

*Reimagining Italian-Australian identities through soccer:
Critical notes on a history of Italian soccer clubs in Perth*

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Abstract: This paper offers a critical contribution to the understanding of issues such as transnationalism, social inclusion, and the construction of Italian-Australian identities by exploring the untold history of Italian soccer clubs in Perth, particularly East Fremantle Tricolore and Perth Azzurri. It aims at integrating individual narratives within a broader framework that includes the historical development of multiculturalism in Australia since the end of World War II. By considering key factors such as regional origins, intergenerational gaps, gender, and the weight of personal experiences in relation to deep social and political changes in Australian society, these narratives reveal distinctive forms of culture, social practices, and a sense of belonging. This paper draws from Homi Bhabha's (1990b) concept of "Third Space" and argues that soccer can be seen as a metaphorical place for the meeting of different identities, and that individual transnational narratives help us to reimagine Italian-Australian identities as fluid, thus avoiding the risk of accepting ideas of a fixed and predetermined migrant identity. Yet by focusing only on the historical development of Italian soccer clubs in Perth, the arguments of this paper are limited to a specific aspect of the 'identity-building' discourse.

Keywords: Western Australian history; Italian migration; soccer.

Soccer, transnationalism and "Third Space"

For many, sport represents a symbolic core of Australian identity, in that it has been used as a vehicle for definitions of Australianness (Hallinan and Hughson 2009). Especially in relatively young nation-states, such as Australia and Italy, sport has served

political purposes in the process of 'imagining' communities, building identities and offering opportunities to "construct the field of meanings and symbols associated with national life" (Bhabha 1990a p.3). Unlike Australian Football, however, soccer was not accepted by the Australian postcolonial sporting society (Hay 2003). Consequently, soccer in Australia can be used as a cultural analytical tool to read national as well as transnational narratives (Danforth 2001). In particular, soccer can further our understanding of ethnicity as an imagined anthropological and cultural construct that is reproduced in social interaction (Banks 1996; Jenkins 1997). Indeed, a few scholars have addressed the importance soccer played in shaping migrant identities, including in Australia (Ricatti and Klugman 2013; Damussi 2015). Many of these studies are based on ethnographic research and emphasise the role of individual memories as analytical tools for interpreting theoretical frameworks such as transnationalism and identity. According to Vertovec (2009), the concept of transnationalism applies to a variety of links and interactions that connect people and institutions across nation-states. The meaning of transnationalism as a social morphology is underpinned by an array of different historical experiences of ethnic diasporas and transnational communities. Within this framework, transnational narratives not only contribute to defining the practices, boundaries and constructions of an ethnic community, but they have also been used to support the concept of migrant identities as "fluid" identities (Harney and Baldassar 2007). Loretta Baldassar (2001) identifies migrants' return home as being the key to capturing these identities. Ethnographic research, however, also tends to overlook the historical and political contexts that provide the background for individual personal memories to play their parts. By investigating the origins and early development of two well-supported Italian-based soccer clubs in Perth, this article explores the relevance of the broader Australian post-war historical context as an indispensable background for the building of "fluid" Italian-Australian identities.

The core argument of this paper, which draws from preliminary research on the history of Italian migrants and soccer in Perth since 1945, is that reimagining Italian-Australian identities through soccer means using soccer as a cultural lens to magnify the history of Italian migration in order to arrive at a better understanding of contemporary issues of transnationalism and social inclusion in Australia. Homi Bhabha suggests that cultural reproductions continue to change in a process of "hybridity." The anti-essential nature of Bhabha's post-modernist theory denies "originary culture," while stressing the importance of hybridity as a "Third Space," where other positions and forms of culture can emerge (Bhabha 1994). Therefore, reimagining Italian-Australian identities through soccer means identifying soccer as Bhabha's "Third Space," a metaphorical forum that fragments identities and displaces the histories that comprise it. Soccer comes to represent the object with and through which a new process of identification takes place, as well as a metaphorical transnational space for the meeting, interaction, confrontation and dialogue of different individual migrant identities, cultural orientations, and emotions. Yet, to better understand this process of reimagining Italian-Australian identities through soccer, it is paramount to integrate individual memories within a broader Australian historical framework that spans from the end of World War II to the early 1990s. The historical development of Australia's socio-political context, particularly the idea of multiculturalism, needs to be taken into consideration as it played a direct role in the process of building individual identities, and can tell us much about Italian migrants. Post-war Australia's social, cultural and political climates not only gave birth to White Australia assimilation policies in the 1950s, the social and

