Doidge, Mark. "'Year Zero'." *Football Italia: Italian Football in an Age of Globalization*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. 197–21. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472519221.0014>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023, 09:04 UTC.

Copyright © Mark Doidge 2015. You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

‘Year Zero’

On Tuesday 25 June 2013 Italy’s tax police, the Guardia di Finanza, undertook a systematic raid across forty-one football clubs across Italy. This raid searched eighteen Serie A clubs, including AC Milan, Juventus, Inter, Roma and Lazio. Eleven clubs from Serie B were raided, including Livorno, Bari and Brescia, as well as a further twelve from the lower leagues. Dubbed *Calcio Malato* (Sick Football), these raids were ordered by prosecutors in Naples to investigate tax evasion and money laundering, which they suspected took place through the transfer of players. Echoing the financial problems of 2001, the Neapolitan magistrates also alleged that clubs had made ‘systematic’ billing for non-existent transactions. Further links to past scandals resurfaced when it was revealed that the Guardia were also investigating the agents Alejandro Mazzoni and Alessandro Moggi – the latter being a central figure in the *calciopoli* scandal of 2006. Many clubs declined to comment on the investigation. The president of Inter, Massimo Moratti, sought to defuse the situation and stated that ‘It wasn’t a search, just a request for past documentation. Nothing to be concerned about’ (*La Gazzetta dello Sport* 2013a). The global financial crisis of 2008 and recession in Italy had led to a wholesale crackdown on tax evasion. These raids can be seen as an extension of this concerted effort to tackle the problem. High-profile athletes were also caught up in the crackdown, including Diego Maradona from his time at Napoli in the 1980s and 1990s.

Six weeks later, there was the culmination of two years of investigations into match-fixing. Stefano Mauri, the Lazio captain, was banned for six months for his failure to report match-fixing (*La Gazzetta dello Sport* 2013b). Mauri was one of eight other players who were fined and banned by the FIGC. In addition, Lazio and Lecce were also fined for the actions of their players. This was the third consecutive summer that clubs had been fined or had a points deduction for match-fixing. This followed the results of the *Calcioscommesse* scandal involving twenty-seven clubs, resulting in Sampdoria, Torino, Atalanta and Siena

receiving penalties in 2012, and Atalanta and Lecce in 2011. Since *calciopoli*, only two seasons, 2008-9 and 2013-14, have not resulted in points deductions for clubs. In 2009, Cagliari was docked points (subsequently reversed) for filing an unauthorized lawsuit, while the following year Bologna was deducted points for unpaid taxes and wages. In a continuation of the arguments laid out in this book, these raids and scandals can also be seen as further evidence of the failure of the central authorities to impose itself over its citizens. They can, however, also be seen as an attempt by the federation to try and reassert its authority. Yet this continued weakness was further demonstrated by continued fan protests throughout the 2013-14 season in relation to the FIGC's attempt to stop 'territorial discrimination'. The disruption caused during the 2014 *Coppa Italia* final also revealed the serious structural problems within Italian football. After outlining the response of clubs and authorities to the current situation, this chapter will present some future directions for Italian football.

The 'English Model'

The introduction to *Football Italia* highlighted the decline of Italian football in this era of globalization. This has been reinforced by comments from managers in Serie A. The Juventus (and current national team) manager, Antonio Conte said in April 2013 that 'Italian football has come to a standstill and that should be a concern for everyone' (*The Independent* 2013). This supports what Jose Mourinho stated when he coached in Italy: 'Italian football is not liked by the rest of the world' (Lawrence 2008). Italy has dropped below Germany and Portugal in the UEFA coefficient tables and is in danger of falling further, behind France. As the original globalized league, the English Premier League continues to be the benchmark upon which other leagues are measured. In Italy in particular, there has long been a neurotic relationship with the English game that was introduced in the nineteenth century. As a result it looks to England, for example, but continues to take an Italian approach to governance and organization.

