#SocialResponsibility in #Football: Mapping Perceptions and Expectations through Social Media Conversations across Europe

UEFA Research Grant Programme 2016/17

Final Report, Dr Tim Breitbarth
Bournemouth, 6 July 2017
Acknowledgement

UEFA is determined to inform its own management and to assist its member associations in managing the social, environmental and economic impact of football across Europe. By awarding this grant as part of the UEFA Research Grant Programme UEFA helps European football to trace publics’ awareness, perceptions and expectations of football’s role in society. It also enables researchers to advance their own scientific work and, thereby, contribute to develop fields of knowledge.

I would like to express my gratitude to UEFA, especially UEFA Education & Universities and the UEFA Social Responsibility team, for this opportunity and for their logistical support, thoughtful input and guidance. I like to very much thank the members of the UEFA Research Grant Programme jury, chaired by Dr Michel D’Hooghe, to believe in the relevance and quality of this research project, as well as Stefanie Schulte (Deutscher Fussball-Bund) and Professor Bo Carlsson (Malmoe University) for providing instrumental letters of recommendation during the grant application phase.

Correspondence and discussions with all parties mentioned in this report have been very insightful, constructive and supportive, adding to the substance and success of the overall project. Therefore, I also owe to the many representatives of participating national associations who provided language support and local information for this complex cross-European inquiry. While this report largely focuses on cross-European findings, further valuable insights for individual national associations could be generated through additional analysis and discussion of locally-contextualised data and circumstances.

I would also like to thank both my faculty for providing additional budget as well as student research assistant Jordan Cotton for supporting the successful completion of this innovative project. Being able to involve young learners in the topic of social responsibility and disseminating various insights in various ways after the completion should be embraced as wonderful opportunity to further strengthen this important topic in future.
Executive Summary

The research project “#SocialResponsibility in #Football: Mapping Perceptions and Expectations through Social Media Conversations across Europe” funded through the UEFA Research Grant Programme was conducted over the period of one year between mid-2016 and mid-2017. UEFA is determined to assist its member associations in managing the social, environmental and economic impact of football across Europe. This research based on large-scale social media analysis helps European football governing bodies and, generally, football organisations to better understand publics’/stakeholders’ awareness, perceptions and expectations of football’s role in society. Views on SR have moved from direct financial benefits derived from such activities towards reputational impact, stakeholder relationships and communication.

This study acts as a ‘social listening tool’ since social media conversations are naturally occurring talk. The backbone of the empirical inquiry is a content analysis based on 32 SR-related keywords which were used to automatically locate and extract relevant items from more than 400 million social media sources. An established commercial monitoring tool was employed in order to produce meaningful quantitative and qualitative results for all selected cases/languages/national associations (Germany, England/UK, France, Spain, Italy, Croatia, Turkey, Sweden, Romania, Poland). The analytical levels focused on either separately or in combination are country/language, buzz/communication volume, social media sources (e.g. news media versus typical ‘social media’), and automated sentiment (positive, neutral, negative). While this report largely focuses on cross-European findings, further valuable insights for individual national associations could be generated through additional analysis and discussion of locally-contextualised data and circumstances.

Generally, there are indications that SR-related themes can create positive sentiments and/or perceptions of SR in football are considered favourably. While on first glance the buzz/social media communication volume around SR and football was relatively low (about 60,000 items), other research into CSR in general confirms shortcomings on both organisations’ and users’ side to foster dialogic interaction. Hence, it also raised questions on how football associations communicate SR in general and in social media in special. For this and other academic and managerial aspects of the research recommendations are provided which may directly inspire and inform policy, strategic and tactical discussions.
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Introduction

Generally, the increasing focus on the management concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) indicates an attempt to “re-embed” the commercial sector in a wider societal context, following a period of neoliberal market exposure, deregulation, separation of commercial and societal concerns. The European Union (EU) identifies CSR as a business’ contribution to sustainable development defined as the responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society: “To fully meet their social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders” (EU Commission, 2017). In Europe, the promotion of CSR “reflects the need to defend common values and increase the sense of solidarity and cohesion” (EU Commission, 2011).

In 2009, Bradish and Cronin concluded their introductory note of the first academic journal special issue devoted to social responsibility (SR) in the context of sport by stating that ‘CSR should be regarded as one of the most important components of contemporary sport management theory and practice’ (p. 696). Indeed, there has since been a proliferation of studies highlighting the economic and socio-political CSR dimensions and outcomes both in sport (i.e. implementing CSR within the sport organisations’ structural boundaries) and through sport (i.e. sport organisations serving as the vehicle for CSR implementation). Walzel and Robertson (2016) identified more than 700 individual articles on the topic of social responsibility and sport published between 2006 and 2015.

This is perhaps not surprising if one considers the increased professionalization, commercialisation, and overall commodification seen in the contemporary sporting context; rendering sport as an activity that ‘should be taken seriously’ (Adcroft and Teckman, 2009, p. 5), not least in relation to CSR. UEFA is at the forefront of recognising its role in contributing to sustainable development in society. In February 2016, a two-day UEFA workshop on social responsibility funded by UEFA’s HatTrick scheme was attended by representatives of 53 European national associations. Meanwhile, UEFA leads by
example by reporting on social responsibility (SR) performance each year and by recognising the relevance of SR in its statues (see Article 2).

In one of the earliest and to date internationally most-cited scientific paper on the role of social responsibility in football Breitbarth & Harris (2008) have conceptually argued that the game offers significant economic, cultural, political and humanitarian value. In most countries, football organisations hold key positions in the social sphere, which – in return – offers significant advantages and opportunities for the game. Academically, the impacts of and advantages from sport organisations’ SR engagement are, at best, vaguely understood (Breitbarth et al., 2015). Some suggest that examining SR in and through sport by drawing on critical perspectives helps to better grasp the complexities associated with the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of CSR-related programmes (Giulianotti, 2015; Levermore & Moore, 2015).

Generally, views on SR across industries have moved from direct financial benefits derived from such activities towards reputational impact, stakeholder relationships and communication (Ihlen et al., 2011). It is also noteworthy that in many languages the word ‘responsibility’ includes the notion of ‘response’ (e.g. also in German: ‘Verantwortung’/‘Antwort’), which points us towards interactive and dynamic characteristics and the role of organisational agility and accountability. Interestingly, this also indicates that (C)SR and social media share some similar features/aims/expectations, for example also around transparency, participation, change and even democracy (e.g. Castells, 2007).

Research aim and questions
Past research into sport/football and SR tried to build on either individual case studies, more or less representative surveys in a few countries, analyses based on published documents or simply website information, and relatively small-scale (quasi-)experimental designs (see e.g. Anagnostopoulos & Shilbury, 2013; Bason & Anagnostopoulos, 2015; Hamil & Morrow, 2011; Hoveman et al., 2011; Kolyperas & Sparks, 2011; Walters & Tacon, 2011). Yet, this study bears scientific innovation as it uses advanced social media
evaluation analysis in order to capture authentic views and emerging conversations from European publics, including supporters of the game.

