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Between two worlds: Italian immigrants and football in America (Argentina, Brazil, USA)

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I migranti italiani hanno dato un contributo sostanziale alla crescita del calcio in Sud America (Argentina e Brasile) e negli USA. Ma il calcio è stato allo stesso tempo anche una via di integrazione e mantenimento dell'italianità. Le società sportive create da migranti italiani, quando i colori nazionali o il nome si riferiscono al loro paese di origine, dimostrano l'attaccamento dei propri membri alla patria. I club etnici non potevano evitare completamente il processo di integrazione che si verifica quando le generazioni si succedono, né superare i vincoli imposti all'introduzione del calcio nella cultura nazionale del paese di destinazione. Non tutti i giocatori italiani immigrati nelle Americhe sono stati simboli di integrazione. Le scelte di carriera hanno portato alcuni a riattraversare l'oceano e tornare nella patria dei genitori o dei nonni e persino, in alcuni casi, a far parte della nazionale italiana.

Parole chiave: Sport; Calcio; Migrazioni; Italia; America

In the 19th century, the British invented football (soccer, in the United States) and, thanks to their imperialist politics, introduced the sport to the rest of the world (Darbon, 2008). The agents of British Imperialism (sailors, merchants, industrialists, diplomatic and colonial civil servants, migrants) were among the first to bring the game to South and North America. However, at the beginning of the 20th century, British influence

in North and South America was overshadowed by a growing number of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe's working-class neighbourhoods where football was popular (Murray, 1996: 32).

In this trans-Atlantic flow, there was a large number of Italians. Between 1876 and 1915, 4.15 million Italians left for the United States, 1.78 million for Argentine and 1.2 million for Brazil. The history of Italian emigration has been the subject of many publications, including research on conditions for the integration and assimilation of migrants (Sanfilippo, 2015). The practice of sports is «commonly seen as a functional means for assimilation and integration, rather than the integration of ethnic boundaries» (Van Rheenen, 2009: 782). These two aspects, assimilation and ethnic identity, are not necessarily poles apart and research in social sciences has shown that they are in fact complementary (Kivisto, 1990; Shenton, 1990). A loyal sentiment of belonging to society and the adoption of national values in the country of destination are not contradictory to maintaining Italianness, since this is seen as a cultural identity. It is possible to take a transnational approach (Baily, 1999) that takes into account the modalities of "adjustment" (Nelli, 1867). If, as Roger Waldinger (2004) has suggested, this approach is less innovative than it might appear to historians, it has the merit of offering a rich and recent historiography for Italian migration (Tirabassi, 2005; Corti, 2013). Here the interest lies in applying this approach to football, which, as a game but also as a social culture, offers a substantial «capacity for mobilization and for demonstration of a sense of belonging» (Bromberger, 1998: 45). Commonly known as "the world game", football also contributes to the development of identity at the local, national, transnational and global levels (Foer, 2004). For Italian migrants in the Americas, football is certainly an integral part of this plurality.

The way multiple identities intertwine varies in terms not only of the period when migration occurred, but also of the role played by football in the social and cultural context of the country of destination. Argentina, Brazil and USA offer an interesting opportunity for a comparative study (Green, 1990) that will contribute to the cultural history of Italian migration.

Ethnic clubs and Italianness

Sports clubs created by Italian migrants, when the national colours or the name refer to their country of origin, demonstrate their members' attachment to the homeland. The first of these clubs, for which football was not the only sport, appeared in Brazil and the United States in the 1910s. Sao Paulo, which welcomed 70% of Italian migrants to Brazil between 1870 and 1920 (Holloway, 1980: 37), saw the foundation of many clubs during that decade: Palestra Italia di San Carlo, FC Italo, Juventus, Palestra Italia di Santos, Palestra Italia-Ribeiro Preto and, in particular, Società Sportiva Palestra which was to become the largest Italian association in the city (Trento, 1992). Created in 1914 after a visit by two clubs from Italy, Pro-Vercelli and Torino, Società Sportiva Palestra adopted the colours of the homeland's flag (green, white and red) and added the Savoy royal blazon and set up a team of players who were either Italians or sons of Italians (De Campos Araújo, 2000).

