the Ship a task we think somewhat difficult to accomplish”. Such opportunities to enter the papalagi world were especially pertinent for the Frueans, who maintained a tenuous position at the very margins of ‘European-ness’. In February 1880, after two members of the family were sued for throwing stones, the American Consul told them that their US citizenship protected them from the court’s jurisdiction. The Municipal Police Magistrate contradicted this account, however, claiming that the Freuans “are the illegitimate children of a Samoan woman by a man now dead, who claimed to be an American citizen, and therefore are Samoans”.

Cricket was not only a means of affirming ‘European-ness’, however. Charles Scanlan might also have made a difference to the result against the Rapid – he appeared in previous matches against the crew— but his place was taken by one of five ‘substitutes’ after he failed to arrive on time. Only a few months beforehand, however, Scanlan took part in a match played “between teams composed of thirteen half-castes and thirteen natives respectively”. Indeed the match was

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64 The so-called Matautu Institute was initially conceived by Rev. Archibald Hunt of the London Missionary Society and Mr W.D.P Keppel, a botanist and all-round busybody who frequently found himself a figure of fun in Samoan newspapers. By his efforts the Department of Education in New Zealand promised to defray the costs of school materials for a school for ‘afakasi children at Matautu. ‘Proposed Club and Institute, Matautu, Savaii’, Samoa Weekly Herald, 24 March 1894, p. 2; ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 28 April 1894, p. 2.
65 ‘Cricket’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 16 November 1889, p. 2.
68 ‘Dismissal of the Municipal Police Magistrate’, Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, 14 February 1880, p. 2. Their disputed status was again raised when the US government sent representatives to rule on the claims of American citizens whose property had been damaged in the wars of the 1890s. Both Fruean claims were dismissed because they could not present proof of their father’s citizenship and lawful marriage. See United States Department of State, Claims of American citizens, Apia, in the Samoan Islands (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 26, 42-43.
noteworthy, reported the *Samoa Weekly Herald*, because the former side were all members of the Scanlan family. This episode was by no means exceptional – as with other ‘afakasi families, the Scanlans turned to cricket and kirikiti to confirm their ties to the Samoan community as much as the ‘European’ one. In May 1893, for instance, a large procession of “Samoan fair dames and maidens” arrived at Sogi to take on a local side co-captained by Mrs G. Scanlan, the wife of Apia’s policeman and herself a Samoan woman of notable rank. The two-day match featured teams of 44 apiece and ended with a comfortable victory for Scanlan’s side.

These engagements between ‘afakasi and Samoans were hardly exceptional; ‘afakasi families frequently built and retained ties to Samoan communities. Charles Scanlan’s relative Michael, for example, owned two ‘European’ houses and worked as a court interpreter in Apia, but he also maintained three Samoan properties on which he grew breadfruit and taro and raised pigs to sell. The cricketing habits of Charles Scanlan and the Frueans are illustrative of these broader ambiguities and how ‘afakasi navigated them on a daily basis. If Emma and Phebe Coe were ‘weavers at the border’, these men were ‘boundary riders’ moving between Samoan and European ‘worlds’.

This pattern of ‘boundary riding’ continued after partition, of course. In the American-controlled islands there was no legal distinction between Samoans and ‘afakasi until the 1930s. While some ‘afakasi men and women embraced this status, others remained ‘between’ the Samoan and European communities, working in trades and living as Europeans even as they participated in Samoan kin networks. Unsurprisingly, sport emerged as a site for affirming their foreign credentials. In 1931 four ‘afakasi Public Works Employees – Sivia Wightman, Samuel Scanlan, William Allen and Edward Meredith – requested permission to use the Enlisted Men’s tennis courts. Their request was denied, notwithstanding the facilities were underutilised and they had

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72 In cricketing parlance, a ‘boundary rider’ is a fielder positioned at or near the boundary line that demarcates the field of play.
73 In 1932 the Fono of American Samoa forbade anyone deemed to have less than three quarters’ Samoan ancestry from holding matai titles. American officials had, however, prohibited naval personnel marrying Samoan women without the Governor’s written permission since 1919. See Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, p. 174.
74 The American ethnologist Bruce Cartwright engaged in an extended discussion of the status of ‘afakasi in American Samoa in his testimony before the 1930 Commission into US naval rule. He pointed out that Ned Ripley, whose mother was descended from a high-ranking Samoan family, had become an important chief in his village. See United States Congress, *American Samoa Hearings before the commission appointed by the President of the United States in accordance with Public resolution no. 89, 70th Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1931), pp. 3-12.
75 According to census records Wightman and Scanlan were bookkeepers, Allen was a plumber, while Meredith was an electrician and the son of American Samoa’s postmaster.
received numerous invitations from naval personnel to join them. Even so, the Captain of the Yard argued, granting them permission would necessarily mean allowing access “for all other natives”. On this occasion, therefore, their efforts to traverse the boundaries imposed by racial classification were firmly denied. They were more successful in 1938, however, when the ‘Fagatogo Nationals’ – managed by Meredith – took part in a baseball league alongside naval personnel, foreign nationals and members of the Fitafita Guard and Band.  

Sport served similar functions for ‘afakasi in German Samoa, even as they faced an entirely different system of racial classification and exclusion. In 1903, the German Administration passed an ordinance which permitted “illegitimate part-Samoans” to be registered as resident aliens – that is, as ‘foreigners’ – upon application to the High Court. Each case was decided on its ‘merits’, which consisted of the proportion of papalagi ancestry and whether the applicant satisfied the court’s criteria pertaining to language, social conduct and standing. By 1907, therefore, Governor Solf noted of ‘afakasi men and women: “despite their dark skin colour [they] were whites”. This move profoundly changed the meaning of ‘European-ness’ and the composition of Apia’s nominally ‘European’ community: between 1903 and 1914, 391 persons received a change in legal status from ‘native’ to ‘European’ and in 1910 the census recorded over a thousand part-Samoans registered as resident aliens.

In the midst of these shifting racial boundaries, sport once again offered a means of performing ‘European-ness’. The centre of sporting life under German rule was the Apia Sports Club, which held several race meets each year and enjoyed the patronage of Governor Solf himself. Their participation there was not always welcome, however. After one such gathering in August 1904, Rev. James Sibree of the London Missionary Society wrote to the Samoanische Zeitung complaining that the newspaper had given as much attention to betting as to the races themselves. In particular, he opined that betting constituted a “danger to the young half-castes, as well as the Samoans of Apia and [the] neighbourhood”. While Samoans were disallowed from gambling, those individuals given European status by registration were free to do so. For Sibree, this was a mistake:

76 Public Works Employees to the Commandant via the Public Works Officer, ‘Permission to play tennis – request for’, 4 September 1931, P10 Amusement and recreation [#6], General Correspondence, 1921-1949, Box 28 (NN-373-91), RG 313: Records of Naval Operating Forces, 1849-1997, National Archives and Records Administration – Pacific Region (NARA), San Bruno.
77 Lieutenant Commander T.F. Darden Jr. [President of League], ‘Memorandum for Team Captains and Managers’, 23 February 1938, P10 [Amusement and Recreation] [#2], Box 28, RG 313.
79 Government Council minutes, 15 February 1907, Samoanische Zeitung, GCA, 2/6/13/1, fol. 2 11, cited in Evelyn Wareham, Race and Realpolitik: the politics of colonization in German Samoa (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 124.
With regard to the half-castes, unfortunately in some respects, they have all been given, by registration, the status of whites; when their characters and position are not in many cases strong enough to make them equal to it.\(^81\)

Despite their involvement as breeders, jockeys and bettors, the first ‘afakasi member of the Club’s committee was not elected until 1911. This was the redoubtable Taisi O.F. Nelson, son of the Swedish trader August Nelson and his Samoan wife Sina Masoe. Nelson began working for his father on Savai’i at the turn of the century and soon showed an aptitude for business: he collected old debts, introduced modern trading methods, started shipping copra directly to Australia and expanded the business significantly in the years between 1903 and 1909.\(^82\) If his business success gave Nelson economic standing in Apia’s papalagi circles, social standing was secured through other means – including the Apia Sports Club. A few months after being elected to the Committee, Nelson organised a boating expedition to Manono and Apolima for almost 40 members of the club and several officers from the visiting SMS Cormoran.\(^83\) He also took a keen interest in improving the breeding of Samoan horses, even donating “a splendid trophy” to be contested by “island-bred horses, to be run over 8 furlongs”.\(^84\) Through these and other efforts, Nelson was able to successfully stake out a prominent position in Apia’s European community – even though, as we will see, he retained his interest and influence in the Samoan ‘world’.

It was under New Zealand rule, however, that sport reached its zenith as a means for ‘afakasi men and women to traverse these boundaries. As had been the case under German rule, some ‘afakasi were recognised as Europeans while a far larger number – poorer, landless and with limited education and vocational training – were regarded as Samoans. “The New Zealand administration”, Salesa observes, “persisted in seeing Samoa in brown and white, although the people of Samoa came in many more shades and colours”.\(^85\) ‘Afakasi were caught between these binary categories and turned to sport as a way to signal their belonging to both. On the one hand, they continued to use papalagi sports to confirm their ‘European-ness’. Within a few weeks of New Zealand troops arriving in Samoa, for instance, the Apia Cricket Club – by now composed predominantly of ‘afakasi men, including the son of former British Consul William Churchward – engaged in a series of matches against the visiting soldiers. A few months later, moreover, the Club’s members invited around 50 officers and men of the Occupying Force to attend a picnic at

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\(^81\) Rev. James Sibree, ‘Correspondence’, Samoanische Zeitung, 13 August 1904.
\(^84\) Untitled article, Samoanische Zeitung, 12 July 1913, p. 10; see also O.F. Nelson, ‘Apia Sports Club’, Samoanische Zeitung, 4 October 1913, p. 12.
\(^85\) Salesa, ‘Half-castes between the Wars’, p. 101
Papase’ea. Despite intemperate weather the function “was thoroughly enjoyed by all present”.\(^{86}\) These patterns of sporting involvement persisted after the war, and ‘afakasi featured prominently in Apia’s sporting life throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

It was not only English cricket that could serve these functions, however. In the 1920s and 1930s, kirikiti also emerged as a site for ‘afakasi men and women to publicly demonstrate their alignment with the Samoan population and their place within it. As we have seen in Chapter Four, New Zealand’s administration of Samoa was characterised by a commitment to ‘progress’ and ‘development’. The interests of European residents – particularly those of ‘afakasi – were at best a secondary consideration. They experienced higher rates of taxation and customs duties, which were expended on a growing civil service and public works. More importantly, the Samoa Act of 1921 gave them no meaningful say in government planning and expenditure. According to Meleisea, the Administration’s unwillingness to address these frustrations convinced Nelson and other prominent Apia residents to join “the increasingly resentful leaders of the Samoans” in a more general opposition movement to New Zealand rule.\(^{87}\)

In the eyes of New Zealand officials, however, this movement – known as the Mau – was the latest in a series of disturbances perpetrated by ‘troublesome’ ‘afakasi. As Salesa points out, ‘afakasi men and women were living proof that the boundary between ‘Samoans’ and ‘Europeans’ was difficult to establish and impossible to police. As a result, each day “they had to deal with the trauma their existence exposed”; ‘afakasi were widely assumed to be degenerate, duplicitous and a threat to the racial purity of both Europeans and Samoans.\(^{88}\) These suspicions were evident in official discourse regarding the Mau. In 1928, Administrator George Spafford Richardson fumed that the ‘simple-minded’ Samoans had been “led by the nose for a keg of beef… and galled by the wily half-caste with his glib tongue in the vernacular” to support the movement.\(^{89}\) The most common official response to Mau petitions and questions, therefore, was to deny that any person with European legal status could speak for Samoans, or should have any say in the formation of ‘Native Policy’. Indeed, when the Minister for External Affairs visited Samoa in 1927, he remonstrated against “you members of the European committee” and flatly rejected their questions regarding ‘Native affairs’.\(^{90}\)

\(^{86}\) Untitled article, *Samoanische Zeitung*, 7 November 1914, p. 7.
\(^{88}\) Damon T. Salesa, ‘Half-castes Between the Wars’, p. 98.
\(^{89}\) Richardson to Bell, 11 July 1928, Correspondence with Sir George Richardson, Sir Francis Henry Dillon Bell – Political Correspondence and Papers, Bell Family Papers, MS-Copy-Micro-0798, ATL.
This stance was at once frustrating and deeply offensive to ‘afakasi men like Nelson, who often had deep roots in both Samoan and papalagi communities. As well as his business success and influence in papalagi social circles, Nelson spoke fluent Samoan and well-versed in Samoan history, family genealogies, legends, customs and traditions. He held a Samoan title, Taisi, and through his mother’s relatives retained influence in Samoan affairs. These ambiguities perturbed New Zealand officials, who insisted that identity was a binary proposition. To represent Samoans in the Legislative Council – or indeed to have any say whatsoever in ‘Native Affairs’ – Nelson and other ‘afakasi men would hence have to abandon their European legal status and surrender their associated rights, including access to a passport and credit.

In this context, it was imperative that ‘European’ members of the movement demonstrated solidarity with Samoan concerns. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the nominally European members of the Citizens’ Committee incorporated these concerns into their more general grievances against the Administration. One of these concerns pertained to restrictions on kirikiti, which Samoan leaders in the Mau recognised as part of a broader pattern of intrusion into village life. In its submission to a visiting Royal Commission, therefore, the Committee explained that Richardson had exceeded his authority by insisting that the ostensibly independent Fono of Faipules – a council comprising representatives of the various districts in Samoa – should pass certain laws, including limits on kirikiti and other games.

More generally, the complainants characterised New Zealand’s administration of ‘Native affairs’ as “tactless and unwise”, with insufficient regard for customary social and political systems, beliefs and wishes. This support for kirikiti persisted as Mau opposition continued in the 1930s. In one instance, the New Zealand press strongly criticised the Mau after they played kirikiti rather than attend a reception for the Duke of Gloucester, who visited Samoa in February 1935. In reply, Nelson released a statement defending their conduct and instead claiming that “harsh laws” and the Administration’s obstinate dismissal of Mau claims were to blame for their non-attendance.

On at least one occasion, however, this support for kirikiti was far more direct and patently symbolic. In the late-1920s the Mau undertook a series of increasingly provocative petitions, marches and boycotts. Stephen Shepherd Allen, who succeeded Richardson as Administrator in 1928, believed that firm policing would diminish the Mau threat. On Saturday 28 December 1929,

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91 Wendt, ‘Guardians and Wards’, p. 100.
however, an attempted arrest during a Mau parade led to a fracas between officers and Mau adherents. The police fired on the crowd, leaving at least eight people dead. Allen responded to this incident, known as Black Saturday, by declaring the Mau a seditious organisation and calling in the armed forces to pursue some 1500 Mau fugitives. With the leaders of the Mau in exile or evading capture in the bush, a so-called ‘Women’s Mau’ emerged to continue the resistance movement through petitions, marches and meetings – and politically charged kirikiti matches.

One such match in 1930 was notable for the presence of Rosabel Nelson – Taisi Nelson’s estranged wife – and her sister Priscilla Muench. Both women were prominent Apian residents, daughters of the American trader Harry Moors and his Samoan wife Fa’animonimo (Nimo). Dressed in Mau colours, Nelson and Muench joined a procession of Samoan women in similar attire marching along the main road to Vaimoso. A kirikiti match ensued, and police witnesses claimed that Rosabel Nelson retired to a house nearby; the implication being that she was engaged in ‘political meetings’. For their part, the sisters denied partaking in any such meetings. They insisted, however, that their attendance at the kirikiti match was overtly political. For one thing, the match was used to raise funds to pay for a fine incurred by the Mau’s solicitor. Furthermore, their attire and presence at the match was an explicit act of solidarity: Muench described herself as “one of the protesting women of Samoa”, while Nelson stated that Mau colours at the game were worn in protest against Allen’s deployment of armed troops. Both women were charged with – and subsequently found guilty of – aiding and abetting a seditious organisation.

Although striking, the sisters’ instrumental use of kirikiti is in no way surprising. In sport as elsewhere, ‘afakasi men and women exemplified the tenuous boundaries and deep-rooted contest that characterised Samoa and other contact zones created by colonialism. In this fractured social context, the cricket pitch quickly gained utility as a site where their ties with papalagi and Samoans alike could be established and maintained. The liminal position of ‘afakasi thus shaped the ways that they understood and responded to both cricket and kirikiti. If white colonists generally viewed kirikiti and other ‘disruptive’ customs as a commercial nuisance, many ‘afakasi men and women – even those with European status and economic interests – also understood and identified with fa’a Samoa social networks, and kirikiti’s significance to them. Whatever their legal status in the eyes of colonial officials, therefore, Nelson and Meunch were ‘boundary riders’, just as Charles Scanlan had been some forty years before.

95 ‘Aiding and Abetting’, Samoa Herald, 17 April 1930. Vaisomo village is situated just outside of Apia and had been the site of many Mau activities. Even today, a sign proudly proclaims the village as ‘the birthplace of the Mau’.
96 ‘Aiding and Abetting’, Samoa Herald, 17 April 1930.
Military men and kirikiti

Compared to white colonists and particularly to ‘afakasi men and women, servicemen demonstrated an altogether more straightforward attitude towards cricket and kirikiti – they embraced the game in whatever guise it took. To varying degrees, sport was an important recreational outlet for the naval crews that regularly visited Samoa from the mid-nineteenth century. While baseball emerged as the sport of choice for American sailors, their British and later New Zealand counterparts favoured cricket. Indeed, the weekly fixtures that the Rapid’s crew played in 1893 were no anomaly; the ludic zeal of British and New Zealander servicemen almost single-handedly sustained English cricket in Samoa. Even so, most military men had relatively little direct engagement with kirikiti. When they did encounter it, the game itself was viewed as something of a curio; their attitudes tended towards amusement and indifference. British and New Zealand crews and soldiers nevertheless played a significant part in the history of both cricket and kirikiti in Samoa. By introducing and then reinvigorating English cricket in the islands, they provided opportunities for Samoans to adopt and appropriate the game, and to pursue their own ambitions through it.

With the arrival of papalagi settlers and traders in the 1840s, foreign warships began to visit Samoa with some regularity. For the most part, Gilson infers, they came “on routine patrol, that their commanders might ‘show the flag’ and, if conditions were found to require it, to intervene in the interests of peace and order”. These sojourns were usually brief – vessels rarely stayed more than a fortnight – but they had the capacity to dispose rough justice and ‘mediate’ disputes through ‘gunboat diplomacy’. Indeed, for the foreign consuls at Apia these visits constituted a valuable means of improving their standing with Europeans and Samoans alike. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, these ships arrived more frequently, often stayed for longer and were almost exclusively from the United States, Britain and newly unified Germany. Naval crews from these nations therefore became an increasingly common presence at ‘the Beach’.

While naval commanders may have spent their time fielding complaints from aggrieved consuls, missionaries and traders, their crews were set loose on the town to entertain themselves and make mischief. In the 1850s and 1860s in particular, visiting sailors contributed to Apia’s reputation as a ‘hellhole’, partaking in raucous dancing, heavy drinking, and whiling away hours at

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98 This paragraph draws on Richard Gilson’s description of the period of ‘Naval Justice’ in Samoa during the nineteenth century. Gilson, Samoa 1830 to 1900, pp. 198-221.
99 Ibid., p. 201.
bowling alleys and billiard halls. By the 1880s the town’s recreational horizons had broadened, even if the sailors’ unbridled enthusiasm for them had not. While ‘grog shops’ and dance halls still did a steady trade when a foreign warship was at port, the townsfolk were also treated to dramatic and musical performances from crewmembers. In 1881, for instance, the Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette reported that the band from the German warship H.I.G.M.S. Hertha had “discoursed sweet music on the vacant lot plot opposite the German Consulate” for the benefit of the large crowd who had gathered there. Twelve years later a minstrel troupe from the British cruiser H.M.S. Katoomba gave a performance in the Apia Public Hall to raise funds for the Benevolent Institution. The townsfolk welcomed these new pastimes, even if the sailors’ sheer exuberance was occasionally bothersome and even hazardous. Even as the Samoa Weekly Herald advertised the Katoomba’s minstrel troupe, for instance, it paused to admonish the crew for “careering wildly through the town” on horseback, knocking down passers-by with abandon. While the Herald’s reporter claimed not to begrudge the sailors their fun, he implored that “they might select some less frequented thoroughfare than the main street in which to disport themselves”.

This wholehearted pursuit of excitement was characteristic of the attitudes of servicemen towards sport. While German crews reserved their leisure time ashore for recitals, dances and picnics, the British – and to a lesser extent Americans – also played sport whenever possible. Sport’s role in the British military was a product both of its perceived production of martial qualities and as a diversion for idle soldiers during peacetime. Indeed, British forces were playing football and cricket by the mid-nineteenth century, and they were often responsible for transmitting English sports to the farthest reaches of the empire. This ludic spirit was initially less pronounced within the American forces. It was only during the Spanish-American war that commanders in the Pacific theatre established a formal sports program as part of a broader initiative to maintain morale, enthusiasm and discipline among the troops.

British and American naval personnel in Samoa largely adhered to these patterns of sporting participation. Visiting British ships regularly challenged local sides in a variety of sporting contests. According to the diaries of the British Consul T.B. Cusack-Smith, the visit of any British naval vessel in the 1890s was invariably accompanied by cricket and polo matches, tennis competitions

100 Burgoyne, ‘Re-defining ‘the Beach’’, pp. 123-124.
101 ‘Music’, Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, 30 April 1881, p. 2.
103 Ibid.
American sporting endeavours, conversely, were relatively limited. In 1881 a solitary American officer from the *U.S.S. Lackawanna* joined the Apia locals in a cricket match, while American naval crews only introduced baseball to Samoa in 1889 and thereafter played it sporadically amongst themselves. An incident from mid-1899 illustrates the varying extents to which the respective navies pursued sport in Samoa. When the British sloop *H.M.S. Pylades* called at Apia it found another British warship moored alongside an American supply ship and a German cruiser. The officers and crews of the two British warships arranged a ‘sports gathering’ and invited their American and German counterparts; the Americans accepted the invitation and had “a real good time” but the Germans demurred.

For all their varied ludic interests, British sailors who visited Samoa were most devoted to cricket. The game was particularly popular among the officer class, and Lieutenant (later Rear Admiral) Gerald Harrison was justified in claiming that

> The Navy and Army can, I think, be looked upon as the pioneers of cricket in many places in the world, and wherever a ship has been for any length of time, or wherever a regiment has been stationed, there, as sure as fate, will you find the game played, and, what is more, played with keenness.

This was certainly the case in Samoa. As we have seen, cricket was first played in 1879, when officers from the British warship *Cormorant* defeated a team representing Apia’s papalagi community. The visit of the *Miranda* in June 1881 further stimulated the local cricket scene: a club was hurriedly established and – following an unlikely victory – its members sought out a ground, sent for more cricket gear from Sydney and advertised for members and donations in the local newspaper. Thereafter visiting warships provided regular fixtures during the 1880s and 1890s at a time when the game – or at least its English form – might otherwise have disappeared completely. This was made apparent in 1892, when the crew of *H.M.S. Curaçoa* gave the local inhabitants “a very substantial licking” in their first match for several months. There was “in effect no local cricket team in existence”, bemoaned the *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*, “it having long since died from inanition”.

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106 See for example Cusack-Smith, Diary – 12 November 1892, MSX-2760: Diary (1892), Cusack-Smith, Thomas Berry (Sir), 1859-1929: Papers, MS-Group-0066, ATL; Cusack-Smith, Diary – 10, 12, 17, 24 August 1893, MSX-2761: Diary (1893), ATL.
107 ‘Cricket Match’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette*, 2 July 1881, p. 2.
108 Baseball’s failure to take hold in Samoa appears to have been due to the relatively small American contingent in Apia and the earlier arrival of cricket. See ‘American Base Ball’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Observer*, 2 March 1889, p. 2.
111 *Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette*, 4 June 1881; 11 June 1881; 30 July 1881.
112 ‘Cricket’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*, 27 August 1892, p. 2.
‘Novelty’ cricket matches against Samoan sides were a particular favourite of British crews. In 1893, for instance, sailors from the Katoomba, batting and bowling left-handed, lost an exhibition match against a side comprising Samoan women.\textsuperscript{113} Games featuring elements borrowed from kirikiti provided similar entertainment. In 1886, HMS Opal docked at Apia and, after five days receiving dignitaries on board, the crew played “a rough game of cricket” against 22 Samoan men. The locals emerged victorious.\textsuperscript{114} Five years later the crew of HMS Cordelia and “the natives of Vaiala” played a series of matches in which the locals ‘used clubs instead of bats’. The visitors won the first and third games, but were ‘utterly beaten’ in the second contest.\textsuperscript{115} This unrelenting enthusiasm for Samoan participation was markedly different to the views held by officials, missionaries and white colonists. It is not surprising, however. As Tony Mason and Eliza Riedi have argued, sport was a great solace for servicemen in those distant placements where time was hard to fill.\textsuperscript{116} If sport was a tonic for tedium, then kirikiti’s unfamiliar elements represented an especially potent dose. In Samoa, one of the farthest-flung of all destinations, soldiers saw kirikiti not as a threat to decency, economic prosperity or political stability but rather as a means of escaping boredom.