One such trope that epitomizes this relationship is the term *modello inglese* (English Model). The Italian government and media talk about applying an 'English Model' to resolve the problems in Italian football, especially in relation to hooliganism and policing. Although putatively based on the Taylor Report, the 'English Model' was not actually explained or developed and had become rhetoric to symbolize a hard-line approach to violence (Bianchi 2005; Valdiserri

2008; *La Gazzetta dello Sport* 2008b; Francesio 2008; D'Auria 2009). As D'Auria (2009, p. 89) states, the 'English Model', as laid out in the Taylor Report, is:

principally orientated to reaching four fundamental objectives: 1) reinventing the stadium as a public space and therefore re-evaluating the sporting community; 2) rediscovering the sense of spectacle of the footballing encounter; 3) to give attention to the customer satisfaction of the fans, pampered and handled as customers; 4) to introduce control measures for the regular attendees at the stadium.

As has been demonstrated throughout this book, an 'English Model' has not actually been implemented as there has not been wide-scale redevelopment of stadium safety, the implementation of wider commercial practices, nor reform of policing. If anything, the sense of spectacle and customer satisfaction has been diminished through the imposition of draconian legislation. Ironically the changes within the 'English Model' also provide an alternative symbol to fans. The commercialization and commodification of the game represents something for many fans to resist with the 'No to modern football' movement. Paradoxically, English fans represented the model of support for Italian *ultras* and hooligan groups across Europe (Dal Lago 1990; Dal Lago and De Biasi 1994; Podaliri and Balestri 1998; Spaaij 2006). As Francesio (2008, p. 73) states sardonically, 'evidently there is always an "English Model" to refer to'.

Central to the symbolism of the 'English Model' is the continuing crisis in Italian football. The first decade of the twenty-first century has seen Italian football rocked by financial scandals that have affected large Italian businesses and their football subsidiaries, such as Parma, Lazio, Fiorentina and Napoli. This has been compounded by scandals including forged passports, forged financial declarations and doping. The nadir of the crisis in Italian football was reached in 2006 when the *calciopoli* scandal was leaked to the Italian media. *Calciopoli* revealed the intricate patrimonial networks of politicians, businessmen and the football authorities that were operating in Italian football. Strategic charismatic leaders were extending their patronage across the network in order to favour their teams. *Calciopoli* was compounded by the *Calcioscommesse* scandal involving twenty-seven teams in match-fixing. The culmination of the years of scandal has not led to any widespread change within the game as existing practices have continued. Fan apathy has led to a decline in attendance at football stadiums and continued violence from the *ultras*. Less than a year after *calciopoli*, violence between Catania and Palermo fans led to the death of a policeman, Filippo Raciti. Nine months later, Gabriele Sandri, a Lazio fan, was shot and killed by a

police officer. The government adopted the Pisanu Law in an attempt to enforce an 'English Model', and impose some regulation upon football, but without understanding the full details of the Taylor Report.

Throughout this book it has been argued that political debate has been marginalized as the hegemonic elite accumulate resources and power to maintain their position. The Pisanu Law reflect this lack of political dialogue. As Lorenzo Contucci argues,

In Italy when there is *confusione* you know, when there is an accident in the stadium, after two or three days you have a new law. It is an emotional law and sometimes it is not fair and it is not correct. In Italy the *Daspo* it is done directly by the police and there is no control over it. While in England there is a proposal I think, by the police, and then there is the judge that gives the banning order. (Lorenzo Contucci, AS Roma and lawyer, personal interview, January 2014)

The problem with this emotional reactive legislation is that there is no significant public or parliamentary debate to work through all aspects of the regulations. Testa (2013) argues that as these laws are imposed using the *Decreto Legge* (Decree Laws), they have actually been used to bypass parliamentary debate, particularly during Berlusconi's administration. Because the *Decteri Leggi* are quickly introduced they require continued readjustment; a solution that was debated thoroughly in parliament would produce a more enduring and beneficial result (Contucci 2010).