In the United States, the major area of Italian immigration had similar clubs. Despite abundant research on Little Italies in New York, which has the largest Italian population in the United States, there are no references to this sport. Sociological and ethnographical studies on activities by youths, many of whom were Italian, in the streets of New York in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, do not discuss soccer (Spano, 1994). But according to Carmelo Bazzano (1994: 112) «during the 1920s, many Italian soccer clubs had been established in the Italian neighborhoods of many eastern cities»; some of them in New York City. In Chicago – the third largest Italian population in USA after New York and Philadelphia (Candeloro, 2003: 151) – the first Italian sports clubs were created in 1929. St. Louis was also an important place of Italian soccer during the 1920s (Mormino, 1982). In San Francisco, where there was a substantial Italian community in North Beach, we know that the largest sports club, Circolo Recrativo Italiano Virtus was founded in 1917, followed by two more clubs in 1919: Unione Sportive Italiana and Sporting Club Italiana. In 1921, Sporting Club Italiana and Circolo Recrativo Italiano Virtus merged and the new club was renamed Italia Virtus Club before again

merging, this time with Unione Sportiva italiana, and becoming Unione Sportiva Italia Virtus in 1926 (Van Rheenen, 2009).

Given that both countries had an Italian migrant population for several decades by the time these sports clubs were founded, this seems to be a relatively late phenomenon. In 1912, *Fanfulla*, Sao Paolo's Italian newspaper, launched an appeal:

> In Sao Paulo we have… football clubs for the Germans, English, and Portuguese, an international club and even clubs for Catholics and Protestants, but nothing has [yet] been done to create a club composed entirely of Italian "sportsmen" even though we have the largest colony in the state (Bocketti, 2008: 282).

In Chicago USA, when the Maroons club was founded, there were already teams of Irish, Scottish, Swedes, Danes, German, Hungarians, Bohemians and even Jews in the local soccer championship (Trouille, 2008).

There are several reasons for this interval between the arrival of migrants and the creation of clubs. In one of the first studies published, in 1929, on the Italo-American community in the United States, Giovanni Schiavo (1929: 81) noted that «It is well known that, as a whole, the Italian immigrant has not brought with him any tradition of national games… the only pastime for which the immigrant is noted is apparently *bocce* – an Italian game resembling lawn bowling».

The traditional games that attracted the most interest from migrants were Bocce and Pallone in its many forms, the most popular being Pallone col bracciale[1]. In fact, Pallone was the reason behind a first attempt to organize an ethnic sports team for New York's Italian community in 1877: it was a failure (Gems, 2013: 1). The principal sport practised by Italian migrants was cycling, which was very popular in Italy (Marchesini, 2009). The Unione sportiva italiana, one of the oldest Italian sports clubs in New York, was been particularly successful (Bazzano, 1994: 108). However, the conditions for introducing football were not

[1] Balls are struck back and forth with a wooden cylinder, called a bracciale, worn over the forearm. Pallone is often played on courts marked out on town streets or in sferisteri for championship.

particularly favourable, as it did not become a popular sport in Italy until the First World War (Papa-Panico, 1993; Dietschy, 2014; Dietschy-Pivato, 2019). At the time, most migrants came from poor rural areas, and soccer was mainly seen as a «game for the young urban elite» (Lanfranchi, 1994).