technological changes of the 1960s, and the consequences of intergenerational conflicts in the early 1970s; they have also deeply and directly influenced the construction of Italian migrant identities, both as an ethnic community and as individuals within that group. Within this conceptual framework, the following introductory notes on the so far untold history of East Fremantle Tricolore and Perth Azzurri aim at representing a particular and critical contribution to the understanding of transnationalism and social inclusion in Australia. Yet, by focusing only on the historical development of Italian soccer clubs in Perth, the arguments of this paper are limited to a specific aspect of the 'identity-building' discourse.

“What is wrong with Azzurri? Cannot they take a beating?” Italians and soccer in Perth after WWII

In the early 1950s, Perth local newspapers, such as *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, and *The Western Mail* reported an increasing number of pitch invasions and clashes off the field of play during soccer matches. Tensions among emotional spectators were often caused by alcohol and betting activities, and were further fuelled by the establishment of fierce rivalries between different ethnic-based soccer clubs, such as the Italian Perth Azzurri and the Croatian North Perth clubs. The Azzurri, established in 1948, was the first soccer club founded by Italian migrants in Perth. Many founding members came from Valtellina, an alpine region in Northern Italy. The Azzurri quickly became one of the most successful soccer clubs in Perth (Guzzi and Andrews 1998). In 1952, during their first league encounter, an incident involving an Azzurri fan and the North Perth goalkeeper ignited a bitter rivalry between these two teams. On Saturday 21 June 1952, Azzurri and North Perth met again at Dorrien Garden, Azzurri's home ground, to play their second match of the Charity Cup knockout competition. The first match had ended in a draw, two-all. With only five minutes to go and with Azzurri leading three to one, referee Rhys Hill showed North Perth's captain, Bert Robertson, a red card for striking Azzurri's Joe Skrabel, who was also sent off for using offensive language. The two players continued their violent confrontation on their way to the change room and their behaviour sparked the first controversial incident involving spectators and players. There were no police attending the match, as the control of the crowd was the responsibility of the Soccer Association of WA, which, despite words of provocation between the two clubs in the days leading up to the match, did not organise security. After ten minutes of fighting, players were able to conclude the match (Kreider 2012 pp.108-115).

Over the following days, local newspapers published numerous letters by readers who addressed this incident. A reader, who signed himself as “Scotia,” wrote:

Having attended the Azzurri vs. North Perth game at Dorrien Gardens on Saturday last, I should like to express my disgust at the behaviour of some of the Azzurri players and supporters.

The letter continued:

It is about time that this club, which could be such an asset to the code because they have the ability to play good football without needing to resort to unsportsmanlike tactics to gain their ends, took their players and a section of their supporters in hand and inculcated in them a spirit of fair play. (*The Western Mail* June 1952, qtd. in Kreider 2012 p. 113)

This strong feeling of “disgust” and disapproval towards Azzurri for not respecting the referee, and thus the authority, the law, was echoed in other letters, such as the one by “Nobby” who wrote:

What is wrong with Azzurri? Cannot they take a beating? It appears the general rule that when they are not in the lead, the idea is to start something to upset their opponents by not abiding with the referee's decisions. I venture to say that Swan Valley has not done half what Azzurri have done and yet they have their ground closed for four weeks. What about doing the same to Azzurri and perhaps they will learn a lesson? (Kreider 2012 p. 113)

The discussion on violence in soccer games quickly led people to address the issue of new migrants. On a regular radio soccer programme, listeners could hear comments such as:

I listen with interest to Mr Des Abraham's broadcasts on Soccer each Saturday. His one particular plea has always been 'be tolerant with these New Australians because of their war experiences and life caused through such.' From what I have seen as regards witnessing their play and in private life, past and present, you can't change a leopard's spots. (Kreider 2012 p. 113)