A shifting focus is justified, timely and needed since social media has become a vital tool for managing organisational reputation and stakeholder communication (Adi et al., 2015), including e.g. rolling out football-related fair play, integration, diversity, health and environmental campaigns. Communication-wise, most European football organizations from professional to amateur maintain a presence on social media platforms (www.socialbakers.com); about half of the European population are active social media users, and growing (SmartInsights, 2016); and football-related content is the single major driver in the growth of online discussions (Stoll, 2014). ‘Unlocking’ such online discussions and understanding their dynamics bears scientific value on the one hand, but also provides member associations also with tactical knowledge on the other hand. From a scientific perspective, the contribution of this study is two-fold: firstly, it advances knowledge, and secondly, it introduces new analytical ways to capture large-scale social media content.

The research aims to evaluate and compare awareness of, perceptions about and expectations towards European football’s contribution to society. The research strategy embraces communications as processes of individuals’ reality construction. Conversations on particular topics, such as the role of football organisations in society, are expressions of beliefs, opinions and expectations. Discussions in the social web are authentic conversations since they are ‘naturally occurring talk’ (Silverman, 2006). This enables European football managers to compare novel and dynamic insights into authentic perceptions and expectations, which can directly inspire and inform policy, strategic and tactical discussions. At the same time, it could support discussions with concerned industry partners (e.g. sponsors), political/regulatory stakeholders (e.g. governments) and social initiative partners (e.g. from civil society).

Research questions are:

- What is the intensity of communication (‘buzz’) about the role of SR in football across Europe?
- What is the tonality of discussions (‘sentiment’)?
- Which does the public find key and are there differences across countries/languages (Germany, Turkey, France, England, Italy, Spain, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Croatia)?
- What are social media sources, channels, platforms used for respective discussions?
- How dynamic are all the above matters and facts over time (about five months) and can possible peaks be directly related to events/campaigns initiated by UEFA/national associations?

Outline of the report

The main results and insights from this research are of empirical, methodological and managerial value. The project was driven by the mind-set to provide new and innovative insights into European publics’ perception of the societal role of football for professional/amateur clubs, national football governing bodies and UEFA. After providing a theoretical backbone based on relevant literature, the report moves on to describe the challenges and solutions to establishing the adequate methodology and detailed empirical inquiry in order to provide comparable data from, mainly, across ten European member associations/countries/languages. The multi-linguistic design delivers data that is usually not easy to gather.

The design of the data collection and analysis provides a blue-print for possible future inquiries by national associations or other interested football organisations (e.g. contextually-bound investigations or for internal/external benchmarking). In the then following chapter, the report provides both quantitative results (e.g. intensity of respective communication and media sources) and qualitative findings (e.g. tonality of comments). From an academic perspective and due to the longitudinal design of capturing dynamic data, further understanding into the formation of views and expectations towards football organisations’ role in society is being gained. From a managerial perspective, the introduction of the highly specialised social media monitoring systems in this research may also be a testing ground for tracking the impact of social initiatives and campaigns over time allowing for improved reputation management. These matters are amongst those covered in the final chapter.
Theoretical Framing and Literature

Trends in top management and specialist journals show a steep incline of CSR-related academic publications since the end 1990ies (Wang & Gao, 2016). Especially in sport management it is argues that SR should be one of the most important components of theory and practice (Bradish & Cronin, 2009; Slack, 2014). In that spirit, the overall relevance of interrelated sport and SR topics have been examined by many authors to date (e.g. Byers et al., 2015; Paramio-Salcines et al., 2013; Sherry et al., 2007; Forster, 2006; Hamil et al., 2004). Notwithstanding the ever-increasing emphasis the sport-management scholarly community places on SR, Slack (2014) noted in his keynote at the 2014 European Association for Sport Management (EASM) conference that SR has become one of the key issues of research in the field. Especially, seminal contributions by Babiak & Wolfe (2006; US sport), Smith & Westerbeek (2007; sport in general) and Breitbarth & Harris (2008; football) have framed and justified the relevance of modern social responsibility (SR) of sport, in sport and through sport.

Figure 1: Model of the role of CSR in professional football (Breitbarth & Harris, 2008, p. 187)

Traditionally, sport organisations have added to the public sphere by addressing social issues (Van Eekeren, 2013). However, due to different cultural contexts and the evolution of a modern interpretation of (C)SR, sport organisations are in the process of embracing the concept for their own advantages (Hackert et al., 2012). In football, organisations from progressive/professionalized football cultures are more actively engaged in SR activity (Kolyperas et al., 2015; Kolyperas & Sparks, 2011). Importantly, views on SR have moved from direct financial benefits derived from such activities towards reputational impact, stakeholder relationships and communication (Ihlen et al., 2011).
Unfortunately, researchers have not been able to empirically describe, compare and test such differences (respectively: commonalities) in awareness, expectations and perceptions in a sport or football context. A comprehensive review of the field by Breitbarth et al. (2015) concludes that content-based research that connect SR engagement with social media has the potential to offer valuable insights. In this sense, this research project shifts the focus from, firstly, content-based research from an organisational perspective to the content of public discussions; and, secondly, from ad-hoc to a longitudinal inquiry. Ad-hoc, organisational content studies have been conducted within settings such as professional teams in US (e.g., Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Sheth & Babiak, 2009; Extejt, 2004); teams in Europe (e.g., Hamil & Morrow, 2011; Hovemann et al., 2011; Kolyperas & Sparks, 2011;) teams in Australia (Alonso & O’Shea, 2012); European sport associations (Walters & Anagnostopoulos, 2012; Walters & Tacon, 2011); professional teams’ (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2014; Bingham & Walters, 2013; Anagnostopoulos & Shilbury, 2013; Walters & Chadwick, 2009) or athletes’ charitable foundations (Babiak et al., 2012; Tainsky & Babiak, 2011); non-team commercial sport organisations (Walker & Parent, 2010); major sporting events (e.g., Dowling et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2010) or even sporting facilities (Uecker-Mercado & Walker, 2012).

Almost 100 journal articles published since 2008 have been identified in the field of sport and social media. They revolve around one of three topics: strategic, tactic, user-centred issues. Yet, none has been identified that looks at communicating CSR – or vice versa grasping publics opinions on that very matter in sports/football sphere. It confirms that the current research project offers a contribution to academic sport management and sport communication knowledge.

Social media as a form of social interaction
Social media plays an increasingly important role as a vital communications tool and wide-ranging opinion-building. Established social theories (e.g. social correlation theory, Granovetter, 1973; balance theory, Heider, 1946), theories of learning (e.g. connectivism, Siemens, 2005) and communications theories (e.g. agenda setting theory, McCombs & Shaw, 1972) provide ample substance to the argument that knowledge and opinions of individuals and communities develop through social interaction.
Filo et al. (2015, p.167) define social media as “new media technologies facilitating interactivity and co-creation that allow for the development and sharing of user-generated content among and between organizations and individuals.” The term ‘social media’ substantialises in an array of platforms, channels, applications and online spheres which keep developing and changing with great speed – as do user preferences and activities. However, Figure 2 provides a visual map of the social media landscape, structured by the ideas of listening, learning and adapting.

Figure 2: The Conversation Prism (www.conversationprism.com)

While the Conversation Prism and other social media overviews clearly show the scale and variety of the social media sphere, most papers focus on Twitter (e.g. Gillooly et al., 2017; Hayat et al., 2016; Colleoni, 2013;) and Facebook (e.g. Cho et al., 2017; Pronschinske, 2012) as their scope for analysis.
Arguably, football in particular is ideally positioned to use social media in order to reach fans, to disseminate sports-related news, and to establish and foster an interactive and long-term relationship (Parganas & Anagnostopoulos, 2015; Wallace et al., 2011). At the same time, such analysis allows judgement about the effectiveness of social media for social responsibility communication, for example, organisations that are mastering this two-way communication are strengthening both their sustainability and overall strategy (Korschun & Du, 2013). Vice versa, ignorance towards or failure in adequately acknowledging and embracing modern means of communication have pushed organisations into defensive positions and crisis situations (Wagner et al., 2015).