The partition of Samoa in 1900 curtailed these regular British naval visits and thus led to a significant decline in cricket’s fortunes. Even before partition, English cricket had barely featured at Tutuila due to the negligible papalagi community there. Cricket remained an irrelevance there after the advent of American naval rule; the visiting ‘blue jackets’ instead turned decisively to baseball. In 1905 Governor Moore noted that the only recreational facility at the naval base – aside from the rifle range – was a baseball diamond.\textsuperscript{117} In 1913, moreover, officers on the U.S.S. Princeton sent an urgent request for baseball bats, balls and gloves so that they might “place two nines in the field and, if possible, capture the championship of the island”.\textsuperscript{118} Recreational offerings at the naval base were expanded over the next twenty years through the efforts of the Enlisted Men’s Club and an increasingly activist naval administration. By the mid-1920s three tennis courts were in use, with American football, volleyball, indoor-baseball, quoits and foils all introduced to varying degrees of

\textsuperscript{113} Cusack-Smith, Diary – 17 August 1893.
\textsuperscript{114} ‘HMS Opal at Samoa’. Mercury, 9 March 1886, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{115} Cusack-Smith, Diary – 7-14 May 1891, MSX-2759: Diary (1891), ATL.
\textsuperscript{116} Mason and Riedi, Sport and the Military, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{117} Governor to the Secretary of the Navy, 1 March 1905, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, GENERAL, 1905, Reel 23 (Series No. 5, Annual Reports on Government Affairs, 1902-1921...), T1182: Records of the Government of American Samoa, National Archives and Records Administration – Pacific Region (NARA), San Bruno.
\textsuperscript{118} ‘Baseball in Samoa’. San Francisco Call, 25 May 1913, p. 51.
success.\textsuperscript{119} The 1930s, moreover, saw the establishment of regular tennis and bowls tournaments alongside indoor recreations such as films.\textsuperscript{120} All the while, a regular baseball championship was contested between visiting crews, station personnel, the Fitafitas and a few mostly European civilians.\textsuperscript{121}

Cricket’s prognosis in German Samoa seemed only marginally better. Without regular matches against British warships to sustain it, horse racing rapidly eclipsed cricket as Apia’s principal divertissement. As they had done in the nineteenth century, German servicemen visiting Apia tended to spend their leisure time ashore conducting musical recitals and being entertained at balls, dances and picnics. Organised sport – a decidedly Anglo-American mode of physical culture\textsuperscript{122} – was rarely undertaken. This began to change in the early twentieth century, at least among the officer classes. When five German battleships visited Apia in mid-1910, they partook in what the \textit{Samoanische Zeitung} called “a diversified and successful” range of activities. As well as a series of dances, public concerts and picnics, the men of the fleet gave an exhibition of athletics, “tugs-of-war [and] gymnastics on horizontal and parallel bars”.\textsuperscript{123} The officers, meanwhile, hunted pigeons, played a prominent part at the August race meet and were made honorary members of the racing club.\textsuperscript{124}

This state of affairs changed abruptly with the arrival of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force at Apia on 29 August 1914. Led by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Logan, the Force comprised men drawn from territorial units alongside “a good sprinkling of ardent spirits who had never before handled a service rifle”.\textsuperscript{125} Their initial enthusiasm for the war effort was short-lived. The capture of Samoa was decidedly lacking in military glory – the Germans surrendered without a shot being fired, while Governor Schultz ensured he was not in Apia to receive the landing party in person.

\textsuperscript{119} Lieut. Francis Lee Albert, Chaplain Corps, U.S.N. to Secretary of the Navy, ‘Chaplain’s Annual Report for the Year 1923’, 31 December 1923, Reel 32, B.F. Kneubuhl, Birds of Samoa, Books of Samoa..., T1182.
\textsuperscript{120} Extensive records of sporting life at the naval base – including an inventory of all the sporting equipment contained therein – can be found in the ‘Amusement and Recreation’ files contained within the Records of Naval Operating Forces, General Correspondence, 1921-1949, Box 28 (NN-373-91), RG 313; Records of Naval Operating Forces, 1849-1997, National Archives and Records Administration – Pacific Region (NARA), San Bruno.
\textsuperscript{121} See for example Lieutenant Commander T.F. Darden Jr. [President of League], ‘Memorandum for Team Captains and Managers’, 23 February 1938, P10 [Amusement and Recreation], General Correspondence, 1921-1949, Box 28 (NN-373-91), RG 313.
\textsuperscript{122} The lack of enthusiasm that German crews – and indeed German colonists and officials – showed for organised sport can be partly attributed to the existence of distinctive traditions of physical culture. While British sporting culture – particularly tennis, regattas and horse racing – made some inroads among the upper classes after the turn of the century, modern sports were not fully enconceded in German mass culture until World War I. See Udo Merkel, ‘The Politics of Physical Culture and German Nationalism’, \textit{German Politics and Society} 21:2 (2003), pp. 69-96.
\textsuperscript{123} Untitled article, \textit{Samoanische Zeitung}, 30 July 1910, p. 7.
This anticlimactic entrance was followed by a few weeks of “hard work in the tropical heat, discomforts and numerous alarms”.  

By late September, however, the immediate threat of German attack subsided and the force settled down to a workaday life. The troops quickly tired of Samoa – they were beset by disease, the tropical climate and, most incessantly, by boredom. The *Pull Thro’*, a military newspaper styled as “the unofficial organ of the Advance Party of the N.Z. Expeditionary Force”, spoke to the soldiers’ frustrations in its third edition. The editorial – tongue only partly in-cheek – favourably compared the position of “the fortunate warrior actively striving for his country’s honour” with that of the “humble garrison soldier”, whose duties were limited to “protecting the ladies of Samoa”. This sentiment was reinforced by a full-page cartoon, which featured a weary and mosquito-ridden soldier bearing a large stone slate labelled ‘SAMOA’. The caption read “We’ll Hold it! But we wish something would happen”.

Faced with this void, the soldiers turned to sports and games. Some eagerly took up an invitation to use the London Missionary Society’s tennis court at their leisure, others engaged in bowls tournaments against the locals, and in 1916 the administration procured cloth for billiard tables. Most of all, they played cricket. Within a month of landing ‘D’ Battery had arranged a scratch match against the Apia Cricket Club, whose members – mostly ‘afakasi men but with some prominent Samoan players – shrugged off more than a decade of relative inactivity to defeat their more experienced opponents. A veritable torrent of fixtures followed over the next two months. The Apia Club first took on the military staff of the Post Office and Court House, then the Customs and Harbourmaster staffs, followed by the Fifth Auckland Regiment, the Third Auckland Regiment and finally the Medical Corps. Each of these matches was subject to lengthy coverage in the *Pull Thro’*. By November 1914 the soldiers were also playing amongst themselves, with ‘D’ Battery soundly defeating the Third Regiment, and the officers of the Vaimea and Malifa camps facing off

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126 Ibid., p. 37.
127 ‘Ourselves’, *The Pull Thro’*, 7 November 1914, p. 2.
128 ‘No title’, *The Pull Thro’*, 7 November 1914, p. 3.
132 The military side included Herbert McGirr, a fast bowling all-rounder who later played in New Zealand’s first test series in 1930, and Gilbert Howe, a wicketkeeper who had represented Wellington before the war. Indeed, the *Pull Thro’* noted that the Advance Party contained “quite a large number” of first grade players. Even so, the Apia side emerged victorious after dealing out “severe punishment” to the soldiers’ bowling. See ‘Cricket’, *The Pull Thro’*, 14 October 1914, p. 9.
133 See ‘Cricket’, *The Pull Thro’*, 14 October 1914, pp. 9-10; 7 November 1914, p. 5; 5 December 1914, p. 7.
in front of “a large crowd of visitors”. December and January of 1915 saw more cricket, and the soldiers gratefully accepted Christmas “consignments of pipes, tobacco, games, music, books and cricket and tennis material” provided by the Auckland Civic League. Christmas itself was greeted with a morning cricket match between the officers and men.

As part of this ‘boom’, the cricket pitch emerged as one of the few sites where Apia’s European residents and Samoans alike could interact with officers and soldiers. As had been the case with British sailors in the nineteenth century, New Zealand’s military men were unperturbed by departures from MCC orthodoxy. In a letter home, for instance, one Wellington grade cricketer expressed his amusement at several Samoan members of the Apia Cricket Club batting with “clubs similar to those used at baseball” – that is, kirikiti bats – in their first match against the soldiers. Several members of the Expeditionary Force also wrote comical descriptions of kirikiti matches they had attended. In one such account, the Wellington cricketer Herbert McGirr reported having witnessed a match involving 90 players that he estimated would have lasted for “a week or ten days”. Larger matches, he confidently predicted, could last for three weeks. While McGirr’s portrait of kirikiti may have been fanciful, it is also clear that he saw the game as an amusing diversion rather than a threat to law, order and production in the islands.

For the most part, however, Samoans playing the English game laid down their kirikiti pate [bats] and took up the English willow. In September 1915 a military eleven featuring Colonel Logan played an impromptu match against a side comprising high-ranking matai, including the paramount chief Malietoa Tanumafili. A round-robin tournament also commenced in September, featuring the predominantly ‘European’ Apia Cricket Club, two sides representing the soldiers and officials in the military administration, as well as the Catholic Young Men’s Club and the Toeaina Club. The latter two sides were exclusively Samoan, with the Toeaina side comprising high-ranking chiefs and important officials in the ‘native’ government. The 1916 season expanded the game still further, with each side fielding ‘A’ and ‘B’ teams in a two-tier competition. Cricket’s exalted status was publicly demonstrated in July 1917, when a new matting pitch was inaugurated inside the racecourse at Apia Park. The match that followed was played between a Garrison side – once again including Colonel Logan – and an Apia eleven. As had been the case at their first match three

140 ‘Apia Cricket Association’, *Samoa Times*, 9 September 1916, p. 4.
years earlier, three Samoan men featured in the local side. One of these was Toleafoa Lagolago, who used his renowned power to hit the ground’s first six.141 Thanks to Logan and his men English cricket was once again flourishing in and around Apia, with significant Samoan interest and participation.

Cricket’s fortunes necessarily declined in Samoa as New Zealand servicemen were redeployed to Europe or returned home. Round-robin tournaments continued until the mid-1920s, but cricket’s social importance was unquestionably diminished. Inevitably, Samoan participation – in English cricket at least – waned as well. It would be a mistake, however, to trivialise the effect that New Zealand’s military men had in resuscitating the moribund English cricket scene in Apia. In their quest for excitement, the Expeditionary Force revived the cricket pitch as a ‘shared space’ within which Samoans could negotiate relationships with military servicemen – and with other colonisers. Indeed, as we will see in Chapter Eight, Toleafoa and other prominent Samoan leaders used this space as one part of a broader effort to attain influence. In many ways the New Zealanders’ impact is therefore redolent of their predecessors in the British Navy, who had introduced cricket in 1879 and largely sustained it for two decades. On both occasions, these cricketing enthusiasts were responsible for stimulating Samoan interest in the game; on both occasions, moreover, their actions allowed Samoans to use both cricket and kirikiti to further their own interests and navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by papalagi colonialism(s).

Conclusion

This chapter has emphasised the array of groups and individuals who together made up ‘colonisers’ in Samoa. While this assortment of ‘sundries’ frequently congregated to play cricket on ‘the Beach’, their reasons for doing so were often subtly different. These differences were more pronounced, moreover, in their respective attitudes towards kirikiti. For white colonists, kirikiti was an unmitigated menace to their livelihoods, even as cricket emerged as the game of choice for Anglophones at Apia. The game held a very different significance for those who skirted the boundary between ‘European’ and ‘native’, and between coloniser and colonised. In the fractured social context of the contact zone, ‘afakasi men and women used cricket and kirikiti to confirm their place in both the papalagi and Samoan ‘worlds’. Finally, British naval crews and New Zealander soldiers sought out sport in general, and cricket in particular, with an appetite that spoke to their boredom at sea and in the garrison. Kirikiti, replete with singing, dancing and a host of other unwonted features, was celebrated as an especially amusing diversion.

141 ‘Inaugurating the New Pitch at Apia Park’, *Samoa Times*, 7 July 1917, p. 4.
Such disparate and occasionally discordant reactions reflect the real and symbolic contests that took place through cricket and kirikiti during the period of study. Together with Chapters Four and Five, therefore, this chapter demonstrates Samoa’s status as a contact zone marked by indistinct boundaries and shifting interests; on the cricket pitch as elsewhere, contestation took place within the broad category of colonisers. It has only hinted, however, at how these tensions between different colonisers also had far-reaching consequences for Samoans. Despite using the Rapid’s match against a composite ‘scratch’ eleven as its starting point, the chapter has remained largely silent with regards to the Samoan men who took part in the match. In rectifying this deficit, the two chapters that follow will argue that in addition to its intrinsic importance for Samoans a site of cultural affirmation, the game also took on extrinsic value as a means of modulating their relationships with papalagi. Through cricket and especially kirikiti, Samoans were thus able to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the various ‘colonialisms’ that they faced.
‘Navigating colonialism(s)’ through cricket and kirikiti

Having first considered the Samoan appropriation of cricket and then papalagi responses to that act, the final two chapters of this thesis return once more to the theme of Samoan agency. More specifically, they consider the game’s instrumental significance for Samoans in the context of foreign colonialism. This approach does not imply that the game’s instrumental qualities were all encompassing, of course. Playing cricket and kirikiti was never simply about politics; frequently it had no political intent at all. Nevertheless, a broadly ‘political’ reading of kirikiti has great merit in explaining how Samoans responded to the social and political realities created by colonialism. As was the case in other contact zones created by imperial expansion, papalagi presence in Samoa presented Samoans with both challenges and opportunities. The two chapters that follow are hence concerned with examining how they used the game – in both its English and Samoan incarnations – to ‘navigate’ these challenges and opportunities throughout the period of study.

This is no simple task, however. Just as the cricket pitch was frequently a site of contestation within the broad category of colonisers, so it also reflected similar divisions between Samoans themselves. In Samoa as elsewhere, colonised peoples responded to colonisers and colonialism(s) in a variety of often ambivalent ways. When New Zealand forces arrived at Apia in August 1914, for example, the influential chief Faumuina wept on the shoulders of the German Governor, even as his wife busied herself preparing a bouquet of flowers to welcome the arriving New Zealand commander.1 It is clear, therefore, that colonialism did not provoke any single or consistent response from Samoan men and women. Instead, as Pratt has suggested, they ‘grappled’ with the presence of colonisers, seeking to navigate the competing pressures of papalagi colonialism(s) to best serve their own interests. In this ‘navigating’ process, Samoans – particularly chiefs – sometimes accommodated papalagi interests, and sometimes resisted and even protested against them. Each of these respective strategies were informed by a more general desire to promote

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and protect their own personal interests – and, just as importantly, those of their ‘aiga (extended family) and local communities – in the face of different forms of colonial power.²

In adopting this view of Samoan agency, the thesis follows the approaches taken by Peter Hempenstall in his research into Islander responses to German colonialism, and by Brij Lal in his work on plantation labour in Fiji. Hempenstall’s view of Islander agency is particularly apposite to this thesis, even if its characterisation of kirikiti as an instrument for political action sits uneasily with his assessment of Pacific politics as being the “history of elites, not mass movements”.³ For Hempenstall, there was nothing automatic or inevitable about how Islanders responded to German colonial rule. Instead, their actions spanned varying degrees of accommodation and opposition, and were framed by a wide range of considerations including the level of colonial organisation they faced.⁴ In his account, therefore, Islanders’ responses to papalagi colonialism were fluid and opportunistic; “‘collaborators’ and ‘resisters’ were often the same men in the Pacific”.⁵ Even if the colonial relationship was never equal, the presence of gifted indigenous leaders meant that societies in Oceania were able to exercise some control over how they adjusted to colonial rule. In Lal’s work, meanwhile, accommodation and resistance are a continuum of a single activity – interest-maximisation – and each is informed by specific historical circumstances. In the case of Fijian plantations, active protest was rare precisely because the authoritarian plantation system did not allow it.⁶ By this logic, the strategies of colonised peoples – and indeed any subordinate group – are invariably mediated and constrained by the efficacy of the superordinate power.

Together, these insights provide a framework for understanding how Samoans used kirikiti and cricket to respond to papalagi presence. When colonisers’ power was fragmented, Samoans were more likely to engage in acts of resistance – including playing unsanctioned kirikiti matches that frustrated attempts to control Samoan production. In addition, overt intrusion into customary life – even when backed up by coercive power – was liable to result in open protest. Here too, Samoans used kirikiti as a highly visible means of protesting colonial intrusion. Accommodation, ² For further discussion of Samoan motivations in accommodating or resisting colonialism, see Peter J. Hempenstall, *Pacific Islanders under German Rule: a study in the meaning of colonial resistance* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1978), especially pp. 218-222. Hempenstall contends that Samoan leaders were engaged in ‘the politics of survival’: the need to come to terms with vastly more powerful forces which held the ultimate say over the future of their societies. He acknowledges their motivations in this context were “not altogether fathomable”, but argues that while some were concerned with reshaping their societies and bettering their communities, “most were primarily self-interested”.
³ Ibid., p. 218. For Hempenstall’s more general discussion of the ‘conservative and creative’ leadership by local elites, see especially pp. 213-222.
⁴ Ibid., especially pp. 201-212.
⁵ Ibid., p. 219.
conversely, was more likely when colonisers could exercise coercive power more effectively. Under such circumstances, Samoans used both forms of the game – but particularly ‘English’ cricket – to create a shared social space with colonisers and so establish and maintain beneficial relationships with them. In this sense they used the game to nurture the social space – the *va* – between themselves and colonisers, in much the same way as customary sports and games did in the broader framework of fa’a Samoa. Accommodation was not subservience, however, and Samoans often leveraged the goodwill they had established to their own advantage. When Samoans navigated papalagi interests by ‘playing’ one faction against another, moreover, the lines between accommodation and resistance frequently blurred.

Samoans frequently utilised both ‘conventional’ English cricket and especially kirikiti to pursue these diffuse strategies. Chapter Seven considers these processes in three discrete ‘colonial’ milieux: in the two decades between cricket’s introduction and partition of the islands; in German Samoa between 1900 and 1914; and under American naval rule at Tutuila from 1900 until the beginning of the Second World War. Chapter Eight adopts a similar approach, but focuses on New Zealand’s military and later civilian administration. Together, these chapters confirm that Samoans used both ‘English’ cricket and kirikiti to modulate their relationships with colonisers and navigate papalagi colonialism(s). In so doing, the thesis contends that Samoans understood the game not only as a site for reaffirming fa’a Samoa, but also as an invaluable and versatile instrument in navigating the flux and uncertainty of the contact zone to their best advantage.
“Cricket assumed a political importance”: cricket, kirikiti and Samoan agency in three colonial milieux

Some difficulty was experienced in procuring a ground for the game, but at last the malae at Mulinau [sic], which had been kindly offered by His Majesty King Malietoa, was fixed on. Here then on Thursday afternoon the competing elevens met to try conclusions with ‘the willow.’ A very enjoyable game resulted, in which the local team showed considerable prowess, and brought to light cricketing talent which only requires development to make it formidable.1

On 30 May 1881, H.M.S. Miranda docked at Apia as part of her maiden voyage to ‘maintain British interests’ in Oceania. This brief visit passed largely without incident for the ship’s crew. They made no effort to intercede in local politics, despite ongoing skirmishes between different Samoan factions down the coast, and departed for Tonga a week later. If they were reticent to involve themselves in Samoan affairs, they were far more enthusiastic about the prospect of a cricket match. A call duly went out to Apia’s British denizens, and this so stimulated the would-be sportsmen among them that the Apia Cricket Club was formally established in between the ship’s Monday arrival and the proposed match three days later. One problem remained, however. Previous matches against visiting men-‘o-war had taken place at Vailele, but this setting was not considered prudent – probably because of fighting nearby. Just as it seemed the Club’s debut would be decidedly anticlimactic, Malietoa Laupepa, who the three foreign consuls had jointly crowned ‘King’ of Samoa three months earlier, stepped into the breach. Laupepa offered the use of the open space in front of the malae at Mulinu’u, the seat of his Samoan government. With the ground set, the local magistrate Thomas Kelsall led the Apia side to a surprise victory over the crew. According to the Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, Malietoa’s generosity was warmly appreciated by the “large number of residents [who] visited the ‘convincing ground’ and seemed much interested in the progress of the game”.2 In short, the match was an unmitigated success for the locals, and indeed it went some way to establishing the Imperial Game in Samoa.

Laupepa’s offer was more than a simple act of generosity, of course. As Richard Gilson has pointed out, despite holding the paramount Malietoa title he was held in far higher esteem by papalagi than amongst Samoans. Papalagi colonists and officials – particularly British and

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1 ‘Sporting – Cricket Match’, Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette, 4 June 1881, p. 2.
2 Ibid.
Americans – saw Laupepa as an ideal candidate: he had received formal education from papalagi missionaries, had shown “uncommon appreciation of… [European] views and interests” and even had cultivated a reputation as ‘a man of peace’. His decidedly unimpressive record on the battlefield, however, meant that he was less widely admired in the villages and districts. He had only recently secured his claim to the Malietoa title following the death of his more belligerent uncle Talavou and an unsuccessful challenge from the similarly bellicose Mata’afa. As we will see in this chapter, moreover, his claim to the ‘kingship’ of Samoa was even more tenuous given his difficult relationship with German officials. The *Miranda*’s arrival – the first British naval vessel in Apia for many months amidst a series of visits by German men-of-war – thus presented a valuable diplomatic opportunity. In this context, Laupepa’s willingness to grant the use of the Mulinu’u malae to British naval officers, officials and colonists can be seen as a decidedly political act.

As this episode clearly demonstrates, Samoans used cricket to mediate their relationships with papalagi even before they played the game themselves. This instrumental use of cricket became more widespread once they took to playing it; Samoan men and women soon recognised that sport in general – and cricket in particular – allowed them to create a shared social space within which they could cultivate beneficial relationships with British colonisers, be they officials, prominent colonists or visiting soldiers. This was not the only way that the game could be used to modulate relationships with colonisers, however. Because most colonisers were so vexed by kirikiti, Samoans understood that they could accommodate papalagi interests by actively trying to limit it. Conversely, by partaking in kirikiti matches in contravention of the law – and colonisers’ interests – Samoans showed the limits of colonial power. This kind of ‘everyday resistance’ was especially prevalent when there was no strong, centralised government with the coercive apparatus to successfully police Samoan bodies and movement. These apparently divergent uses of kirikiti nevertheless shared an underlying logic: for Samoans, they reflected a concerted attempt to promote their interests in the face of different forms of colonial power.

This chapter surveys three distinctive colonial milieux to explore some of the ways that Samoans used cricket and kirikiti to ‘navigate’ foreign colonialism(s). First, it considers the period before the partition of the islands in 1900. With the three powers jostling for position and no government to embody and enforce ‘colonial power’, Samoans used cricket and kirikiti both as a means of resisting colonisers’ attempts to interfere in village life and as a way to ‘perform’ loyalty to British or German interests. The chapter then considers how Samoans adapted this method in

4 ‘Arrival of H.B.M.S. Miranda’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette*, 4 June 1881, p. 2.
German Samoa, where increasingly centralised political control – while imperfect – meant that resistance was less common and accommodation more so. The chapter concludes by shifting attention to this process under American naval rule. As in the German-controlled islands, Samoans faced a relatively coherent colonial authority and a more effective coercive apparatus. As such, resistance largely gave way to accommodation; Samoan leaders and officials took part in limiting kirikiti and used the game to entertain American officials and visiting marines. Taken together, therefore, these diverse responses show that cricket and kirikiti were valuable and versatile tools for Samoans as they negotiated the distinctive challenges and opportunities presented by different papalagi colonialism(s).

**Cricket, kirikiti and ‘navigating’ colonialism before partition**

Almost from cricket’s inception in the islands, Samoans used the game to navigate papalagi presence. As has been observed in previous chapters, cricket was introduced to Samoa at a tumultuous historical moment. British, American and German colonisers were unwilling to relinquish their commercial and strategic interests and instead supported various Samoan factions to shape local politics to their best advantage. Whatever ‘colonial power’ existed was therefore fractured, diffuse and contested. These circumstances shaped Samoans’ responses to colonial influence in two principal ways. Firstly, along with other non-cooperative behaviours, kirikiti constituted a form of resistance against the colonisers – and the Samoan officials and leaders they supported – who sought to interfere in village life. Secondly, Samoans used the cricket pitch as a site for building and maintaining relationships with (mostly British) colonisers. This was only one face of a broader strategy, however. More generally, they exploited the competition between different colonisers to their own advantage. Participation in – and suppression of – cricket and particularly kirikiti were frequently employed in this way to ‘perform’ loyalty to British or German interests.

Colonial authority in Samoa during the 1880s and 1890s was fractured, incomplete and contested. As well as divisions between different groups of colonisers, foreigners’ capacity to control Samoans was further limited by the simple fact that there was no strong, centralised government that commanded the recognition of all Samoans, ‘colonial’ or otherwise. In the 20 years before the partition of the islands in 1900, therefore, representatives and colonists from Britain, the United States and Germany repeatedly sought to shape the Samoan politics to define and secure their interests in the region. Their mutual desire, as Jocelyn Linnekin observes, was for “a lasting, centralised native government under a Samoan ‘king,’ a government capable of
maintaining order and negotiating treaties”. This government would, of course, recognise and defend colonisers’ economic and political interests – and particularly those of their compatriots. Despite their best efforts to encourage and enforce such a scenario, however, the discordant and often violent Samoan political situation remained stubbornly unresolved.

The resultant ‘gaps’ in power meant that Samoans could frequently frustrate colonists and foreign enterprises – as well as official power more generally – without fear of overwhelming coercion. Instances of what James Scott terms ‘everyday resistance’ – “foot dragging, dissimulation, false-compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth” – were thus commonplace. A notable example of this, according to Linnekin, was that Samoans were able to delay repaying debts to papalagi traders for as long as possible. With no means of enforcing debt contracts, traders and firms resorted to a stream of agitated letters to the ‘king’ demanding he send his forces into the districts. In general, however, these entreaties were ineffective. As such, Linnekin argues, while traders may have envisaged debts as a means of enmeshing Samoans in an exploitative commercial relationship, “for the Samoans, credit was a way to get money and Western goods in exchange for a promise”. Tax avoidance was another corollary of this highly imperfect hegemony. Even after the 1889 Berlin conference, in which the three foreign powers reaffirmed their support for the nominally independent Samoan government, its taxation powers remained largely aspirational. By early-1894 the Samoa Weekly Herald lamented that the Treasury was empty and “not at all likely to be replenished by native taxes during the present year” due to political unrest. Non-payment of taxes was, of course, a manifestation of the broader lack of unitary authority in Samoa.

