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ARTICLE

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TIM BREITBARTH & PHIL HARRIS

School of Business, University of Otago, New Zealand

ABSTRACT   Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has attracted considerable interest in the management discipline, but has rarely been evaluated and explored in the sports management research arena. In evaluating the sports, management and marketing literature, this article considers the role of CSR in professional football. It argues that an increased awareness and integration of CSR into the football business fosters the competitiveness of the game and creates additional value for its stakeholders. The article proposes a conceptual model which outlines the agency role of football in order to create political, cultural, humanitarian and reassurance value. Empirical evidence supporting the model is applied based on case studies from four key countries that currently dominate the shaping of CSR discussion and are vital for the game itself: England, Germany, Japan and the US. The article's aim is to encourage sports management to see CSR as an opportunity-driven concept, which can assist in achieving better strategic direction, and outlines areas where future research can improve sport management's appreciation of this rapidly more important topic.

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is of growing societal interest and is seen as one of key areas of modern corporate sustainability on the business, public and research agenda. It is of particular relevance for business management, and this can be seen in the growing influence it has gained in the management discipline (Lockett, Moon, & Visser, 2006). CSR is broadly grounded in an understanding of business being part of society. CSR challenges organizations to explicitly clarify their business ethics, acknowledge expectations of their

Correspondence Address: Tim Breitbarth, Department of Marketing Management, School of Business, University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand. Email: tbreitbarth@business.otago.ac.nz

stakeholders, and integrate it to benefit society. Today, global industries are heavily engaged in the discussion, development and implementation of CSR. This is a result of it having the potential to offer strategic direction to managers who want to enhance their organization's performance and competitiveness. However, CSR receives little specific attention in the field of sports management and sports marketing. Having seen the dramatic professionalization of many sports—and football in particular—in the last two decades, it is now without doubt an industry by itself. Consequently, sports managers need to be fully appraised and aware of developments in the wider world of the socio-political-economical environment just as corporate managers in other industries are increasingly tracking and engaging with stakeholders and their growing range of interests.

   Hence, this article aims to investigate the role of CSR in professional football, and conceptualize its value based on case studies of important football markets. It is guided by managers' drive to develop and strengthen the game. From a realism paradigmatic perspective (Peter & Olson, 1983; Hunt, 1991), we apply deductive thinking by drafting a model of value creation in professional football through CSR from the literature and investigating its relevance for four highly relevant national cases. However, since both deduction and induction are part of "understanding" and knowledge creation, we initially started working on this topic by the use of induction through comparative case study analysis. Case studies are said to be the most suitable method for a blend of induction and deduction reasoning processes (Perry, 1998). Consequently, presented as one piece, this investigation improves the understanding of CSR in the sports context by "tying up loose ends" of exploratory and descriptive research. We hope that this article contributes to filling a gap in the sports management literature and offers a meaningful agenda for sports managers to meet the increasing demands of social forces. Lead by the question of how different approaches to CSR fit into the organization of professional football and where it creates value to the industry, the unit of analysis used throughout this article is CSR-related strategies and tactics across four professional leagues, of which two are traditional centres of the game (England and Germany) and two represent rather new, franchise-based national leagues (USA and Japan). We show the benefits of the utilization of strategic CSR management for the competitiveness of both individual actors and the game of football in general. The findings outline the benefits of the mutual beneficial interplay of professional football and its socio-economic-political environment.

CSR and its Relevance for Sports Management

Carroll (1999) in his influential article describes the evolution of modern CSR and suggests *Social responsibility of the businessman* (1953) by Howard Bowen as the birthplace of the modern CSR literature (see also Whetten, Rands, & Godfrey, 2002). Bowen's work argues that modern businesses accumulate considerable power, have far-reaching influence on people's lives and that businesspeople are responsible for the consequences

of their own actions in addition to the usual financial performance accounting and associated statements. These views have largely remained the key framework for CSR thinking until today. However, this approach has also been rigorously criticized and most prominently in the work of neo-liberal economist Milton Friedman (1970), who argued that businesses' focus must be on generating profits for shareholders. In-between these two ideological poles, the more practical approach of "enlightened self-interest" has gained more attention (Bowd, Harris, & Cornellison, 2003) and through the policies of The Commission of the European Communities (2002)—which can be summed-up as, doing well by doing good. Bowen also raises the important question about what "responsibilities" should be assumed to be included and proposes public policies as the key point of reference and starting point for CSR.