The overarching argument of the Taylor Report was to improve the safety at stadiums through stadium reconstruction and reformed policing (Taylor 1990). Yet neither of these points have been addressed in relation to the Pisanu Law. Many of the Italian stadiums are antiquated and have poor facilities. After the death of Raciti, only four stadiums passed the safety review (Sanminiatielli 2007; Kiefer 2007b; Hamil et al. 2010). Despite this, there were no provisions to improve stadium infrastructure in the Pisanu Law. Fundamentally, the Taylor Report sought to prevent congestion at entrances to stadiums and on the terraces, which was a significant factor contributing to the Hillsborough tragedy. The Pisanu Law has not acknowledged this aspect. It has in fact added to the congestion at turnstiles by instigating an identity check to ensure hooligans do not enter the stadium. However, these checks are disregarded when there is excessive congestion at the turnstiles and fans have been admitted without checks at Parma and Livorno. Ticket sales are not adequately controlled as approximately 1,000 Napoli fans attended their match at Livorno despite the

Osservatorio banning all away fans. Furthermore, some of the features of the Taylor Report were never implemented in Britain. For example, membership cards for fans were never introduced in Britain after widespread opposition from fans, yet the equivalent in Italy, the *tessera del tifoso* was introduced in 2009. If an 'English Model' is to be implemented in Italy, studies must be undertaken to fully understand the situation in England.

A key element of the Taylor Report (1990) related to the architecture of the terracing within the stadium. The report required that perimeter fences should be dismantled to ensure that fans had a safe exit from the end in the event of an emergency. Within Italy, only Fiorentina and Juventus have removed the Perspex fencing that encloses the *curve*. In addition to the removal of the perimeter fences, numbered seating was installed in British stadiums, and followed by similar measures in the Netherlands. In combination with Foucauldian surveillance techniques, numbered seating permitted the identification of individual troublemakers. These surveillance techniques outside of Britain, in Germany in particular, have permitted the retention of terraces in certain circumstances. These practices have not been fully implemented in Italy. Although there are closed-circuit television cameras in Italy, perpetrators are not reprimanded. Objects are frequently thrown onto the pitch during games. For example, in Livorno's Armando Picchi stadium, no cameras are installed underneath the stand, and this permitted a fan to launch a rocket across the pitch in 2010. Inter fans have even launched an enflamed scooter, which they stole from an Atalanta fan, from a stand of the San Siro Stadium in 2001.¹

The draconian measures imposed on all fans, and their piecemeal enforcement, only helps to reinforce the 'Outsider' identity of the *ultras*. They perform their identity within the liminal space of the stadium in opposition to the symbolic constructions of the police and the state. As the state does not infringe on the territory of the *ultras*, problems occur when the two sides re-enter the 'Italian' state outside the stadium. Consequently, the opportunities for a Hillsborough-style tragedy in Italy are manifest. The Pisanu Law is an Italian solution that imposes excessive regulation without improving the final result. Balestri argues:

It is a harmful and punitive legislation because it assumes that all the fans are potential criminals and therefore are filed. The *Tessera del tifoso* is merely an example of a further bureaucratization and it seems to confirm a trend for some time by the biggest football clubs to move the interest of the matches to television viewing, focus on royalties and discourage participation in the stadiums. (Carlo Balestri, UISP and Progetto Ultra, personal interview, January 2014)

The laws affect all fans, rather than the small number of *ultras* it is designed to target. The result is that many fans are not watching the matches on the television at home. As Lega Serie A permits all matches to be pay-per-view then there is no incentive to attend the stadium. In contrast, no game may be broadcast live on a Saturday afternoon in England so as to encourage fans to physically attend the match.

The perceived lack of legitimacy of the central authorities ensures that it does not impose safety regulations onto the clubs. The Taylor Report (1990) placed the obligation for safety of fans within the stadium on the clubs. In abdicating responsibility for fan safety, the British state reaffirmed its legitimacy. It advocated individual clubs' accountability for their consumers, and the individual responsibility of the fans. Surveillance assumed that all fans were potentially being observed. In doing so, the state imposed neo-liberal economics by placing the economic burden on the clubs. Consequently, English clubs employed third-party security firms to maintain order, which restricted the police to a public order role away from the stadium. The poor infrastructure of the stadiums and the Outsider identity of the *ultras* have necessitated increased police presence at Italian stadiums; the police operate as the lynchpin that maintains the *status quo*. As the police operate within the political patrimonial system they become active agents in constructing the *ultras* as the only cause of the problem in Italy (Della Porta 1998; Marchi 2005; Testa 2013). The weakness of the central state to impose reform permits the maintenance of existing patterns of policing. The heavy police presence operating around the stadium, combined with the regulations related to the stadium security check and the *tessera del tifoso*, criminalizes all fans. This is apparent from the police presence afforded to *all* fans travelling to away games. Without fully understanding the key aspects of the 'English Model' the Italian authorities are perpetuating the vicious cycle of decline in Italian football.