Participation in large-scale kirikiti matches constituted a similarly unsystematic and opportunistic form of ‘everyday resistance’ for most of the 1880s and 1890s. The game’s excesses could be controlled in and around Apia, where colonisers’ influence was more keenly felt. To this end the Municipal Council passed a law against cricket being played close to public roads in 1884, while the following year the German consul forbade kirikiti matches or other forms of public assembly at the seat of government at Mulinu’u. In the outlying districts, however, the game

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8 Untitled article, Samoa Weekly Herald, 3 February 1894, p. 2.
continued largely unfettered. Indeed, a newspaper report in March 1887 claimed rather fancifully that Samoans “spent three fourths of their time” playing the game.10

A notable exception to this pattern of ‘everyday resistance’ came under the short-lived Tamasese-Brandeis government, which exercised effective control over much of Samoa from September 1887 to August 1888. As Linnekin observes, this regime represented the first time that a single foreign power – Germany – was willing and able to use overwhelming coercive force to compel Samoan obedience to a unitary government.11 Under the arrangement, Laupepa’s rival Tupua Tamasese Titimaea led a German-backed administration in which Eugen Brandeis, a former German officer then under the employ of the D.H.P.G, acted as Premier. Brandeis quickly set about establishing a coercive apparatus to uphold German commercial claims against Samoans: a militia was mobilised to collect taxes and disallow repaying debts except to the D.H.P.G., opponents were deported and recalcitrant villages faced the prospect of bombardment by German warships.12 Although the deeply unpopular regime was effectively ousted in September 1888 after precipitating popular rebellion, it was for a time largely successful in achieving its aims. Linnekin points out that Samoans did acquiesce to colonial interests when faced with the threat of coercion – taxes and debts were paid, and production increased. When the regime fell, however, this effective coercive apparatus was no longer operational and Samoans happily returned to resisting colonial interests and power.13

Unsurprisingly, a similar fate temporarily befell kirikiti, whose disruptive economic and political effects rendered it similarly adverse to German interests. In January 1888, Tamasese passed the first law – undersigned by Brandeis – expressly prohibiting the game. Unlike later attempts to restrict kirikiti, these laws appear to have had been at least partly successful. This success did not survive the collapse of the regime and subsequent fighting between different Samoan factions, however. Writing in 1889, an officer on the American warship U.S.S. Nipsic reported that although kirikiti’s “evil” effects had diminished under the authority of the previous government, they had been “revived considerably during the unsettled state of affairs during the present war”. Indeed, Tamasese’s opponents took great delight in playing the game in spite of the nominal law; the same correspondent reported seeing a game in progress “nearly every time I pass through Malietoa’s lines”.14 Such open contravention of the law signified that resistance of colonial

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10 ‘News from Samoa’, Auckland Evening Star, 2 March 1887, p. 5.
12 Gilson, Samoa 1830 to 1900, pp. 385-88; Linnekin, ‘The Teacher and His Copra’, pp. 543-544.
13 Ibid., p. 545.
14 S.T. Browne, ‘Samoan Sketches’, Abbeville Press and Banner, 8 May 1889, p. 5. Browne was a pay clerk on the Nipsic who wrote regular letters to American newspapers from his postings in Samoa and Sydney. He regarded kirikiti
interests had once more taken the place of accommodation. With the collapse of a coherent, coercive face of colonial power, therefore, Samoans’ strategic calculus changed and unsanctioned kirikiti matches resumed once more.

These patterns of ‘everyday resistance’ continued throughout the period of tricondominium rule that followed the 1889 Berlin conference. Despite a rash of anti-kirikiti laws passed in the 1890s at the behest of papalagi officials and colonists, the Samoan government proved about as effective in controlling the game as it was at collecting taxes and enforcing debts. Indeed, attempts at enforcing the law were often rebuffed with disdain, reflecting the tenuous nature of official ‘control’ and colonial authority in Samoa. In June 1890, for instance, Malietoa asked for the assistance of the three consuls in enforcing the rule of law – and particularly an anti-kirikiti ordinance. He complained that a local Judge, Tofae, had returned a printed copy of the law with a message that he would not accept or uphold it, and neither would it be followed in his district. In November, moreover, the *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser* reported that “some rather high-handed action” on the part of the government-appointed Chief Native Magistrate had upset the inhabitants of a dozen or so villages on Tutuila. To protest his conduct, the aggrieved parties resolved to start a kirikiti match in violation of a recent law so as to undermine the Magistrate’s authority. Intercession by the American Consul had little effect, and the standoff only ended when the Magistrate was stripped of one of his matai titles; the kirikiti players returned to their villages unpunished.

Indeed, official authority was even less secure than in these examples. In early 1892, the missionary Joseph Hatten Carpenter expressed his exasperation in the midst of a series of kirikiti matches that lasted almost two months:

> Cricket had been forbidden by a law of Kingdom, but here we see judges & Korana even Suisala all playing & taking part. What is the use of such a *malo* [government] to make laws to be overridden?

Officials were thus not only powerless to stop kirikiti matches, but were even liable to partake in them. Under such circumstances ‘colonial hegemony’ was circumscribed almost to the point of absurdity. By 1896 a visiting New Zealander commented that kirikiti remained “a perfect craze” with Samoans. The game, he declared, “should be put down by law” – seemingly oblivious to the

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16 ‘Tutuila’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*, 1 November 1890, p. 3.

fact that one was already in place. Without a Brandeis-like coercive apparatus to uphold foreign interests, Samoan resistance thus continued to frustrate papalagi missionaries, colonists and officials until the partition of the islands in 1900. Together with other ‘uncooperative’ behaviours such as tax avoidance, these patterns of resistance and accommodation on the kirikiti pitch are hence indicative of the variations in – and limitations of – ‘colonial power’ before 1900.

If fragmented and contested colonial power encouraged Samoan resistance, it also provided opportunities for Samoans to mediate their relationships in more systematic and purposive ways. The fraught relationship between the three powers in Samoa in the 1880s and 1890s rendered ‘political’ many apparently innocuous activities. Papalagi recreational activities were one such field, and Samoans soon recognised that a range of sports provided them with opportunities to navigate the challenges and opportunities afforded by papalagi presence. Sport had utility both as a means of creating a ‘shared space’ with colonisers, and as a means of demonstrating alignment with one papalagi faction or another. While several sports and games served this purpose, supporting – and indeed opposing – cricket and particularly kirikiti was a symbolic means of ‘performing’ loyalty to British or German elements. In so doing, Samoans furthered their own political interests.

As in other contact zones created by imperial expansion, papalagi sport and games allowed Samoans to temporarily suspend and even transcend the normal sectional divisions of the ‘colonial’ social order. Tennis, for instance, was almost wholly limited to Apia’s British and American contingent during the 1880s and 1890s. For those Samoans who did participate in the game, however, it was a clear symbol they belonged in papalagi circles. According to one account, tennis was “the game of the half-castes and Samoans who are married to white men; it goes with hats and shoes and stockings as an index of rank”. The Apia Sports Club, moreover, which from 1892 organised horse racing in the islands, determined in mid-1893 to allow Samoans to participate in (some) of its activities – but only upon the payment of a subscription. Under these circumstances few Samoans were willing and able to join as either participants or spectators.

They were far more enthusiastic about polo, which the British Consul T.B. Cusack-Smith introduced and popularised after his arrival in 1890. In a letter published in a London sporting magazine in August 1893, Cusack-Smith reported that the British Consulate Polo Club’s 20

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18 A Trip to the South Seas’, Supplement to the New Zealand Herald, 8 February 1896.
20 ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 3 June 1893, p. 2.
21 Cusack-Smith even had the Hurlingham rules translated into Samoan. Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith, Diary – 20 January 1893, MSX-2761: Diary (1893), Cusack-Smith, Thomas Berry (Sir), 1859-1929: Papers, MS-Group-0066, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), Wellington; ‘Polo in Samoa’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 12 August 1893, p. 3.
members – of whom he was the only papalagi – “have been playing polo steadily three days a week since halfway through January”. In 1896, moreover, he led “what might be called a missionary expedition” to extend polo’s reach to Magia, several miles down the coast from Apia. The mission was a notable success, and several hundred Samoans gathered to watch the game. They seemed delighted, the *Samoa Weekly Herald* observed, “that the[ir] countrymen had all the best of the play” against a team of British players. When Cusack-Smith left Samoa in 1898, some 45 Samoan and ‘afakasi members of the Club came to bid him farewell after a final match.

While polo was an invaluable instrument for cultivating beneficial relationships with Cusack-Smith, cricket was undoubtedly the most profitable means for Samoans to nurture social space with colonisers. In May 1893, for instance, a team from Apia – led, of course, by the cricketing enthusiast F.W. Christian – journeyed some 15 miles down the coast to the Leulumoega district to play a series of matches against Samoan sides. In the first encounter, they defeated “a local twenty-two”; subsequent matches featured the regulation eleven-a-side. These were hardly isolated occurrences. According to one former Apia resident, the Native Police and Samoan teams drawn from the surrounding districts often played with and against papalagi during the 1890s. Writing years later, he recalled that the visit of a British man-o’-war in the 1890s saw three Samoan men selected in the local XI alongside several local European residents and a Tongan cook. This was not the end of Samoan involvement, however. Two local matai served as umpires, while “Arrangements were made with the local chiefs ‘Atafu & Soa’a for the providing of an umu or mixed earth oven bake of pig & chicken, of mealy yam & of succulent taro [an edible vegetable]”. As had been foreshadowed by Malietoa lending the Mulinu’u malaee in 1881, playing cricket was only one of the ways that Samoans used the game to nurture relationships with colonisers. Matches involving colonisers provided a forum for Samoans to demonstrate symbolic competence in papalagi culture and to cultivate relationships with officials, colonists, and naval officers.

Such multifaceted participation signified much more than ludic enthusiasm, of course. Because of the competing interests of the three foreign powers in the nineteenth century, these endeavours often went beyond creating a ‘shared space’ with particular groups of colonisers; they also allowed Samoans to publicly confirm their alignment with one or another group of coloniser interests. This was notably the case with the Polo Club, which as the British Consul’s pet project held a special political significance. Indeed, the club’s Samoan members gained very real benefits

22 ‘Polo in Samoa’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*, 12 August 1893, p. 3.
23 ‘Polo’, *Samoa Weekly Herald*, 12 December 1896, p. 3.
24 ‘Polo Match’, *Samoa Weekly Herald*, 19 March 1898, p. 3.
25 ‘Local and General News’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*, 3 June 1893, p. 2.
from their association with Cusack-Smith. In 1893, for instance, every one of the twenty members of ‘his’ club was deported after a high-ranking chief accused them of treason. Cusack-Smith quickly interceded on their behalf to ensure he could continue his polo habit: “I set to work and used my influence to get my polo players returned to their houses”. Polo matches also served as a site for publicly confirming ties between the British consulate and its preferred candidate for the throne, Malietoa Laupepa. In 1897, a special program was arranged to honour Laupepa’s presence. The club’s members even gave him an escort back to his residence after the matches had been completed. As a result, the Samoa Weekly Herald reported that Malietoa “was greatly delighted, both with the game and the manner in which he was received and entertained”.28

Because of the game’s indelible associations with ‘Englishness’, cricket – played in either its ‘English’ or ‘Samoan’ forms – was an invaluable instrument in performing symbolic cooperation. English cricket matches in the 1880s and 1890s allowed Samoans, particularly chiefs, to demonstrate their affinity for British interests over German ones. Recalling one such match played against a visiting naval crew in the 1890s, for example, a former resident of Apia described the Samoan players as “braves and patriots, marvellous catchers & smitters, vehemently pro-British, ludicrously anti-German”. In the 1890s, moreover, the British official Arthur Mahaffy participated in a Samoan match of 150-a-side while awaiting the arrival of consular representatives at Lufilufi. The consular parties were delayed and the conference eventually abandoned, but not before Mahaffy and his Samoan hosts completed the game and “parted the best of friends”. While Samoans unquestionably played such matches for pleasure, it would be a mistake to disregard the persistent appearance of consuls and other prominent colonisers in these accounts. Cricket was an inherently political act.

This Samoan use of kirikiti to mediate relationships with colonisers permeated the highest levels of local politics. The decade-long struggle for supremacy between Malietoa Laupepa, Tupua Tamasese Tima and their respective supporters demonstrates the game’s instrumental value for Samoans as they navigated competing papalagi interests. After the death of Malietoa Talavou in 1880, Laupepa succeeded him as the sole holder of the Malietoa title and claimed the position of

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27 ‘Polo in Samoa’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 12 August 1893, p. 3.
29 Anon., ‘A Samoan cricket match’, ATL.
31 This example draws heavily on Richard Gilson’s monograph in reconstructing contemporaneous Samoan politics. Gilson, Samoa: 1830 to 1900, pp. 373-395. See also Malama Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the History of Western Samoa (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1987), pp. 38-40.
'king' of Samoa. Other factions disputed his claim, however, and in early 1881 his government went to war against a rebel regime headed by Tupua Tamasese Titimaea and supported by Germany. A truce was organised by consular intervention in July 1881, resulting in a compromise coalition government in which Malietoa was king and Tamasese his nominal deputy. The settlement also stipulated that Tamasese would alternate with Malietoa as king septennially. Unsurprisingly, this arrangement did little to allay competition between the two camps.

Malietoa’s crown was a thorny one. His government exercised no real authority: a papalagi Municipal Council had jurisdiction over Apia, while in the districts the government’s legislative powers were virtually a formality. Instead, local matai exercised real political power in the districts, making their own laws and appropriating monies from taxes and fines. He also found himself the focus of intense pressure from a diverse range of intractable local and papalagi interests. His position thoroughly compromised, Malietoa repeatedly attempted to extricate himself by securing the protection of one of the foreign powers. These appeals were usually addressed to the British, occasionally to the Americans, but never to Germany. Gilson notes that Malietoa’s distaste for German assistance reflected a perspective “very widely shared” in contemporaneous Samoa. This attitude was a consequence of the expansion of German commercial enterprises onto Samoan lands and their concomitant demands for concessions and reparations. In this political climate, kirikiti’s English heritage instilled it with a ‘pro-British’ – and hence anti-German – message. In his memoir, the acting British consul William Churchward, recalled that

> It was the invariable practice of the Apia men on turning out for a match to halt in front of my Consulate, and drawn up in line receive word of command, ‘Salute the British Consul!’ whereupon the whole line would perform a studied exercise with their bats and arms, equivalent in signification, I suppose, to the ‘present’ whilst the band, with the colours in front of them, performed a duet for my benefit. They would then form up again in single file, and move off to their game. The ritual was repeated at the residence of the Municipal Magistrate, himself a ‘Britisher’ and a keen cricketer, but never to the German authorities.

Kirikiti once again took on what Churchward called “a political importance” in 1885. In November 1884, the German consul Stuebel forced Laupepa to sign a treaty giving Germany overriding influence in the Samoan affairs. Seeking to extricate himself from the political stalemate and avoid German annexation, Malietoa sent a series of petitions to the British government seeking its protection. This action was accompanied in April 1885 by what Churchward describes as “a cricket match of such stupendous proportions that it would last until they got an answer”. With the

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32 Gilson, Samoa: 1830 to 1900, p. 376.
33 William B. Churchward, My Consulate in Samoa: A Record of Four Years’ Sojourn in the Navigators Islands, with Personal Experiences of King Malietoa Laupepa, his Country, and his Men (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1887), p. 145.
entire government involved, they surmised that they “had a valid excuse for not taking notice of any business that might unpleasantly crop up”. The German consul found this reasoning less than convincing, however, and he issued an order forbidding the game at the seat of Government. When Malietoa ignored Stuebel’s warnings, he used the episode as a pretext to drive his supporters from Mulinu’u and raise the German flag.

As was noted earlier in this chapter, Tamasese followed a different path. After German officials eventually evicted the Malietoa government from Mulinu’u in 1886, German support coalesced around Tamasese. He and his supporters had two principal aims: they wished to form their own ‘national’ government, and also to check the aspirations of Mata’afa Iosefo, who had ties to both the Malietoa and Tupua paramount titles. In exchange for German recognition of his claims and military assistance, Tamasese appointed the ex-German officer Eugen Brandeis to act as Premier in his government. In August 1887 Tamasese’s forces attacked the Malietoa alliance with German naval support, established a de facto government and sent Malietoa Laupepa into exile. As we have seen, the resulting regime pursued a nakedly pro-German agenda that coerced Samoans into producing copra for the D.H.P.G.’s benefit and forced them to run up and repay debts with the company. Given kirikiti’s political overtones and its habit of discouraging copra production, it was no surprise that the new government quickly issued a proclamation forbidding the game and specifying heavy fines for individuals and villages caught playing it.

By 1889 the local political landscape had shifted again. The unpopular Tamasese-Brandeis government fell and, in an attempt to find a solution to the ongoing instability and protect European property, the three powers returned Malietoa Laupepa to the kingship. His position was heavily dependent on papalagi support, however, as most Samoans did not recognise his claim. In June 1890, only months after Malietoa had resumed the throne, local newspapers commenced an anti-kirikiti campaign demanding that the Government “put a stop to it altogether” because of its deleterious economic effects. Within a few weeks Malietoa issued a host of proclamations favourable to the papalagi community, including regulating the use of arms and demanding villages be weeded and roads maintained. “The best regulation of all”, enthused the Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, “has been the total abolition of the game of cricket. A very severe penalty has been

34 Ibid., p. 147. This apparently fanciful series of events was corroborated by John T. Arundel, a British subject with phosphate and copra interests in the region, in the course of a lecture he gave at the Honolulu Y.M.C.A. ‘The Islands of the Pacific’, Pacific Commercial Advertiser, 22 January 1887.
36 Gilson, Samoan 1830 to 1900, p. 383; Hempenstall, ‘Germany’s Pacific Pearl’, p. 34.
37 ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 7 June 1890, p. 2.
fixed for a breach of this regulation, viz., a fine of $45 or three months’ imprisonment”. 38 The prohibition had little effect, however, and so was repeated in January 1892 citing these same arguments. A further twist emerged in 1903, when the recently installed German administration investigated the circumstances surrounding a disputed trust account. German officials ascertained that the money had originally been raised during Malietoa’s reign for the purpose of building a church. 39 Apparently the organisers had charged an entry fee for participating in kirikiti matches, and Laupepa had himself been one of the principal players.

This series of events demonstrates how Samoan leaders were able to use kirikiti to signal their loyalties as part of a broader strategy of cooperation with particular foreign powers. This pattern may have started with Malietoa offering the Mulinu’u malae in 1881, but it continued throughout the nineteenth century. Faced by the prospect of German annexation in the mid-1880s, the Malietoa-led government used kirikiti matches to demonstrate affinity for English culture and forestall German intrusion. Given Malietoa’s willingness to issue two anti-kirikiti prohibitions after 1890, these actions should be read as instrumental rather than obsequious. The agreement signed by the three powers at the Berlin Conference relieved fears of imminent German annexation and established Malietoa as its preferred candidate. Given his vulnerable position and this new political reality, he did not hesitate to mollify papalagi concerns by repeatedly prohibiting kirikiti – even if he was not averse to playing the game himself. On both occasions, Malietoa’s actions can be understood as an attempt to appeal to particular groups of colonisers so as to secure favourable political outcomes. Tamasese’s 1888 prohibition against kirikiti, meanwhile, reflects his willingness to defer to German legislative demands in exchange for their support. Together, these distinctive approaches to kirikiti demonstrate the extent to which the game was incorporated into the complex political fabric of late-nineteenth century Samoa. More broadly, they underscore ways in which Samoan leaders used kirikiti to navigate papalagi interests and pursue their own political goals in a time of great uncertainty.

**Cricket, kirikiti and ‘navigating’ colonialism under German rule**

When Malietoa Laupepa died in August 1898, several candidates competed to succeed him as ‘King’ of Samoa. 40 The dispute between these parties led in January 1899 to a resumption of the

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38 ‘Local and General News’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*, 28 June 1890, p. 2.
39 Schulz to Solf, 27 July 1905, XVII.A.I: Government and Administration of Justice (vol. 2), Pacific Manuscript Bureau (PMB) 479: Western Samoa: English Summaries of Papers Relating to the German Administration, 1900-1914, Australian National University (ANU) [microfilm].
40 One of these candidates was Laupepa’s son Malietoa Tanumafili, who at 18 was widely considered too young to command the title but had British and American backing. His principal opponent was Mata’a afa Iosefo, a much older
fighting between different configurations of foreign and Samoan parties. A truce was arranged in May, and a lasting resolution of sorts was arranged through the Tripartite Convention of 1899, which resulted in the formal partition of the islands in 1900. Those to the west, including the largest and most populous islands of Upolu and Savai‘i, came under German colonial administration. Partition meant that, for almost the first time, Samoans were faced with relatively coherent colonial authority and coercive apparatus. In German Samoa, therefore, ‘everyday resistance’ and overt opposition to colonial interests diminished – but did not disappear – relative to acts of accommodation. These broader changes also shaped the ways that Samoans used sport, including cricket and kirikiti, to define and maintain their relationships with colonisers. While Samoans continued to participate in papalagi sports as a means of tending to the social space with colonisers, kirikiti increasingly held an altogether different significance. By controlling and even suppressing ‘excessive’ playing, Samoan leaders and officials used the game as a site of symbolic accommodation with colonial officials.

As had been the case in the nineteenth century, Samoan responses to colonisers under German rule were a product of the kind of colonialism(s) they faced. Under the governorship of Wilhelm Solf and then Erich Schultz, colonial authority in German Samoa was more coherent and coercion was deployed more effectively than had been the case for most of the 1880s and 1890s. While scholars of Oceania have often portrayed the liberal and erudite Solf as sympathetic towards Samoan custom and autonomy, Malama Meleisea argues that – despite his clear appreciation and understanding of fa’a Samoa – his administration systematically undermined the traditional forces in Samoan politics. Solf’s aim was to neuter the power of the chiefs in the pre-partition central government, or Malo; political authority would instead be reserved for the Kaiser and his representative, the Governor.41 This view echoes that of Peter Hempenstall, who points out that Solf had been working since before partition to eliminate chiefly authority and place himself at the centre of a decentralised system of indigenous politics.42 More generally, Solf successfully levied a poll tax, enacted and enforced copra-planting regulations and increasingly intervened in customary control of land and titles in order to neuter what he saw as the most disruptive aspects of Samoan politics.

These efforts elicited several instances of protest during the first ten years of German rule. Unlike in the 1880s and 1890s, however, the German administration was able to defuse resistance

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by mobilising coercive power and persuading many Samoans to cooperate. This was, in part, because both Solf and Schultz were skilled administrators with a firm grasp of Samoan custom, adept at dividing Samoan opposition. When Samoan leaders established an unauthorised trading company in 1904 as an economic and political counterpoint against German authority, for instance, Solf and Schultz induced some of those involved to work against the scheme. After it collapsed, Solf used the episode as a pretext to dissolve the Malo in an apparent show of justice.\(^{43}\) Just as importantly, however, partition meant that the new German regime clearly possessed a monopoly on coercive power – at least among papalagi. Although such coercive force was rarely deployed, it proved a powerful disincentive to rebellion and dissent. The clearest example of this came in March 1909, when Solf put down a resistance movement – the *Mau a Pule* – led by the pre-eminent Samoan orator Lauaki Namulauluulu Mamoe.\(^{44}\) After diplomatic means stemmed the movement but failed to end it in, the Governor called in four battleships and a large contingent of marines. Faced with the prospect of bloody reprisals and a civil war, Lauaki and other leaders surrendered themselves to be deported to the far-off German Marianas Islands. While the penalties imposed on ‘errant districts’ were relatively restrained, Solf warned the Samoans to “bear in mind that there… [is] only one head in Samoa… His Majesty the Kaiser”.\(^{45}\) As a result, Meleisea contends, Samoans recognised that “the Germans’ resolution and capacity to enforce their policies was not to be ignored”.\(^{46}\)

Most Samoans, therefore, responded to the superordinate position of papalagi by accommodating this influence rather than challenging or subverting it. Samoan ‘co-operators’ – particularly on Upolu – took up salaried administrative positions at the local, regional and national levels of colonial administration.\(^{47}\) In so doing they limited the influence of customary political authority in order to gain status and the support of papalagi decision-makers, as well as to benefit materially. Indeed, Hempenstall observes that these men played an important role in resolving the Lauaki crisis:

\(^{43}\) Ibid., p. 15.
\(^{44}\) This brief summary of the *Mau a Pule* draws on the work of Peter Hempenstall and Malama Meleisea. See Hempenstall, ‘Resistance in the German Pacific empire’, pp. 19-20; Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, pp. 82-83; Peter Hempenstall and Paula Tanaka Mochida, *The Lost Man: Wilhelm Solf in German History* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), pp. 73-76.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 65.
Co-operating fully with the German government’s counter-strategy, or weighing carefully the options open to them in the conflict, they gave Solf an important lever over the Samoan community in general and enabled the islanders to avert civil war.  

In the context of a relatively strong German administration, Samoans hence appreciated that accommodation was generally the most effective means of ‘navigating’ papalagi colonialism to their best advantage.

Sport – both papalagi and Samoan varieties – remained a profitable instrument in these endeavours, even if the precise ways it was deployed differed subtly from the 1880s and 1890s. As had been the case before partition, Samoans used papalagi recreational activities to nurture a beneficial social space with colonisers. These attempts were shaped and constrained, however, by changes in colonisers’ sporting habits after 1900. German rule resulted in an influx of German colonists and – more decisively – a steep decline in the number of British and American men-of-war visiting Samoa. This, of course, adversely affected sport in and around Apia and thus restricted its utility for Samoans. English cricket, which had previously held political significance in light of Anglo-German rivalries, offered fewer opportunities for Samoans after 1900. Samoan involvement consequently declined – by 1914 only one or two Samoan men were regularly taking part in the game.