Among Italian communities abroad, it was often the elite who encouraged the creation of football clubs and many other associations, including the numerous mutual support groups which, frequently organized cultural activities (Bugiardini, 2002; Bertagna, 2002). More importantly, the main purpose of Italian associations was to promote solidarity amongst their members, maintain the image of their homeland, and develop cultural activities: football clubs clearly contributed to meeting these objectives. They gave the Italian migrant a community structure and were encouraged by the Italian government which, in the early 20th century, sought to "nationalize" migrants who did not have a strong feeling of belonging to a country that had only recently been unified (Choate, 2008). The Italian consulates, which maintained close links with the local ethnic elite, played a key role in this process which was reinforced by the Fascist regime's policies during the 1920s and 1930s (Franzina-Sanfilippo, 2003; Pretelli, 2010). The creation of the Italian club, the Maroons, in Chicago in 1929 appears to have been influenced by a «heightened nationalism of fascist Italy» (Candeloro, 2003). The merger of San Francisco's football clubs into the Italian Athletic Club in 1936 appears to have been part of a "mainstream" approach which, if it did not give rise to massive numbers of migrants joining the Fascist cause, did in fact strengthen their identification with Italy.

The Church also played an important role in maintaining this sentiment and in providing structure for migrants by sending out missionaries (Rosoli, 1996; Principe, 2009). In St Louis's Hill district, with a 90% Italian population, membership of football teams organized by parishes was clearly based on ethnic background in the 1920s through the presence of Italian priests seeking to reduce violence among migrant youths (Mormimo, 1982).

In many cases, the clubs took on a social function other than sport either by bringing immigrants into a larger social network or by organizing charitable and cultural activities. In Sao Paolo, Società Sportiva Palestra offers a good example of mutual support and solidarity activities offered by ethnic clubs (Bocketti, 2008: 286). Similarly, «[b]eyond their social function, many teams [from Chicago's ethnic clubs] also provided essential community services, such as helping players acquire jobs, housing and loans» (Trouille, 2009: 802). In addition, Gerald R. Gems noted (2013: 39) that:

> For many Italian immigrants of the first and second generations [in the United States], pride in Italy was a matter of self-respect and social recognition. They propagated information of the Italian nation in order to gain attention and acceptance from the other ethnic groups and the mainstream population. For some Italians, economic reasons also may have played a role in their efforts to support identification with Italy and with the various Italian groups. Businessmen may have hoped that the united Italian populace in the United States would provide greater commercial opportunities and additional patrons beyond their own paesani. In particular, the early northern Italian middle-class immigrants spearheaded the efforts to unite Italians in United States by creating an 'imagined community' among them through the establishment of clubs, fraternal organizations, and commercial associations.

Ethnic clubs were far from being universally present; they were almost non-existent in Argentina, due to competition from other local and national cultures and identities in that country.

Play the Game! from Neighbourhood to Nation

Ethnic clubs could not completely avoid the process of integration that occurs as generations of migrants replace each other, nor overcome the constraints imposed by the introduction of football in the national culture of the country of destination.

A good indication is the use of Italian in the clubs: for example, by 1927, Sao Paulo's Società Sportiva Palestra wrote its documents in

Portuguese (Bocketti, 2008). By the end of the 1930s, the policy of *Brasilidade* (Brazilianness), introduced by Vargas' Estado Novo, covered all aspects of life including football. The *coup de grâce* for Italian clubs came when Brazil joined the Allies during World War II: Germany and Italy were immediately treated with scorn. As a result, SC Germânia was renamed Pinheiros in 1942, Sao Paolo's Società Sportiva Palestra became Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras and Palestra Italia, founded in Belo Horizonte in 1921, was reborn as Cruzeiro Esporte Clube (Goldblatt, 2014: 61-62). The two Italian clubs were even forced to give up the traditional colours of green, white and red from the Italian flag. During the second half of the 20th century, Palmeiras and Cruzeiro made their mark on the history of Brazilian – and South American – football: Cruzeiro won the Copa Libertadores in 1976 and 1997, followed by Palmeiras in 1999. Nevertheless, their Italian origins were fading and now have almost completely disappeared.