There is a need to shift beyond the conventional way of thinking that social media is an extension of the one-way flow of information to an outside audience (Kesavan et al., 2013). Social media offers the chance to listen to football fans and supporters in real-time and understand the development of their thoughts and expectations. In football, coercive, mimetic and normative pressures from e.g. fans have been found important drivers of organisational SR engagement (Kolyperas et al., 2015). Acknowledging public perceptions beyond a myopic approach to association’s/club’s SR activities is of particular importance since central European football consumers have been found to be more sceptical towards more or less obvious tactics to using SR as an instrument to achieve profits or to improve image compared to sport consumers from Anglo-Saxon countries (Breitbarth et al., 2013). Hence, the national/cultural role of (C)SR matters, possibly along the implicit CSR versus explicit CSR cultural dived suggested by Matten & Moon (2008).

Social media as a very topical matter in socio-political contexts

Prominently, in the process and wake of Donald Trump’s victory in the American election, the pros and cons of social media have once again come to the very forefront of socio-political debates. User-generated content has led to ‘beliefs in organizational omniscience’ become something of a rarity (Kim et al., 2015). Social media’s role in socio-political discussions and on public/individual opinions and decisions remains vague, but perceptions of its powerful character and manipulative influence goes hand-in-hand with crucial problems in current opinion poll and traditional market research. Social media has the potential to offer real added value by ‘predicting the present’ (Bright et al., 2014) in
order to understand current salient issues. Knowing what the public or a relevant sub-community is thinking about is a crucial precursor to knowing what their opinion is of any given topic.

With a reference to CSR communication in general and via social media in particular about 40 articles have been identified. The following four main assumptions have been confirmed, indicating how results and interpretations from this study can enhance football organisation’s engagement with stakeholders based on SR activities and communication.

Firstly, CSR communication requires a sensitive balance of information and inspiration. Arguably, the problem today is a lack of balance. There is a disproportionate amount of information, data, and details being used to grow interest. In addition, traditional CSR communication tends to focus on building awareness and broadcasting a corporation's efforts, progress, or future plans. In other words, CSR communication is used primarily to serve corporate interests, versus promote social progress. This one way broadcast of corporate-centric information is not unlike the way so many business/brands/organizations today are still using media to talk only about themselves, versus what matters most to people (see e.g. Humlen, 2014).

Secondly, the type of communication strategy adopted provides some clear indication of where CSR sits on a firm’s list of priorities. Different approaches are possible when social media channels are used as the means to correspond about CSR issues. Communication strategies in this context essentially fall into three types: broadcasting strategy, reactive strategy, engagement strategy (see e.g. Etter, 2015).

Thirdly, there is evidence that there are lower levels of social media participation in relation to official sport organisations’ feeds (e.g. Twitter, Facebook), and still a focus of traditional media usage for informational purposes, albeit it may be traditional media’s online/mobile services (Clavio & Walsk, 2014; Burk et al., 2016).

Fourthly, the assumption of the more the dialog, the more the communality seems to fail to portray the complexity of the communicational dynamics, such as the persistence of
different, or simply a dialog without alignment. Empirical findings show that, even when engaging in a dialogue, communication in social media is still likely to be conceived as a marketing practice to convey messages about organisations (see e.g. Colleoni, 2013).

**Currently salient issues and the challenge of social media research**

Offering an insight into currently salient issues is an area where social media has the potential to really fill in a gap. By providing a forum for unsolicited public comments and conversation to emerge, different social media platforms provide an indication of what the wide body of social media users are thinking about at any given time. It is no surprise therefore that a variety of indicators from social media are already starting to enter common parlance and changing media, PR and communications fundamentally. For example, newspapers routinely report that a topic is “trending” on Twitter.

Yet, at the same time it points to one of the methodological challenges since a significant problem for social media research concerns the extent to which sentiment measured on such networks can be attributed to “real people”. As a result of the value and significance of social media, a number of professional organizations exist which try to actively influence overall perceived sentiment (e.g. apparently 30% of retweets of Donald Trump’s hashtag were generated by ‘bots’). Also, pure quantitative measures on top-ranked agenda items (which CSR is not though, usually) may overrate the number posts/tweets/etc are shared since ‘sharing’ content does not mean ‘reading’ content in the first place.

Hence, social media conversations around – in the bigger picture – rather particular topics, such as the role of football organisations in society, are considered **authentic** conversations since they are ‘naturally occurring talk’ (Silverman, 2006). Mainly, spaces stretch across Zone 1 and Zone 2 of Tuten & Solomon’s (2015) ‘4 Zones of Social Media Marketing Framework’:

- **Zone 1**: Social Community describes channels of social media focused on relationships and the common activities people participate in with others who share the same interest or identification. While all social media channels are built around networked relationships, the interaction and collaboration for relationship building and maintenance in social communities are the primary reasons people
engage in these activities. The channels in the social community zone include social networking sites, message boards and forums, and wikis. All emphasize individual contributions in the context of a community, communication and conversation, and collaboration.

- Zone 2: Social Publishing aids in the dissemination of content to an audience. Social publishing may be user-generated, editorial, and/or branded. Channels of social publishing include blogs, micro sharing sites, media sharing sites, social bookmarking, and news sites. Social publishing has been closely connected to content strategies in marketing and communication.

In contrast to methodological approaches used thus far in sport/social responsibility research, the following chapter describes the advanced qualitative and quantitative social media evaluation analysis that was employed to capture authentic conversations and dynamic views from European publics and communities directly related to football.
Research Design and Data Analysis

As stated before, this study is based on the assumption that social media conversations are expressions of beliefs, opinions and expectations (e.g. Castello et al., 2016; Etter & Vestergaard, 2015); are authentic conversations; and are ‘naturally occurring talk’ (Silverman, 2006). In many ways, such content bypasses traditional gatekeeping functions of other media and methods (Etter et al., 2017). For example, traditional news media content is shaped by various selection processes (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013), and surveys are only conduct in intervals and may be limited due to predefined organizational aspects (Helm 2007). This chapter describes the challenges and solutions to design an adequate way to conduct the empirical research and analyse the large-scale data. This also includes important ethical considerations.

The case selection was driven by the ambition to capture Europe’s and UEFA’s diversity, especially to involve national associations from all parts of Europe also representing different regional (CSR) cultures including the leading football nations in terms of sporting performance and representing more than 50% of Europe’s population (incl. Russia).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>UEFA Association</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>UEFA Ranking**</th>
<th>Population (million)</th>
<th>Active social media use (2017, % internet users)</th>
<th>Active social media use (2016, hours/day)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>England/ UK</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Statistica.com (2017), SmartInsights (2016). * Not available at the time of writing, ** UEFA association club coefficient (after 2016/17 season)

Globally: 37%
The empirical data collection system and process

The monitoring system used for this project has been successfully developed over more than ten years by one of the world’s first ever social media monitoring companies. Because it is a learning system, it automatically adds relevant sources as it collects and processes social media items. Overall, the main challenge for this research was to refine the monitoring system in a way to manage the ‘right’ balance between breadth and depth of data in general and set-up the data collection system in such way that (as much as possible) consistency and comparability between and across associations/countries/languages was secured. This much relies on the ‘right’ cluster/list of keywords/tags to be used. After all, the monitoring system has access to more than 400 million online sources, of which 1,715k are news sites (i.e. likely editor-generated shared content one way or another), 95k are blogs (i.e. user-generated content, often by people with a vested interest or expertise in a certain area) and 57k forums. The largest amount of sources are non-access-restricted social media user sites profiles/streams/etc. in a language that the system can interpret (i.e. e.g. no Chinese).