If the cricket pitch no longer held the same utility for mediating relationships with colonisers, Samoans did use other sporting pastimes in a similar fashion. The most notable example of this was the Apia Sports Club. The Club, which was re-established in 1903 after lying dormant since the 1890s, rapidly became the centre of sporting life in Apia: its committee arranged several horseracing meetings each year, while a series of chases, regattas, shooting competitions and boating evenings were also held under its auspices. While the Club enjoyed overwhelming support from Apia’s papalagi community, several factors meant that racing provided only limited scope for Samoans to transcend the sectional divisions of colonial society. Firstly, the Club’s rules only allowed Samoans to compete in one of the races held at each meet. In 1904, for instance, the Samoanische Zeitung reported that entry was free for the “Matafagele Sweepstakes for natives only”; four other races were reserved for Club members while a fifth, the Vaiala Pony Race, was open to horses “nominated and ridden by foreigners, members of the Club or otherwise”. By 1911

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48 Hempenstall, ‘Resistance in the German Pacific Empire’, p. 12. Civil war was possible because a substantial minority of Samoan chiefs aligned themselves with Solf in the dispute. See Hempenstall and Mochida, The Lost Man, pp. 74-75.
49 Notably both men, Toleafoa and Paniani, were chiefs and officials in the Native Government. See Untitled article, 13 June 1914, Samoanische Zeitung, 13 June 1914, p. 9.
51 Untitled article, Samoanische Zeitung, 6 February 1904, p. 8.
the Matafagele race had been rechristened the ‘Native Sweepstakes’ but it remained the only contest for which Samoan horses and riders were eligible.\footnote{Untitled article, \textit{Samoanische Zeitung}, 18 March 1911, p. 9.}

More importantly, several regulatory factors militated against Samoans using these events to tend to social space with papalagi. Although Samoans could gain admission to the racecourse for a discounted fee, they could not access the Grand Stand or even the general ‘European’ area. “Whoever shall be found in a higher place than that to which his entrance ticket entitles him”, the Club announced, “shall be prosecuted”.\footnote{Untitled article, \textit{Samoanische Zeitung}, 8 October 1910, p. 9.} Because Samoans could not legally purchase alcohol or place bets, moreover, their participation in the festivities was very much circumscribed. In its synopsis of the Club’s mid-year race meeting in 1912, the \textit{Zeitung} noted that the bar had been so popular that it “sold out of everything”. Special praise was also reserved for the management, who managed to run to schedule while ensuring there was no “cramping of the time allowed for speculation on the totalisator”. While the newspaper’s editor enthused that “A race meeting at Solf-Feld now takes the form of a Social function”, these restrictions meant it was one in which Samoan participation was strictly controlled.\footnote{Untitled article, \textit{Samoanische Zeitung}, 1 June 1912, p. 9.} Even with these impediments, Samoans found ways to tend to the social space with colonisers through sport. The paramount chief Tupua Tamasese Lealofi, who was himself angling for influence and official recognition in the German administration, lent his band to enliven proceedings at two of the Sports Club’s meetings in 1914.\footnote{‘The Kaiser’s Birthday Festivities’, \textit{Samoanische Zeitung}, 31 January 1914, p. 9; Untitled article, \textit{Samoanische Zeitung}, 18 April 1914, p. 9.} Overall, however, these factors meant that the Sports Club – and indeed papalagi sport in general – had limited value for Samoans seeking to build and maintain relationships with colonisers.

While papalagi sports declined as a site for Samoans to mediate their relationships with papalagi, kirikiti remained a useful means of navigating coloniser interests. The German administration in Samoa was consciously modelled on the ‘indirect rule’ practiced in parts of the British Empire at the turn of the century.\footnote{According to Meleisea, both German and later New Zealand administrations in Samoa were premised on this concept, whereby policies formulated by foreign officials would be implemented and enforced at the local level by Samoan officials. He argues that officials in both administrations looked to British rule in Fiji for a local exemplar. Hempenstall and Mochida observe, moreover, that Solf frequently looked to British colonial rule for guidance. In 1913, Solf – now Colonial Secretary – even visited Nigeria to study Frederick Lugard’s system of ‘indirect rule’ at first-hand. Meleisea, \textit{The Making of Modern Samoa}, p. xi; Hempenstall and Mochida, \textit{The Lost Man}, pp. 96-100.} Mata’aafa Isosefo was made paramount chief, with senior matai appointed to an advisory legislative body and a series of local officials commissioned to exercise authority at district and village levels. These officials were responsible for advising and executing laws aimed at curtailing traditional exchange, travelling parties and other practices that...
diverted Samoans away from ‘useful’ production and towards disorder and ‘trouble’. Addressing these concerns required the assistance of Samoans in formulating and enforcing laws, and thus provided opportunities for them to showcase cooperation with the colonial administration.

Kirikiti represented one such opening. Although kirikiti’s ‘pro-British’ message was rendered less subversive after 1900, German authorities remained perturbed by the game when it was played ‘to excess’. This dim view meant, of course, that Samoans could abet the administration by helping draft and enforce anti-kirikiti laws. The first such instance occurred in August 1902, when Mata’afa himself aided Dr. Schnee, the Deputy Governor and Chief Magistrate, in formulating a series of laws regulating morality and freedom of movement. Mata’afa’s suggestions were strikingly aligned with German concerns: ‘very substantial’ takings of fine mats and other property to weddings or on malaga should be prohibited because they could encourage indebtedness, while malaga itself was to be strictly limited due to its detrimental effects on ‘useful work’. In addition, Mata’afa proposed, kirikiti, tagati’a (a dart-throwing game) and tologa (spear throwing) should be restricted to twenty-a-side and two hours duration when played at functions where fa’a Samoa exchanges took place.57

Schnee could scarcely have asked for suggestions more attuned to his own thinking. For Steinmetz, Mata’afa’s overt support for the administration – as evidenced in drafting these regulations – attests to his “willingness to play along” with the German administration. He notes that while Mata’afa “frequently pressed for more Samoan autonomy” and was committed to maintaining or reinstating certain Samoan institutions and customs, his position was ultimately constrained by German sovereignty.58 Meleisea goes further, arguing that Mata’afa was “deferential and at times abjectly submissive” towards Solf as he was keenly aware that he owed his paramount position to German support.59 Whatever the truth of the matter, Mata’afa clearly chose to accommodate German interests in light of the particular circumstances he faced. His stance against kirikiti can thus be read as part of a broader effort to align with German concerns regarding itinerancy and ‘unproductive’ social activity.

It was not only at the highest levels of Samoan politics that kirikiti presented opportunities to modulate relationships with colonisers, of course. The game came to Governor Solf’s attention once again in 1904 after Richard Williams, the Resident Commissioner of Savai’i and the only white official on the island, relayed a series of complaints about Samoans ignoring Schnee’s ruling. In response, Solf drafted more stringent restrictions on kirikiti and presented them at a meeting of

57 Mat to Schnee, 13 August 1902 (Memo #40), 176: Malo in Mulinu’u, vol. 3, PMB 479.
58 Steinmetz, The Devil’s Handwriting, p. 319.
senior Samoan advisors – known as Faipules – at Mulinu‘u. The initial proposal was to limit matches to one day per week, but two of those present – Fonoimoana and the redoubtable Lauaki – suggested that two successive days would be more apt because the large number of players involved would require more than a single day. Another senior member of the fono, Toelupe, then argued that any such law would be inimical to German intentions as it would likely draw attention to the game and encourage Samoans to play it even more. He claimed that the current outbreak of matches was only temporary, and that interest in the game had in reality diminished since it was introduced. Solf accepted these arguments and agreed to defer any action. This (in)action appeared to have the desired effect, and a few months later an article appeared in the Samoanische Zeitung lauding Solf’s approach and attributing the apparent decline in unsanctioned play to his ‘influence’.

The counsel offered by senior advisers in 1904 – and its acceptance by Solf – again demonstrates that kirikiti provided opportunities for Samoan leaders to demonstrate their willingness to accommodate the German administration. For Toelupe, a renowned orator who had featured in Samoan government since the 1870s, his actions were only the latest in a recurring pattern of accommodating coloniser interests. Indeed, he later opposed the Mau a Pule and retained his position as a leading advisor to the German administration and subsequently the New Zealand one. Lauaki took a different approach. Directly or indirectly, he was involved in much of the resistance that Solf faced during his tenure; indeed one of his colleagues, Moefa’auo, warned Solf that Lauaki was “the root of all evil” in Samoa. For Lauaki, ‘accommodating’ Solf in this advisory role was strictly temporary – as soon as the Governor was overseas Lauaki helped promote a commercial scheme that challenged his authority. In spite of their differing endgames, both Toelupe and Lauaki understood that helping craft ‘Native policy’ was an invaluable method of gaining Solf’s trust and navigating German colonialism to their best advantage.

At the district and village level, meanwhile, local officials were charged with enforcing these directives from the administration. Again, this responsibility provided a setting in which Samoans could accommodate – or indeed resist – official intentions. The manner in which pulenu’sus (village ‘mayors’ in charge of basic policing) responded to anti-kirikiti laws reflects these

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61 ‘Sam. Zeitung, 6.5.05’, XVII.A.I.: Government and Administration of Justice, vol. 4, PMB 479.
62 Toelupe had already developed a positive reputation among colonisers in 1892, when the Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser predicted “a future for this gentleman that will be a credit to himself and his country”. In 1912 the Samoanische Zeitung reported he was in charge of implementing sanitary improvements in several villages, while his obituary in the New Zealand press in 1934 noted his loyal service and his ‘strenuous’ opposition to the Mau opposition movement. Untitled article, Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, 24 December 1892, p. 2; ‘Lokal-Nachrichten’, Samoanische Zeitung, 3 February 1912, p. 1; ‘High Chief’s Death’, New Zealand Herald, 13 August 1934, p. 9.
general patterns. In September 1909, for instance, a new round of regulations was announced after another advisor, Tuala Silivelio, informed Solf that cricket was once again interfering with work. In addition to penalties for the players themselves, however, the ordinance advised that the village and its pulenu’u would also face sanction for allowing the match to proceed.64 The reason for this provision is not difficult to discern – officials often turned a blind eye to unsanctioned kirikiti games. While in some instances such non-performance of duty may have reflected active opposition to colonial authority, in others it was very likely a consequence of pressure from their communities – and even of their own desire to play the game.65 Most of all, however, they did not enforce the law because – whatever their motivation for avoiding their duties – they could afford not to.

An example from the previous year demonstrated how the law was supposed to function. Fa’ifa’i, a pulenu’u on Upolu’s east coast, complained to Schultz that people in two neighbouring villages had three times ignored his warnings and played kirikiti in violation of the law. Schultz’s subsequent investigation resulted in 32 people being charged and fined, although they were subsequently let off with a warning.66 Many cases were not resolved in this manner, however. In 1912, Williams wrote from Savai’i to draw attention to another rash of unauthorised kirikiti fixtures. Not only were officials failing to report large matches between villages as Fa’ifa’i had done, however, they were actively taking part. As such, he recommended a blanket prohibition against inter-village matches.67

For pulenu’us and other local officials, policing kirikiti thus provided a setting for ‘performing’ cooperation with the German colonial administration – or indeed practising ‘everyday resistance’ against it. As well as their salaries, Samoan officials enjoyed other privileges: they received special buttons and badges, ceremonial cockades, German flags, pictures of the Kaiser and other signifiers of their position. According to Meleisea, moreover, the special booklets officials

65 Certainly community pressure was frequently significant in the decision-making calculus of appointed Samoan officials. Paul Shankman argues that appointed officials – particularly pulenu’us – were the subject of scorn and resentment from the traditional titleholders within the village. The pulenu’u was seen as an interloper with no basis for exercising power, and village councils quietly subverted his authority by appointing its own members to ‘assist’ him in his work – in effect marginalising him. See Paul Shankman, ‘Equatorial Acquiescence: Village Council and Pulenu’u in Western Samoa’, in William L. Rodman and Dorothy Ayers Counts (eds.), *Middlemen and Brokers in Oceania* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), pp. 220-221. For officials actively taking part in kirikiti games, see the next paragraph.
66 ‘Fa’ifa’i, PN to Schultz, 3 December 1908 (Memo #104), XVII.B.1: District Administration: Atua, vol. 5, PMB 479.
67 Williams to Schultz, ‘Re Cricket playing against the Tulafono’, 26 February 1912, Eingeborenenverhältnisse - A. Allgemeine Verwaltung – Allgemeine Verwaltung und Rechtspflege, p. 238, German Colonial Administration – Samoa (AGCA) 6051 Box 77, 1908-1912, National Archives of New Zealand (NANZ), Wellington.
received to mark their appointment “were proudly framed and displayed” in their homes.68 These were powerful inducements to accommodate German colonial authority, as were the penalties associated with failing to uphold the law.

Fa’ifa’i’s note to Schultz can hence be understood not merely as an effort to uphold the anti-kirikiti law, but to be seen upholding it. Even so, Williams’ letter four years later demonstrates that the strategic calculus facing local officials – especially in the more remote parts of Savai’i – was not always weighted towards accommodation. In this context, ‘turning a blind eye’ and even taking part in unauthorised kirikiti matches constituted ‘everyday resistance’ in the face of what remained, despite the best efforts of German officials, a highly imperfect system of colonial authority. More generally, despite cricket’s decline in Apia, the kirikiti pitch therefore remained a fruitful site for Samoans to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by German colonialism.

**Cricket, kirikiti and ‘navigating’ colonialism under American rule**

As was the case to the western islands, the onset of American rule at Tutuila and Manu’a brought with it distinctive challenges and opportunities for Samoans. While the intentions and activities of American officials were very different from their German and later New Zealand counterparts, Samoans certainly faced a form of colonial authority that was less fragmented and better able to deploy coercive power than had been the case before 1900. Inevitably, this meant accommodation and cooperation became more common; resistance was less pervasive, but by no means extinguished. As in German Samoa, changing modes of colonial authority also informed sport’s utility as a site for Samoans to mediate their relationships with colonisers. While some Samoans – notably members of the Fitafita Guard and Band, a special naval unit charged with enforcing court decisions and maintaining order – created a shared social space with officials and marines through papalagi sports, it was kirikiti that proved most productive in navigating foreign interests. In particular, vigorously policing the game was for many Samoan officials part of a broader strategy of accommodating the naval administration, and hence benefiting from it.

As had been the case in German Samoa, the relatively coherent – and unquestionably autocratic – nature of American rule shaped the ways that Samoans responded to it. Before 1900, patterns of papalagi settlement meant that colonisers’ influence at Tutuila and particularly Manu’a had been negligible. Indeed, early efforts to get the paramount chief of Manu’a to sign the Deed of Cession proved unsuccessful as he considered himself the leader of a sovereign state; the notion of

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an external authority that superseded his own was to him nonsensical. Soon, however, Samoans recognised that American rule could not easily be ignored. While most government functions remained in Samoan hands – local officials were charged with keeping the peace and enforcing the law – political and legal authority rested absolutely with the commandant (later governor).

This authority was, of course, accompanied by a willingness and capacity to employ coercive force. When expedient, American governors used various means to impose their wills, including arresting protestors, stripping matai and officials of their titles and positions and imposing fines. Two incidents that took place during the first two years of American naval rule are instructive in this regard. In what J.A.C. Gray describes as ‘the Case of the Skipjack’, Commandant Benjamin Franklin Tilley sided with a Samoan man, Fagiema, who had defied fa’a Samoa convention by keeping a skipjack fish for himself rather than sharing it with Letuli, the High Chief of the county. After punishing Fagiema by burning his house and crops and banishing him along with his family, Letuli was found guilty of conduct improper under American law. He was temporarily stripped of his title, confined to house arrest and made to pay restitution to Fagiema and his family. Much later, one of Tutuila’s paramount chiefs informed American officials that this had constituted a public attestation that American authority took precedence over that of the high chiefs. In 1902, moreover, a newly-levied copra tax stirred opposition in Tutuila. In response, the commandant Uriel Sebree arrested three matai to intimidate their followers and subsequently dismissed a Samoan judge who had petitioned the Navy in protest.

Samoans responded to this new reality in several different ways. As David Chappell and Dan Taulapapa McMullin have demonstrated, Samoans were in no way overwhelmed by American colonialism. Indeed, in Chappell’s account resistance and protest presented a persistent challenge to American intentions in the islands: at various points Samoans organised petitions, boycotted stores, stopped cutting copra and took part in unsanctioned malaga. Eventually, moreover, the ‘American Mau’ pushed Congress to ratify its annexation treaties in the late-1920s after a quarter-century of de facto naval rule. For the most part, however, Samoans accommodated American colonial authority while actively challenging its construction of race and citizenship. 

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70 Ibid., pp. 132-134.
presence in order to take advantage of the opportunities it afforded them: on a day-to-day basis copra was cut, roads were cleared and laws obeyed.

The clearest example of this accommodation was through service as local officials in the colonial administration. Tilley appointed three high chiefs as district governors on Manu’a and Tutuila, while other high-ranking matai received commissions as county chiefs and judges. As in German Samoa, moreover, the Americans installed pulenu’us to uphold naval authority at the village level. While these men did not always discharge their official duties fastidiously, they were keenly aware that they owed their positions to American favour; persistent non-performance of duty could lead to their salary being withheld or even their removal from office. Indeed, Chappell wryly points out, most Samoans testifying about the administration to a Congressional Committee in 1930 displayed an almost unctuous support for naval rule, “as though their jobs depended on it”.74

Perhaps the fruitful site of Samoan accommodation was the Fitafita Guard and Band. Trained and supervised by the US Navy, the ‘Fitas’ proved an unmitigated success in their policing and military roles; they obviated any need to station American marines at Tutuila until the Second World War. For young Samoan men, joining the Guard provided a unique chance to benefit from naval presence: membership conferred prestige, a substantial salary and various other opportunities. In his ‘Historical Sketch’ of the naval administration, for instance, the post-war Governor Thomas Darden observed that – since its inception – appointments to the Fitas were “eagerly sought” because of the status they conferred among both Samoans and papalagi.75 Similarly, Tuala Sevaaetasi, who enlisted in the Guard in 1931 and served until after the Second World War, recalled that Fitas drew the same salary as American seamen – “about the best paid job in Samoa at that time” – and provided him with opportunities to develop his musical talents.76 While resistance and protest against American colonisers was not unheard of, therefore, for the most part Samoans accommodated American presence so as to navigate it to their best advantage.

As was the case in German Samoa, sport in the American-controlled islands retained significance as a site for cultivating social relationships with colonisers and signalling their alignment with American rule. Whereas Samoans found German rule limited the opportunities afforded by sport, the presence of ludic-minded American officials and marines at Pago Pago had

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74 Ibid., p. 253. Chappell also cites a Samoan stenographer, who asserted that the high chiefs abandoned the Mau protest movement because they would otherwise have lost their position. Ibid., p. 240.
the opposite effect. As such, Samoans increasingly turned to baseball, tennis and other sports as a means of nurturing shared social space with colonisers. According to Gray, for instance, tennis players stopping in Pago Pago en route to Sydney from San Francisco in the 1920s and 1930s often practiced with Tufele Fa’atoia, a high ranking chief from Manu’a. Given Manu’a’s limited exposure to papalagi ways, Gray submits, Fa’atoia’s actions “somewhat scandalised his conservative ‘aiga by his enthusiasm for sports and his athletic prowess”.77 Such pastimes were more commonplace at Pago Pago, where the naval base itself was situated. In 1930 the Chief Athletic Officer announced a football game would be played between the nearby village of Fagatogo and a side made up of players from the naval base and the U.S.S. Ontario.78 By 1938, Pago Pago’s inhabitants expressed their desire to enter a team into the annual baseball competition held at the naval base. Despite their enthusiasm, the league’s president Lieutenant Commander Thomas Darden – who later served as Governor after the war – declined to admit them until they had demonstrated their ability in practice.79

By far the most active Samoans in papalagi sports, however, were the Fitafitas. Even as Darden denied the Pago Pago side entry to the baseball league, he confirmed that the Fitafitas would take part – as they had done for two decades. Indeed, the Fitas themselves appear to have held significant sway in the league’s organisation: efforts to split the Guard into two sides were abandoned after they “strong objected”, while Darden agreed to accommodate their refusal to play on Sundays wherever possible.80 For the Fitas, this was only the latest in a series of sporting endeavours with colonisers. Fitas were members of the Enlisted Men’s Club, and as early as 1916 they competed in a baseball league against a civilian side and two comprising ‘bluejackets’. Games were played on the parade ground adjoining the Fitas’ barracks, and spectators gained admission by donating to the league’s equipment fund.81

In the 1930s the Fitas also joined in tennis and bowls tournaments with the station staff and visiting marines.82 They were even granted ‘exclusive’ access to one of the station’s three courts – enlisted men and their families could use the court when it was unattended, but had to relinquish the

77 Gray, Amerika Samoa, p. 232.
78 F.P. Brown, ‘Memorandum for the Captain of the Yard’, 24 November 1930, General Correspondence, 1921-1949, Box 28 (NN-373-91), P10 [Amusement and Recreation] [#14], RG 313; Records of Naval Operating Forces, 1849-1997, National Archives and Records Administration – Pacific Region (NARA), San Bruno.
79 Lieutenant Commander T.F. Darden Jr., ‘Memorandum for Team Captains and Managers’, 23 February 1938, P10 [#2], RG 313.
80 ibid.
82 For bowls, see T.B. Fitzpatrick [Captain of the Yard], Untitled document, 8 October 1935, P10 Amusements - Recreation, 1935 [#4], RG 313. For tennis, see Untitled document, no date, P10 Amusement and recreation [#6], RG 313.
court to the Fitas should they wish to play.\textsuperscript{83} On the tennis court as elsewhere, the Fitas held a privileged status that allowed them to participate fully and regularly in papalagi sports with American officials and servicemen. While the Fitas – and other Samoans – clearly enjoyed these sporting encounters, they also served an instrumental purpose: in sport, Samoans had identified an opportunity to cultivate friendly relations with often-bored American colonisers. American sport was thus an effective site for navigating naval rule to their best advantage.

If Samoans increasingly took to papalagi sports under American rule, kirikiti remained their game of choice throughout the period of study. Despite a distinct dearth of papalagi participation, moreover, kirikiti provided Samoans with a means to navigate the opportunities presented by American presence. One method was to use public matches as a site for ‘performing’ cooperation and nurturing beneficial relationships with colonisers. The daughter of one American naval governor, for instance, recalled watching kirikiti matches played in front of the Fitafita barracks,\textsuperscript{84} while the travel writer Lewis Freeman reported that Samoans frequently played “exhibition cricket” for the benefit of visitors and servicemen passing through Pago Pago.\textsuperscript{85} The Fitas were themselves keen proponents of kirikiti, and a team comprising members of the Guard even accompanied the first Commandant on his official visits around the territory. According to one witness, these matches were a kind of ‘diplomatic mission’ – they were part of a more general effort to associate with prominent matai, and cited as one of the factors that made the Commandant “very popular” with the local inhabitants.\textsuperscript{86}

It was not only the Fitas that used kirikiti to foster relationships with papalagi officials, of course. In his account of life at Tutuila in the 1910s, the former Secretary of Native Affairs Alexander Stronach recalled that one of his most frequent duties had been imposing fines on Samoans who played kirikiti without official sanction. When the Governor finally granted permission to hold a match, however, Stronach attended as a guest of honour. He was immediately enamoured of the game: he recalled a raucous match that “made the jungle ring” and was accompanied by dancing, ‘swinging’ tunes and the obligatory feast. His hosts, meanwhile, clearly understood that his attendance constituted an opportunity to ‘perform’ their respect for him, and the administration he represented:

\textsuperscript{83} Lloyd L. Bogart [First Sergeant, US Marine Corps], ‘Memorandum to Captain of the Yard’, 30 June 1936, P10 Amusements - Recreation, 1936 [#3], RG 313.
\textsuperscript{86} ‘Statement of Alex T. Willis’, United States Congress, \textit{American Samoa Hearings before the commission appointed by the President of the United States in accordance with Public resolution no. 89, 70th Congress} (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1931), p. 245.
A mat was brought for "The White Judge" to sit on, and kava for him to drink. Do I need to say that, after such an initiation, when a permit for a cricket game was granted by the governor, I usually managed to attend it myself? 87

Kirikiti’s instrumental value was most pronounced, however, as a site for Samoans to demonstrate altogether more tangible cooperation. Even compared to their German counterparts, the American naval administration relied heavily on Samoan officials to function. In 1900, it boasted three papalagi officials: Commander Tilley; E.W. Gurr, a long-time resident of Samoa who found himself installed as ‘customs officer’; and E.M. Blackwell, the naval ship’s surgeon who was hastily appointed ‘medical officer’. Matters barely improved thereafter due to the absence of Federal funding or a dedicated colonial service. Indeed from 1903 to 1931 the great majority of government work fell to the Secretary of Native Affairs, a nebulous position that was eventually split into two roles due to the formidable scale and variety of its duties. 88 With so few papalagi available to fill key positions, the administration turned to Samoans: high-ranking matai assumed key administrative roles at the ‘district’ and ‘county’ levels, while Samoan men served as policemen, judges and pulenu’us. As well as upholding the law and implementing directives, Samoan officials wrote regular reports detailing health, economic and educational conditions and were consulted at annual meetings about potential changes in policy. This was, as one historian notes, “not so much a system of ‘indirect rule’ as direct rule using indigenous agents”. 89

Their positions within the administration, of course, provided opportunities for Samoans to overtly accommodate American colonialism. As we have seen in Chapter Four, kirikiti attracted American opprobrium due to its capacity for interrupting economic activity and its association with ‘disruptive’ Samoan politics, exchange and movement. For Samoan officials, policing the game – often vigorously and conspicuously – hence constituted a profitable means of accommodating American rule. Early anti-kirikiti laws required the Governor’s personal approval for inter-village matches to take place, but it fell to Samoan officials to uphold and enforce them. The 1907 edition of the law, for instance, stipulated that intra-village matches were allowed unless they began to interfere with “the ordinary duties of the people, or the general work for the government or village”. The pulenu’u and other government officials determined whether this particular line had

88 Darden, Historical Sketch, pp. 5-8.
been crossed. Inter-village matches provided further scope for accommodation. Requests to play in such matches invariably went through local officials, while pulenu’us and other government officials were also responsible for stopping and reporting any unsanctioned play. The Fitas, meanwhile, were often called on to break up fights that might occur during inter-village matches – a task that was frequently made difficult by their ties to one side involved in the dispute.