What this listener, who called himself “Fair Play,” arguably meant was that these “new” Australians, including Italians, are different from us, in both the public and private spheres, and they will never change. The step to ‘they cannot integrate with us’ was a relatively short one. Yet the ‘us and them’ discourse did not always have a negative connotation. For example, the *Sunday Times*, on 12 April 1953, reported that 5,000 people had witnessed Azzurri beat Sokol, and

being colourful in its varied dialects, it was a pleasant change from ‘ave a go’ and ‘holding the ball’ which are so standard at the Australian games. No doubt sensitive and extremely nationalistic, this type of crowd, while still partisan, were certainly spontaneous in applause for the good play of both sides. (“5,000 See Azzurri Beat Sokol at Soccer” 1953)

These comments on the issue of sport and migrants offer an insight into views held within Australian society as they address the question of the unequal power of discourse that has marked the relationship between the Anglo and non-Anglo communities in Australia. At a time when the wounds of WWII were still fresh and Australia was coping with the dismantling of the British Empire, this selection of comments mirrors only a small sample of the wide range of feelings and attitudes held by ‘old’ Australians towards ‘new’ Australians. These ranged from disgust and the need to teach them a lesson, or inculcate in them ‘our’ values, to acceptance of and tolerance towards the

colourful, pleasant and spontaneous Italians, the latter revealing a more curious and open-minded approach to the exoticism of these southern Europeans. In other words, at the time, Italian migrants and other non-Anglo ethnic minorities represented “the Other.” As Said (1977) suggested, the construction of “the Other” is fundamental for the construction of “the Self,” as it provides a context and criteria for defining one’s own identity. Therefore, what these comments published in popular newspapers actually help to reveal is the general climate in Australian mainstream society; they are indicators of a widespread exclusivist, dominant and civilising attitude that reinforced the notion of assimilation.

This concept of assimilation was part of a complex ideological system that included notions (and practices) of nationalism, imperialism and racism, which eventually contributed to the birth of the White Australia policy. After WWII, Australian nationalism aimed to control immigration and shape the development of a narrow idea of multicultural mass society under British command. Sport, including soccer, served Australian nationalism by giving both ‘old’ and ‘new’ Australians a sense of national solidarity, and represented a tool to achieve national reconciliation among all social classes. Yet, until the mid-1990s, when the process of de-ethnicisation of the game occurred, soccer was considered not to be a game having suitable Australianness, and despite government policies that encouraged citizens to practice sport, it was marginalised as it was seen as ethnic and feminine (O’Hara 1994). Australian player Johnny Warren’s famous book title *Sheilas, Wogs and Poofters* perfectly encapsulates soccer’s marginalisation, relative to other football codes and signified by the use of the ethnically stereotyped term “wogball” (Warren et al. 2002). Nonetheless, migrant communities in Australia were the main contributors to the expansion of the “world game” in mainstream Australian society (Skinner et al. 2008). Within this framework, a history of Italian soccer clubs in Perth represents a significant tool to shed light on the issues of transnationalism and social inclusion in Australia, as it can enhance the understanding of some of the dynamics that affected Italian migrants’ social process of settling, integration and inclusion within the development of a multicultural mass society in Australia.

A general historical background of those Italian migrants who played soccer in Australia after the war highlights their experiences of tragedies such as fascism and war. Over the previous twenty years, Italians had been indoctrinated by Mussolini’s fascist propaganda which aimed at forging a new man, a new Italian, a fascist Italian, who had to be strong, healthy, vigorous and victorious. It was Mussolini’s totalitarian idea of integrating the individual within a culturally and ethnically homogenous society, the fascist Italian state. Mussolini’s regime used Italy’s 1934 and 1938 soccer World Cup victories to forge and manipulate Italians’ feeling of grandeur on a sporting level into a new Fascist identity (Foot 2006; Martin 2004). Yet the tragedy of WWII—logical consequence of an ideology such as fascism that aimed at total domination—brought Italians back to their reality: Italy was a destroyed country with ruins, misery and unemployment that contributed to the decision of a massive wave of Italians to migrate to Australia and other countries following the war. More than 280,000 Italians emigrated to Australia between 1947 and 1976 (Castels et al. 1992).