The incorporation of football into the patrimonial system permits the presidents of football clubs to abstain from the responsibility of stadium safety. As local councils, or state institutions like CONI, own most stadiums, presidents do not take responsibility for their maintenance. Consequently, this prevents Italian clubs from capitalizing on their stadiums. An unintended consequence of stadium redevelopments in Britain led to football clubs increasing their commercial and matchday revenues. Corporate boxes were enhanced and augmented with catering facilities, merchandising outlets and special events. In addition, stadiums host conference and restaurant facilities, club superstores

and various leisure facilities to extend the profitability of the stadium over the course of the week, rather than restrict their facilities to matchdays. In contrast, a few Italian stadiums include facilities to purchase club merchandise and even fewer have adequate catering facilities. Fan comfort is restricted to inadequately maintained *curva*. Poor seating and temporary stands create an unsatisfactory fan experience that is compounded by poor toilets and catering. The former England, Juventus, Roma and AC Milan manager, Fabio Capello, has echoed this point. As he collected a career award at Parma University in February 2010, Capello stated that

Italian teams are well equipped but English sides are on top right now. Players prefer to go to England and Spain and it is not just for the money. They see Italian stadiums are half empty and realise we've got problems. (Kington 2010)

The lack of revenue-generating facilities is compounded by the failure to implement improved stadium safety. This contributes to fan apathy and falling attendances, which impact the financial viability of the clubs. Consequently, matchday revenue constitutes the smallest percentage of overall revenue for many Italian clubs (Deloitte and Touche 2013). The vicious circle is complete as the restricted revenue further reduces the clubs' ability to improve the facilities of the stadium.

Television revenue has been a key driver of transformation within football. Deregulation of television networks saw the inauguration of new broadcasters. These networks had more freedom over content and sport became a key market opportunity. In Britain, the satellite broadcaster, Sky, was central to the transformations within the English Premier League. Similarly, television income from the Champions League helped transform European and national competition. Within Italy, Silvio Berlusconi's Mediaset made extensive use of entertaining neo-television and utilized these television networks to publicize and transform his football club, AC Milan. The complete deregulation of the football television rights in Italy permitted individual clubs to negotiate their own television contracts. This has seen the popular and powerful clubs in Italy maximize their revenue, accumulate the most resources and lengthen the economic distance between them and the provincial clubs. Consequently, television revenue constitutes most of the overall revenue for Italian football clubs. For example, Italy's most popular club, Juventus, generated nearly a half of its revenue from television in 2010 (Deloitte and Touche 2010). This ratio has significantly improved since the construction of their new stadium

(Deloitte and Touche 2013). Until then two-thirds of their revenue came from television. The neo-patrimonial system had permitted the over-reliance of television revenue to the detriment of other aspects of the football experience. This practice came to an end in 2010 as Serie A clubs signed a new deal to have a more equitable distribution of television revenues. This is one small step in making Serie A more competitive, both at home and abroad.