Kirikiti took on further instrumental value for Samoan officials from about 1923, when the Secretary of Native Affairs Sydney Hall determined that any proposed inter-village match required the written approval of the ‘home’ and ‘away’ County Chiefs and District Governor(s) as well as the Governor’s own permission. This added responsibility meant that County Chiefs and District Governors had an even stronger interest in controlling kirikiti matches; failure to do so reflected poorly on their leadership. Kirikiti therefore provided a broad range of opportunities for Samoans to accommodate American authority. By controlling and even suppressing the game, Samoan officials were able to publicly ‘perform’ service to the naval regime and thus benefit from its presence.

The case of Mauga Sialega is instructive in understanding how Samoan officials used the game to mediate relationships with colonisers. When Mauga Moi Moi – the highest-ranking chief of Pago Pago – died in 1934 at the age of 82, he left vacant his matai title, the county chieftainship of Maputasi and the district governorship of Tutuila’s eastern district. The administration subsequently bestowed the Mauga title, and the county chieftainship, upon Afamasaga Sialega after judging him the best-qualified candidate for the role. The newly designated Mauga soon demonstrated an enthusiasm for kirikiti and a talent for using the game to establish and maintain relationships with papalagi officials. In July 1936 the newly appointed Attorney General M.B. Byington, Jr. refused permission for a kirikiti match between two villages on Tutuila. He changed his mind, however, after Mauga and another county chief suggested a less expansive match be played at the Naval

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91 The US archives are replete with examples of officials requesting permission for kirikiti matches to be played in their district or county. Indeed, there is a file entitled ‘Cricket’ devoted to this correspondence – Box 36 (NN-370-59), RG 284: Records of the Government of American Samoa, 1900-1966, NARA. See also Lutu, District Judge to Governor via Secretary of Native Affairs, ‘Cricket Game’, 12 April 1922, Box 48 (NN-370-59), A “4” Officials District, RG 284.
93 These new regulations were part of broader efforts to regulate what Hall called ‘useless’ malaga. See Secretary of Native Affairs to the Governor, ‘Annual Report for the fiscal year ending 30 June, 1923’, 30 June, 1923, Reel 1, T1182: Records of the Government of American Samoa, 1900-1958, NARA.
Station. Byington subsequently wrote to Mauga to thank him for “arranging and conducting” the afternoon’s entertainment, which he seemed to have enjoyed personally.95

This gratitude did not last long. Only a few days after his message of thanks, the Attorney General published a notice warning all Samoan officials that their salaries would be withheld unless copra taxes were paid in full.96 Several months later, in January 1937, he directed local officials to stop a recent spate of unsanctioned malaga and report future offenders for prosecution.97 Two days later, Mauga wrote to Byington seeking his permission for the young men of Pago Pago to play kirikiti on Saturday mornings. Aware that the game sat uneasily with the Attorney General’s recent proclamations, he went to great lengths to assuage Byington’s concerns. “From Monday through Friday… we used to work all day long”, he implored, “but, Saturday only, your Honour, excuse me and my ‘TEAM’”. Not only had they been hard at work, he argued, they had surely earned Byington’s favour after the success of their match the previous August: “I am sure some time in [the] future you’ll ask me for [a] cricket game same as before, while I and my team know how to play ‘No learning without action’, also the Flag-day April 17th”.98 Flag Day, of course, was still some four months away. For Mauga, the kirikiti pitch was thus an especially fruitful site for navigating American colonialism. Not only did the game enable him to establish a friendly relationship with Byington, it was also a means for demonstrating his loyalty as an official. “TRUST me”, he insisted in his letter, “I am watching them to get BUSY”. In this case, the reward for such fidelity was special permission to play weekly kirikiti matches. More generally, however, Mauga used the game to attain special privileges for himself and the people of his village.

While the Mauga’s actions were distinctive, his instrumental view of kirikiti certainly was not. Several incidents in Tutuila’s western district in 1932 bear this out. In January, reports filtered in to the Attorney General’s office that kirikiti was disrupting the collection of copra. Indeed, the District Governor, Tuitele Salatielu, ordered his County Chiefs to ensure all the copra was cut, and that no kirikiti matches or malaga would be undertaken until taxes had been paid in full. Until that time, he warned the Attorney General, no village in his district should be granted permission to play.99 Within a month the imperative to control kirikiti was rendered more urgent by a polio outbreak – an emergency order suspended any assemblies involving children and travelling parties

95 Attorney General, ‘Memorandum for County Chief Savusa, County Chief Mauga’, 3 August 1936, Box 463 (NN-370-59), N-1 Native Affairs, 1936 [2 of 2], RG 284.
98 Mauga to Attorney General, 9 January 1937, Box 466 (NN-370-59), 8-A Native Affairs, 1936-1937, RG 284.
99 Tuitele to Attorney General, 13 January 1932, Box 511 (NN-270-59), 8A – Native Affairs, RG 284.
between villages. Immediately, Tuitele and the county chiefs in his district inundated the Attorney General’s office with complaints of unauthorised games and fervent promises to uphold the law. “I want to be very careful at the present time”, wrote one County Chief, “and I will not neglect to carry out any orders received from the Government”. The same official also informed the Attorney General that he was refusing a request to play kirikiti because it came from a man who was involved in the anti-government Mau movement. Yet it was Tuitele – who had himself served as one of the first Fitas – who upheld anti-kirikiti laws most assiduously. Even after the quarantine had been lifted in March, Tuitele intervened in a planned game between two schools after hearing that many so-called ‘school pupils’ were in fact men who should have been cutting copra to pay for their taxes. For Tuitele and his county chiefs, performing – and being seen to be performing – official duties was thus a valuable means of accommodating American rule and navigating it to their best advantage.

If Tuitele performed his duties with uncommon vigour, it is clear that Samoan officials at all levels of government understood that kirikiti matches presented an opportunity to publicly perform their commission. As in German Samoa, however, faithfully upholding the law was not a given. While archival sources necessarily underreport those instances where kirikiti was not suppressed, non-compliance by Samoan officials was a persistent American concern. According to one Secretary of Native Affairs, for example:

Faithful performance of duty by a native official is the exception. Rather is it the want of the native to talk considerably, indulge in no little preliminary ceremony and then act little or not at all with the matter is one that is going to require some mental exertion or a monotonous routine. These sentiments certainly applied to policing kirikiti, which had the added detriment that officials could be enticed to join in games rather than stop them. In 1913, for instance, a prospective pulenu’u had his appointment suspended when the Secretary of Native Affairs discovered that he had taken part in unauthorised matches and then refused to fine the other players involved. Another candidate had been arrested when he had taken part in a game several years beforehand.

The ways that Samoan officials employed kirikiti to mediate relationships with colonisers is only one part of a more general pattern, of course. As elsewhere, Samoans’ use of kirikiti to navigate American colonialism reflected the extents and limitations of colonisers’ influence in the islands. Even as the correspondence between Samoan and American officials shows the game’s

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100 Tago [County Chief] to Attorney General, 25 February 1932, Ibid.
101 Tago [County Chief] to Attorney General, 24 February 1932, Ibid.
102 Tuitele [District Governor] to Governor via Attorney General, 5 May 1932, Ibid.
103 Secretary of Native Affairs to the Governor, ‘Annual Report for the fiscal year ending 30 June, 1922’, 30 June, 1922, Reel 1 (Records of the High Court…), T1182.
104 ‘Investigation of Asuega’, 30 April 1913, Reel 9 (Village Affairs…), T1182.
value as a site for accommodating American rule, therefore, so it also speaks to the general willingness of Samoans to practice ‘everyday resistance’ by playing kirikiti, going on malaga and engaging in other behaviours that frustrated American intentions. Accommodating American colonisers through sport – be it by establishing a shared social space through baseball or suppressing kirikiti to signal cooperation – was undoubtedly a productive strategy for Samoans, but it was certainly not the only one. This should not be surprising: while foreign influence and control on Tutuila and Manu’a increased substantially relative to before partition, it was still limited – often painfully so. The disparate Samoan responses to American efforts at controlling kirikiti embody this fact. If accommodation was the logical response to an increasingly coherent and coercive American colonialism, then the *absence* of accommodation reflected its lingering limits.

**Conclusion**

As this chapter has shown, Samoans deployed sport in various ways as they sought to navigate papalagi colonialism in whatever guise it took. While several papalagi pastimes served as a site for Samoans to nurture shared social space with colonisers, English cricket and kirikiti were the most consistently valuable instruments in defining and maintaining these relationships. As might be expected in a chapter covering six decades and three distinct periods of foreign influence, however, there was considerable variation in *how* cricket and kirikiti were deployed. Samoans used both forms of the game to build beneficial relationships with colonisers, to signal their alignment with one papalagi faction or another and to accommodate foreign officials and colonists by drafting and policing anti-kirikiti laws. Obversely, by playing unauthorised games in defiance of colonisers, Samoans effectively showed the limits of colonial authority and influence in their lives. Clearly cricket and kirikiti were versatile instruments with which Samoans could navigate colonisers’ presence and influence in their islands.

What this ‘shopping list’ approach fails to convey, of course, are the circumstances that shaped and informed these divergent responses. A common imperative underpinned each of these strategies: in sport as in other spheres of life, Samoans sought to navigate papalagi colonialism to their best advantage. Changes in the ways Samoans utilised kirikiti are hence emblematic of what Linnekin calls “historical variations and points of unevenness in colonial power”. Thus when coercive colonial authority was weakest, as during most of the 1880s and 1890s, Samoans

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105 This designation is borrowed from Doug Munro, who uses it to question Ronald Takaki’s presentation of divergent forms of indigenous resistance as ‘an undifferentiated listing’. Doug Munro, ‘Patterns of Resistance and Accommodation’ in Brij V. Lal, Doug Munro and Edward D. Beechart (eds.), *Plantation Workers: Resistance and Accommodation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), p. 8.

effectively ignored entreaties to cease the game; accommodation was limited to those Samoan leaders who relied on papalagi support to achieve their political aims. Conversely, ‘everyday resistance’ through kirikiti declined after partition because Samoans faced more coherent, capable and coercive forms of colonial authority. A revised strategy of accommodation – both in terms of obeying anti-kirikiti laws and upholding them – reflected the distinctive challenges and opportunities presented by German and American rule. Kirikiti was thus both a compass and a barometer for Samoans in the context of colonialism – not only did it provide a mechanism for them to navigate papalagi presence and influence, but it also reflected changes in the nature of colonial power they faced.
“More interested in playing cricket than in Samoan politics”: cricket, kirikiti and Samoan agency under New Zealand rule

After lemonade time, the Apia players girded up their lavalavas and set out for scalps. Armed with their fearsome clubs they dealt out severe punishment to the Battery bowling, even the great ‘Billy’ being treated with disrespect. The stout gentleman in the long short trousers (or were they short long ones) was particularly aggressive, and he easily topped the score.¹

On 26 September 1914, Montgomery Betham Jr.’s paddock at Vaimea played host to the first cricket match between soldiers from the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and the Apia Cricket Club. The military side was drawn from ‘D’ Battery, a Wellington artillery regiment of about 100 officers and men. Having landed at Samoa on 29 August 1914, they spent the first few weeks of the occupation unloading provisions and setting up their entrenched guns at the harbour in case German forces attempted to recapture the islands.² By the end of September any apparent threat had subsided, and the men turned instead to cricket. The ‘D’ Battery side included several provincial players, including one – Herbert ‘Billy’ McGirr – who would go on to play test cricket for New Zealand. Despite making a promising start, ‘Battery’ faded in the tropical heat and were soundly beaten. Apia’s standout performer was Toleafoa Lagolago – the “stout gentleman in the long short trousers” – who plundered the military bowlers on the way to a match-winning score of 33 runs. Toleafoa’s contribution was not confined to his hitting, however. As the club’s President, he called the toss before the game and ensured the visitors were treated well and supplied with lemonade and other refreshments. Thanks in no small part to Toleafoa’s efforts, the occasion was an unqualified success. “I think we will be playing every Saturday now”, wrote one of the soldiers, “so I won’t miss my game of cricket after all”.³

Toleafoa’s prominence in this first match was nothing if not prescient. Over the next five or six years, he appeared regularly for the Apia Cricket Club and later the Toeaina Cricket Club, which he himself founded. In his official capacity at both clubs, moreover, he organised excursions for the soldiers, raised money for the war effort and even arranged for Fijian cricketers to visit

Samoa. Toleafoa also made a habit of inviting New Zealand officials to watch exhibition kirikiti matches featuring dancing and other performative aspects. For all his undoubted enthusiasm for the game, Toleafoa’s actions were also deeply instrumental and reflected his privileged status in Samoan and papalagi circles. His title and that of his brother, Afamasaga, were among the highest-ranking in the district of A’ana. His brother, meanwhile, had been a senior official under German rule and continued to hold influence under New Zealand occupation. For his part, Toleafoa spoke excellent English and earned the respect – if not necessarily the trust – of successive New Zealand administrators. In a missive to New Zealand’s Minister of External Affairs, the then-Administrator of Samoa, Robert Ward Tate, described Toleafoa as

A pillar of the local Racing Club and [one who] understands the intricacies of racing and betting; [he] is reputed to be an adept poker player; was on the ‘European’ list for liquor in the German and Military Occupation days and was a great entertainer these days.5

In addition, however, he noted that Toleafoa had been “at the bottom of or concerned in, every trouble since I arrived in 1919... his desire for political ascendancy and personal credit is insatiable”. Seen in this light, Toleafoa’s cricketing activities can be rightly understood as part of a broader effort to nurture a shared social space with these latest colonisers and so benefit from their presence.

While Toleafoa may have been, as Hermann Hiery puts it, “an exceptional case”,6 his instrumental approach to cricket and kirikiti was anything but. As they had done before partition and under German and American rule, Samoans used the game to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by New Zealand colonialism. Indeed, the Anglophile ludic habits of New Zealanders meant that English cricket was once again valuable to Samoans as a site for cultivating beneficial relationships with colonisers. Kirikiti was no less valuable in mediating these relationships. Exhibition matches were frequently arranged to entertain soldiers and officials – and to perform symbolic acts of accommodation to them. Kirikiti was also a site of more tangible acts of accommodation; Samoan officials were responsible for regulating and policing ‘excessive’ play, as they had done under German rule. The obverse was also true: as with other non-cooperative behaviours, the extent to which Samoans played unauthorised kirikiti showed the limits of New Zealand authority. Most striking, however, was the manner in which Samoans used kirikiti matches as a site for overt protest against interventionist New Zealand administration in the late-1920s and 1930s. As these diverse responses indicate, Samoans were well served by both cricket and kirikiti as

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4 ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Times, 2 October 1915, p. 3.
5 ‘Tate to Minister of External Affairs’ [Memorandum], 14 February 1922, Ex. 82/2, IT (Department of Island Territories) 1 449: Firms, 1919-1939, National Archives of New Zealand (NANZ), Wellington.
they sought to navigate New Zealand rule to their best advantage.

In exploring these varied methods, the present chapter first turns to the period of military occupation from 1914 until 1920. Under military occupation, colonial power was once again disjointed and uncertain. Samoans thus revived kirikiti in the districts as part of broader efforts to reclaim activities that had been restricted under German rule. Samoans also saw the cricket pitch as a site for navigating the challenges and opportunities of military rule. Samoans regularly played the game to establish relationships with officials and attain influence with them, while kirikiti matches were also used as a site for entertaining soldiers and ‘performing’ loyalty to officials and the British Empire. Following the transition to civilian rule in 1920, Samoans gradually developed different strategies to navigate New Zealand colonialism – including on the cricket pitch. While controlling and policing kirikiti remained a fruitful means of ‘performing’ accommodation, adherents of the Mau movement began to use the game in altogether different ways. For them, kirikiti constituted an instrument through which they could navigate the delicate politics of anti-colonial protest. Together, this catalogue of responses hence shows the game’s value to Samoans as they sought to promote their own interests in the face of new and increasingly invasive – if not necessarily pervasive – forms of colonial power.

**Cricket, kirikiti and ‘navigating’ New Zealand military rule**

The arrival of New Zealand forces in August 1914 precipitated profound changes in how Samoans experienced colonial authority, and how they responded to it. Despite the significant size of the New Zealand contingent – over 1400 officers and men at its zenith – the military regime possessed little administrative expertise or strategic directive. As a result, Samoans faced a colonial administration that was distracted and haphazard, especially compared to its German predecessor. In the districts, therefore, the benefits of accommodation were less pronounced for officials and the population at large; ‘everyday resistance’ proliferated, including unsanctioned kirikiti matches. In and around Apia, however, the military presence provided an array of opportunities for Samoans to engage with the New Zealanders and develop beneficial relationships with them. Both cricket and kirikiti were valuable in this regard: Samoans recognised the pitch as a site where they could mediate relationships with these new colonisers. Samoan leaders, with Toleafoa taking a determined lead, were particularly active in these endeavours through the Toeaina Club. Indeed, Samoan leaders’ activities on the cricket pitch were one part of a more general effort to promote their own political aspirations under New Zealand military rule.

Colonial authority during New Zealand military rule was shaped and constrained by personnel and circumstances. The Expeditionary Force was led by Lieutenant Colonel Robert
Logan, a man with strong record of public service but whose military field experience was decidedly limited. With no grounding in colonial administration or ‘native affairs’, he was utterly unprepared for the task of governing Samoa.\(^7\) His task was rendered more difficult by the lack of instruction from Wellington and a dearth of local expertise after he sacked and then deported German officials. In their stead, Logan turned to members of the occupying force and a few British residents to perform governmental duties. Unsurprisingly, this combination of inexperienced personnel and a lack of strategic direction resulted in an arbitrary and undirected form of colonial rule. While Logan did enact several new laws, the Military Administration was preoccupied with its own soldiers and had little inclination for expansive forays into Samoan affairs. As such, Hiery observes, “New Zealand activity in the field of native administration was virtually non-existent”.\(^8\)

The Samoan response to this confused state of affairs was initially cautious. Soon, however, they recognised the opportunities it presented. Outside of Apia and its surrounds, Samoans took advantage of the leadership vacuum to re-establish traditional authority and reassert the patterns of customary village life.\(^9\) Samoan participation in administrative duties soon lapsed: in June 1915, Samoan officials sent some 50 letters excusing their non-attendance at work or meetings and asking that their salaries be set aside for them to collect on their next visit to Apia, or else paid to the envoy carrying the letters. This endemic “dereliction of duty”, as Malama Meleisea terms it, would have seen officials face financial sanction, suspension or dismissal under German rule.\(^10\) Such ‘everyday resistance’ was not the preserve of Samoan officials, of course. Practices banned under German rule were revived due to the increasingly porous nature of colonial control. Although gambling was prohibited, for instance, the New Zealanders prosecuted it only sporadically.\(^11\) Indeed, the German planter and scientist Ernst Demandt remarked that by late-1914 papalagi had begun referring to the village of Tanugamanono as the Samoan ‘Monte Carlo’. When reproached, they protested that New Zealand occupation had rendered German law null and void. As no new law had been promulgated, moreover, they were free to do as they wished.\(^12\)

\(^10\) Ibid., p. 110, see also endnote #9, p. 244.
\(^11\) For an example of a successful prosecution see ‘Law Reports’, *Samoa Times*, 29 September 1917, p. 4. The offenders were each fined ten shillings and the police confiscated the cards and stakes.
\(^12\) E. Demandt diary, 24 September and 4 November 1914, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, cited in Hiery, ‘West Samoans Between Germany and New Zealand’, pp. 60-61.
Almost inevitably, the decline of colonial influence in the districts meant that kirikiti matches also resumed in force. Indeed, Meleisea discusses the game’s resurgence in terms of diminished New Zealand authority and the non-compliance of Samoan officials:

Cricket matches, which had been deplored by the German administration and restricted to two days a week by law, began to creep back as a regular activity in the village life...The upsurge of cricket playing during the New Zealand military administration was seldom reported or punished because many native officials were involved and their positions earned them extra recognition and gifts at inter-village matches.\(^{13}\) New Zealand officials did occasionally prosecute unsanctioned matches, albeit somewhat reluctantly. In May 1915 Logan himself presided over a case in the Native Court of Appeal in which several villages had received 500 Mark fines for playing kirikiti on a Monday. The *Samoa Times* reported that the law in force provided Logan with “no alternative but the above mentioned fine”. Logan, who himself was a noted cricketing enthusiast, did reduce their fines to £15 per village – in part because the games seemed to have been ‘practice matches’ rather than competitive ones.\(^{14}\) Overwhelmingly, however, unauthorised matches continued unfettered. As such, the resurgence of kirikiti outside of Apia can be seen as part of a more general pattern of ‘everyday resistance’ – and a concomitant revival of customary Samoan authority – in light of diminished colonial influence.

Closer to Apia, however, kirikiti and particularly cricket took on a very different significance. As we have seen in Chapters Four and Six, cricket was a favourite pastime amongst the New Zealand officers and soldiers – including those who served in the administration. As such, the game provided a fruitful forum for Samoans to foster beneficial relationships with these new colonisers. Within a few months troops were being invited to attend kirikiti matches, and incredulous descriptions were soon a staple of letters home.\(^{15}\) Such occasions frequently featured a heavily stylised performance for the audience’s enjoyment.

Perhaps the best exponents of this strategy were the members of the Catholic Boys Cricket Club. Although the Catholic side were playing ‘English’ cricket by 1915, they were far more accustomed to kirikiti. Their first match, which took place in November 1914, was played against soldiers serving in the Post Office and featured the regulation eleven-a-side. In several subsequent games, however, they selected larger teams – much to the delight of the similarly enlarged contingent of soldiers who joined them.\(^{16}\) This expanded participation was only one part of the


\(^{14}\) Native Court of Appeal’, *Samoa Times*, 15 May 1915, p. 4.


\(^{16}\) See ‘Cricket’, *Samoanische Zeitung*, 12 December 1914, p. 4; ‘Cricket’, *Samoanische Zeitung*, 19 December 1914, p. 4.
Catholic Boys’ more general efforts to entertain and impress the New Zealanders. The Samoan players joined the soldiers for refreshments between innings, while kava ceremonies frequently bookended matches. On the pitch, moreover, the Club’s “amusing antics” came to the fore. In one match, the Samoans sang and danced in the field in the usual fa’a Samoa style. When one of their players missed a catch, moreover, the bowler reacted with a theatrical blow to his buttocks. The Catholic Club won the match – as they usually did – but this was only incidental. While the Catholic Club had developed “a reputation for cricket”, the Samoanische Zeitung surmised, it had also established “a further reputation for hospitality”.17

This instrumental use of the cricket pitch to build and maintain relationships with New Zealanders continued into 1915 and beyond. After the rash of scratch matches in the final months of 1914, a regular tournament – played in accordance with English rules – was established in mid-1915 and continued for each of the next three years. By 1916 three Samoan clubs – Vinuela, the Toeaina Club and the eventual champions from the Catholic Club – were each providing sides in both the senior and junior competitions. Even excluding those in the Apia Cricket Club’s ranks, each week some 66 Samoan men were therefore playing ‘English’ cricket, with many more serving as hosts and watching on.18 From the local perspective, these regular matches presented a forum for engaging with the New Zealanders during an auspicious historical moment. As the Apia Cricket Club and Catholic Boys’ Club had shown in 1914, cricket presented exactly these kinds of opportunities. Matches were invariably accompanied by afternoon tea with their opponents from the garrison and the military administration, including senior figures such as Logan and Captain A. Loftus Tottenham, who had been appointed Judge of the Native Court. In one match in March 1916, for instance, the Nomad Club’s match against the Apia Cricket Club only took place after both sides had indulged in a “taumafataga fa’a Samoa” (Samoan feast) given by ‘the Vaimoso ladies’.19

While the Samoan players who took part in cricket certainly used the game to signal cooperation and goodwill, there is little evidence that the Apia Cricket Club or its Catholic and Vinuela counterparts became more than a forum for furthering social intercourse and fostering friendly relationships; they were never overtly political. Samoan leaders found more palpable ways to foster relationships with New Zealanders through cricket, however. In November 1914 the Apia Cricket Club, with Toleafoa again to the fore, arranged a Sunday picnic for some 50 non-commissioned officers and men from the Expeditionary Force. They visited the popular Papase’ea

17 ‘Cricket’, Samoanische Zeitung, 28 November 1914, p. 8
18 The scorecards from the 1916 season confirm that these clubs comprised Samoan players only. See for example ‘Apia Cricket Association’, Samoa Times, 30 September 1916, p. 10 (supplement).
19 ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Times, 4 March 1916, p. 3.
sliding rocks and enjoyed what one guest called a ‘wonderful’ feast.\textsuperscript{20} Even the unlikely figure of Tupua Tamasese Lealofi I saw in cricket an opportunity to pay formal respect to these latest colonisers. Tamasese, whose father had led the pro-German regime in the late-1880s, was one of the two foremost advisors under the German administration. He endured an often-fraught relationship with New Zealand officials, however. Indeed, Logan considered him a German sympathiser and a troublemaker after he petitioned against the internment of German residents and publicly complained that New Zealand soldiers had mistreated Samoan women.\textsuperscript{21}

Despite this ambivalence about the occupation, Tamasese was shrewd enough to appreciate that some respect needed to be shown to the New Zealanders and especially to Logan. In the early months of the occupation, therefore, Tamasese and other matai made a concerted effort to ‘perform’ support. On November 7, a large crowd gathered at the malae in front of Tamasese’s residence to witness a cricket match between the officers of two of the New Zealand camps. Two weeks later Tamasese invited the Auckland Regiment – as well as prominent guests including Logan and his wife – to hold its first sports meeting on the ground opposite his village.\textsuperscript{22} According to a soldier’s account published in the \textit{New Zealand Herald}, Tamasese and his followers had gone to great lengths to entertain their guests:

This chief, to show his affection for the English, and the Vaea camp especially, has had many trees cut down so as to give us plenty of room to play cricket or hold a sports meeting, for which we owe him a debt of thanks.\textsuperscript{23} Tamasese also lent the use of his band, which played throughout the day – precisely as they had done at the Apia Sports Club’s meetings under German rule. These events were a rousing success and, with Logan still in attendance, the sports meet closed with cheers for Tamasese and singing of the British National Anthem. The band rendered similar service the following year, when a match between the military and civilians was organised to raise funds for the New Zealand war effort.\textsuperscript{24} Afamasaga Mua, Toleafoa’s older brother who worked as the government’s chief interpreter, also arranged a dance programme to accompany the match.