Consequently, the sampling relies on a non-probability selection techniques. Certainly, the interconnectedness of the content and its embeddedness in a network of interrelated discussions and actors challenges the definition of the boundaries of discourses, groups, and often platforms (Jenkins, 2006). This poses the question of delimitation (i.e. the selection of coherent and representative sample for subsequent analysis; see Gerlitz & Rieder, 2013). However, in a nutshell, the data collection method for online ‘community research’ (Taddicken & Bund, 2010) and especially ‘extended netnography’ based on, mostly, user-generated content (“online practice of anthropology”; Kozinets, 2006; Janowitz, 2010) works as following (Figure 3).

- General queries retrieve data from the available overall data-pool and assign the data to a project - this data is organised in the main-feed (‘football’).
- The main-feed is based on keywords provided by the researcher. Keywords are important in order to ensure a good data coverage.
- For more specific topic analysis data is assigned to sub-feeds, which are extracted automatically (via specific queries) and/or by hand (via topic encoding).
• Levels of thematic analysis are established within sub-feeds (incl. e.g. buzz, sentiment, source tracking)

Figure 3: Data retrieval and query management (based on theory-driven text analysis, see e.g. Mayring, 1993 and Gläser & Laudel, 1999)

In this research, the football main-feed for each language was framed by the following indicators – this means, that at least one of the following terms had to be in any social media item in order to qualify for the main-feed: the word ‘football’ and/or FIFA and/or UEFA and/or the full or abbreviated name of respective national association (e.g. FA or ‘Football Association’). Within this main-feed the SR sub-feed needed to be established.

Hence, in order to operationalise SR and to frame the evaluation the cluster of keywords/tags to be used across the ten countries and languages had to be established. This multi-step process built UEFA’s on and respective national associations’ understanding of social responsibility (e.g. integration, diversity, inclusion, peace/reconciliation, solidarity, health) and additional themes/topics/campaigns (e.g. topical refugee issue, recognisable European-wide or national initiatives like the ‘Respect’ campaign). A list of 32 keywords was developed by extracting most dominant SR-related terms from – in the first instance – UEFA’s, The FA’s and DFB’s publications on the one hand, and academic articles on the other hand. However, that list was then also sent to all
ten individual national associations for verification and translation. In addition, locally relevant terms could be added (in their native language) to the set of comparable cross-European keywords. See Figure 4 for the relevant section from the survey sent to national associations, which consequently provided the backbone for all data-pool queries and the text/semantic analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Term</th>
<th>Interpreted In Your Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doping</td>
<td>Respect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Social ~ development</td>
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<td>Equality</td>
<td>Social ~ responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethical</td>
<td>Societal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football ~ association</td>
<td>Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human ~ rights</td>
<td>Volunteering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Excerpt from the survey sent to national associations, including the keywords for the data-base queries

For the full survey see Appendix A. Information provided also helped the researcher to frame national SR discourses and association’s engagement, as it will allow for possible follow-up analysis and discussions with individual national associations. Unfortunately, not all national associations returned the two parts of the surveys (Table 2) with part being the most important as it included the keywords – yet, a Spanish and a Romanian colleague familiar with SR and football kindly provided the required translations.

The network of native speakers and the use of automated translation services (e.g. GoogleTranslate) allowed to mitigate most of the complexity associated with studying naturally occurring talk across languages. Professional linguists were employed to ‘translate’ keywords into search queries in the social media monitoring system. Those
linguists and native speakers were needed to optimise the search results, for example does one have a native understanding of the syntax of a language in order to provide a measured solution for the distance between search terms (“proximities”). Also, all keywords accompanied by their respective root words (e.g. ‘integrate*’ in order to capture ‘integrative’, ‘integration’, etc).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Language</th>
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</thead>
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<td>81.3m</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>(√) / (√)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>78.2m</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>√ / √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>66.4m</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>√ / -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>England/UK</td>
<td>65.1m</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>√ / √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>61.0m</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>√ / √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>46.3m</td>
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<td>- / -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>38.5m</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>√ / √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>19.8m</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>- / -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>9.8m</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>√ / -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>4.2m</td>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>√ / √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>UEFA</td>
<td>(ca. 850m)</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ / (not requested)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Countries/languages/national associations researched and response to surveys

Right from very early into the project, the German case was used as testing ground and pilot study, in order to detect and find solutions for challenges such as the potentially huge amount of data. It helped to finding a measured and meaningful approach to capturing SR-related online football conversations, but also inspired different levels of subsequent analysis. For example, the test run indicated that while general football talk and online conversations happen well beyond ‘traditional’ news sites (46% news versus 54% else), SR-related posts appear predominantly in news sources (80% news versus 20% else; see Figure 5). In line with suggestions in the literature (see above in this report) this raised early questions about the appetite for SR-related information, content-generation and discussions on what is often considered ‘typical’ social media sites and platforms (i.e. social networking sites). Clearly, football bodies could match such insights against their standard strategies for online CSR communication, be it broadcasting, reacting, engaging (Etter, 2015), albeit a direct link between SR-related communication “input” by DFB during
the period of the pilot study (e.g. publication of latest SR report, PR activities) and influence/impact on the social web could not be observed.

![Figure 5: Source distribution general football conversations (left) versus SR in football (Germany only, November 2016)](image)

Obviously, the tonality of comments (neutral, positive, negative, mixed) is of relevance when judging social media conversations from an organisational perspective. Here, the established monitoring system has shown to be 90% reliable with 0% confusion between ‘positive’ and ‘negative’. However, the system classifies most data as neutral and advanced analysis would require substantial investment for any large-scale research like this project – or a confined small-scale qualitative research design. However, integrated sentiment analysis has even shown to outperform traditional qualitative analysis in a study by Ceron et al. (2016).

**Research ethics**

In a standard post-application stage of the project, Bournemouth University did require internal ethical approval under its policies and procedures. Interest of the approval panel revolved around why the research requires the collection of personal data or may collect personal data (intentionally or not) as part of its methodology; how personal data would be anonymized; how the collection and storage of the personal data is managed (taking into consideration the UK Data Protection Act and the 8 Data Protection Principles). Considerations required as part of the approval process helped to further strengthen the methodology and management of the project. The successful request for ethical approval
is provided as Appendix B. It provides compelling answers to ethical issues related to social media research, which still constitutes new territory and where traditional ethical considerations require new thinking.
Results and Findings

This chapter features detailed results and findings from a cross-European perspective mainly. The analytical levels focused on either separately or in combination are country/language (all, all without Spanish/Polish, individual languages), buzz/communication volume, social media sources (all, news versus typical ‘social media’), SR keywords (32 SR identifiers) and automated sentiment (positive, neutral, negative).