Football requires referees to arbitrate between the sides. In the wider political economy, the state should act as this arbitrator. Within the global neo-liberal economy, the authority and power of the state as arbitrator has been challenged, changed and, in many cases, diminished. In the absence of a powerful arbitrator, such as the state, influential actors operating across business, politics and football can accumulate resources to the detriment of other groups. The Italian political economic system encourages the incorporation of football clubs into the wider patrimonial network. The 'deep play' of football within Italian society sees the sport as a major contributor of social and symbolic capital to charismatic individuals. As the British novelist and cultural commentator of Italy, Tim Parks states 'In Italy, you haven't really arrived until you own a football club' (cited in Arie 2004). This permits dense interdependencies between football clubs, television, business and politicians that frame the production and consumption of Italian football. The deregulation of the 1980s resulted in connections thickening between the media, politics and football. Silvio Berlusconi utilized television to promote his football club before using this as a paradigm to 'enter the field' of politics. Italian family capitalism and thicker personal connections permitted clubs like Parma and Lazio to be incorporated into wider family businesses. The lack of regulation and transparency, however, resulted in the clubs being affected when the parent companies went bankrupt. The problems affecting Parma and Lazio exposed widespread financial irregularities across Italian football and saw many clubs operating under incredible debt. Top clubs such as Parma, Fiorentina and Napoli have all been relegated due to financial complications. The neo-patrimonial system then saw the government attempt to pass the *salva-calcio* law to allow clubs to delay repayment of their tax debts (Porro and Russo 2004). Furthermore, the lack of regulation also resulted in several clubs utilizing fraudulent paperwork or doping in order to gain an advantage. Personal connections across a neo-patrimonial network were exposed spectacularly with the *calciopoli* scandal in 2006. This permitted a successful club with the right connections to influence the outcomes of football matches. *Calciopoli* became a metaphor for the wider Italian state; personal connections influenced the operation of the system for individual gain at the expense of

the wider interest. The accumulation of resources by strategic individuals, facilitated by personal networks, permitted the elite clubs to dominate Italian football and empty out wider involvement.

The future of Italian football: 'Year Zero'?

At the start of the 2009-10 season, Carlo Verdelli (2009) of the *Gazzetta dello Sport* suggested that it was 'year zero' for Serie A and Italian football. The season passed without any major scandals or incidents and finished with Inter's triumphant Champions League victory in Madrid. The success of Inter had demonstrated that Italian football could still compete on the global stage. Much of this, however, was down to personal wealth and ambition of Massimo Moratti, as well as to the economic weakening of rivals. Despite this brief moment of optimism, Italian football continues to the struggle. It is instructive that *Gazzetta dello Sport* also declared that Italian football was at 'year zero' in July 2014 (Monti 2014). Italy had just been defeated in the World Cup finals and did not qualify for the second round. They presented research that showed that Italy was bottom of a list detailing the percentage of players trained in the academies of clubs in European national leagues. A day later, the death of Ciro Esposito was announced. Esposito was the Napoli fan who had been shot before the Coppa Italia final. Italian football was again blighted by failure on the pitch and violence off it.

In order for Italian football to build upon its past successes it needs to understand the changing global economic system. After two decades of deregulation, King (2010) has highlighted that the worldwide recession of 2007–10 could constitute a renewed process of regulation. UEFA sounded this signal when they announced that from the 2011-12 season they will enforce 'financial fair play' rules to ensure that all clubs who play in UEFA competitions comply with strict financial regulations. As Michel Platini, the president of UEFA states, 'The clubs will comply, or they will not play' (Conn 2010). It is instructive that a transnational body is imposing regulation in the absence of state regulation. Furthermore, UEFA will need to enforce the regulations to ensure legitimacy – a problem that has dogged the Italian federation since its inception.

There are signs that Italy is beginning to adapt to this global situation. In 2009, all but one of the twenty Serie A clubs voted to create a separately administered league, along the lines of the English Premier League. Lega Serie A became operational at the start of the 2010-11 season and signalled the start of a

collective television deal for the league. This represents an opportunity to make the league more competitive and appealing to a global market. In the short term, it dramatically affected the revenue of the elite clubs who had previously received a substantially larger share of the television revenue during the last twenty years. How these clubs manage this transition will be crucial. Juventus, for example, initially struggled after *Calciopoli* with relegation and the loss of television money. Their financial and footballing fortunes were strengthened, however, with the construction of the Juventus Stadium in 2011. Since its inauguration, Juventus' matchday revenue has trebled (Deloitte and Touche 2013). Other clubs in Italy may have to follow their lead in order to compete both nationally and across Europe. Promotion of other revenue streams will also mitigate the revenue reduction from television.