In the United States where, before World War II, soccer was played almost exclusively by migrants, it was seen as a "foreign game" (Markovits-Hellerma, 2001; Wangerin, 2011) placed mostly in the suburbs (David, 1997). It was many years before the game was subjected to a process of "domestication" or "americanization" (Keys, 2014) and the Italianness of clubs became less visible. This process also affected clubs created by later migrants: recent migrants from Southern Italy to New York founded Italians Brooklyn in 1949, a club still active today. Among migrants arriving in the 1990s was Baldo Savarino, a former player for the Maroons and now Chairman of Chicago Park District Soccer, who said: «Soccer is going to be a lot more popular, but I think its ethnicity will begin to diminish» (Mayer, 1991).

Although time has served to wipe out traces of Italianness in clubs initially formed on the basis of ethnic ties, those ties were not always the reason for the presence of Italian migrants in football clubs. They might also join clubs sponsored by companies or teams in their local neighbourhood. Even if this resulted in a high proportion of Italian members, because of links with their place of work or of residence, we cannot consider them to be a vector for Italianness. Certainly, they foster

links within migrant communities, but their primary role was to contribute to the integration of migrants at the local and national levels. These clubs developed social and territorial identities within which Italianness played only a second role, in conjunction with the national identity of the country of destination. In Sao Paolo, Sport Club Corinthians Paulista, rival of Società Sportiva Palestra, offers an interesting example (Bocketti, 2008). Based in Bom Retiro near the city centre, where the majority of the inhabitants were migrants from Italy and other countries, Sport Club Corinthians Paulista was founded in 1910 by a group of workers, two from Spain, two from Portugal and one Italian. The presence of Italians in the initial management team and among the players was noteworthy in itself, but they did not appear to exert more influence than anyone else in the club. The club preferred to promote a working-class identity, as can be seen in its charter: «the Corinthians will be the people's team, run by the people and for the people».

In Argentina and, in particular Buenos Aires, sports clubs were the flag bearers for the *Barrio* (neighbourhood). By the early 20th century, when the first clubs were founded by the British elite, football was already spreading to the working classes. In 1907, there were 300 club teams in the capital «[that are] community institutions rooted in neighbourhoods and connected to the local and national political spheres; they are spaces with multiple internal forms of sociability» (Frydenberg-Daskal-Torres, 2013: 1674). Migrants, who represented 50% of the Argentinian population in 1914, played a major role in the development of these clubs. In particular, Italians (34% of the city's inhabitants in 1914) contributed to the creation of Argentina's two largest – and rival – football clubs in La Boca. The first club, River Plate, was created in 1901 after the merger of Las Rosales and Santa Rosa which was a club for young men from Genoa. The majority of the new club's founders were Italian or of Italian descent. Following the presidency of Leopoldo Bard, son of Jewish immigrants, they became directors of River Plate and when it was decided to move its stadium in 1923, the site chosen was the neighbourhood of Palermo with its strong Italian community. The second

club from La Boca, Boca Juniors, was even more representative of the neighbourhood when it was created in 1905 by Genoese migrants and this is still the case today.

In parallel with the emergence of territorial identities, Italians were contributing to the nationalization of football (Archetti, 1994) with the debate about their contribution to a specifically Argentinian style. This was important because it was thought to contribute to the definition of national identities in Latin America, in opposition to a European identity, and became particularly pertinent after World War I. Joshua H. Nadel in a recent publication stated that «[i] n soccer terms, the intermixing of immigrants from around Europe with the Argentine population supposedly gave birth to the *criollo* style, while the Brazilian game purportedly rested on the mulatto heritage of the nation. In both cases, what mattered was that the national style embodied the composition of the nation and was able to surpass the supposedly superior European "race"» (Nadel, 2014: 45). In Argentina, the sports magazine *El Grafico* described *criollo* as an individualistic, but undisciplined, style based on agility and, in particular, dribbling (Archetti, 1999: 60). For the journalists, it is not a specifically Italian or Spanish style: migrant children had been transformed through their contact with Argentinian culture based on the myth of the *Gaucho* on the Pampas. As a result, *criollo* was seen as a barrier to cultural transfer and football styles imported from Europe (Archetti, 1999: 69). But, according to Eduardo P. Archetti, this idea was subject to debate, since *criollo* could be seen as a consequence of the Argentinian melting pot (Archetti, 1999: 70). To avoid this ideological debate, let us say that this football style is one element in a sporting culture that is essential to the Argentinian national identity. This sporting culture is obviously linked to the cultural environment of football players, many of whom were imbued by their Italianness. Nevertheless, the extent to which Italian migrants influenced this style has still to be elucidated.