As a type of consciousness, transnationalism refers to migrants’ awareness of “multi-locality” (Vertovec 2009). In Australia, the trauma of WWII saw Italians being targeted

and persecuted as war enemies. For those Italians forcibly interned during the war on Rottneest island, in Fremantle jail, or Kalgoorlie, soccer became their main activity. When they were released, for many Italians soccer continued to play an integral part in their lives. After the war, like other ethnic minorities, Italians were subjected to discrimination through government policies and attitudes held by the general public. They had to carve their space within Australian society, and soccer served to aid this purpose. Soccer became an expression of what Bhabha would describe as a process of hybrid cultural reproduction, which stimulates something new and whose meaning and representations are continuously negotiated (Bhabha 1990b). For Italians, soccer became an extra-territorial space, their clubs' success being a source of pride, and the relatively quick spread of Italian soccer clubs in Perth metropolitan area (Azzurri, Tricolore, Vastese and Aurora) as well as in country regions (La Fiamma in Geraldton and Swan Athletic in the Swan Valley) reflects the developing process of social inclusion of Italian migrants in Australia.

Club names, intergenerational gaps, and gender variations to reimagine fluid identities

The humble origins of East Fremantle Tricolore Soccer Club epitomise the Italians' effort to smooth their settling into a new society. At the beginning of 1951, it was possible to meet a few Sicilians in Market Street and High Street in Fremantle, collecting subscriptions for a new soccer club. They organised dances at the Fremantle Trades Hall, where participants were entertained by Ugo Bartolomei's accordion. A local newspaper reported that it was always *un pienone*, very crowded (*The Italian Club Fremantle* December 1969). In 1952, their application to register a team was rejected by the Western Australian Soccer Association because the club did not have a home ground. That year they could only play friendly matches, while continuing their fundraising activities. In 1953, they again lodged an application to register a team. This time, thanks to the intervention of the Catholic Priest Father Nanni, they finally had a home ground, a pitch at South Beach held in concession by the Town of Fremantle, when in 1954 the Town of East Fremantle granted the Club the use of Wauhup Park.

In exchange for the new facilities, the new Italian soccer club agreed to change its name from Torino into East Fremantle Tricolore Soccer Club. Club members decided to keep Torino's original colours (*granata*, maroon), as a reference to the best team in Italy at the time; as with Perth Azzurri (*azzurro*, light blue, was the colour of the former Italian royal family), the name Tricolore, the Italian flag, was also a clear reference to their national identity. Influenced by an official Australian governing body, the Town of East Fremantle, the decision to adopt East Fremantle's name may be seen as a step in the assimilation of soccer by Australians. Yet the choice of a nationalist name such as Tricolore mirrored a common habit among other ethnic-based soccer clubs, such as the Greek Athena, the Polish Cracovia and others. Club names became a metaphorical space within which migrant and Australian identities met. For migrants, club names and colours represented transnational bonds and manifestations of different types of belonging, of feeling 'here and there.' Migrants recreated a shared imagery through cultural artefacts and social reproductions. One could argue that all those nationalist

names, including Tricolore and Azzurri, represented a tool to set social practices, features and boundaries, and aimed at constructing their own identity as a group. In other words, in the first years after WWII, in a time of strong nationalistic feelings, Italians staked a claim for their own national identity through soccer and in particular through the relationships with, and differentiation from, other Anglo and non-Anglo soccer teams.