The evolution of the CSR concept has diversified and developed further with most notably on a conceptual basis, Garriga and Mele (2004) providing a useful map of the current CSR territory, and see four dominant lines of thought. Their mapping is based on Parsons' systems theory, whose foundation—entrenched in functionalism—tends to portray static and uncritical description, but has the logical advantage of capturing "totality" and outlining distinct areas of action within it. The four dominant lines of thought in CSR they see as:

- The *political approach* of focusing on the responsible use of business power in the political arena represented in the idea of (corporate) citizenship, where the organization is seen as a citizen with a certain degree of involvement in the community (Thorne McAlister, Ferrell, & Ferrell, 2005).
- The *integrative approach* of focusing on the integration of social demands. Here stakeholder theory is outlined as a balance of the interests of the different stakeholders of the organization. An example is Rowley's (1997) CSR analysis from a network point of view which presents the organization's power and influence as a result of the position emerging from the density of the overall stakeholder network and the centrality of the focal organization.
- The *ethical approach* of focusing on the right thing to do. Several approaches aim to achieve "common good" with either a philosophical (Phillips, 2003), paternalistic–humanitarian, or sustainability ("Brutland Report") background, or following human rights and other international conventions (e.g., UN Global Compact).
- The *instrumental approach* of focusing on achieving economic objectives through social activities. This comprises cause-related marketing and strategies for competitive advantage. Within the former, two ideas can be separated: strategic investment in a competitive context (Porter & Kramer, 2002), and strategies for the bottom of the economic pyramid (Prahalad & Hammond, 2002).

Taking an overview of the CSR research through the lens of the management discipline, Lockett, Moon and Visser (2006) describe four dominating areas of CSR study, which at the same time capture an accurate picture of where CSR thinking is historically rooted: business ethics, environmental responsibility, social responsibility and stakeholder approaches. Initially and still dominantly thought as a construct to profit-seeking organizations, CSR has been extended as an umbrella construct integrating other forms of organizations (e.g., associations, non-profits), too—Neves and Bento (2005) even suggest the term "organizational social responsibility".

Despite efforts to formalize and regulate CSR-related evaluations, measurements and reporting (e.g., ISO 14000, AA 1000, GRI), the concept and its application largely remains dynamic, diverse and context specific. It has also been criticized as a modern age branding tool, a "greenwash" of corporate behaviour, boardroom talk, and a public relations invention (Frankental, 2001), However, CSR is no longer a "fad" or an "extra option" but describes a deeper change in looking at organizations and their relationships to their stakeholders (Lewis, 2001). It has spread around the world mainly because of governments retreating partly or completely from directly providing public services in several areas (e.g., utilities, health care, education), civil counter-reactions towards economic globalization (e.g., exploitation in supply chains, decay of urban areas) and new tactics used by stakeholder groups to demand organizational transparency and morally balanced corporate action (for a list see Whetten *et al.*, 2002, p. 385). Several distinctive approaches and applications exist (see Garriga & Mele, 2004; Bowd *et al.*, 2003). Guthey, Langer and Morsing (2006) argue that despite the possibility that CSR might be a management fashion, the CSR-concept is of value, because it has real consequences in the business world. The growing influence of CSR policies (Bowd *et al.*, 2003) and the rise of a respective consultancy industry (Fernandez Young, Moon & Young, 2003) provide strong support for this argument. In the football context, consulting firm Deloitte and Touche (2005, quoted in Holt, Michie, Oughton, Tacon & Walters, 2005) has recommended that clubs integrate CSR management to insure healthy relationships with their communities. On a global level, the world governing body FIFA has created a CSR unit, even so the general moral integrity of the organization and a number of its "goodwill" activities (e.g., the Goal Programme) remains doubtful (Jenkins, 2006), which links to occasional scepticism about the general idea of CSR and its application.