It is easier to observe and measure the contribution of Italian migrants to the international reputation of Argentinian, Brazilian and American football by analysing the presence of these players in their national teams.

Argentina's team certainly benefited from the presence of Italian players during the 1920s and 1930s and, in particular, in the early major international competitions. It won the Copa America for the first time in 1921, largely thanks to Julio Libonattti, originally from Genoa. At the Amsterdam Olympics in 1928, when Argentina was one of the finalists, the most successful striker was Domingo Tarasconi, a player from Boca Juniors, as was Raimondo Orsi. Argentina also played in the final of the first World Cup held in Uruguay in 1930, during which Guillermo Stabile was the leading goal-scorer. He then joined Genoa, in his parents' homeland, with his teammate, Luis Felipe Monti. Other descendants of Italian migrants include emblematic players such as Daniele Passarella, who played in Argentina's winning team in the World Cup at home in 1978, and above all the famous Diego Maradona and Lionel Messi, who both have Catalan and Italian origins.

The contribution of Italians to Brazil's national team is less noteworthy. The great football stars, Pelé and Garrincha, reflect the racial mixity that Brazil sought for developing its identity and culture. However, this does not negate the influence of Italian migrants. In the 1930 World Cup, the Brazilian team included Luis Gervasoni, whose nickname (common for Brazilian players) "Itália" clearly refers to his origins. Later, Roberto Rivelino (Rivellino), son of a family originally from Molise, was an important player in the history of the *Seleção,* having played alongside Pelé in the winning team at the 1970 World Cup.

The USA team's record is somewhat less glorious. It participated in the first World Cup in 1930 with a team of players mostly of Anglo-Saxon origin. At the 1934 World Cup in Italy, the team was led by its striker, Aldo Donelli from Pittsburgh (Allaway-Jose-Litterer, 2001: 80). The contribution of Italian migration was more visible, when the USA team beat England in the Brazilian World Cup in 1950, with several Italo-American players from St. Louis, including the goalkeeper Frank Borghi, the "hero" of the match against England, and Gino Pariani, who scored the only goal.

Not all Italian migrant players in the Americas were symbols of integration. Career choices led some to travel back across the Atlantic

Ocean to the homeland of their parents or grand-parents and in some cases, to play with the *Azzurri,* Italy's national team.

Between two worlds

This migration of American footballers originally from Italy was part of a major return movement by Italian migrants (Cinel, 1991; Cerase, 2001). We do not know for certain how many left the Americas, but the number is estimated at between a third and a half of Italian emigrants. Until the mid-20th century, returning footballers selected for the Italian team were known as *rimpatrati,* as were other returning emigrants, but in 1950 a new term *oriundi* (from the Latin *oriri*, "to be born") was introduced and was later extended retrospectively to those returning in the 1920s and 1930s. Some 40 *oriundi* have been selected for the *Nazionale*. Other South Americans with Italian origins agreed to return through transfers to Italian clubs, usually for financial reasons, but also because South America was slow in introducing professional football (Lanfranchi-Taylor, 2001). These transfers were arranged by a network of official and unofficial agents, but were not necessarily part of a search for identity, even though they participated in a circular migratory space for Italians (Baldassar, 2002).