In reimagining Italian-Australian identities, transnational narratives can reveal distinctive forms of culture, social practices and a sense of belonging, particularly when one considers factors such as regionalism, generation, gender and personal experiences with reference to the historical developments of Australia's social, political and cultural contexts. Italian migrants' identification with and attitudes towards their regional and national identities changed over time as they were influenced by deep changes in Australian society and its cultural constructs, particularly multiculturalism. As a matter of fact, there is a significant difference between Italian soccer clubs that were founded just after the war, and those that were founded later in the 1970s and 1980s. During the period of the White Australia and assimilation policies, when multiculturalism simply meant the acknowledgment of Australians' different ethnic origins bound together by a dominant British ethnic cultural identity, Italians belonging to the first wave of migration (1945-1970) used some nationalistic references in the names of their clubs. The names Azzurri and Tricolore reveal a need for ethnocentric identification, rather than regional. Italians chose those names because, according to Mario Carosella, a player for Tricolore during the 1960s and secretary of Perth Italia in the late 1980s, "they symbolised Italy to them" (Carosella Interview 2015). Carosella remembers that: "when they met Tricolore or Azzurri, other teams knew they were meeting Italians." Regionalism was not a selective criterion for membership to an Italian soccer club. There was a greater concentration of Northern Italians in the northern suburbs and a majority of Southern Italians south of the river. Yet, as Ennio Tavani reports, Italians did not base their loyalty to a club according to their regional origins: in fact, as a young Italian migrant from Lombardy, Tavani played alongside Sicilians, Calabrians, people from Valtellina and Abruzzo (Tavani Interview 2015). Rather, their membership to a soccer club was based upon the distribution of the Italian migrant community in Perth's metropolitan areas. In the early 1970s, on the contrary, when multiculturalism became associated with migrants' freedom of expressing their own cultural identities, and when notions of Australian identity, Australianness and whiteness were also changing, names of Italian soccer clubs show references to regional origins, such as Stirling Tuscany, Lathlan Inter, Rosemount Juventus, and also Balcatta Etna, founded by Sicilians and offering a clear ethnic identification in its club name. This significant change suggests different attitudes towards concepts of Italian national and local identities and their negotiation with an Australian identity, showing perhaps a revival of the specifically Italian feeling of *campanilismo* (loyalty to one's own town). In this way, the development of a new concept of Australian multiculturalism in the 1970s may be seen to have resulted in more complex and nuanced processes of identity-building.

Moreover, further differences of identification with an Italian-Australian identity were given by the generational gap among members of the Italian community, between first and second generation Italians. Indeed, the pride of being Italian was mostly felt by older Italians rather than by the youngest generation, who preferred being identified as Australian. A generational gap that was mirrored by the choice of sport practiced by the

children of migrants: unlike soccer, AFL was the real Australian game. It had more appeal to second generation Italians because it was the sport of mainstream Australian society and represented a way to better integrate with it (Tavani Interview 2015). This generational gap, expressed through the choice of sport, was part of a broader ethical and intergenerational conflict which had its apex in the 1968 phenomenon of youth rebellion that occurred in the Western World. Within this context, in examining the relevance of soccer to Italian migrants' experiences of social inclusion, in light of changing ethnic politics, questions on gender issue need also to be addressed. Undoubtedly, Italian clubs, including soccer clubs, offered Italian women opportunities to establish and develop social networks. Cosimo Monaco, the secretary, treasurer, and committee member of Tricolore for many years during the 1960s-80s, reports that the role of Tricolore was not limited to sport; it also served a social function as it offered assistance and support to Italian migrants, men and women, who were looking either for jobs or for social relationships, including finding a partner (Monaco Interview 2016). This was the case of Giuseppe (Joe) Fulgaro and his wife Luisa, who met in 1964 at Wauhop Park, on the very first evening of Giuseppe in Australia, during a social event organised by Tricolore's social committee (Fulgaro Interview 2015). Social gatherings were organised frequently: Mrs Monaco remembers that Tricolore organised Saturday night dances every two weeks, as well as day trips to the south-western region. Italian women played an important role in the organisation and running of these events by volunteering at the clubhouse, selling food they had previously made and working behind the bar selling beer, homemade wine and spirits. Ethnographic studies on Italian women in Australia could investigate whether their involvement with soccer was structured according to gender ideals or if there was, instead, gender variation and any evidence of resistance. On the one hand, scholarship on Italian women in Australia (in particular, Kahan-Guidi and Weiss 1989; Pallotta-Chiarolli 1989; Ricatti 2010; and Baldassar & Gabaccia 2011) has focused on the emancipatory potential of migration, overlooking how those women who did not participate in soccer felt about the impact this popular sport had on their lives and if they felt marginalised. On the other hand, the risk is in using soccer as a vehicle to portray one migrant group as a homogeneous group, while the nuances in experience within such groups are in some ways more intriguing and less predictable. In this sense, future research on Italian migrant women's individual experiences with soccer and other social activities could reveal some of those nuances, and help us to reimagine migrants' identities as fluid rather than predetermined and fixed.