Such displays of hospitality were not necessarily indicative of friendship, of course; they can instead be viewed as calculated efforts to build political capital. In particular, Tamasese’s willingness to host sporting events and lend his personal band to aid New Zealand fundraising

\textsuperscript{20} ‘In Samoa’, \textit{Evening Post}, 17 November 1914, p. 4. See also Untitled article, \textit{Samoanische Zeitung}, 7 November 1914, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{21} Tamasese was indeed unabashedly pro-German – despite New Zealand protestations, he kept pictures of the Empress and Kaiser Wilhem in his home and raised the German flag on the Kaiser’s birthday. See Meleisea, \textit{The Making of Modern Samoa}, p. 104; Hiery, ‘West Samoans between Germany and New Zealand’, p. 57.

\textsuperscript{22} ‘Cricket’, \textit{The Pull-Thro’}, 5 December 1914, p. 7.


\textsuperscript{24} ‘Local and General News’, \textit{Samoa Times}, 3 July 1915, p. 3.
efforts is best understood as a ‘performance’ of respect and loyalty as he adapted to the New Zealand Occupation. Despite his misgivings, Tamasese pursued a strategy of engagement with the New Zealand forces as he recognised that they held what Meleisea calls “the key to the possession of offices and positions of authority”.25 As Afamasaga Mua’s contribution indicates, moreover, Tamasese was not alone in his assessment. Given the ludic enthusiasm of Logan and the troops, sport and especially cricket presented a valuable means for Samoans to create a shared social space with New Zealanders. In so doing, they were better positioned to navigate the opportunities and challenges of the military occupation to their best advantage.

Tamasese’s actions are suggestive of a more general trend: compared to the colonial regimes that came before and after it, the military occupation provided far greater scope for Samoan leaders to engage with prominent papalagi leaders.26 As the months went on, Samoan leaders increasingly took part in cricket matches against Logan and other leaders in the military administration. In July 1915, for instance, the “chiefs of Vaimauga”, with High Chief Malietoa Tanumafili opening the batting and Toleafoa top-scoring, played a match against senior officers from the garrison – but only after they had come together for a kava ceremony.27 A month later, moreover, the visit of HMS Encounter resulted in a match between a Samoan side and a combined naval and army team featuring Logan, Tottenham and other senior officials in the military administration. Malietoa captained the locals.28 For Samoan leaders, the cricket pitch was steadily emerging a site for them to nurture their relationships with colonisers so as to further their own political aspirations.

The Toeaina Club represented the fullest expression of these efforts. Founded by the redoubtable Toleafoa Lagolago, the Toeaina Club commenced its existence in mid-1915 as a cricket club with social aspirations. As the occupation persisted, however, its activities increasingly took on commercial and political dimensions. By the end of the war it had commenced a number of business ventures for the benefit of Samoans and was a significant social and political presence. This political influence was most decisively exercised after administrative incompetence led to the influenza pandemic reaching Samoa in November 1918. The New Zealand ship Talune arrived at Apia carrying infected passengers and, despite having been quarantined in Fiji, sick passengers were allowed to disembark. Within weeks, the New Zealand-held territory experienced a catastrophic loss of life – over a fifth of Western Samoa’s population perished. When Logan’s then-temporary replacement arrived in January 1919, the Secretary of the Club, Toleafoa, presented him

27 ‘Local and General News’, Samoa Times, 3 July 1915, p. 3.
28 ‘Cricket’, Samoa Times, 14 August 1915, p. 3.
with a petition calling for Logan’s permanent removal as administrator and demanding that German Samoa be turned over to the United States. If this was not possible, the petition submitted, the British should administer Samoa directly; under no circumstances should the New Zealand mandate continue. Some months later Tate acted to liquidate the Club after an auditor’s report warned him that it tended “to place in Toleafoa’s hands an influence that the Administration considers may be detrimental to safe government”.29

It is principally in this capacity as a locus of Samoan economic and political resistance that the Toeaina Club has attracted historians’ attention. Writing in 1968, Boyd placed the Toeaina Club within a more general narrative of Samoan protest against colonial rule: she characterises it as both a successor to organised resistance under German administration, and the predecessor of later strategies which culminated in Samoan self-government.30 Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford similarly describe the club as “part protest, part self-help organisation” and claim that “it fits logically into the recurring pattern of islander initiatives through to this day in the face of colonialism and neo-colonialism”.31 If the Toeaina Club’s role in resisting colonial rule has been examined, the question of how it came to be in a position to cause such disruption is less well documented. This issue certainly vexed Colonel Robert W. Tate, who succeeded Logan as Administrator in 1919 and immediately recognised the club as a profound threat to New Zealand’s colonial ambitions in Samoa. In his memoirs, Tate bemoaned his predecessor’s actions in allowing the club to become such a menace: “How the Toeaina Club, which commenced life as a cricket club, if you please, had been permitted to promote a trading company in defiance of this law I do not know – but there it was”.32

Cricket did indeed play a crucial role in the origins of the club, but the motivations for its inception were never simply sporting. As Meleisea points out, it was rather a response by the local elite to the opportunities presented by military occupation. Operating with the official approval of the two Fautua [paramount chiefs], Malietoa Tanumafili I and Tupua Tamasese Lealofi I,

The club drew its membership from leading matai who held or had formerly held senior positions in the native administration… Some of the founding members were Toleafoa (later Afamasaga) Lagolago, Tagaloa, Pulepule, Tuatagaloa, Tuli’au, Tanumapua, Mata’afa Faumuina Fiame, all men of great influence in the native administration.33

29 J.L. Arcus to Controller and Auditor General, 25 August 1919, p. 6, IT 82/8, NANZ.
31 Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford, Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific (Suva: Institute of the South Pacific, University of the South Pacific, 1984), p. 32.
In time, the club’s prestigious membership began to inform its aims. According to James Davidson, the club set out to provide a focal point of chiefly interests in Apia "and, in particular, to provide… [its members] with an opportunity for them to settle lands and titles disputes informally without recourse to the government". In 1918, moreover, the club approached Logan for permission to form a limited liability company – an act prohibited under the existing German laws. When he acquiesced, they established business ventures with the stated goal of benefiting Samoans: a company through which Samoan producers could sell copra, with the promise of higher returns than were offered by private firms; the purchase and operation of a transportation vessel; and opening a restaurant in Apia.

It is initially difficult to see how this bold agenda received Logan’s assent. Not only was such activity proscribed by law, it was deemed commercially futile and politically dangerous by Richard Williams, a senior official within the colonial administration. Indeed, a similar endeavour in 1904 – the so-called Oloa company – had constituted a threat to German authority until Governor Solf outlawed its activities and punished its leaders. If Logan was oblivious to this precedent, he admitted having been aware that a similar experiment had resulted in “trouble and political implications with the Government and the Natives themselves” in Fiji. In spite of these reservations, he later defended his decision by claiming that such commercial ventures would encourage Samoans to be ‘progressive’, and that a blanket refusal “might lead them to believe that the administration was antagonistic to their interests”.

Beyond his expressed rationale, however, it is clear that Logan’s decision was informed by his personal interactions with the Samoan leaders who made up the Toeaina Club’s leadership. Boyd has argued that Logan’s assent was probably granted after the intercession of Afamasaga Mua – Toleafoa Lagolago’s older brother – who was a senior government advisor and served as Treasurer in the Club. While Afamasaga’s contribution was invaluable, it was his younger brother who was most active in building a rapport with Logan and other senior military officials on the pitch itself. As was noted at the outset of this chapter, Toleafoa was a proficient cricketer – despite his hefty frame and an injured leg – and he captained the Apia Cricket Club in its early matches against military sides. As such, he saw first-hand the game’s capacity for creating a shared social space with New Zealanders and sought to exploit such opportunities in his dual roles as the Toeaina

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37 Robert Logan, Administration of Samoa – Report by Colonel Logan, July 1919, EX 1/10, IT1 25, NANZ.
38 Ibid.
Club’s Honorary Secretary and captain of the cricket team. Cricket was therefore an integral part of the Club’s broader campaign to earn the favour of Logan and other senior military officials.

The Toeaina Club’s activities in 1915 illustrate its success in using cricket as part of a broader strategy of creating a shared social space with New Zealand colonisers in general, and Logan in particular. On 24 July 1915 the Club hosted a function to raise money for a New Zealand Hospital Ship Fund. The *Samoa Times* reported that the event had been “a marked success in every way”:

The function was remarkably well attended. Among the guests was his Excellency the Administrator and his staff and Mrs Logan. The Cricket with lady bowlers proved a great attraction and the Taumafataga [feast] contributed largely towards the funds collected. On Tuesday morning the sum of £154 2s 1d was handed to his Excellency by a deputation from the club, this amount representing the net proceeds from the afternoon.\(^{40}\)

Aside from the cricket match, guests were treated to a knife-wielding exhibition, a refreshment stall, fortune telling and an auction of “native curios” including kava and related accoutrements, Samoan axes, clubs and canoes. They were also well-fed: the feast menu was described by the *Times* “long and varied”, and comprised 62 pigs, 76 fowls, 1663 taro, 124 small fish, 47 large fish, 2193 coconuts, 54 pineapples, 29 bunches of bananas, 943 prawns and 3 watermelons. The Club’s efforts were aided by “the young ladies” of Apia’s European community, who assisted with fortune telling and the sale of refreshments. While it is entirely unremarkable that these young women were relegated to the more ‘lady-like’ activities of serving refreshments and telling fortunes, the gendered nature of this participation is nevertheless noteworthy when contrasted with the role Samoan women played as bowlers in the match.\(^{41}\)

In any event, their collective efforts were so successful that the Governor of New Zealand sent a cablegram to Colonel Logan asking him to convey his sincere appreciation of the Club’s fundraising endeavours.\(^{42}\)

A few months later the Toeaina Club held a ‘Native Festival’ at the Matautu malae, to the east of Apia. Refreshments including food, coffee, kava and ice cream were provided, and the venture raised £21 8s 4d in total. The *Samoa Times* again noted the presence of Logan and his wife, and commented that “His Excellency displayed a large amount of interest in the cricket match, and

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\(^{40}\)‘The Samoa Toeaina Club’s Cricket Festival’, *Samoa Times*, 31 July 1915, p. 3.

\(^{41}\)White women were considered to be especially susceptible to Samoa’s tropical climate – and the menace of indigenous men – and discouraged from overexerting themselves. According to one contemporaneous medical account, for instance, while Samoan women were capable of playing cricket in the midst of a tropical downpour, the “depressing climate” was liable to cause health issues for Europeans in general and white women in particular. Richard E. Delaney, ‘Among the South Sea Islanders’, *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* 72:1 (July 1918), pp. 23-24. For further discussion of the gendered dimensions of colonisation in Samoa – particularly pertaining to white women and their ‘precious’ and ‘fragile’ sexuality – see Paul Shankman, 'Interethic unions and the regulation of sex in colonial Samoa, 1830-1945', *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 110:2 (2001), 119-147, especially p. 134; Damon Salesa, ‘New Zealand’s Pacific’, in Giselle Byrnes (ed.), *The new Oxford history of New Zealand*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 158-159.

\(^{42}\)‘Local and General News’, *Samoa Times*, 31 July 1915, p. 3.
was very prominent in that department”.

Aside from these festivities, the club also played regular cricket matches against the sides representing the military and local Europeans. A typical match in September 1915 saw the Toeaina side defeat a Military XI by 12 runs at the Pilot Station at Matautu. Malietoa opening the batting for the Toeaina Club and Logan did likewise for the military side. While the Club gradually moved away from its cricketing roots as the military presence in Samoa declined, it continued to host what the Times called “feasts and tifagas [entertainment acts] and functions of a like festive character” until the end of the war. Through such sporting and social activities the Club became an established and popular presence in wartime Apia. For its members, meanwhile, it provided opportunities to exploit relationships with key New Zealand officials to further their own political and commercial aspirations.

The Toeaina Club’s rise to prominence provides a stark illustration of cricket’s instrumental value for Samoans in mediating their relationships with colonisers. Under Toleafoa’s direction, the club initially sought to establish connections with New Zealanders through the medium of cricket. Through the game, Samoan leaders created a shared social space within which they developed and maintained beneficial relationships with Logan and other military officials. These efforts were remarkably successful, such that the Club was soon able to expand its activities outside of its original social ambit and indeed beyond the law. If this influence was later used in ways that threatened New Zealand authority, this only confirms that – for the Club’s members – cricket was never about social intercourse per se. Instead, it was an indispensable part of a more deeply instrumental strategy to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities posed by the military occupation under Logan’s leadership. In so doing, they were once again able to configure and then utilise their relationships with colonisers to their best advantage.

**Cricket, kirikiti and ‘navigating’ New Zealand civilian rule**

The transition from military to civilian rule again transformed the ways that Samoans experienced and responded to foreign colonialism. Inevitably, their deployment of cricket and kirikiti reflected these broader changes. With the departure of New Zealand soldiers and no counterpoising influx of colonists, English cricket lost much of its significance as a space for Samoans to foster relationships with papalagi. Instead, it was kirikiti that emerged as a more useful instrument for navigating colonialism(s) during this period. As was the case under German and American rule, many Samoans used the game to accommodate colonisers. They did so by

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43 ‘Local and General News’, *Samoa Times*, 9 October 1915, p. 4.
44 ‘Local and General News’, *Samoa Times*, 18 September 1915, p. 3.
45 ‘Toeaina Club of Samoa’, *Samoa Times*, 18 May 1918, p. 4
‘performing’ loyalty for papalagi officials in stylised matches and – more frequently – by passing and enforcing laws limiting the game. If accommodation was one response to New Zealand rule, resistance and even protest was at least as prominent. By the mid-1920s, the increasingly interventionist nature of New Zealand colonialism alienated a broad coalition of Samoans and local Europeans and precipitated the birth of the Mau movement. While some Samoans continued to accommodate and even cooperate with New Zealand interests, the Mau instituted a campaign of protest and passive resistance. In this context, Mau adherents used kirikiti to protest New Zealand intrusion in a publicly defiant manner. The game thus constituted a versatile and effective means of articulating several divergent responses.

Logan was recalled to New Zealand in January 1919, initially for two or three months but later permanently after local outcry intensified over his role in the influenza epidemic. He was replaced by Robert Ward Tate, who served at first as Military Administrator before continuing in an equivalent position following the transition to civilian rule on 1 May 1920. Soldiers were decommissioned and returned to New Zealand and replaced by a smattering of civil officials but very few private colonists. Tate and his successors were armed with the League of Nations mandate and – by the standards of New Zealand’s notably frugal approach to empire – significant human and financial resources. A colonial administration apparatus thus took form, albeit one lacking in experience, local knowledge and often in competence. As was outlined in Chapter Four, Tate and his successors – particularly George Spafford Richardson, who served from 1923 until 1928 – took increasingly determined steps towards executing the ‘development’ mandate given them by the League of Nations. Although widespread resentment continued to undermine New Zealand authority after the influenza outbreak, the question of colonial authority therefore seemed to have been resolved for the foreseeable future.

Just as the more coherent face of German colonialism had shaped Samoan responses to colonisers after partition, so Samoans found new ways of navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by a more settled and organised New Zealand administration. To a significant degree, accommodation once again emerged as a profitable strategy for many Samoans. This was particularly true from 1920 to around 1926. The network of Samoan officials established under German rule was gradually expanded, providing further opportunities to benefit from New

Zealand presence. In 1924, for instance, Richardson established district councils that held wide-ranging powers in mediating local disputes and overseeing water supply, road building, agriculture and the enforcement of the Administration’s instructions. Members of the Fono of Faipules – a ‘Native Parliament’ selected by the Administrator – were especially well served by their links to the New Zealand regime and the authority it gave them. The obverse was also true: non-compliance was harshly dealt with. Richardson in particular imposed severe measures against Samoans who disobeyed his instructions – often banishing them from their homes and stripping them of their titles, a degrading punishment that he took particular delight in. Even at the height of the Mau protest movement during the late-1920s and early-1930s, a significant minority of Samoans continued to support the Administration due to both the opportunities it provided them and entrenched divisions in Samoan ‘high politics’. Frequently, therefore, Samoans responded to New Zealand colonialism by accommodating and thereby benefitting from its presence.

If accommodation was one strategy in navigating this new reality, it was certainly not the only one. ‘Everyday resistance’ remained somewhat common, particularly in outlying districts, but Samoans also responded to New Zealand rule with more active strategies of non-cooperation. Chief among these was the Mau protest movement that emerged in the aftermath of a public meeting held in November 1926. The movement brought together the general concerns of different groups regarding New Zealand colonialism: many high-ranking chiefs were perturbed by their continued exclusion from positions of influence; at the popular level, discontent stemmed from increased interference in village life; while those with ‘European’ status felt antagonised and disenfranchised by the administration. Members of the Mau opposed New Zealand rule through various forms of social agitation: its leaders organised marches and large public meetings, presented petitions, led

48 Ibid., pp. 61-72, especially pp. 62-63.
49 Two of Western Samoa’s four paramount titleholders – Malietoa Tanumafili and Mata’afa Salanoa – did not join the Mau, and indeed Malietoa actively supported the Administration due to fear of the chaos that might result if the Mau were successful. In addition, the Malietoa lineage had been associated and broadly aligned with ‘British’ influence in Samoa since before partition. The Mau, conversely, drew its strongest support from followers of Tupua Tamasese and Tuimaleali’ifano S’iu and drew on Taisi Nelson’s extensive network of trading stores to raise money and distribute propaganda. Even so, most of the influential families associated with Malietoa supported the Mau cause, and the Mau party in Mata’afa’s district of Aleipata contained the greater part of his people. For further discussion of these divisions and their manifestation in the Mau movement, see Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa, pp. 142-145; Hempenstaff and Rutherford, Protest and Dissent, pp. 39-40. For an account of opportunistic support for the Administration, see also Boyd, ‘The Record in Western Samoa to 1945’, p. 158.
50 The Mau has been the subject of extensive historical analysis and inquiry, and a full account of its origins, aims and methods is far beyond the purview of this thesis. For an overview of the movement, see for example Davidson, Samoa mo Samoa, pp. 114-160; Hempenstaff and Rutherford, Protest and Dissent, pp. 34-43; Field, Mau, 1984; Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa, pp. 139-151. For a contrary view, see I.C. Campbell, ‘Resistance and colonial government’, Journal of Pacific History 40:1 (2005), pp. 45-69.
boycotts of government services and openly engaged in proscribed behaviours. Such protest was not unique to New Zealand rule, of course. The Mau followed several similar episodes during the German administration, while an ‘American Mau’ gave expression to local concerns regarding US naval rule during the 1920s. Even so, the Mau was notably organised and pervasive in the New Zealand-controlled territory – Boyd estimates that 90 per cent of the population engaged in passive resistance in the decade from 1926.

**Cricket, kirikiti and accommodation under New Zealand civilian administration**

Sport remained an invaluable instrument for Samoans as they pursued these divergent strategies of accommodation, resistance and protest. Compared to the military occupation, however, European sports were notably less useful as sites for creating a shared social space with colonisers. With the departure of Logan and other cricketing enthusiasts among the occupying force, cricket gradually lost some of its pre-eminence and utility. Increasingly, moreover, officials drew a ‘colour line’ to exclude Samoans from ‘European’ social occasions. Thus while one local observer noted approvingly that Tate joined in sports and encouraged socialising between the various elements of Samoan society, he later complained that New Zealand officials “live by themselves, for themselves, and only entertain each other”.

This social distance was frequently reinforced rather than suspended through sport. In 1936, a report in the New Zealand press indicated that association football (soccer) had recently been taken up, but registration was confined to those with European status. A similar mode of segregation emerged in rugby union, which steadily gained in popularity during the 1920s and 1930s. At first, the game was strictly a ‘European’ one. Speaking in 1924, a New Zealand official on furlough told the *New Zealand Herald* that Samoans could not yet participate because they were not ‘civilised enough’ to understand a rugby tackle was not “a personal affront”. By 1928, however, the *Auckland Star* claimed that the islands’ five senior and five junior teams comprised only Samoan players. For their part, New Zealanders were largely limited to coaching and

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52 Boyd, ‘Racial Attitudes of New Zealand Officials’, p. 142. It is also true that historians’ estimation of the Mau’s role in New Zealand-governed islands has been shaped by subsequent events. While Western Samoa attained independence in 1961, the US-controlled islands remain an unorganised and unincorporated territory of the United States of America.
54 ‘Samoans at Sport’, *Evening Post*, 19 August 1936, p. 16.
refereeing duties – they were said to find the hot and sticky conditions too ‘exacting’ for their tastes.56

Despite this considerable impediment, Samoans did find occasion to navigate colonisers’ presence through rugby. At the height of the anti-Administration Mau campaign in 1928, for instance, HMS Diomede visited Samoa “to remind the islanders that the Administration there had at least the moral support of the British Navy”. “The sons of the Mau”, as the Auckland Star dubbed them, duly defeated the naval side with ease in the blazing sunshine. With soccer and hockey teams also playing matches in Apia, the Star’s reporter asserted that “British sport will go a long way to smooth over some of the little differences” between the Administration and the Mau.57 Rugby was again used in this capacity when the Governor of New Zealand, Lord Bledisloe, visited Samoa in 1933. The Governor General was impressed with their play and promised to give news of the game’s development to the rugby authorities in New Zealand.58 These cases were largely exceptional, however. The dearth of regular participation by New Zealanders meant that rugby had relatively limited utility as a means of nurturing a shared social space with colonisers.

If the normal sectional divisions in colonial society were often reinforced on the rugby field, cricket was relatively more effective in suspending them. Malifa became the first Samoan school to organise an English cricket team in 1921 and other schools soon followed suit. According to Safua Akeli, school cricket tournaments were “hotly contested” during the 1920s, with New Zealand officials and teachers taking an active interest in coaching and organising play.59 Even so, regular league play involving club sides was increasingly replaced with frequent but irregular matches between scratch teams. Speaking in 1924, the Administrator’s aide de camp reported that while there were four regular sides, it was only when a warship visited that the game attracted the public’s attention.60 By the early-1930s, moreover, cricket was limited to a series of matches arranged every few weekends between alphabetical or ‘Foreign’ vs. ‘Local’ elevens.

Even as cricket’s fortunes declined, Samoans continued to exploit the temporary proximity to colonisers that it afforded them. A particularly striking example came in March 1926, when the inhabitants of Safune, a village on Savai’i, entertained a large party of guests at the opening of their

new cricket pitch. This would not have been noteworthy in itself – such festivities frequently accompanied the opening of a kirikiti pitch – except that the inaugural match was played in “the European style of cricket” against a side of papalagi guests, including a senior official in the administration. The Samoa Times reported that the locals won handsomely, while “nothing was lacking” in either the food or entertainment provided.61 Samoans also sought to cultivate cordial relationships with papalagi by participating in more conventional settings. In October 1930, for example, a Samoan side defeated the local Europeans twice in a week on account of “their really excellent fielding”. The Administrator, Colonel Stephen Allen, attended the first match in the afternoon.62 After attempts were made to formally revitalise the game in 1932, moreover, Samoans were once again enthusiastic participants. Indeed Tolo, a Samoan government official, frequently appeared for the ‘Administration’ side against ‘Commerce’ and in other fixtures.63 Samoan participation was notably less pervasive than had been the case under military occupation, however, reflecting the game’s diminished utility in defining and maintaining relationships with colonisers.

While cricket’s significance as an instrument for navigating colonialism declined during the New Zealand civil administration, kirikiti’s certainly did not. In the first instance, Samoans used the game to entertain and impress New Zealanders so as to cultivate friendly relationships with them. Colonel Tate’s experiences – both before and after the formal transition to civil administration – are instructive in this regard. On 14 May 1919, the American Consul Mason Mitchell invited Tate to a kirikiti match. Upon arrival, they were greeted by Malietoa Tanumafili’s wife Momoe Lupeuluiva Meleiseā, who broke from play and “with the usual courtesy of the high class Samoan, immediately came over and… produced from somewhere mats that were spread on the grass and chairs for us to sit on”.64 Like papalagi observers of kirikiti before and after, Tate was captivated by the game: he described the catching as “excellent” and was particularly impressed by the wicketkeeper’s ability to catch “the balls thrown in sometimes with one hand and sometimes with the other”. More than the contest, however, Tate was taken with the spectacle: the colourful uniforms, the massed ranks of fielders joining in coordinated celebrations when a wicket fell, and the side not fielding “singing songs and dancing sivas” while they waited to bat.

Perhaps after hearing of Tate’s appreciation of the game, three days later he was invited to a game between Apia Village – led by Toleafoa – and the ‘native’ police, who were “very anxious

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61 "A Visitor", 'Savai'i to the Fore', Samoa Times, 26 March 1926.
62 'In the Field of Sport', Samoa Herald, 3 October 1930; ‘In the Field of Sport’, Samoa Herald, 10 October 1930.
63 See for example ‘Cricket’, Samoa Herald, 9 December 1932, p. 2.
64 Robert Ward Tate, Diary – 14 May 1919, MS-Papers-0264-43: Diary (Mar-May 1919), Tate, Robert Ward, 1864-1933 : Papers, ATL.