Since Lega Serie A was inaugurated in 2010, every league has been affected by points deductions due to financial irregularities or match-fixing, except in 2013–14. Although this is evidence of the entrenched corruption within the patrimonial networks of Italian football, it also highlights how the league is beginning to assert authority. Any form of regulation must be adequately policed. There has been a long history of patrimonial networks used to circumvent regulations. The 'Rosetta Case' in 1923 resulted from Juventus providing Virginio Rosetta an accountancy job in addition to his salary. Similarly, the restrictions on foreign players resulted in passports being forged to 'prove' Italian ancestry. These scandals are in addition to the opportunities taken by presidents and players to profit from their positions. Betting scandals and match-fixing payments have beset the Italian league since 1926 when Torino was found guilty of bribing a player from Juventus. Brian Glanville highlighted systematic bribery in Italian football during the 1960s and 1970s. *Totonero*, *calciopoli* and *Calcioscommesse* are further examples of individuals utilizing their networks to organize football results. Economic profit is not always the prime driver for these scandals. Symbolic capital and prestige are equally important. The history of Italian football is a history of pushing the boundaries of authority, and Lega Serie A will need to assert its legitimacy.

The football authorities and the elite Italian clubs have highlighted the need for improved stadiums. In their book, *Ripartenza* ('Reboot'), which calls for Italian football to 'reboot', Gianfranco Teotino and Michele Uva (2010) highlight that Serie A was the only league in Europe to witness a fall in the average number of spectators per match in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In addition to calling for a new governance model, and a respect for the regulations, they argue that Italy needs new stadiums. The Italian Football Federation

acknowledged this and made a bid for the 2012 European Championships to act as a driver for stadium renovation. Fan violence and *calciopoli*, however, saw the Championships granted to the Ukraine and Poland (Praverman 2007). The Federation subsequently bid for the 2016 tournament, yet this was awarded to France. The new Italian Prime Minister, Enrico Letta of the Partito Democratico, reiterated the importance of renovating stadiums in May 2013. In the senate he argued that 'we need new stadiums or the Italian decline will not stop' (*Corriere dello Sport* 2013). Significantly, however, Letta made no governmental provisions for financial support given the global economic crisis.

As a result, the Federation and the clubs will need to seek alternative funding for any redevelopment. Stadium redevelopment is vital in order for these clubs to offset the short-term loss of television income, as Teotino and Uva argue. This situation is complicated by the continuing communal control of football stadiums in Italy. This restricts opportunities for revenue generation for the clubs. Some clubs have begun the process of stadium redevelopment. Juventus lead the way with their club-owned Juventus Stadium. The two Milan clubs and Roma have also announced plans to renovate their stadiums. In Florence, Fiorentina announced plans to build a new stadium, alongside a modern art gallery, hotels, and conference facilities. Yet disputes with the commune resulted in their plans stalling. More importantly, Fiorentina have experimented with new policing techniques to minimize confrontation and violence at the stadium. Only time will tell if the new stadium and reformed policing constitute a 'Fiorentina Model' for Italian football (Giudici 2010).

Despite the changes to the structure and administration of the leagues, there has been little widespread reform in the governance of the federation and this will impact the wider success of the league. Guschwan (2007, p. 264) succinctly summarizes this problem:

The difficult task facing Italian government, soccer league and fans is to balance the requirements of safety and civility with the passion and expression that makes Italian soccer matches so compelling.

One of the enduring features of Italian football has been its vibrant spectator culture; it was part of the unique selling point when Channel 4 first broadcast *Football Italia* in 1992. Unfortunately, the bureaucracy imposed by the Pisanu Law has dramatically impacted the matchday experience of *all* fans. It is for this reason that Contucci and Francesio (2013) are more pessimistic and suggest that these as 'the last days of Italian football'. As they argue, 'they [the government] are trying to chase the violent people from the stadium – they have chased away

everyone but the violent people'. The unintended consequence of the 'repression' has been a strengthening of the *mentalità ultras*. They are the only ones continuing to go to the stadium so feel legitimated in their actions as 'authentic' fans.