Transnational individual narratives of soccer and Italian migration

The process of reimagining Italian-Australian identities starts from the analysis of personal transnational experiences in relation to the individual's own public and private spheres of interaction. Ennio Tavani, President of Perth Italia in the 1990s, attributed a key role in his personal process of defining himself as Italian to his experience with the Australian army in Vietnam (Tavani Interview 2015). For many young people around the world, the war in Vietnam represented the centre of an international struggle against American imperialism, as well as against traditional forms of authoritarianism, including family, state, and capitalism. Individual expressions of transnationalism, such as Tavani's personal experience as an Italian-Australian soldier in a hostile

environment, are indicators of fluid identities that continue to change and to be reimagined in relation to both private and public social and cultural environments. Within this process of reimagining Italian-Australian identities, individual ethnic narratives of soccer can be used as a cultural lens to magnify transnational issues of social inclusion. For thousands of Italians, men and women, of different generations, soccer has offered avenues to smooth their way in a new country. These opportunities were given by different individual experiences with soccer that went beyond the soccer match. The match itself—ninety minutes on a Saturday afternoon—was the culmination of a process that included the organisation, administration and management of a community group. From a transnational perspective, different narratives of soccer are able to capture Italian migrants' fluid identities, as they show how soccer offered Italians the opportunity to connect not only with members of an imagined Italian migrant community, and thus with Italy, but also with other ethnic-based communities and with the broader Australian society.

The few available written sources reveal that some Italian migrants significantly contributed to the early development of East Fremantle Tricolore Soccer Club. Many of those Italians came from Capo d'Orlando in Sicily, Vasto in Abruzzo and Molfetta in Apulia, and for them soccer was not only a recreational activity, but also a means to bond and build social relationships with fellow Italians. Soccer became the fabric of a vast social network. Among the most charismatic figures were Osvaldo Tagliaferri, Franco Fausto (Frank) Stazzonelli and Luciano (Lou) Ricci. Osvaldo Tagliaferri, from Sicily, was the first president of East Fremantle Tricolore. He owned Interfoods, a local business located in Fremantle's Cappuccino Strip, and managed it with his wife Giovanna for more than 35 years. By becoming Mayor of Fremantle in the 2000s, Osvaldo's son, Peter, has made another significant contribution to the inclusion of the Italian migrant community within Western Australian society.

Franco Stazzonelli arrived in Australia in 1949 aboard the Sebastiano Caboto. He was born in Sondrio, a small town in north of Italy, and settled in Fremantle where he contributed to the establishment of both the Fremantle Italian Club and the Tricolore Soccer Club. Stazzonelli sponsored Tricolore as the owner of Atlantic Travel, an authorised travel agency located in Fremantle. The WA Museum website explains that he was also involved with the promotion of Italian culture and art through radio shows and other entertaining activities (Stazzonelli, n.d.). Stazzonelli's name appears several times in Tricolore's early documents, and his long-lasting presence and support to the Tricolore club, as well to the Fremantle Italian Club, suggest that Stazzonelli played a major role within the Italian community in Fremantle. The port city, located at the south of the Swan River, for many years has been welcoming Italian migrants, and after the war became a safe harbour especially for Sicilian fishermen and their families. Through social activities and by providing work to his fellow countrymen, Stazzonelli became a leader of the Italian migrant community.

A similar role was played by Luciano (Lou) Ricci. He was born in Italy in 1935 and moved to Australia, together with his family, in 1938. Like many other young Italians, Ricci began to follow the Azzurri team but in 1953, the establishment of Tricolore in the Fremantle area led him in a new direction. Although Ricci never played the game, soccer became such an integral part of his life that he served for many years as President of Tricolore (1959-60 and 1969-78). In 1960, Ricci, owner of Hilton Estate