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that we should witness the game”. Tate’s hosts at this second match went out of their way to show their deference:

They had prepared what might be called a Royal Box by decorating the balcony of an adjoining house with coconut leaves. Several officers were there to meet us and then we all went up into the balcony where chairs were provided and observed the game from there.65 Unsurprisingly for a team led by Toleafoa, the Apia side put on a spectacle for Tate and his company. Indeed, Tate suspected that they had set out to impress him with their “absolutely extraordinary” antics. A batsman’s dismissal saw the fielders

assemble on a signal, run round in circles, and shout and gesticulate, or form lines and go through contortions, or they would rush in a body about the place, performing various antics, and on one occasion they rushed up in a body to where we were and fell on the ground with the exception of one man, who saluted, and on another occasion they all rushed to where the opposing team were seated, fell on the ground in front of them and then poked out their tongues in derision.66

A week later Tate attended yet another match, again at the behest of Consul Mitchell. Tate was once more amused by the “furious antics” on display, including “actions implying derision or chaffing of the opposite side”.67

Kirikiti also served as a forum for more overt demonstrations of support for colonisers and colonial authority. Kirikiti pates [bats] were a common gift from Samoans to New Zealand officials. Logan kept one after he retired to Devonshire, while Wellington’s Te Papa museum holds several bats given to New Zealand public servants in Samoa.68 Samoans also used the kirikiti pitch to ‘perform’ loyalty for colonisers. Writing in January 1923, for instance, Tate reported to External Affairs on his recently completed malaga through relatively inaccessible parts of Upolu. His first such assignment had been conducted in late 1920, when Tate himself was something of an unknown quantity outside of Apia and with the anger of the Talune incident still raw. He perceived that his reception in the area had been marked by a veneer of formal respect, which he felt veiled underlying distrust:

The attitude of the natives along the South Coast was affected by the disaffection of the natives of the North Coast, and probably their greater politeness and courtesy prevented their showing it to me on that occasion.69

Two years later, however, he enthused that local attitudes had “completely changed for the better”. There were no uncomfortable questions or requests, while the atmosphere in the district “was one of cordiality, satisfaction and happiness”.

65 Robert Ward Tate, Diary – 17 May 1919, MS-Papers-0264-44: Diary (Apr-Jul 1919), ATL.
66 Ibid.
67 Tate diary, 24 May 1919, MS-Papers-0264-44: Diary (Apr-Jul 1919), ATL.
69 Tate to External Affairs, 27 January 1923, MS-Papers-0264-34: Reports and memoranda (1922-1923), Tate, Robert Ward, 1864-1933 : Papers, ATL.
Whether or not their sentiment was genuine, the locals certainly endeavoured to exhibit their satisfaction to Tate and his entourage. When Tate visited the village of Muliatele, on Upolu’s east coast, he was invited to observe a kirikiti match played in typical Samoan fashion. There were, Tate reported, 110 players on each side and the game was played on a malae “hardly big enough for the operations of an ordinary cricket eleven, surrounded by the fales [houses] of the village filled with onlookers”. Tate’s presence led to what he and his Secretary for Native Affairs regarded as an extemporaneous display of contentment from the participants:

Shortly after I had taken my seat, the play stopped for a short time – the whole of the players (most of them being villagers and not chiefs) advanced in a formed body, dropped on one knee and saluted.

It was a spontaneous act of homage to authority, quite unexpected, and one which I understand, in the German days, would only have been rendered, and perhaps was, under compulsion.\(^{70}\)

A kirikiti game with hundreds in attendance provided the ideal medium for conveying such favourable sentiments. As has been illustrated throughout this chapter and the one that preceded it, Samoans frequently used kirikiti to ‘perform’ accommodation for colonisers and the administrations they represented. Tate was certainly right to construe the salute as an “homage to authority”. Contrary to his interpretation, however, this episode appears to have been a carefully choreographed expression of support; it was anything but ‘spontaneous’.

Samoans also used the game to accommodate New Zealand colonialism in more tangible ways. For papalagi officials, ‘excessive’ kirikiti was incongruent with the administration’s stated aims of economic and social development. As such, drafting, upholding and even complying with anti-kirikiti laws were for Samoans part of a broader ‘accommodative’ strategy. Perhaps the most conspicuous adherents of this approach were the faipules (meaning representatives or councillors), who Richardson selected from each district to form a kind of ‘native parliament’. As an appointed body, the so-called Fono of Faipules was hardly representative of Samoan interests; Stewart Firth describes them as “willing partners in imposing measures which intruded into daily life and custom”.\(^{71}\) Indeed, despite Richardson’s protestations, one New Zealand cabinet minister dismissed the ‘native parliament’ as “an absolutely worthless body”; the only Samoans who endorsed it were the faipules themselves.\(^{72}\)

In 1926, for instance, the faipules passed a host of regulations that were neatly aligned with Richardson’s efforts to reshape the tenets of Samoan political and economic life. Traditional lands were to be divided to provide for individual ownership, government officials were given expanded

\(^{70}\) Ibid.


powers in village and district affairs, while new mechanisms were proposed for deciding the succession of titles. Unsurprisingly, a further regulation also limited kirikiti matches to two days per week in order to limit inter-village travel and stimulate production. As with most laws, day-to-day enforcement fell to appointed Samoan officials in the districts and villages. Perhaps the most ubiquitous of these was the pulenu’u, or ‘village mayor’, for whom the regulation of kirikiti was one of a growing number of responsibilities under New Zealand rule. As with the faipules, the pulenu’u owed his position to the administration. Faithful performance of his duties was thus an overt act of accommodating colonial authority, particularly given resistance within the village to these interventions. For local officials as much as the faipule, therefore, the kirikiti pitch was a site for accommodating New Zealand colonialism to further their own interests.

Kirikiti, resistance and protest under New Zealand civilian administration

This use of kirikiti to perform symbolic and real acts of accommodation was only one strategy open to Samoans, however. Samoan attitudes towards New Zealand rule were indelibly framed by Logan’s mishandling of the influenza epidemic in 1918. As New Zealand colonialism became increasingly interventionist during Richardson’s term as Administrator, moreover, many Samoans despaired at the subversion of customary ways of life and their continued exclusion from positions of authority. In the years following 1926 these grievances found expression in the Mau, which Paul Shankman describes as Oceania’s “most successful anti-colonial movement of this period”. The Mau was especially active between 1926 and 1935, when the anti-colonial Labour Party came to power in New Zealand and revoked the movement’s status as a ‘seditious organisation’. Although full independence was only achieved in 1962, the Mau’s success as an anti-colonial movement was more immediate; by the mid-1930s New Zealand had virtually abdicated its authority outside of Apia and left governance to customary Samoan political institutions. The Mau’s use of kirikiti reflected its more general goals: the game became a symbolic instrument for

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73 New Zealand Ministry of External Affairs, Mandated Territory of Western Samoa (sixth report of the Government of New Zealand on the administration of, for the year ended the 21st March, 1926), report prepared for the League of Nations General Assembly (Wellington: Government Publisher, 1926), p. 9.
74 As with the faipules, Richardson elevated pulenu’us to crucial decision-making roles, reasoning that they were less entangled in Samoan custom and thus more amenable to coordinating ‘progressive’ policies. See Paul Shankman, ‘Equatorial Acquiescence: Village Council and Pulenu’u in Western Samoa’, in William L. Rodman and Dorothy Ayers Counts (eds.), Middlemen and Brokers in Oceania (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), p. 221.
75 Traditionally, a village council comprising the matai from each extended family regulated conduct within the village. As Shankman points out, the pulenu’u thus frequently faced resistance from these former powerholders who resented outside interference in their affairs. See Shankman, ‘Equatorial Acquiescence’, pp. 220-222.
76 Ibid., p. 222.
resisting the New Zealand administration, protesting its policies and ridiculing its lack of effective authority in the face of Mau opposition.

For New Zealand officials, the prominent role played by members of the local European community was evidence that the Mau was “a movement of half-castes, vain, keen for power, cunning and not to be trusted”. Historians have largely repudiated this view, however. Damon Salesa, for instance, characterises the Mau as a coalition of distinct interests bound together by dissatisfaction with New Zealand rule: “the native involvement and that of Europeans or half-castes generally had different inspirations, but they were inextricably bound together”. Indeed at the village level Samoans led the strategy of passive resistance that characterised the movement in the late-1920s and early-1930s. Mau supporters refused to pay taxes, blockaded and inspected traffic through their villages, picketed Apia stores and imposed ‘fines’ on anyone who purchased goods from certain traders. They also defied the authority of Samoan officials appointed by the Administration and ignored laws that they regarded as interference in their own affairs. In villages where the Mau was ascendant – that is, in the overwhelming majority of cases – village councils would form their own committees, refuse to recognise government-appointed officials and sometimes even appoint a ‘rival’ pulenu’u to oppose the official appointee. Under such circumstances the Administration’s activities came to a standstill.

As a result of this neutered colonial authority, Samoans determinedly returned to practices that had been restricted in the mid-1920s as part of Richardson’s interventionist push. For Jocelyn Linnekin, fine-mat exchange was one such activity. Targeted by the administration as a ‘wasteful’ and disruptive practice, the exchange of fine mats thus “acquired new instrumental meaning…as a locus of resistance” during the Mau period. A similar mechanism operated with regards to kirikiti. In March 1930, for instance, the New Zealand Herald’s correspondent wrote a lengthy exposition claiming that Mau propagandists had overstated the movement’s significance. As evidence for this proposition, he cited the fact that Samoans were playing sport rather than engaging more overtly ‘political’ activities:

I might mention that during the past week a village in another part of the island played a cricket match with 90 men aside. The first side was out in three days, which is considered to be a very good

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77 Richardson to Nosworthy, 17 December 1926, IT 1/33/1, cited in Mary Boyd, ‘The Record in Western Samoa to 1945’, p. 149.
achievement on the part of the bowling. Here again there was no evidence of an excess of concern over the fortunes of the Mau men who are on the run.\textsuperscript{82}

This reading is misguided and even disingenuous, however. Kirikiti was limited to Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, so a three-day innings directly contravened the law. That Samoans were willing and able to disregard the law so openly shows the extent to which the Administration’s authority had been eroded outside of Apia. Indeed, following Linnekin’s view of fine-mat exchange, such contests are best understood as a symbolic site of ‘everyday resistance’ to colonial authority.

New Zealand newspapers frequently mischaracterised kirikiti matches as apolitical. A similar sentiment was expressed four years later in the \textit{Auckland Star}, which reported that initial unrest over the deportation of a Mau leader had been quickly forgotten. Instead, Samoans’ energies had been redirected to “the revival of a new craze – cricket”. “In all the villages”, the report continued, “village cricket games are going on between teams of different villages”.\textsuperscript{83} A month later the same correspondent was tentatively optimistic about reconciliation between the government and the Mau. In his estimation, Mau propaganda and a few ‘irreconcilable’ leaders were responsible for the ongoing stalemate. In general, however, he thought the locals were unconcerned with political matters: “The great mass of the Samoans, indeed, are indifferent, and show little interest either way. They are more interested in playing cricket than in Samoan politics”.\textsuperscript{84}

Such a dichotomy is of course nonsensical – as this thesis has repeatedly demonstrated, kirikiti and Samoan politics were inextricably linked. Kirikiti was not only a locus of ‘everyday resistance’ against the Administration’s attempts to control village life, but inter-village matches had served as a front for political meetings since the nineteenth century. Indeed, New Zealand officials themselves recognised that the tradition was alive and well in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{85} For Samoans the game was thus innately political. Even as appointed officials accommodated colonialism by restricting and policing kirikiti, therefore, Mau leaders and adherents in the villages used the game to navigate colonialism in a very different way. For them, kirikiti increasingly constituted resistance against the Administration’s encroachment into village life.

As well as this ‘everyday resistance’, Mau adherents also used kirikiti as a site for performing symbolic \textit{protest} against New Zealand colonialism. Indeed, the Mau frequently used sporting events as the pretext for showcasing the movement’s strength and simultaneously undermining – and even ridiculing – New Zealand authority. An early example of this occurred

\textsuperscript{82} ‘Samoans at Play’, \textit{New Zealand Herald}, 14 March 1930, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{83} ‘Nelson’s Exile’, \textit{Auckland Star}, 23 March 1934, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{84} ‘Mau in Samoa’, \textit{Auckland Star}, 21 April 1934, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{85} ‘Aiding and Abetting’, \textit{Samoa Herald}, 17 April 1930.
when New Zealand’s Minister for External Affairs, William Nosworthy, visited Samoa in June 1927. Nosworthy was charged with investigating the growing unrest, but he alienated Mau leaders by condemning it as a ‘European’ movement whose members sought to “sow the seeds of discord and disunion amongst the Samoan people” for their own benefit. Mau leaders responded to Nosworthy’s condescension by organising a boycott of the King’s Birthday Celebrations. Rather than attend and partake in Administration-organised games and regatta races, the Mau ran a rival gathering a few miles away. The Samoa Times described the event as “a covert attempt to draw away Samoans from the sports and regatta at Apia”. Certainly this was Nosworthy’s view. He accused the dissenting group – and the Europeans and ‘afakasi who had supposedly encouraged them – of undermining “the harmony of the celebrations of His Majesty’s birthday” and promised to take “drastic steps” to stop them.

Far from being cowed, the Mau escalated their activities over the following twelve months. Even as the prominent ‘afakasi businessman Taisi O.F. Nelson and other European supporters were deported to New Zealand, Mau adherents enforced a boycott of European businesses, held protest marches in contravention of the law and engaged in a host of other actions to undermine the Administration. Effective policing was made impossible by the sheer number of offenders engaging in non-violent protest: with the prisons overwhelmed, the police force took to loading men in lorries, driving them into the districts and unloading them with a warning that they were not to return to Apia wearing the Mau uniform. These instructions were, of course, politely ignored. An attempt to arrest the High Chief Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III was embarrassingly abandoned when the six officers charged with the task found themselves surrounded by hundreds of his supporters.

By the time the King’s Birthday celebrations came around in 1928, the newly installed Administrator Stephen Allen felt compelled to cancel the usual festivities on account of the unrest. According to the Auckland Star’s correspondent, however, the Mau were not deterred by this lack of official recognition:

At about 8am some 600 uniformed Mau followers marched on Apia with a brass band in attendance and a display of flags in front. A native with a large Union Jack led the procession, with two others carrying the Mau colours. The party marched directly to Central Office, where the band played the National Anthem, after which the Administrator came out and greeted the Mau chief Tamasese with a few words. The procession then went on to the village of Vaimoso, where native sports were held

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86 New Zealand Ministry of External Affairs, Mandated territory of Western Samoa (report of visit by W. Nosworthy, Minister of External Affairs to), report prepared for the League of Nations General Assembly, (Wellington: Government Publisher, 1927), p. 22.
for the rest of the day. The leading Mau chiefs played cricket.\textsuperscript{90}

If the previous year’s protest aimed to publicly undermine the Administration’s authority, this event presented a more nuanced message. Although the Mau’s rallying cry was ‘Samoa mo Samoa’ – Samoa for the Samoans – this was not necessarily a demand for immediate independence. Their complaints were more narrowly trained on the New Zealand administration. In March 1928, for instance, Tamasese outlined the Mau’s position: Samoa should “be run by the Samoans entirely, without white officials but under the British flag”.\textsuperscript{91} Indeed, when Nelson submitted a petition to the League of Nations four days later, he asked that the mandate be passed directly to the British Colonial Office if self-government was not forthcoming.\textsuperscript{92} By 1933 the Mau was calling for Samoa to follow the Tongan model of British ‘protection’ if independence was not viable.\textsuperscript{93} As such, Mau claimed its protest was directed at the interventionist New Zealand administration, rather than with British influence \textit{per se}.

The 1928 King’s Birthday celebrations saw Samoans ‘perform’ this message of protest to the Administration, the local public and the watching world. Kirikiti was an important part of this performance: the game was at once ‘pro-British’ and anti-colonial – and more specifically, against the interventionist New Zealand colonial administration that sought to control it. This tension only added to the already-incongruous spectacle of several hundred uniformed Mau supporters marching behind the Union Jack, singing ‘God Save the King’ and playing cricket, all the while symbolically protesting colonial rule by a British dominion. In the context of its other protest activities, these actions by the Mau also reinforced its message that a weak and ineffectual Administration could do nothing about the movement’s ongoing defiance. Instead, by organising their own celebrations and brazenly breaking the law, the Mau presented themselves as being effectively ‘in charge’ of Samoa.

Mau adherents continued to use kirikiti as a site of symbolic protest well into the 1930s. The actions of the so-called ‘Women’s Mau’ are particularly instructive. Women had been active in the Mau since its inception through fundraising, publicly wearing the Mau uniform, participating in meetings and playing in prohibited kirikiti matches. This role was greatly expanded after the events of 28 December 1929, when colonial police opened fire on a Mau parade at Apia’s waterfront and killed eleven Samoans, including the High Chief Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III. In the aftermath of these events, known as ‘Black Saturday’, the Mau was declared a seditious organisation and

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{90} ‘Our Samoan Letter’, \textit{Auckland Star}, 5 July 1928.
\item \textsuperscript{91} ‘Concessions to Mau’, \textit{New Zealand Herald}, 7 March 1928, p. 11.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Marc T. Greene, ‘Samoa To-day’, \textit{Auckland Star}, 7 September 1933, p. 11.
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military police arrived to crush the movement. Over 400 arrests were made and around 1500 male Mau supporters evaded capture by disappearing into the bush. Following Black Saturday, therefore, women increasingly became the public face of the movement.94 They continued to conduct meetings and hold kirikiti matches, but these actions were also combined with overt public expressions of protest. Protest was centred at Apia – where it was more likely to be observed by officials and foreign visitors – and complemented the Mau’s strategy of non-cooperation in the villages, as well as protestations in New Zealand and at the League of Nations in Geneva.

Kirikiti was an important part of this wider strategy. Throughout 1930, for instance, members of the Women’s Mau would meet to play the game near Apia in a public display of protest. That these events were political is not in doubt – they were recognised as such by both participants and observers, including New Zealand officials. Kirikiti enabled the Women’s Mau to raise funds and was thought to provide a front for meetings between Mau leaders. As was outlined in Chapter Six, one such match resulted in the nominally ‘European’ sisters Rosabel Nelson and Priscilla Muench being convicted on charges of aiding and abetting a seditious organisation. The game had been organised to raise funds for a solicitor who had incurred a fine in the course of defending the Mau in New Zealand. A Samoan constable also testified that Mrs Nelson had not played cricket with the others but had instead been in a fale next to Tamasese’s house engaged in political meetings.95

As was discussed in Chapter Six, prominent ‘afakasi women such as Nelson and Muench joined in kirikiti matches in part to affirm the shared commitment between Samoans and ‘Europeans’ against the New Zealand administration. This was only one element of their protest, however. Kirikiti was also the pretext for hundreds of women to dress in Mau colours and march in formation through Apia – past the onlooking papalagi officials, visitors and press – on their way to play at nearby Vaimoso village. Indeed, during the sisters’ trial some 600 Mau women gathered outside the High Court until the case was adjourned.96 Two weeks later a similarly large gathering made their way to Vaimoso to play kirikiti, which the Auckland Star’s correspondent reported was likely to be “a ‘blind’ to cover up the meetings of the leaders” nearby. They spent the day playing

94 According to Lisa MacQuoid, the Women’s Mau was “led by Ala Tamasese (widow of High Chief Tamasese Lealofi III), Rosabel Nelson (wife of Taisi O.F. Nelson and daughter of H.J. Moors, who had been a prominent European businessman), Paisami Tuimalealiifano (wife of Chief Tuimalealiifano), and Faamusami Faumuina (wife of High Chief Faumuina Fiame and daughter of Malietoa Laupepa)”, who she collectively terms the “four leading ladies of Samoa”. See Lisa P. MacQuoid, ‘The Women’s Mau: Female Peace Warriors in Western Samoa’ (MA diss., University of Hawai’i at Moana, 1995), pp. 26-27.
95 ‘Aiding and Abetting’, Samoa Herald, 17 April 1930.
and singing songs ridiculing the Administration on a field directly behind its offices.97 These very public processions and kirikiti matches occurred twice a week and lasted at least until the end of 1930, but they were especially well-attended on boat days when papalagi visitors were in Apia.98

This heightened attendance was, of course, entirely deliberate. The Star’s correspondent sneeringly reported the Mau women only seemed to appear when a New Zealand vessel was in port. While tourists might infer from “waving banners, drums and the general noise” that the Mau was still an active organisation, he claimed, “the residents… know that this is entirely wrong, for sometimes weeks pass without a sign of the Mau”.99 In one sense this accusation was correct: such matches were indeed part of a broader strategy of targeted public protest and anti-colonial propaganda. In 1932 the Pacific Islands Monthly reported that some 2,000 Mau women had held a ‘monster meeting’ to prove to the world and to the Administration that the movement was still ‘going strong’.100 When Taisi O.F. Nelson returned from exile in May 1933, moreover, he was greeted by the cheers of some 1500 Mau women assembled on the foreshore.101 As Nicholas Hoare has shown, Mau leaders and their supporters in New Zealand agreed that publicity was the key to the movement’s success. These instances of public protest and propaganda hence aimed to cultivate international interest and sympathy.102

Kirikiti matches can and should be understood in this context. Mau women clearly appreciated the game’s instrumental value: kirikiti matches soon became the pretext for large processions of women clad in Mau uniforms through Apia, for fund-raising Mau activities, and for covert political meetings. That this protest was purposive is shown by the manner in which it was timed to capture the attention of Administration, and – more importantly – the local and foreign press. Even as non-cooperation continued in the districts and Nelson made the Mau’s case in New Zealand and Geneva, therefore, the Women’s Mau used kirikiti to draw attention to the persistent anti-colonial sentiment ‘on the ground’ in Samoa.

This was far from an isolated instance. Mau adherents frequently employed the game as a forum for anti-colonial protest until the anti-colonial Labour Party’s victory in the November 1935 General Election in New Zealand. An especially vivid illustration of this strategy came in February 1935, when the Duke of Gloucester visited Samoa as part of a tour of British interests in the region.

102 Hoare, Harry Holland’s ‘Samoan Complex’, pp. 164-165.
The Duke’s visit was certainly a significant moment for members of the colonial government, who saw the occasion as an opportunity to demonstrate the success of New Zealand’s administration of Samoa on Britain’s behalf. In the days leading up to his arrival, the *Samoa Herald* described the Duke’s visit as “a red letter day in the annals of Samoa” and reminded its readers that “much was expected” by the Duke and the watching world. Indeed, the Duke brought with him press representatives from Australia and New Zealand, who reported daily on proceedings.

In November 1934, therefore, the Administrator presided over “a large and representative meeting of citizens” at the Courthouse to finalise the arrangements for the Duke’s visit. Every effort was made to ensure the occasion was successful: 10,000 miniature flags were ordered from England for the children; a general committee and various subcommittees were elected to organise the particulars of the visit; and an itinerary for the weekend was drafted, including official calls, a series of ‘native receptions’, a formal Address of Welcome, a citizens’ ball and a small dinner party at the Administrator’s residence. In the weeks before the Duke’s visit, the *Samoa Herald* devoted most of its attention to the impending festivities. Various articles appeared detailing the Duke’s itinerary, providing a ‘sneak peek’ at the Addresses of Welcome and advising readers of correct greeting etiquette. The *Herald* excitedly pronounced that, despite some untimely rainfall, “all will be in readiness for the great day”.

The event itself was marked by a souvenir supplement to the 8 February edition of the *Samoa Herald*, which contained articles detailing every aspect of the Duke’s visit in a parade of superlatives: his reception was ‘splendid’, the festivities ‘brilliant’ and the tour had overall been ‘most successful’. To New Zealand officials, therefore, the visit served as a valuable propaganda exercise to confirm the continued success of their colonial administration.

For the Mau, however, the Duke’s visit constituted an opportunity to protest New Zealand colonialism in a very public manner. They ignored the Administration’s invitation to attend ‘native functions’ organised for the Duke, correctly surmising that their presence would be interpreted as an endorsement of the *status quo*. Instead, they spent the day playing a series of forty-a-side kirikiti matches in the nearby villages. The choice of kirikiti was no coincidence. Foreign newspapers reported that the games had been organised as a ‘counter-attraction’ to ensure that the young people would not attend the official festivities. More pertinently, however, kirikiti encapsulated the

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Mau’s message of protest against New Zealand rule. As had been the case for Tamasese and his followers at the 1928 King’s Birthday celebrations, kirikiti allowed the Mau to perform an act that was ‘pro-British’ while simultaneously undermining the colonial administration. Indeed, cricket’s symbolic associations with ‘Englishness’ and the British Empire were precisely what gave the protest its subversive power and political potency.  

Mau leaders’ subsequent statements to the press confirm that this was a purposive act of protest. In a widely reported statement, the Mau affirmed their support for the Duke – and the Crown more generally – but their implacable opposition to New Zealand rule. According to Taisi O.F. Nelson, who was once again languishing in exile, the Mau’s leadership “extended a cordial welcome” to the Duke but felt unable to attend due to the Administration’s harsh laws and the Mau’s continued status as a seditious organisation. Indeed, several newspapers reported that Mau adherents would entertain the Duke himself, but could not countenance the presence of Government officials. Kirikiti, which simultaneously represented their embrace of British culture and their rejection of New Zealand interventionism, was perhaps the ideal vehicle for performing this message to the watching world.