Realistically, the CSR concept needs to demonstrate its value to managers in order to be a sustainable management concept itself. Consequently, one stream of CSR research is concerned about the rationality of companies to engage in CSR and their likely strategic benefits (see Burke & Logsden, 1996; Epstein & Birchard, 1999; Fombrun, 2001; Gilbert, 2001; Porter & Kramer, 2002; Prahalad & Hammond, 2002; Thorne McAlister, Ferrell & Ferrell, 2005). The understanding of how and where CSR can contribute to achieve organizational objectives is grounded in what is known as the "resource-based view of the firm" in strategic management (Fahy, 2000;

Barney & Arikan, 2001). This approach stresses the value of intangible and interactive assets of a company as the main competitive factors leading to competitive advantages in the marketplace. Adopting the same approach, Freeman (1984) outlined the concept of "stakeholder management" as a way of thinking and acting for managers who saw themselves confused by the dynamic nature of environmental changes. The author sees CSR as a building block for the stakeholder concept (Freeman & Vea, 2001). On the other hand, the stakeholder concept is referred to as being the most influential in management studies on CSR (Beckmann, Morsing & Reisch, 2006). Hence, there is a close intrinsic connection between the two concepts. The stakeholder concept itself has since been treated as a foundation for the theory of an organization (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Post, Preston & Sachs, 2002) and a framework for relationships of business and society (Rowley, 1997). This is what Granovetter (1985) described in general terms as the "embeddedness" of economic actions in social relations.

In the sports context, such "embeddedness" in social relations can, for example, easily be found in the traditional concept of clubs ("societies") for example in England and Germany, which are heavily intertwined with other social networks. Thus the idea of stakeholders is hardly new to football. Nevertheless, some important notions are new to modern professional football management: firstly, the explicit (often: contractual) acknowledgement of stakeholders; secondly, the degree of demanded transparency of business conduct; thirdly, the interaction with groups which were formerly to be considered outside the game; and fourthly, the need to strategically manage stakeholders in order to gain or sustain advantages the game holds against other sports in the global sports industry marketplace. Figure 1 shows a club-centred stakeholder map for a professional (English) football club. It comprises both external and internal stakeholders.

Beckmann *et al.* (2006) describe four basic strategies stakeholders may utilize to implement their concerns: creating public pressure through mass media; mobilizing political pressure via parties or other institutions; initiating market forces through "exit and voice" strategies; and directly putting
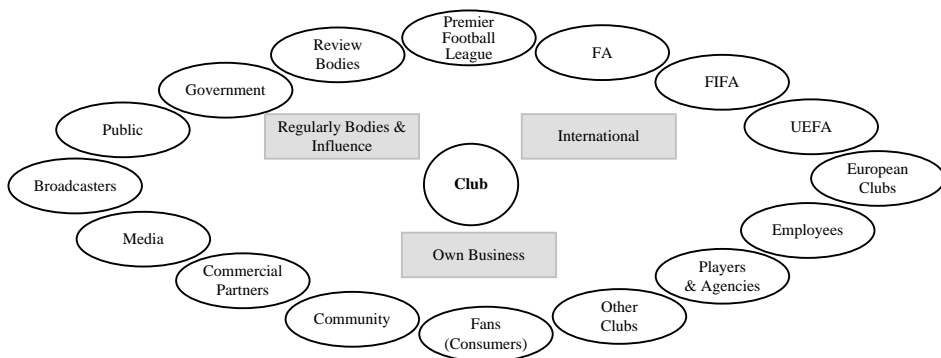

Figure 1. Non-hierarchical stakeholder map of a (English) football club
Source: Boon (2000, p. 30)

pressure on corporate agents. Today's professional sports management faces such potential damaging scenarios, too. For example, NGOs targeting the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Asia accusing FIFA of abusing and exploiting labour involved in the production of footballs came as a surprising experience for the football family (CSR Europe, 2002). Suddenly, the question of "how socially responsible is football?" was on the agenda. To face this growing challenge we argue that integrating CSR into the football context will directly benefit the industry primarily through "enlightened self-interest" and should be further integrated into the structural changes the game has seen over the last two decades.