Agency in Beaconsfield, played a major role in establishing the Soccer Federation of WA. Under different managerial roles, he served this institution for several years and worked hard for the development of the game in Western Australia. Not surprisingly, Ricci became first a Life Member of Tricolore in 1972, and later, in 1987, a Life Member of the Soccer Federation of Western Australia. "There are a number of memorable occasions in my time at Tricolore with the building of the clubhouse at Wauhop Park high on the list", said Lou Ricci (qtd. in *2001 Perth Soccer Club Yearbook* p.120). As a common goal for the Italian community in Fremantle, the construction of Tricolore's clubhouse at East Fremantle's Wauhop Park became an opportunity to bring many Italian migrants together. They offered skills, services, and private business in order to complete one of the best facilities for soccer players at the time (Monaco Interview 2016). Tricolore became "the first soccer club in WA with premises devoted exclusively to the advancement of soccer" (Lee 1979 p. 180). Tagliaferri's, Stazonelli's and Ricci's personal stories stand up more than others as these industrious men represented important points of reference within the Italian migrants' social network. Their stories, the development of successful soccer clubs and, particularly, the construction of one of the best soccer facilities in Perth epitomise Italian migrants' hard work in carving their space within Australian society.

At the end of the 1950s, Tricolore quickly emerged as one of the most successful clubs in Perth. Credit for its early successes goes to both Italian migrants and some influential non-Italian top players. Italian players were quite good and they had a distinctive style of play; however, except for only a few who had experience in Italian professional and semi-professional leagues, the majority were amateur players. Nonetheless, these amateur Italian migrants managed to win the 1956 Second Division, just three years after their first official match. Tricolore's speedy forward line, in which Vic Coccia, Alessio Poladori, Mario Casotti and Andrea Scarangella were outstanding, proved too much of a match for most opposing defences. Centre-half Mario Mercati, left-half L. Pedris and left-back L. Granelli worked the half line and backed up the forwards. Former State player Vincent Parltoni played some beautiful games as a centre-half, before breaking his leg. Together with the full back Angelo Torelli, they protected the young goalkeeper Nick D'Orazio (*The Official W.A. Soccer Annual and Year Book* 1956). Two years later, in 1958, Tricolore won its first State Premiership title. Yet in reading the names of the 1958 Tricolore squad, the main difference that strikes the eye is the presence of a few more English names, such as Johnny McInroy, Tony Monks, Peter Atkinson and Doug Stewart (*The Official Western Australia Soccer Annual and Fixture Book* 1959). The following years can be considered as the 'golden years' of Tricolore: the Club won the title three times consecutively (1963-65), and then again in 1970 and 1972. Tricolore's most representative player of those golden years was a Scottish player from Dundee, John McInroy, who, from 1961 to 1969 scored 203 goals for Tricolore, heading the goal scoring list five years consecutively (1961-1965). His personal best of 48 goals in one season (1963) still represents the best scoring figure in WA.¹

While in the 1950s the majority of Tricolore players were Italian migrants, in the 1960s Tricolore's managers began to invest more money in order to attract and keep former professional British players, mostly English and Scottish. Since the end of the 1950s, the club had welcomed non-Italian members. This major shift was magnified by the 1960 turmoil that hit soccer in Western Australia. That year, eight differently ethnic-

based soccer clubs pressured the Western Australian Soccer Football Association (WASFA), the all-English governing body, to open up to professionalism by paying players and retaining them under contract. It is difficult to assess to what extent ethnic issues played a role in this breakaway. It is more likely that the reasons behind their wish to play soccer under a professional rather than amateur status were mainly financial: from the heavy monetary fines laid against Azzurri and Tricolore, due to incidents where match officials had been attacked, to claims of unfair percentages of gate money taken by the WASFA, to the unofficial payment of players in order to keep them on a regular basis. Among those clubs involved in the breakaway were the Italian Azzurri and Tricolore. They were not only among the most talented clubs in the metropolitan area, but also the most financially sound as they were well-supported by the Italian communities north and south of the Swan river. In July 1960, together with Athena, Cracovia, Olympic, South Perth, Swan Athletic, and Windmills, the two Italian clubs participated in the establishment of the Soccer Federation of Western Australia (SFWA). Soon after, all of the other clubs, attracted to the lights of professionalism, deserted the WASFA and joined the new Federation, and in 1965 the WASFA ended its activities.