Any form of governance or transition to an 'English Model' needs to incorporate an understanding of fan culture. As Merkel (2012) argues, German fans have fought to maintain their position within 'their' clubs and 'their' game. The result is a number of concessions to fans that maintains significant levels of order, but permitting the performance of fan culture. One of the major criticisms from fans in England has been the suppression of matchday atmospheres in all-seater stadiums. The Football Supporters' Federation has launched the 'Safe Standing Campaign' and 'Away Fans Matter' for lobby clubs to acknowledge the contribution to the atmosphere that safe terraces and away fans bring.² Something similar would be beneficial for Italian football.

One final danger of following an 'English Model' too closely relates to power. Although power is more evenly distributed among English Premier League clubs, there still exists a hegemonic bloc within the league. Clubs that compete in Europe have access to greater resources than those who do not and this helps maintain their position. A dual process occurs where the income of the overall league increases, but the resources are accumulated by the powerful. Those with less power have encountered a growing financial crisis, especially among lower league clubs, such as Plymouth Argyle, Leeds United and Portsmouth. Despite these financial problems, there remains an active fan involvement in rescuing and supporting their club. Independent Supporters' Associations and Supporters' Trusts have emerged in England in order to try and effect a change within supporters' football clubs. This is one area that differs from English fans' counterparts in Italy.

Political participation in Italian football

Despite Robert Putnam's (1993, 2000) assertions that social capital accumulated through associations contributes to national democracy and national economic success, this has not been demonstrated in Italy. The restructuring of the global political economy has also led to the restructuring of local communities. Deregulation of the economy and the movement of capital have also had a direct impact on individuals who have less time to attend associations, or have moved away from their community. This has been facilitated by increased consumption where traditional associations have been supplanted with new forms of

association. Although social capital is generated at all levels of society and within every social network, it operates in accordance with economic capital; those with the resources to accumulate it generate capital in greater quantities. As Skidmore et al. (2006) suggested, 'Those already well connected tend to get better connected ... community participation tends to be dominated by a small group of insiders who are disproportionately involved in a large number of governance activities.' Economic and social capital is intimately entwined, as Bourdieu (1986) argued. So as individuals accumulate these stocks of capital, it reinforces their position. This allows patrimonialism to flourish. Consequently, we must make a clear distinction between the Bourdieu concept of 'social capital' that is a resource that is used by individuals within a group and the more generic theory proscribed by Putnam. While stocks of social capital may increase with certain individuals participating in community life, this does not automatically translate to a wider benefit for the community in general. Many fans are participating for the sociability, not for any wider political or national involvement.

The restructuring of the global economy has opened up the football economy for new entrepreneurs. These have exploited existing connections to make the most of the transformations in the global political economy. Individuals like Silvio Berlusconi extend their wide social networks and, in doing so, win acclaim and favours from their supporters. This facilitates the accumulation of economic capital and sets in motion a self-reinforcing cycle. This in turn has accumulated and reinforced patrimonial networks. Personal patrimonial connections were retained within the new structure of Lega Serie A.³ Adriano Galliani, the vice president of AC Milan, was also the first vice president of Lega Serie A. Galliani was a former president of the Italian League until he resigned due to *calciopoli*. Even more disconcerting was the place of Massimo Cellino on the board of Lega Serie A. The president of Cagliari moved his team's home matches to Trieste, over 1,000 kilometres from Sardinia, after a dispute with the commune over their imposition of safety regulations. He then decided to move the club to a smaller stadium in the city, but was arrested in February 2013 over an investigation into fraud and embezzlement. As part of this investigation, the prosecuting magistrate described Cellino as having 'marked criminal tendencies' (Masu 2013). The central authorities have to impose a regulatory framework upon Italian football in order to mitigate the patrimonial networks. Yet the individuals are part of the same patrimonial networks that have systematically undermined the league.