Value Creation in Professional Football Through CSR: Towards a Model

CSR as we have argued is the focus of growing attention in the management and marketing literature (Bowd *et al.*, 2003; Lockett *et al.*, 2006), and many organizations across a variety of sectors have begun to integrate CSR into their business strategies and planning. Risk management, institutional relevance, organizational functioning, market positioning, and ethical assumptions are said to be core reasons why businesses get involved in CSR management (Paine, 2003). This, as well as Brown, Crabbe and Mellor's (2006) list of motivations for English football clubs to get involved with their communities (ethical/ideological, business, political/legal motivations) overlaps significantly with Garriga and Mele's conceptualization previously outlined. This provides us with a solid conceptual base to develop a model of value creation in professional football through CSR.

Despite its increasing relevance, the little direct attention CSR has received in the field of sport management is not surprising given the widespread understanding of sport as being a hobby, positioned in the centre of social life, and as a quasi per definition contributing to the benefit of society due to policies drawing on the inclusiveness of sports (Green, 2006). Even this may still hold truth for grassroots activities, Brown, Crabbe and Mellor (2006) challenge this presumption in the context of football clubs and their community relations in England, where the organization of the game "over the past 15 years [has] actually contributed to the exclusion of some groups in society, especially on economic grounds" (p. 9). Furthermore, most prominently professional men's football has created a global industry of its own right worth billions in broadcasting rights, merchandising and sponsoring. It comprises a cooperative activity, which relies on financial, human and social capital (Morrow, 2003). Even some may argue that football is unique because of the way it touches people's everyday lives (Branston, Cowling, Brown, Michie, & Sugden, 1999), professional clubs are hardly different from any other medium-sized, multi-national company: they consist of tangible, financial and intangible assets that are professionally managed and marketed (Yang & Sonmez, 2005). Thus, its modern management and governance should not be treated different to other production or service activities (Branston *et al.*, 1999). Figure 2 shows the

Source/ revenues	Clubs/teams (since 1990s)	Clubs (before 1990s)
Football team	> Tickets and merchandising > Development and sale of players > Sponsorship and advertising > Broadcasting rights > Secondary spend	> Tickets and donations > Sponsoring and advertising > Broadcasting rights *(all above relatively low-key)*
Premises	> Multi-purpose facilities, especially stadiums > Hospitality and services	> Publicly-owned facilities
Brands	> Promote non-football goods and services (e.g. credit cards, insurances, mobile services, gambling)	> Club membership fees

Figure 2. Main business segments in professional football
Source: Matusiewicz (2000) adapted and extended

difference between professional clubs'/teams' main business segments before 1990 and today.

Research at club level has confirmed the increasing need of stakeholder management in order to demonstrate sound governance and strategic management (Szymanski, 1998; Bale, 2000; Cannon & Hamil, 2000; Barn & Baines, 2004). It highlights the matureness and professionalization of the football industry. This change has been driven by internal motivations for growth as well as external events (including serious scandals and crises), which made organizations in the sport recognize "its expanding economic, social and even political significance" which also includes "dealing with matters *outside* its immediate sporting sphere of activity" (ILO, 2003; italics added).

We see four main reasons that support this argument: firstly, the recognition of professional football clubs and bodies as business entities under European law linked with the "Bosman" judgement of the European Court of Justice in 1995 which ended the times "of innocence when football blithely assumed that it was immune from the intervention of law" (Foster, 2000, p. 39) and subsequently led to closer relationships between the Commission, FIFA and UEFA because of the cultural, economical and social importance of sport in general and football in particular as laid down in the Treaty of Amsterdam; secondly, globalization of trade, marketing and sourcing encouraged clubs to look for players, promote their brands, sell media rights, licence merchandising, and acquire investors and sponsors from all the regions of the globe; thirdly, the need to redevelop urban areas and local communities urged football to go into mutual beneficial partnerships, especially through investment in infrastructure, supporting "place marketing", and acting as ambassadors for worthy campaigns; and finally, with governments increasingly acting as allocators and regulators rather than direct providers of public services (Harris & McDonald, 2004), functioning as a public agent has been regarded to open spaces for improving the sports competitiveness and making the game relevant for society.

These four areas of change in terms of socio-economic-political matters of professional football highlight the increasing complexity managers find themselves in, in order to achieve profits through business activities, competitiveness against other sports or forms of entertainment, raise participation in the game to sustain its future, and gain institutional relevance to impact on governmental regulations and actions.