The establishment and development of Italian soccer clubs in Perth was favoured by the entrepreneurial nature of some Italian businessmen who became leaders of their migrant community. They were not the richest men in town and it is not easy to say whether they made money out of soccer. The financial aspect of the 1960 breakaway operation undoubtedly required the commitment of successful businessmen. Three of them, Julius and Frank Re and Tommaso D'Orsogna, were the owners of two local smallgoods companies, Re Store and D'Orsogna Ltd. Italian entrepreneur Julius Re was the main character in the establishment of the Federation. He had to make sure that the administrators of all clubs were financially able to support a professional team. Julius Re became the first secretary of the new professional SFWA, while his brother Frank was among the founders of the Perth Azzurri Club in 1948. Born in Sicily, the Re brothers came to Perth in 1933, the same year that Tom D'Orsogna arrived in Australia. During WWII D'Orsogna was forcibly interned on Rottneest island where he met other soccer-mad Italians, and after the war, in the 1950s, he became president of the Aurora Club. D'Orsogna was a highly regarded butcher who soon began to manufacture and trade Italian food products. His smallgoods business became one of the main sponsors of the newly-born SFWA. In post-WWII Australian society, Italian food did not have the same good reputation that it has now. Established in 1960, the D'Orsogna Cup became immediately the main knockout competition, as well as a vehicle for the popularity of both soccer and Italian food. The Cup was played for the last time in 1995.

At the beginning, as a business incentive, Italian soccer clubs were not remunerative and members' participation in fundraising activities was crucial to support the clubs financially. The aspiration of establishing an Italian soccer club that could compete in the national league materialised in 1987 with the establishment of Perth Italia, born out of the merging of the two historical rivals Azzurri and Tricolore, together with Balcatta Etna. For those Italians strongly involved with the management of this new club, the huge financial investment to sustain a team in the National Soccer League meant a constant effort to gain power and influence the control of the game, especially through the involvement of local mass media in the competition with other football codes and sports (Moore 2009). Nonetheless, it is also thanks to this constant effort and

commitment to the game by some influential Italian entrepreneurs that the whole Italian community in Perth can be credited with the advancement of soccer in Western Australia.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that individual transnational narratives of soccer, as multiple expressions of 'fluid' identities, make more sense if they are considered within a broader historical context that considers different agents, particularly an ideological and political force such as Australian nationalism, a social issue such as transnationalism, and a cultural construct such as multiculturalism. All these factors contribute to the understanding of social patterns, territorial similarities, gender differences, and intergenerational gaps. The interaction of all these forces at play contributed to shaping the identities of those Italian-Australians who, despite accepting and abiding by the rules of the game, by playing without a script, made the "Third Space" (the soccer match) an ever-changing, unique experience. In other words, by assessing the role played by soccer in shaping Italian migrant identities, one has to avoid the risk of juxtaposing microhistory with macrohistory for, as this paper has shown, individual memories, stories and emotions are as significant as their historical context. On the contrary, any attempt to understand the impact soccer had on migrants' lives, both as individuals and as a group, highlights the need for marking the space for the meeting of different identities, and the necessity to identify these intersections between political and cultural orientations and individual identities. In conclusion, this paper has suggested that the historical development of the relationship between Italian migrants and soccer in Perth was affected by political, social and cultural orientations that marked the history of post-war Australian society, and that they were as significant as transnational individual experiences. The individual dimension of the game has been thus elucidated in relation to the broader historical picture of multicultural society in Australia. By addressing questions concerning social exclusion and the construction of an Italian-Australian identity, this paper has shown that, in order to further our understanding of the roots of these issues, transnational narratives of soccer that consider multiple different cultural orientations can help us to reimagine Italian-Australian identities as fluid, and avoid the risk of accepting ideas of a fixed identity, which, unlike soccer, represents a predetermined outcome rather than a unique expression.

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- Interview with Mario Carosella, East Fremantle, 22 December 2015.
- Interview with Giuseppe Fulgaro, Fremantle, 14 November 2015.
- Interview with Cosimo Monaco, Beaconsfield, 20 July 2016.
- Interview with Ennio Tavani, East Fremantle, 22 December 2015.

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