Overall: all languages, all sources, all keywords

Overall, 600,000 individual social media items accumulated in the SR sub-feed over the period between end of February and end of June 2017 (see Figure 6). The source distribution shows that, for example, about 31% of items derive from news sites, about 43% from micro-messaging sources (e.g. Twitter), almost 11% from blogs and about 10% from social networking sources (e.g. Facebook). The overview in Figure 6 also features a word cloud which arranges terms mostly used in a relational manner. Hot Spots list individual platforms, channels, websites or users by quantity of items. The sentiment analysis in the bottom right corner provides an overview over how many items could be analysed automatically and the tonality (positive, neutral, negative) amongst those items.

However, the buzz timeline at the top shows the distribution by day. While an increase in the number of captures in mid-April was expected due to a technical refinement that positively affected all search queries, its steep and sudden rush was driven by hits in Spanish and Polish language. Precautiously and to avoid possible abnormality and distortion between languages, it was decided to exclude Spanish and Polish from any cross-language analysis. The Spanish case also highlights the challenges of separating social media conversations in Spanish language from geographic regions since geo-tracking of items suggests that by far most of the items captured in the sub-feed origin from South America. However, such a dominant influence from elsewhere was not the case for English or any of the other languages (most of which are also only widely spoken in their home countries).
Hence, the ‘clean’ overview is provided in Figure 7. This clean-up leaves an immediate impact on the overview, especially reducing the communication volume to 200,000 over the same period with now only 8 languages; shifting the source distribution towards news media (now responsible for almost half of all items); and significantly increasing the quantity of items for the sentiment analysis (although the trend remains that SR-related conversations are predominantly occurring in a positive context).
Cross-case results: news media versus “social media” (also see Appendix C)

The source distribution of items that include SR-related keywords is in all languages dominated by the news media category, which for example include online offerings by newspapers and broadcasters but also organisation-owned websites (e.g. also www.uefa.org). The sentiment chart shows that positive notions dominate in the news media category while it is almost 50/50 in the ‘typical’ social media category. Here, a higher percentage of items could be included in the sentiment analysis, which indicates that options/perceptions/expectations are expressed in a stronger way.

Figure 8: News media versus “social media” (total numbers)

Figure 9: Sentiment analysis (percentages; excluding HR/RO/SE/TR due to low/unreliable data)
**SR-keyword results across languages (also see Appendix C and Appendix D)**

Figure 10 lists the 32 keywords used to operationalise SR. Some keywords attract – in relative terms compared to other keywords – a higher percentage of “social media” conversations than news media coverage (e.g. corruption, charity, doping). Figure 11 provides the sentiment analysis.

![Figure 10: Comparison between 32 keywords used to operationalise SR (total numbers)](image-url)
Figure 11: Sentiment analysis across the 32 keywords and by source type (percentages)

Appendix D provides detailed analytics for each SR-keyword separately, including buzz, sources, word cloud, hot spots and sentiment.
In-case results: country/language specific overviews

Similar to Figures 6 and 7, the following Figures 12 to 22 provide a dashboard with results for the ten different national associations/countries/languages included in the study.

Figure 12: Overview German

Figure 14: Overview English
Figure 15: Overview Spanish

Figure 16: Overview French
Figure 17: Overview Croatian

Figure 18: Overview Italian
Figure 19: Overview Polish

Figure 20: Overview Romanian
In-case analysis: German example

As mentioned before, additional nationally-bound levels of analysis beyond the scale and scope of this project are possible and available upon request, ideally leading to immediate discussion with national associations. Additional analysis of the German data shows, for example, that SR/football-related conversations may happen in surprising places (e.g. the
general forum ‘Gutefrage’ accounts for more hits than a football special interest platform like FuPa.net: 251 versus 198), albeit Facebook and Twitter by far dominating the Hot Spot ranking (about 8,000 combined).

Second-level word cloud analysis reveals conversational context and content associations indicating more fine-tuned local understandings and perceptions of SR (see Figure 23).

Figure 23: Second-level word cloud analysis for ‘Soziale Verantwortung’

Especially, spikes in longitudinal buzz monitoring can be analysed. The Borussia Dortmund bus bombing (April 11 2017) impacted immediately on social media communication volume (Figure 24) and clearly linked football to ‘solidarity’, one of e.g. UEFA’s core SR narratives (see Figure 25).

Figure 24: Buzz ‘German’ with peak around BVB bus bombing

Figure 25: Word cloud analysis of April 11-12, 2017
Conclusion and Recommendations

The previous results chapter, including respective Appendices, provide ample insights into a longitudinal view on perceptions of SR in European football. In this final chapter, a number of findings are highlighted and conclusions are drawn leading to some academic and managerial recommendations.

Highlights

Generally, there are indications that SR-related themes can create positive sentiments and/or perceptions of SR in football are considered favourably. Yet, industry-leading CSR reporting guidelines like the Global Reporting Initiative and holistic CSR management approaches also includes the aspect of good governance and anti-corruption, which is the one most critical individual issue this social media research has brought up. Especially, separating what is often considered as ‘typical’ social media (i.e. micro blogging, social networking, etc) from editorially- and organisationally-led online news media has been found valuable since both volume and sentiment show different trajectories. User-generated expressions on Twitter, Facebook & Co are more negative.

Possibly, most surprising on first glance is the relatively low social media communication volume around SR and football. Widely, social media is linked to huge numbers (for example the fact that almost half of the global population has a Facebook account, according to Facebook, or that a certain single video has attracted X-millions of views) – a narrative also used by interested parties such as social media marketers. However, often this is distorting (see e.g. Ritson, 2016). Especially niche or technical topics often receive much less attention. This can be due to the large amount of ‘noise’ in the social media sphere, but also how attractive content is in relation to the characteristics of social media (e.g. ‘sharability’, ‘provocability’, ‘emotionability’). Hence, reach of social media audiences and interest of people to interact/to engage in dialogue can easily be overrated, leading to – on the surface – possibly disappointing quantitative outcomes. Examples from a football association social media campaign (here: Croatia) and from another industry (here: Bayer) provided in the presentation (Appendix E) only exemplify that resonance, dialogue and interest in sharing can be much less than initiators probably hoped for.
Hence, for any sport organisation it is not only important to develop a solid SR strategy, but to clearly distinguish which aim they have for any of their SR-related communication initiative. Figure 26 differentiates between communication that is integral part of SR development process (e.g. stakeholder dialogue) and, therefore, intrinsically dialogic and ongoing; communication that is aimed to inform expert communities (usually) about wide-ranging and substantial measurements and progress made (i.e. disclosure and accountability); and more consumer-oriented and concrete impact-related outcomes of an organisation’s SR-orientation. Hence, the latter is the least technical and most ‘light’ path, but obviously needs to rest on substance in order for an organisation not to be called out (e.g. greenwashing, whitewashing), which will only lead to reputational challenges at least in the short run.

![Figure 26: Different types of CSR communication aims and content](image)

Communication along the impact/outcome approach is most relevant for social media communication, but only if organisational and technical language (text and visual) does not dominate communication items as this hinders ‘sharability’ and emotions (Lee & Kahle, 2016). This is in line with earlier research which advised organisations to actively focus on personalising and humanising their messages, as social media users are seen to engage more with posts that are tailored/personalised and not bound with corporate jargon (Meng et al., 2015; Paraganas et al., 2015; Colleoni, 2013; Kim et al., 2015; McCarthy et al., 2014; Abeza et al., 2014). However, communicators especially of potentially sensible and ethically controversial topics such as SR-related subjects need to find a balance between
branding-and ‘eventisation’-driven communication approaches otherwise prevalent in commercialised sport on the one hand and yet less ‘technical’ language otherwise dominating in SR-communication.