Kirikiti’s newfound status as a site of anti-colonial protest reflected broader changes in how Samoans responded to New Zealand authority, of course. While ‘everyday resistance’ and even protest were hardly unheard of during the early-1920s, the relatively coherent nature of New Zealand administration meant that accommodation was a common strategy in the villages and districts – at least compared to the era of military occupation. As New Zealand colonialism took a more overtly interventionist turn, however, Samoans sought to pursue their interests in an altogether different way – by protesting en masse and seeking to end New Zealand rule. At no point, not even when several hundred military police were called upon, could New Zealand summon the requisite coercive force to guarantee their compliance. If accommodation signified the presence of colonial authority and resistance indicated its limits, the use of kirikiti as protest thus attests to Samoans’

108 This discussion draws on Malcolm MacLean’s analysis of the 1981 Springbok rugby tour to New Zealand, which precipitated widespread public protest – including a pitch invasion that prevented a match taking place at Hamilton and the famous flour-bombing of another match at Auckland’s Eden Park. For MacLean, the opposition campaign was potent precisely because of rugby’s “metonymical role in Aotearoa/New Zealand”, where it variously serves as a site of national celebration, a continuation of the frontier ethos and an embodiment of Pakeha [white] masculine identity. Rugby was hence an effective means of protesting dominant ideas of the nation, masculinity and racial equality. Malcolm MacLean, ‘Football as Social Critique: Protest Movements, Rugby and History in Aotearoa, New Zealand’, International Journal of the History of Sport 17:2 (2000), pp. 256-257.


growing conviction that the best response to New Zealand colonialism was not to come to terms with it or ignore it, but rather to actively challenge and change it.

**Conclusion**

As this chapter has demonstrated, cricket and kirikiti served as valuable and versatile instruments for Samoans as they navigated a quarter-century of New Zealand rule. Indeed, its underlying argument closely follows that of the previous chapter: Samoans’ use of the game reflected and embodied their more general responses to colonisers’ presence. When faced with a decidedly reluctant military administration, Samoans revived kirikiti in the districts in defiance of the law – even as they used cricket as part of a broader effort to build beneficial relationships with soldiers and officials. Civilian administration brought more coherent colonial rule, which in turn provided opportunities for Samoan officials to profit by regulating and policing kirikiti. The rise of the Mau, precipitated by an overtly intrusive administration, saw its adherents recast kirikiti as a forum for publicly protesting New Zealand rule. Despite the relatively compressed time period, therefore, Samoan actions on the cricket pitch ran the full gamut of accommodation and cooperation, resistance and even protest. These apparently disparate responses – and the role that cricket and kirikiti played in them – speak not only to the game’s heightened relevance under New Zealand rule, but equally to Samoan ingenuity and adaptability in the face of these changing circumstances.

Indeed, the diffuse ways that Samoans used cricket and kirikiti to navigate papalagi colonialisms – New Zealand or otherwise – speaks to the broader thematic currents in this thesis. By fundamentally rethinking cricket’s method and meaning, Samoans had since the 1880s made the game synonymous with contest and confrontation. Thereafter Samoans and papalagi alike sought to define and control this ‘contested space’ in order to further their own interests. If the shifting and often divided nature of coloniser interests was frequently manifest on the pitch, this was also true of Samoans themselves. Samoans did not respond to colonisers in a uniform manner, of course; they were instead guided by the particular challenges and opportunities presented to them at any given historical moment. Whatever strategy they adopted, kirikiti’s English origins and distinctive local elements – and conversely its association with ‘disruptive’ patterns of Samoan economic and political life – ensured it remained a valuable and versatile instrument in navigating the uncertainty of the contact zone. It is thus apparent that Samoans were every bit as innovative in their utilisation of kirikiti as in their creation of the game. Even if – in both cases – direct and indirect colonial influence was clearly apparent, this in no way diminished the centrality of Samoan agency in these processes. Kirikiti’s form and function may not have been ‘purely’ of Samoan manufacture, but in
both senses they had made the game fundamentally their own.
Conclusion

“Lima sefulu ai ma le lima
Ua mate le au-va’ a o le setima.
Ua malosi Apia, ua ngoto [sic] le Lā
Tofa soifua outou, tofa!

Fifty runs & five
The men of the steamer are beaten
Apia has conquered, the sun is setting.
It was a good fight. Good night! Good night!”

Some time in the 1890s – the precise date is uncertain – a diverse cast of players and spectators assembled at the makeshift cricket ground that bordered the British Consulate at Matautu, overlooking Apia Bay. The local side comprised British residents, ‘afakasi men, several Samoans and a Tongan cook. Their opponents, meanwhile, were drawn from one of the British warships that regularly visited Apia during the 1880s and 1890s. According to an unnamed observer-turned-raconteur, whose scrawled and retrospective account was notably sketchy on some details, the match resulted in a decisive victory to the locals after the crew were bundled out for 55 runs in their second innings. If the particulars of this account are in question, then the scene it conveys was a familiar one. As the preceding chapters have repeatedly demonstrated, many similar – and more often, in the case of kirikiti, dissimilar – matches took place during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Within a few short years of cricket’s introduction to the islands, therefore, the pitch was entrenched as a site where individuals within and between the categories of ‘coloniser’ and ‘colonised’ engaged, confronted and grappled with one another. As such, the game was symptomatic and indeed emblematic of the kinds of everyday contestation that took place in Samoa throughout the period of study. This unnamed account, and the Samoan umpire’s chant with which it symbolically concludes, thus provides an apt prelude to this closing chapter.

It also speaks to the broader arguments and discursive currents that have flowed through this thesis. In Samoa as elsewhere, sport in general and cricket in particular was an instrument for foreign soldiers, officials, colonists, missionaries to confirm their own identities in a foreign land, as well as reforming those of indigenous peoples. For all these intentions, indigenous peoples frequently altered sport’s meaning and used it to pursue interests that were entirely their own. In

1 Anon., ‘A Samoan cricket match’, 19--. MS-Papers-2702, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), Wellington, p. 11.
2 Many of the names that feature in this account are clear misspellings of – or poor guesses at – the names of prominent Apia residents in the mid-1890s. Contrary to the author’s account, moreover, it seems highly unlikely that the crew of *HMS Tulip* took part in the game – principally because no British naval ship held this name until the First World War.
exploring the history of cricket in the Samoan archipelago in the sixty years between 1879 and 1939, the thesis has confirmed this general observation about sport in the context of empire: the game’s history in the islands embodied and reflected a broader process of cross-cultural contestation between Samoans and papalagi. Drawing on Mary Louise Pratt’s notion of contact zones, we can thus see cricket as a medium through which this ‘grappling’ between colonised and colonisers took place. To better map the crowded and contested space of the cricket pitch, moreover, the thesis progressively probed several more particular enquiries, notably how and why Samoans embraced cricket and then so fundamentally reimagined its method and meaning, how broadly defined ‘colonisers’ perceived and responded to this ‘Samoanised’ sporting form, and how Samoans themselves used the game – in both its English and Samoan guises – to navigate the various colonialisms that they encountered during the period of study.

In the course of investigating these seemingly ancillary questions, however, the thesis has arrived at a markedly more complex view of cricketing contest in Samoa than we might have originally anticipated. The initial examination of cricket’s transmission and adoption in the islands provided the first indication that this was no ordinary narrative of sporting diffusion, appropriation and confrontation. While sport was frequently reoriented outside the metropole, often subversively, the changes Samoans wrought to cricket’s form and function were almost uniquely profound: modes of participation were revised to reflect Samoan social configurations; the equipment and techniques employed were tailored to local circumstances and sensibilities; and fa’a Samoa was strikingly apparent in the attendant elements and the social milieu in which the game was played. The resulting game owed as much to Samoan modes of recreation and social organisation as to English cricket. Following Fernando Ortiz and Pratt, this ‘Samoanised’ cricket – kirikiti – can thus be understood as an example of transculturation and situated within the wider context of Samoan innovation and selective appropriation of introduced cultural forms.

Kirikiti’s singular expression was, of course, indicative of broader and deeper processes of contestation in Samoa. If the game owed its distinctive elements in part to a more widespread Samoan genius for transculturation, the persistence of these features owed much to the fractured and tenuous nature of foreign influence and colonial control in Samoa – particularly in the late-nineteenth century. As well as reflecting this process of ‘grappling’, however, kirikiti also embodied it: Samoans’ initial act of transculturation rendered the pitch a contested space as papalagi found that the game’s distinctive features undermined their economic, political and proselytising objectives. As a result, they spent much of the next sixty years attempting to bridle its perceived excesses as part of more general efforts to control Samoan movement, exchange and politics. The contest that emerged on the cricket pitch in Samoa was therefore qualitatively
distinctive, even if the underlying processes were recognisably similar to those that took place through sport in other colonial contexts across the globe.

In exploring the nature of ‘coloniser’ responses to kirikiti, however, the thesis has shown that this initial picture of cross-cultural ‘grappling’ requires significant refinement. While it is fair to surmise that most foreigners were wary of kirikiti most of the time, this general statement obscures the specific and contingent ways that the game intersected with their interests. These interests were hardly homogenous: papalagi colonisation of Samoa in the nineteenth century was incremental and complicated by the competing claims of the three Great Powers – Britain, Germany and the United States. Even with the onset of formal colonial rule in 1900, any reference to ‘the colonial state’ could have variously described an American naval administration, a German colonial one or later New Zealand military and then civil rule. Quite aside from these distinct colonial administrations, the interests and perspectives of different groups of ‘colonisers’ – officials, missionaries, colonists and soldiers – were rarely identical at any single moment, let alone fixed across the period of study. Even a more nuanced binary approach is silent, moreover, as to the experiences and concerns of ‘afakasi men and women, who frequently found themselves ‘in between’ the broad categories of coloniser and colonised.

Unsurprisingly, this diverse cast of groups and individuals perceived and responded to kirikiti in markedly different ways. Colonial officials of all nationalities understood the game as a hindrance to imposing order and controlling Samoan bodies and politics. Their attitudes and responses to it were framed, however, by historically specific circumstances: personal beliefs and international rivalries were significant, as was the extent to which a colonial power was willing to intervene in Samoan politics and production, and their ability to mobilise coercive force in doing so. Missionaries understood kirikiti differently again: in their minds, ‘heathen conduct’ was as much of a concern as political and economic disruption. In addition, despite an early consensus that kirikiti undermined their ambitions, there were notable discrepancies in how different individuals and denominations attempted to control it. As time went on, moreover, missionaries acquiesced and adapted to kirikiti’s place in Samoan social life – given the game’s stubborn popularity, they could do little else.

Any lingering notion of a coherent ‘coloniser response’ to kirikiti is rendered yet more problematic by considering the respective attitudes of white colonisers, ‘afakasi men and women and Anglophone naval crews and soldiers. While their lives – if not always their interests – elided on cricket pitches around Apia, their attitudes towards kirikiti were strikingly different: for white colonists, the game’s economic and political effects made it an unqualified menace; ‘afakasi men and women used kirikiti to maintain their networks with Samoan kin and neighbours, even as they
employed English cricket to confirm their place in the European ‘world’; while military men actively welcomed kirikiti as an amusing diversion from the tedium of ship and garrison life. As such, there was no ‘colonial’ response to kirikiti, but rather an array of responses reflecting the different ‘colonialisms’ present in the islands. Indeed, such disparate and sometimes discordant ‘coloniser’ reactions are indicative of the more general processes of contestation within the broad category of ‘colonisers’ that took place in Samoa throughout the period of study.

Returning to matters of Samoan agency confirms this increasingly entangled cricketing landscape. Papalagi presence presented Samoans with a series of challenges and opportunities as they sought to protect and further their own interests. In part because they elicited such strong reactions from papalagi, both cricket and particularly kirikiti were valuable instruments as Samoans sought to navigate these colonialisms to their best advantage. Indeed, the cricket pitch revealed divisions between ‘the colonised’ as much as it did among ‘colonisers’. In Samoan hands, cricket and particularly kirikiti were repeatedly harnessed as a means of signalling support for – and opposition to – particular groups of colonisers. More generally, the pitch was a site for pursuing strategies of accommodation, resistance and even protest as part of Samoans’ more broadly instrumental approach to different forms of colonial presence and power. Very frequently, some Samoans played the game as a means of resistance or protest in defiance of colonial officials, even as others – by legislating and policing it – accommodated them so as to benefit from their support.

In general, however, Samoans’ strategies for navigating papalagi colonialism reflected the forms of colonial power they faced: when power was fragmented, they were more likely to engage in ‘everyday’ resistance with impunity; when colonisers could exercise coercive power more effectively, accommodation became an increasingly attractive path. In addition, overt intrusion into customary life – even when backed up by coercive power – was liable to result in open protest, as it did with the Mau during New Zealand’s interventionist administration. These broader patterns were once again manifest on the pitch: when colonial power was particularly tenuous in the nineteenth century Samoans simply ignored attempts to restrict the game; with the onset of formal colonisation, however, accommodation in the form of formulating, policing, and abiding by laws became relatively more common – even if it was by no means universal. Even within this broad tenor, specific changes in colonial power – such as the New Zealand occupation of German Samoa – could alter Samoans’ strategic calculi and their approaches to cricket and kirikiti. Examining these shifts in Samoan cricketing habits, therefore, allows us to track historical variations and points of unevenness in the nature of colonial power in the islands.

In exposing these caveats and complexities, the thesis has sketched a much richer and more dynamic picture of cricket’s history in Samoa. From the beginning, the cricket pitch was defined by
innovation, conflict and unceasing contestation. While the Samoan transculturation of cricket rendered the game a highly visible site of cross-cultural ‘grappling’, this was only the broadest of many confrontations manifested on the pitch. Indeed, it is only in moving beyond a binary ‘coloniser-colonised’ approach that we can begin to map and understand the nature of contest in Samoa. The image of Samoa that is refracted through the lens of cricket is that of a jostling, crowded field: in this context, the cricket pitch was a site of real and symbolic contest with many different players involved. Individuals and groups within and between the categories of Samoans and papalagi endeavoured to shape the game’s method and meaning in ways that suited their own interests, which were themselves neither uniform nor fixed. In conclusion, therefore, cricket’s history in Samoa can be read not as a simple process of ‘grappling’ between two discrete parties, but rather a multidimensional contest with indistinct boundaries and shifting allegiances – that is to say, a fair reflection of Samoa during the period of study.

Indeed, these general conclusions are suggestive of several promising avenues for further investigation. Firstly, even as this thesis contributes to scholarship on the ‘everyday’ history of Oceania and especially Samoa, it also draws attention to the dearth of similarly quotidian accounts. Analyses of other aspects of daily life – be they sport and games, labour, clothing, music, food, sex or any other topic typically ignored in political and religious histories – should provide a clearer picture of how Samoans and other islanders went about their lives and those activities that gave them meaning. As historians perusing the archive, it is easy to assume that those matters that speak loudest in that forum were the ones that held our protagonists’ collective attention. Then as now, however, it was the everyday – the seemingly ordinary – that gave the most meaning to their lives most often, as it does our own. Further social history studies should contribute, therefore, to our understanding of how shifting patterns of power relations since the mid-nineteenth century have touched Samoans’ everyday lives in ways that were often profound – and how, day-to-day, they responded creatively and contingently to the unique challenges and opportunities these changes presented.

In Samoa and throughout Oceania, sport is a particularly promising subject for this kind of scholarly enquiry. While a growing number of social scientists have begun exploring Islanders’ experiences of sport in the twenty-first century, historians have been notably absent from these efforts. This thesis has demonstrated that many of the themes contemporary scholars are preoccupied with – identity formation and performance, processes of indigenisation and navigating foreign influence in an increasingly interconnected world – resonated as strongly in the sporting past as they do in the present. More generally, for at least the past 150 years, sport and games were as important for Samoans as they are today. In the Samoan context, historically situated analyses of
other sports should hence enrich our understandings of how these cultural forms provided meaning in people’s daily lives, as well as the patterns of engagement, adaptation and contestation that underpinned their introduction and subsequent practice. Given its long heritage in Samoa and its significance in village life, rugby provides one such focus. Equally, however, accounts of other ‘Samoanised’ forms such as fautasi racing would provide a clearer picture of sport – and life – in the islands. Indeed, the prominence of fautasi races in colonial sporting competitions speaks to how sporting competitions were used to mark physical and public spaces in ways that mediated and reflected power relationships in colonial society. In mapping these unexplored sites of Samoan history, further research should not only provide a deeper comprehension of Samoa’s past but also a means of framing and understanding its sporting present.

Secondly, in taking a regional view it is clear that cricket’s history in Oceania is also worthy of further investigation. While scholars have examined the ways that ‘the Imperial Game’ was adapted and utilised in the Trobriands and in Fiji, many distinctive Islander cricketing stories have yet to be told. This silence is particularly conspicuous with regards to Tonga, where the game initially took on a transcultural character but was gradually returned to its recognisably English form. Indeed, early observers estimated that kirikiti owed as much to Tongan innovations as Samoan ones, and accounts of Tongan cricketing prowess were legion until at least the 1920s. A history of cricket in Tonga would expose these underlying themes of appropriation and contestation and thus merits further research.

Cultural historians, moreover, may wish to consider the ways that cricket in the region was used as a device to confirm contemporaneous understandings of race in the metropole and the nearby imperial ‘nodes’ of Australia and New Zealand. As was indicated in this thesis, kirikiti and other regional adaptations of cricket often featured in papalagi accounts of life in the islands. In their hands, cricket was a curio to entertain foreign readerships and audiences at speaking engagements; the pitch featured in these accounts as a site where naturally athletic – yet fundamentally childlike – ‘natives’ had grasped cricket, and civilisation, only imperfectly. Foreign newspaper coverage of these general accounts, moreover, accentuated this picture of alterity by leading with headlines that put the game’s distinctive local elements front and centre. Other

accounts, moreover, sought to rank the various Islander populations according to contemporaneous notions of stadial development. Along with their adherence to European political institutions, religious practices and musical tastes, their relative adherence to cricketing orthodoxy was a marker of civilisation.\(^4\) While several scholars, notably Andrew Grainger, have argued that media representations of Islander rugby players are part of a wider process of ‘othering’,\(^5\) the language and tropes used to describe Islander cricketers performed a strikingly similar function in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Further investigation of these broader processes of imagining and representing Islanders should therefore provide insight into continuities and changes in metropolitan perceptions of Islanders, as well as the ideas that underpinned these views.

Thirdly, while this thesis closes with the onset of the Second World War, the history of Samoan – and Islander – cricket certainly did not end in 1939. It did, however, become significantly more diffuse. As Samoans increasingly migrated to New Zealand, Australia and the United States in the second half of the twentieth century, they took ‘their’ cricket with them and sought to maintain a distinctive group identity through it, much as William Churchward and other ‘Britishers’ sought to do in the previous century. While Samoan and Islander rugby has received significant attention in this capacity, kirikiti’s ongoing association with another pillar of Samoan life in the diaspora – the Church – indicates that it too is worthy of scholarly enquiry. This would be a very different kind of study, relying on oral histories and interviews rather than archival and newspaper sources to access and record diasporic voices and stories. Further research into kirikiti’s history outside of Samoa should therefore enrich our understanding of what mattered in the daily lives of Samoans outside of the islands; it would also speak to the ways that they have continued to adapt and reimagine ‘the Imperial Game’ to retain their own values and customs, even as they moved from the edges of empire and towards its centre.

Finally, and most broadly, this thesis has pursued several arguments that hold more general application for historians of sport. At first, it might appear that the story of Samoan cricket is fundamentally a local one: in few places did introduced sporting forms undergo quite so radical a transformation, while its tumultuous political history and extended cast of foreign and local interests is also distinctive, if not unique. Even so, two features of this ‘footnote to sport history’ are of more general interest to historians of sport and empire. During the late-nineteenth century,

imperial expansion increasingly made much of the world into contact zones not unlike Samoa. These spaces were invariably marked by significant heterogeneity beyond a simple ‘coloniser-colonised’ distinction. Just as kirikiti is suggestive of these broader – and narrower – dimensions of contest in Samoa, so sport served the same purpose in other imperial contexts. The Samoan case reminds us that dichotomous ‘coloniser-colonised’ analyses are rarely sufficient in explaining sport, and life, in the contact zone. Instead, sporting contests featured a crowded field of groups and individuals, whose strategies on the pitch shifted, overlapped and elided as they pursued their own distinctive interests.

Similarly, if kirikiti represents a singularly striking example of sporting transculturation, the underlying process of ‘mixing’ is one that took place – and continues to take place – in contact zones across the globe. Wherever two or more distinctive traditions came into contact new ‘hybrid’ cultural forms were created, used and understood in different ways. As highly visible cultural forms, sport and games frequently enabled individuals and groups to pursue their interests in the flux and uncertainty of the contact zone. Even if they were less vivid than kirikiti, changes in sport’s method and meaning could take on great import in this broader context of social cleavages and concomitant contest. While scholars have been happy to explore processes of diffusion, adoption and adaptation in some colonial contexts, this thesis contends that important and revealing histories are not the preserve of the metropole and large settler colonies. Further research into such instances of ‘mixing’ at apparently peripheral contact zones should hence deepen our understanding of wider issues pertaining to power, politics, culture, difference and identity – in these individual locales and more generally. While the case of Samoan kirikiti may be distinctive, therefore, it is also instructive in illuminating the ways that sport can represent and embody everyday contestation – both at the edges of empire and in our own lives today.
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New Zealand Herald (Auckland)

New Zealand Truth (Wellington)

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Star (Christchurch)

Sun (Christchurch)

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Argus (Melbourne)

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Mercury (Hobart)

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Referee (Sydney)
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**Lectures, Web Pages and Audiovisual Materials**


Appendix A: selected Samoan titles and titleholders

(Sometimes preceded by ‘the’ unless linked to a personal name)

Afamasaga
An important title in the district of A’ana, on the western side of Upolu. Notably held by Afamasaga Maua (from c. 1900 to 1918) and then his younger brother, Afamasaga Toleafoa Lagolago (from 1919 to 1933).

Malietaoa
One of the four paramount titles in Samoan genealogy, notably held by Malietaoa Laupepa (from 1879 to 1898) and Malietaoa Tanumafili I (from 1898 to 1939).

Mata’afa
One of the four paramount titles in Samoan genealogy, held most notably by Mata’afa Iosefo from at least the early-1880s until his death in 1912.

Mauga
The High Chief of Pago Pago Bay in Tutuila’s Eastern District (American Samoa). Notably held by Mauga Moi Moi (from c. 1900 to 1934) and, after a period of indeterminacy, Mauga Sialega thereafter. The Mauga titleholder generally held the District Governorship of the Eastern District under US Naval rule.

Taisi
An important title in the Tupua lineage, notably held by Taisi O.F. Nelson, a prominent figure in both Samoan and papalagi circles, from around 1918 until his death in 1944.

Tamasese
One of the four paramount titles in Samoan genealogy, held most notably by Tupua Tamasese Titimaea (from c. 1870 to 1891), Tupua Tamasese Lealofi I (from 1891 to 1915) and Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III (from 1918 to 1929).

Toleafoa
Like Afamasaga, an important title in the district of A’ana, on the western side of Upolu. Notably held by Toleafoa Lagolago (from c. 1910 to 1933).

Tufele
The High Chief of Fitiuta on eastern Ta’u Island in the Manu’a group (American Samoa). Notably held by Tufele Fa’atofa (from c. 1925).

Tuiti
The High Chief of Fofo ma Itulagi County in Tutuila’s Western District (American Samoa). Notably held by Tuiti Tuiatu (from around c. 1915 to c. 1933), who was also a District Governor under the US Naval Administration.
### Appendix B: selected foreign officials in Samoa

#### American, British and German officials, c. 1879-1899

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brandeis, Eugen</td>
<td>Premier in the German-backed Tamasese government of 1887-1888.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cusack-Smith, T.B.</td>
<td>British Consul, May 1890- Jan 1895; Sep 1895- Mar 1898.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawson, Thomas M.</td>
<td>American Consul, 1878- c. 1882.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahaffy, Arthur</td>
<td>British official who held various positions in Oceania during the 1890s and 1900s. He visited Samoa during the mid-1890s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewall, Harold</td>
<td>American Consul, 1887-1890; 1891-1892.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuebel, Oskar</td>
<td>German Consul, 1883-1887; 1889-1891.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber, Theodore</td>
<td>Long-term manager of the Hamburg firm Godeffroy’s (later the D.H.P.G.) and German Consul 1870-1872; 1875-1880.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodford, Charles M.</td>
<td>Acting British Consul, Jan- Sep 1895, later Resident Commissioner of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (1896-1915).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Officials in German Samoa, 1900-1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schnee, Heinrich</td>
<td>Chief Justice, 1900-1901; Deputy Governor, 1900-1904.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schultz, Erich</td>
<td>Chief Justice, 1901- ?; Deputy Governor, 1904-1911; Governor, 1911-1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solf, Wilhelm</td>
<td>Governor, 1900-1911 (previously council chairman in provisional government of Apia, 1899-1900).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Officials in US Naval Station Tutuila (later American Samoa), 1900-1939

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bryan, Henry F.</td>
<td>Governor, Mar 1925- Sep 1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byington, Jr., M.B.</td>
<td>Attorney General, c. 1936- c. 1937.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crose, William M. Governor, Nov 1910- Mar 1913
Evans, Waldo A. Governor, Nov 1920- Mar 1922
Graham, Stephen V. Governor, Sep 1927- Aug 1929.
Gurr, Edwin W. Secretary of Native Affairs, 1900-1908
Hall, Sydney D. Secretary of Native Affairs, 1921- c. 1924
Moore, Charles B.T. Governor, Jan 1905- May 1908
Poyer, John M. Governor, Mar 1915- Jun 1919
Sailor, H.A Attorney General, c. 1935- c. 1936
Sebree, Uriel Commandant, Nov 1901- Dec 1902
Stearns, Clark D. Governor, Jul 1913- Oct 1914
Stronach, Alexander Secretary of Native Affairs, c. 1913-1918.
Tilley, Benjamin F. Commandant, Feb 1900- Nov 1901
Underwood, Edmund B. Commandant/Governor, May 1903- Jan 1905

Officials in occupied German Samoa (1914-1920) and Western Samoa (1920-1939)

Allen, Stephen S. Administrator, May 1928- Apr 1931
Hart, Herbert E. Administrator, Apr 1931- Jul 1935
Loftus Tottenham, Provost Marshall of Occupying Force, Judge in Department of
Arthur G. Native Affairs (1914-1918).
Logan, Robert Administrator, Aug 1914- Jan 1919
Richardson, George S. Administrator, Mar 1923- Apr 1928
Tate, Robert W. Administrator, Jan 1919- Mar 1923
Turnbull, Alfred C. Administrator, Jul 1935-1946