The crisis of authority has contributed to player and fan malaise and this is contributing to the decline in Italian football. The culture of mistrust towards the authorities has been highlighted by the changes to the league structure

in the 2010-11 season. These changes have necessitated a new collective agreement between the players and the clubs. In September 2010, the players of the Italian Footballers' Association (AIC) voted to strike (which they subsequently suspended) in opposition to a new agreement proposed by the clubs. In particular, they were protesting against the suggestion that footballers should not have additional jobs outside football, that salaries should be tied to performance and, significantly, that a club could force the sale of a player in the last year of his contract to any club that agreed a transfer fee.

Challenges to central regulation have also affected fan involvement. Stadium regulations have not been enforced, and years of scandal, violence and crisis have resulted in fan apathy, resulting in decline in attendances at the stadium. This has been compounded by the introduction of the *tessera del tifoso*. The imposition of this card has galvanized the collective identity of the *mentalità ultras*. The *tesserae*, 'for the *ultras*', as Guschwan argues, 'embodies police repression and commercialism – the two characteristics of modern day football that *ultras* most detest' (Guschwan 2013a, p. 224). *Ultras* have protested against the imposition of this card, and this saw a dramatic reduction in attendances at Italian stadiums for the 2010-11 season. For example, Roma only had 18,600 fans for their opening match against Cesena in the 80,000 capacity Stadio Olimpico. As Contucci and Francesio (2013, p. 1) argue, 'they [the authorities] are trying to chase the violent people from the stadium. They have chased away everyone but the violent people.' This impacts the spectacle, both in the stadium and on television. Draconian legislation has directly impacted the one area that made Italian football unique, and has simultaneously created a symbol of resistance for the *ultras*.

The fans have a key opportunity to turn the patrimonial networks to their advantage. The supporters' clubs and *ultras* groups represent excellent avenues of social capital creation, which Putnam (1993, 2000) argues would overcome this decline. Instead, they also represent the emptying out of politics from public life (Sennett 1976; Habermas 1989; Putnam 1993, 2000). Richard Sennett (1998) suggested in *The Corrosion of Character* that the way to overcome individualization and to manage changes brought about by the global deregulated economy are to form small collectives. As Maffesoli (1996) argues, new collectives or neo-tribes are forming around consumption. In Italy, the supporters' clubs and *ultras* already constitute these collectives. Yet they need to reframe their political outlook. Historically, *ultras* have reflected the politics of

the *piazza*. Political symbols of the extreme left and right emerged in the *curve* during the 1970s. This has been replaced by a localized communist identity in the case of Livorno, or anti-immigration and secessionist politics of the *Lega Nord* and Berlusconi's centre-right governments in the north. There needs to be more social movements like *Progetto Ultrà* to present an alternative image of the fans. Although there is the FISSC (Federation of Supporters of Italian Football Teams), this does not have the activism of their equivalents in England, such as the Football Supporter's Federation and Kick it Out, or fan-projects and BAFF in Germany.⁴

Potentially, Supporters' Trusts could occupy this third position between the *ultras* and official supporters' clubs. Supporters Trusts can provide a critical eye to football governance, but also an active approach to issues such as anti-racism, and other forms of discrimination. Supporters Trusts should be supported, where possible, in their endeavours so they can become the critical friends of clubs. Yet in order to nurture and develop these ideas, fans must put aside their parochial rivalries. Just as the *ultras* are uniting in the face of common political and police pressure, other fans need to do the same. In this way they can share ideas and develop collaborative approaches to tackle the repressive measures in Italian football. Organizations like Supporters in Campo can potentially operate as this umbrella organization. Linking in with wider fan activism across Europe can help stimulate these actions. Organizations like Football Supporters Europe are potentially vital to maintain a vibrant fan culture across Europe.

Italy stands on the precipice. 'Year Zero' and the newly formed Serie A constitute a new beginning for Italian football. Yet Italy has been adept at *gattopardismo*; this has permitted change while remaining the same. For Italian football to reach the echelons they once occupied, all parties must adopt a controlled strategy to compete across Europe. Alternatively, Serie A will fade away and become a chapter in the history of football. For those who succumbed to the glamour and style of Channel 4's *Football Italia*, this will be a sad loss to world football.