The results shows that SR is mainly linked to ethics (moral duties, responsibility to do something/accountability, respect, solidarity), social and community themes and as mentioned before, misconduct (corruption, doping). Word clouds show that perceptions develop conversational salience based on few concrete organisations (e.g. FIFA, UEFA); linked to highly visible managers/administrators (e.g. presidents as a *pars pro toto* for an organisation) or events. However, it is external, often accidental events (as exemplified by the Borussia Dortmund bus bombing, see Figure 24 above) rather than staged and campaign-driven organisational activities that trigger social media conversations and buzz. SR- and legitimacy-related believes and judgements express themselves against realities and barely show own salience. This fundamentally questions current efforts to SR communication and challenges self-concept of organisations to ‘define’ what SR is and means through own agenda setting and staged activities. At least, simply ‘broadcasting’ SR messages does not work in the dynamic and user-oriented social media sphere.

**Outlook**

No doubt, addressing CSR issues, stakeholder engagement has become an important organizational activity (Sharma & Henriques, 2005) and is increasingly enacted through social media. However, it remains both an academic and practical challenge to overcome the decentralization, interconnectedness and complexity of the social media sphere in general and users’ activities in particular. The promise of social media analysis is that it allows directly accessing the voices of citizens, and, therefore, gives better indication for individual perceptions (Bitektine, 2011). Especially, ongoing integrated sentiment analysis is appealing and has great potential against other traditional methods (e.g. ad-hoc surveys)? From a scientific perspective, triangulation/comparative studies may help to understand the value of automated sentiment analysis against other current forms of qualitative assessment of perceptions and emotions.
Social Media can be, and should be, used by sport organisations to engage customers/fans with their corporate messages (Wang et al., 2017; Wyllie et al., 2016; Jacobson, 2016; Manetti and Bellucci, 2016; Kim et al., 2015). In fact, organisations have invested heavily in social media in pursuit to influence public opinion through various strategies (Castello et al., 2016; Etter, 2014; Illia et al., 2015). Do SR initiatives meet heterogeneous expectations of citizens and other stakeholders and how do organisations ongoing monitor, evaluate and respond? While communicators are likely to follow communication strategies, their listening strategies appear to be underdeveloped – something of particular relevance for social media, which never sleeps.
References


• Lee, C and Kahle, L (2016): The linguistics of social media: communication of emotions and values in sport. Sport Marketing Quarterly, 25, 201-211.


• Manetti, G and Bellucci, M (2016): The use of social media for engaging stakeholders in sustainability reporting. Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal, 29(6), 985-1011.


• Pronschinske, M, Groza, M D and Walker, M (2012): Attracting Facebook ‘fans’: the importance of authenticity and engagement as a social networking strategy for professional sport teams. Sport Marketing Quarterly, 21, 221-231.
• Slack, T (2014): The social and commercial impact of sport, the role of sport management. European Sport Management Quarterly, 14(5), 454-463.
Appendix A

National association survey
PART 1

A) KEYWORDS.

Please answer the following questions, using the textboxes provided. Please note, that it is not necessary to translate literally or professionally. Your rough translation is more useful.

Please translate the following terms into your respective language. If there is more than one possible translation, feel free to add all possible translations (comma-separated).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Term</th>
<th>Interpreted In Your Language</th>
<th>English Term</th>
<th>Interpreted In Your Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
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<td>Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
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<td>Doping</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doping</td>
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<td>Social ~ development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
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<td>Ethical</td>
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<td>Football ~ association</td>
<td>Solidarity</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td>Human ~ rights</td>
<td>Volunteering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, and in respect to your own context, which keywords do you use to communicate core elements and activities of social responsibility/sustainability? Please list about 15 words in your native language and provide a rough English translation in brackets.

Beyond any of the above words, please consider how a sports fan/observer/journalist talks about matters of social responsibility, sustainability and governance in sport and, specifically, football in your country. This may include “sceptical”/“negative” expressions. Please list about 15 words in your native language and provide a rough English translation in brackets.
B) ACTIVITIES AND MEDIA.

Have you run any social responsibility-related public or media campaign(s) since 2015? If so, please provide the full original title(s) of the campaign(s), a rough English translation of the title, and a very brief outline the nature of the campaign(s), e.g. how it was communicated:


If you have used hashtags in relation to any of your social responsibility activities or if you are aware of hashtags that have emerged from elsewhere related to your social responsibility work, please list:


Are there popular social media channels where conversations about football in general and/or social responsibility/sustainability-related aspects of football emerge in your country? Please list by providing links as this may add to our existing database of channels and platforms:


C) CONTACTS AND OUTLOOK.

Please provide your contact details and view on this project.

- Contact ‘social responsibility/sustainability’
  - Name:
  - Role:
  - Email:
  - Phone:

- If applicable, contact ‘communications/social media’
  - Name:
  - Role:
  - Email:
  - Phone:

What you would hope to learn/take from the findings of this cross-European research project into social media conversations on social responsibility in football?


Thank you very much for your cooperation.
PART 2

D) Please provide your very brief general/personal views on:

How the role of sport, in general, and of football, in specific, is publicly perceived in your country:

The role of social media in the context of your association’s communication:

E) Please provide a small selection of your published and/or internal material on social responsibility/sustainability such as brochures, reports, plans, media releases as email attachments, ideally.

In addition, or alternatively, please provide links to relevant websites or online documents:

Please list your key external partner organisations for social responsibility activities:

Thank you very much for your cooperation.
Appendix B

Research ethics checklist and approval
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**Researcher Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tim Breitbarth</th>
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**Project Details**

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<th>#SocialResponsibility in #Football: Mapping Perceptions and Expectations through Social Media Conversations across Europe</th>
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<td>Proposed End Date of Project</td>
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**Summary - no more than 500 words (including detail on background methodology, sample, outcomes, etc.)**
UEFA is determined to assist its member associations in managing the social, environmental and economic impact of football across Europe (www.uefa.com). The proposed research across 10 member associations will help European football governing bodies and clubs to trace publics'/stakeholders' awareness, perceptions and expectations of football’s role in society. This study acts as a ‘social listening tool’ which can directly inspire and inform policy, strategic and tactical discussions. It supports managerial decision-making in respect to e.g. social programme development and efficient communications. The varied pace of UEFA member associations and clubs advancing social responsibility (SR) activities may lead to identify cases of ‘best practice’, furthering international collaboration. Also, it promises scientific advancement since the impacts of and advantages from sport organisations’ SR engagement are, at best, vaguely understood (Breitbarth et al., 2015). Generally, views on SR across industries have moved from direct financial benefits derived from such activities towards reputational impact, stakeholder relationships and communication (Ihlen et al., 2011). This study is timely and needed since social media has become a vital tool for managing reputation and stakeholder communication (Adi et al., 2015), including e.g. rolling out football-related social and environmental campaigns. Most European football organizations from professional to amateur maintain a presence in the social web (www.socialbakers.com); about half of the European population are active social media users, and growing (SmartInsights, 2016); and football-related content is the single major driver in the growth of online discussions (Stoll, 2014). The research aims to evaluate and compare awareness of, perceptions about and expectations towards European football’s contribution to society. Research questions are:• What is the intensity of communication (‘buzz’) about SR in football across Europe? • What is the tonality of discussions (‘sentiment’)?• Which topics and views does the public (esp. supporters of the game) find key?• Do conversations directly relate to UEFA’s and respective national associations’ campaigns/initiatives?• How do perceptions of SR differ across national associations’ spheres?• What are social media sources, channels, platforms used for respective discussions?• How dynamic are all the above matters and facts over time (i.e. 3 months)? The planned methodology is a two-level quantitative and qualitative content analysis. It captures UEFA’s diversity across 10 different countries and languages representing 55% of Europe’s population: Germany, Turkey, France, England, Italy, Spain, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Croatia. The longitudinal evaluation is based on relevant online sources (incl. e.g. social networks, forums, blogs, webpages, news, wikis) and a specific cluster of keywords/tags in all languages relevant in the SR and UEFA/national context. Moreover, the specialised evaluation tool is a ‘learning system’ and will automatically add further relevant sources and keywords.