Half of the *oriundi* in the Italian team came from Argentina; the other are mostly from Brazil or Uruguay, another country with a large Italian migrant population. Some of these players were capped by two countries, notably in the 1920s and 1930s when this was still possible under international rules. The first of the *oriundi*, Julio Libonnati, won the Olympics competition for Argentina in 1928 before playing for Torino and being selected 17 times for the Italian team. Others include the tough defender Luis Felipe Monti whose parents came from Romagna and who is the only player in the history of football to have played for different countries in two World Cup finals: Argentina in 1930 and Italy in 1934. Monti's inclusion in the *Nazionale* occurred at a time when many *oriundi* were recruited for Italian clubs. The 1912 Law on Nationality made the process more favourable by introducing a *jus sanguinis*: losing Italian

nationality could only be made by a conscious act and could be recovered after two years' residence in the homeland (Tintori, 2006). The Fascist regime reduced this residency requirement to six months and authorized acquisition of Italian nationality "in exceptional circumstances". More generally, its appeal for *oriundi* was part of a policy of defending and promoting Italianness among emigrants. This policy targeted Latin American countries, such as Argentina and Brazil (Mugnaini, 2008; Bertonha, 1999; Aliano, 2012; Goebel, 2014) where regulations on nationality had created «a permanent situation for potential tension» since the beginning of the 20th century (Pastore, 1999). In addition, the *oriundi* sportsmen were useful figures for internal and international propaganda (Dietschy, 2008). Initially unimpressed by football, which he saw as a foreign sport, Mussolini was nevertheless persuaded to take advantage of the game's popularity and organize the 1934 World Cup (DietschyGastaut-Mourlane, 2006). The competition not only offered Fascism an opportunity for displaying the modernity of its ideology, but also for demonstrating Italy's superiority through the success of its national team. The *Nazionale del Duce* (Grimaudi, 2003), which won the Cup, included no less than four Italo-Argentinians (Enrique Guaita, Luis Felipe Monti, Raimundo Orsi and Atilio Demaria) and one Italo-Brazilian (Amphilóquio Guarisi).

Footballers playing in the Italian team created problems in Latin American countries, not only in Italy but also with the *Azzurri's* competitors. In France, where the national team was unable to beat the Italians, questions were raised about the nationality of the team members and people talked, not without prejudice, the supposed deception and trickery of Italians (Mourlane, 2006).

In Italy, on the other hand, their national identity was never in doubt. The *Gazzetta dello Sport* said that «there can be no question about [Raimundo Orsi's] right to acquire Italian citizenship. He has always been Italian» (Ghirelli, 1990: 100) However, Orsi, the player with the highest number of caps among the *oriundi* (35 selections), did not speak a word of Italian when he arrived in the country. Like many other *oriundi,* apart from Renato Cesarini (born in Senigallia in the Marche, with 11

selections between 1931 and 1935), Orsi was one of the second generation migrants born in Argentine or Brazil. Some, notably the Italo-Brazilians, did not play under the same name in the two countries. In Brazil, they adopted a football nickname while, in Italy, they used their Italian surname: for example, Amphilóquio Guarisi was known as Filó in Brazil.

Their departure was not appreciated in Argentine or Brazil. For the Argentinians, the Italianness of these players was a far memory that had dissolved into their Argentinian culture (Lanfranchi-Taylor, 2001: 73). In Brazil, they were called "renegades" (Bocketti, 2008: 294). During the 1934 World Cup, the Palestra Italia club house in Sao Paolo was damaged after the Brazilian team was beaten by Spain by people protesting against the defection of Italo-Brazilian players (Goldblatt, 2014: 81). In Italy, similar events occurred in 1935 when three players from AS Roma, including 2 Italian team players (Enrique Guaita and Alejandro Scopetti), returned to Argentina in order to avoid having to fight in the war in Ethiopia (Simon, 2004: 196). In a climate of nationalist fervour, the high point of the consensus around the Mussolini regime, his decision was fustigated and many questioned the attachment of *oriundi* to their parents' homeland. After this episode, the number of players travelling between South America and Italy diminished (Lanfranchi-Taylor, 2001: 81).