External Ethics Review

| Does your research require external review through the NHS National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or through another external Ethics Committee? | No |

Research Literature

| Is your research solely literature based? | No |

Human Participants

| Will your research project involve interaction with human participants as primary sources of data (e.g. interview, observation, original survey)? | Yes |

<p>| Does your research specifically involve participants who are considered vulnerable (i.e. children, those with cognitive impairment, those in unequal relationships—such as your own students, prison inmates, etc.)? | No |</p>
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<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Does the study involve participants age 16 or over who are unable to give informed consent (i.e. people with learning disabilities)?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: All research that falls under the auspices of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 must be reviewed by NHS NRES.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (i.e. students at school, members of self-help group, residents of Nursing home?)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will it be necessary for participants to take part in your study without their knowledge and consent at the time (i.e. covert observation of people in non-public places)?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (i.e. sexual activity, drug use, criminal activity)?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are drugs, placebos or other substances (i.e. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will tissue samples (including blood) be obtained from participants? Note: If the answer to this question is ‘yes’ you will need to be aware of obligations under the Human Tissue Act 2004.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could your research induce psychological stress or anxiety, cause harm or have negative consequences for the participant or researcher (beyond the risks encountered in normal life)?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will your research involve prolonged or repetitive testing?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the research involve the collection of audio materials?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will your research involve the collection of photographic or video materials?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will financial or other inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please give a summary of the ethical issues and any action that will be taken to address these. Explain how you will obtain informed consent (and from whom) and how you will inform the participant about the research project (i.e. participant information sheet).</td>
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<tr>
<td>See reflection on social media research in general and the kind of data collection in the current study later in this ethics form.</td>
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**Final Review**

<table>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<td>Will you have access to personal data that allows you to identify individuals OR access to confidential corporate or company data (that is not covered by confidentiality terms within an agreement or by a separate confidentiality agreement)?</td>
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Please explain below why your research requires the collection of personal data. Describe how you will anonymize the personal data (if applicable). Describe how you will collect, manage and store the personal data (taking into consideration the Data Protection Act and the 8 Data Protection Principles). Explain how you will obtain informed consent (and from whom) and how you will inform the participant about the research project (i.e. participant information sheet).

The ICC/ESOMAR World Research Codes and Guidelines (ICC = International Chamber of Commerce; ESOMAR = European Society for Opinion and Market Research) distinguish between Public social media, Private social media, and Market research social media. This research collects non-interactive public social media data: “This covers the majority of social media. It includes all places where access has been set by the website or the user to ‘public’ and entry is without any form of entry barrier. It can also include those where a username or password is required, but these are required for identification or site revenue reasons, rather than to protect the privacy of the data posted. Examples include public profile pages of social media networks; public micro-blogging posts; and many forums (including those where a username may be required, but is automatically granted, that is they are not moderated).” The Annex to UK Government Social Research Profession (part of Civil Service) Ethics Guidance for Social Media Research (May 2016) states that “as social media methods often make use of existing, publicly available data, the burden on respondents can be reduced.” The Guidelines acknowledge that “individual informed consent is impractical for research involving large datasets. In these cases researchers should ensure data use is in line with terms and conditions and care should be taken to protect the identity of users.” Therefore, the strategy is that “whilst it is not possible to guarantee that personal data will not be collected, the collection of unnecessary personal data should be minimised. This could include limiting the amount of information collected, or stripping out personal or irrelevant data after collection.” According to the ICC/ESOMAR Code, “researchers must ensure that they report only depersonalised data from social media sources.” Our data collection system is an automated data collection service(s) (provided by the world’s third oldest social media monitoring company, based in Germany). Recommended strategies are masking and depersonalizing/non-disclosure of identity. This will be achieved by 1) use of filters and controls to remove personal identifiers such as user IP addresses, names, photos, links to the user’s profile, etc. within the process of collecting and storing data; 2) focus reporting on aggregated results (in fact, the bigger picture is the very focus of the research project anyways); 3) if selected raw data was to be reported for illustrative purposes, then the raw data is so changed that it becomes very difficult for others to find the data online with a search service and thereby identify the person from whom it originates (masking).

| Will your research involve experimentation on any of the following: animals, animal tissue, genetically modified organisms? | No |
| Will your research take place outside the UK (including any and all stages of research: collection, storage, analysis, etc.)? | Yes |
| Does the country in which you are conducting research require that you obtain internal ethical approval (i.e. beyond that required by Bournemouth University)? | No |
| Could conflicts of interest arise between the source of funding and the potential outcomes of the research? | No |

Please use the below text box to highlight any other ethical concerns or risks that may arise during your research that have not been covered in this form.
In addition to the information and reflection provided above, I can confirm that the external service provider based in Germany has its own data security and protection officer. I have a 7-page document (in German language) detailing their overall data security and protection strategy and implementation. After all, this is their bread and butter business and, obviously, they are very professional in what they do (world’s third oldest social media monitoring company; largest such firm in Germany) - probably more professional and appropriate than how most academic researchers handle social media research. Also, as of German law (which is amongst the most restrictive in regards to public/consumer/personal data protection in the world, certainly more strict than in the UK), the firm needs to report to and is regulated by the state’s data protection commissioner.
Appendix C

Analytics: buzz and sentiment for all sources and news sources/"social media" sources
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- Equality: 10,494
- Ethical: 2,277
- Football Association: 543
- Human Rights: 24,769
- Health: 72.2
- Human Rights + Health: 7.95
- Foundation: 21.2
- Football Association: 72
- Social Responsibility: 9.9
- Reconciliation: 3.33
- Inclusion: 85.4
- Equality: 10,494
- Ethical: 2,277
- Football Association: 543
- Human Rights: 24,769
- Health: 72.2
- Human Rights + Health: 7.95
- Foundation: 21.2
- Football Association: 72
- Social Responsibility: 9.9
- Reconciliation: 3.33
- Inclusion: 85.4

Numbers represent percentages or scores.
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<td>82.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Analytics: Keywords, including buzz, sources, word cloud, hot spots, sentiment (all languages and without Spanish/Polish)
Appendix E

Presentation Nyon
#SocialResponsibility in #Football
Mapping perceptions and expectations through social media conversations across Europe

Tim Breitbarth, tbreitbarth@bournemouth.ac.uk

Final presentations UEFA Research Grant Programme 2016/17
Nyon/Switzerland, 12 June 2017
(Corporate) Social Responsibility

- Increasing focus on CSR indicates an attempt to “re-embed” the economy in a wider societal context, following a period of neoliberal market exposure, deregulation, separation of commercial and societal concerns.

- The EU identifies CSR as a businesses contribution to sustainable development defined as the responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society. (EU Commission, 2017)
  - “To fully meet their social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders.”

- In Europe, the promotion of CSR “reflects the need to defend common values and increase the sense of solidarity and cohesion”. (EU Commission, 2011)
Rise of academic interest

• Trends in top management and specialist journals (Wang & Gao 2016):

![Graph showing trends in articles](image)

• More than 700 individual articles on the topic of social responsibility and sport published between 2006 and 2015. (Walzel & Robertson 2016)

• CSR should be one of the most important components of sport management theory and practice. (Bradish & Cronin 2009, Slack 2014)
• Traditionally, sport organisations have added to the public sphere by addressing social issues. (van Eekeren 2013)

• ‘Enlightened’ and opportunity-driven approach in the sport context: organisations employ CSR initiatives (in/through sport) to maximise commercial opportunities and to leverage their societal position. (e.g. Breitbarth & Harris 2008; Hackert et al. 2012)

• Generally, views on CSR have moved from direct financial benefits derived from such activities towards reputational impact, stakeholder relationships and communication. (Ihlen et al. 2011)
  – Corporate Social RESPONS(E)ibility!
Research issues and questions
Observations and issues

• Similarity of CSR/community-focused activities of sport organisations around the world
  – Managerial mimicking
  – ‘Strategic CSR’ and sceptical view of consumers (e.g. Walker, Kent & Jordan 2011 versus Breitbarth & Bryson 2013)

• Role of (CSR) history/culture on business case of CSR and consumer impact and does context matter?
  – Implicit versus explicit CSR (Matten & Moon 2008)
  – Convergence (e.g. de Schutter 2008) versus divergence (e.g. Furrer et al. 2010)

• What does the European ‘public’ think CSR (in football) is?
  – Social media as a ‘social listening tool’
  – No publication looked at CSR/social media in sport or even grasping public opinions
Research questions

• What is the intensity of communication (‘buzz’) about the role of SR in football across Europe?
  – What is the tonality of discussions (‘sentiment’)?

• What does the public find key?
  – Which themes are evident and substantial?
  – Do conversations directly relate to UEFA’s/national associations’ SR campaigns/initiatives?
  – Do perceptions of SR differ across national associations’ spheres?

• What are social media sources, channels, platforms used for respective discussions?
  – E.g. are there difference between ‘news media’ and ‘social media’ sources?
Social media
Social media is the collection of online communication channels and platforms that are devoted to the following community-oriented activities: input, interaction, (shared) content and collaboration. (e.g. Filo et al. 2015)
Was ist Social Media?
Very dynamic sphere in almost every aspect.
• With CSR and social media sharing some similar features/aims and taking off at about the same time, it came with many expectations, e.g. around transparency, democracy, participation. (e.g. Castells 2007)

• On aspect of social media is that it enables ordinary citizens (but also organisations) to bypass the traditional gatekeeping function of e.g. news media and autonomously make individual judgments and messages public. (e.g. Etter et al. 2017)
  - User-generated content has led to ‘beliefs in organizational omniscience’ become something of a rarity. (Kim et al. 2015)
  - Also, judgments in social media have impact because citizens increasingly use them as information sources to assess and negotiate the appropriateness of organizational actions. (Castelló et al. 2013; Whelan et al. 2013)
Research strategy and data collection
Social media conversations on particular topics, such as the role of football organisations in society, are expressions of beliefs, opinions and expectations. (e.g. Castelló et al. 2016, Etter & Vestergaard 2015)

Discussions in the social web are authentic conversations since they are ‘naturally occurring talk’. (Silverman, 2006)

Bypass traditional gatekeeping functions of other media and methods
  - E.g. traditional news media content is shaped by various selection processes. (Shoemaker & Reese 2013)
  - E.g. surveys are only conducted in intervals and may be limited due to predefined organizational aspects. (Helm 2007)
• 10 national associations/languages; top/middle in UEFA ranking; 55% of European population; active social media use 39-64% (1.5-3 hrs per day)
Data collection

- Data retrieval and query management
- Commercial monitoring tool
- Text/semantic analysis > themes/patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Term</th>
<th>Interpreted In Your Language</th>
<th>English Term</th>
<th>Interpreted In Your Language</th>
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<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
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<td>Equality</td>
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<td>Societal</td>
<td>Football ~ association</td>
<td>Solidarity</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>Human ~ rights</td>
<td>Volunteering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- More than 400 million online sources
  - E.g. 57k forums, 95k blogs and 1,715k news sites
- Methodological challenges!
Analysis and results/findings
Overall: buzz, sources
‘CSR’: German, English, other
SR, inclusion, human rights

Pie charts showing different content types and their percentages:

1. **Blog (24.4%)**
   - Q&A-Portal (0.0%)
   - Forum (0.8%)
   - Social Network (3.1%)
   - Picture Portal (0.1%)
   - Videoportal (0.4%)
   - Microblog (11.2%)
   - News (59.9%)

2. **Blog (20.6%)**
   - Q&A-Portal (0.0%)
   - Forum (0.7%)
   - Social Network (2.1%)
   - Picture Portal (0.1%)
   - Videoportal (0.4%)
   - Microblog (30.0%)
   - News (46.2%)

3. **Blog (21.6%)**
   - Q&A-Portal (0.0%)
   - Forum (2.9%)
   - Social Network (6.8%)
   - Picture Portal (0.2%)
   - Videoportal (0.3%)
   - Microblog (8.7%)
   - News (59.6%)
Focus: corruption
Focus: community
Case: German(y)
Last week: Qatar, GER-DEN
Conclusions and recommendations
Conclusions

• Generally, indication of positive sentiments towards aspects of CSR

• Main general themes and patterns
  – Moral, corruption, solidarity, people
  – Character- and organisation-centered
  – Usually, sentiments on ‘news media’ not majorly different to ‘social media’

• Overall, buzz is limited to moderate
  – External events or event/competition-based events trigger for conversations and buzz rather than organisation-led initiatives (i.e. no organisational agenda setting in social media)
  – CSR- and legitimacy-related believes and judgements express themselves against concrete issues and in the context of events and barely show own salience
Beyond the hype

• Don’t overestimate
  – Reach of social media
  – Interest of people to interact/in dialogue
• What do I offer the social media community?
Communication strategy

Process

Disclosure/Accountability

Impact/Outcome

CSR Communication
Research outlook

• To address CSR issues, stakeholder engagement has become an important organizational activity (Sharma & Henriques 2005) and increasingly enacted through social media.
  – How can challenges due to the decentralization and complexity overcome?

• Social media analysis allows directly accessing the voices of citizens, and, therefore, gives better indication for individual perceptions. (Bitektine 2011)
  – Sentiment analysis is appealing and has great potential against other traditional methods (e.g. surveys)? Triangulation/comparative studies!

• (Sport) organisations have invested heavily in social media to influence public opinion through various strategies. (Castelló et al. 2016; Etter 2014; Illia et al. 2015)
  – Do CSR initiatives meet heterogeneous expectations of citizens and other stakeholders? How do organisations ongoing monitor and respond?
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