The debate was revived after the war when the results of the Italian team were less good. Quite apart from the more restrictive conditions established by FIFA, early elimination in the 1962 World Cup and, above all, the trauma of being defeated by North Korea in the 1966 World Cup led to the Italian Federation giving priority to the training and development of national players. Forty years passed between the last selection of an Italo-Brazilian player, Angelo Sormani, in 1963, and the first selection of an Italo-Argentinian footballer, Mauro Camoranesi, in 2003. Great-grandson of Italian migrants who had left the Marche in 1876, Camoranesi is the *oriundo* with the most caps for Italy, with 55 selections, Thiago Motta, the ItaloBrazilian with similarly remote Italian origins, has been a key player in the *Nazionale* since 2011. The selection

of these footballers is made possible by the Nationality Law of 1912, with minimal amendments in 1992. Today, nearly 60 million people can claim Italian nationality. Between 1998 and 2007, 786,000, of whom 66.2% were Argentinian or Brazilian, took up Italian nationality during the economic crisis in those countries (Tintori, 2009; Pastore, 2004). To encourage tighter links with the diaspora of "Italians abroad", the Berlusconi government, shortly before Camoranesi's first selection, passed a law in 2001 giving *oriundi* the vote in general elections and the possibility of regaining the nationality of their ancestors. For the footballers, choosing Italy obviously allows them to play at a higher level, as Giuseppe Rossi, the first Italo-American *oriundo*, realized when he played for the Italian team. He left the USA at the age of 13 in order to finish his training in Parma, but he refused to play in the 2006 World Cup with the modest American team in order to maintain his chances of being selected for Italy.

In 2010, the Italian coach Cesare Prandelli said «The *oriundi* are the new Italians» (*La Gazzetta dello Sport*, July 13, 2010). Yet not all were thought to be particularly good at their sport, so that now, given new concerns because of the growing wave of migrants in Italy, the debate has been reopened. The selection of Camoranesi and Thiago Motta has not been unanimously popular. The journalist Greg Lea recalls that «Camoranesi was refreshingly honest when quizzed on his national identity, admitting that he considered himself Argentinian and did not know the words to the Italian anthem, but this candour did not do much to endear him to football fans of the country he had chosen to represent» (*The Guardian*, February 18, 2015). Cesare Maldini, the former Italy defender and manager said in an interview with Radio Incontro that the resumption of this practice was negative, a "return to the past" and referred to Thiago Motta as "the Brazilian". In 2015 when the new coach, Antonio Conte, selected the Brazilian Eder and the Argentinian Franco Vasquez, Roberto Mancini, Inter's coach, said that «The Italian national team *must* be Italian. Those who aren't born in Italy, but have distant relatives should not be called up» (*La Gazzetta dello Sport*, March 25,

2015). Seventy-four percent of *La Gazzetta dello Sport* readers, when asked for their opinion, shared this point of view.

Conclusion

Even today, football offers indications of the identity issues raised by Italian emigration. The question of integration crystallizes these difficulties, although it appears now that they can be overcome. It does not seem opportune to make ethnic clubs an obstacle to the integration of migrants when they are also agents for their participation in local championships. Similarly, the de-ethnicization and nationalization of football in both Latin America and North America does not prevent the preservation of a memory of migration in diverse forms.

Like Garibaldi, footballers of Italian origin in the Americas can appear to be "heros in two worlds". Their fame spreads, and is sometimes divisive, on both sides of the Atlantic. They contribute to the oftenflouted pride of migrants, notably by insisting on their contribution to the development and reputation of the country of destination. In Italy, these success stories act as a counterweight to negative representations of emigration which is often seen as a form of national dishonour.

Yet, quite apart from these divergent representations, Italian migrants have made a substantial contribution to the growth of football both in South America, where the game is a key element in the national culture, and in the USA, where it faces serious competition from other American sports. Further, for the Italian diaspora, football has led to the emergence of a transnational circular space linking both sides of the Atlantic, not only through tours by Italian teams in South America since the early 20th century, but also by the transfer of players of Italian origin back to Italy. As a result, we can see that Italian emigration, as a certain form of Italianness (Corti, 2011), varies in line with the country of destination, the period of emigration and the contemporary context and also plays a major role in the globalization of football.

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