Oughton (2004) and Tacon (2005) have concluded that the growing commercialization of professional football over the past two decades has increased risk in the football industry. At the same time, new forms of partnerships and public spaces opened up by governments offer considerable opportunities to benefit enormously from adopting sustainable business models (Oughton, Mills, McClean & Hunt, 2003) and integrate CSR in their long-term planning (Deloitte and Touche, 2005, in Holt *et al.*, 2005).

By doing so, football can create values for their external stakeholders and position itself as a highly relevant and influential social, economic and political agent. On a conceptual basis, we see four distinct areas (Figure 3): football as agent to create human value (e.g., by supporting supra-national organizations in nation building and efforts to increase quality-of-life); football as a business agent creating financial value for other industries (e.g., broadcasting, sports clothing industry, sponsors); football as a social agent
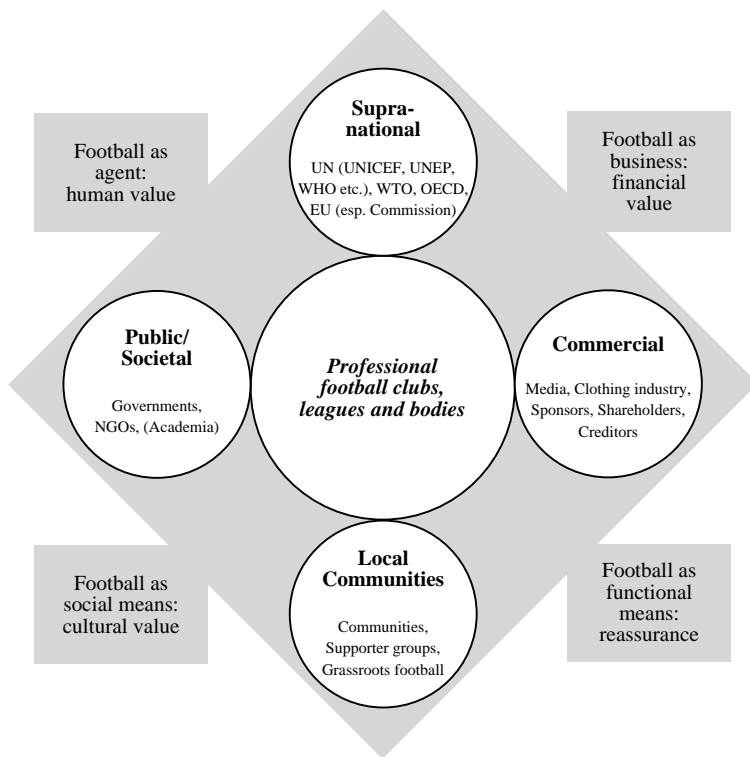

Figure 3. Value creation through CSR in professional football (own diagram)

High public profile of professional football demands CSR

Integration

Power   Financial Value   Cultural Value   Institutional Relevance   Participation in Game

CSR Fosters   Values Create

Function

Ethics   Humanitarian Value   Reassurance Value   Profits   Competitiveness
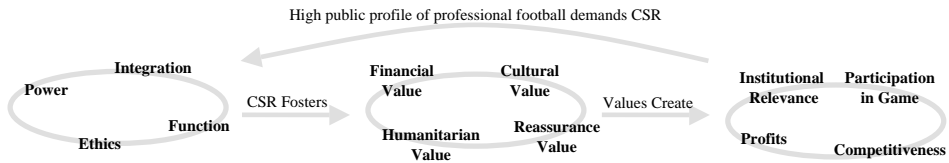
Figure 4. Model of the role of CSR in professional football (own model)

fostering cultural value (e.g., social and personal identification); and football as a functional agent to create reassurance value and foremost the game's capability to act as means of connecting commercial or political actors with people (e.g., through social marketing campaigns and support of football infrastructure).

Figure 4 brings together the conception of CSR and its potential impact for professional football. Crucially for sports management, it captures the opportunities for the development of the game in an economic, cultural, humanitarian and integrative sense. The four areas also show the strategic possibilities arising from the growth of CSR in other industries: for example, football is a great beneficiary of donations, sponsorship money, governmental support, investment in social campaigns and volunteering. Hence, if clubs/teams, leagues and bodies manage its agency role strategically, they can increase the competitiveness of the game against other sports in the commercial marketplace and political arena through their high and distinct relevance for society. The potential weight of the game in the public arena is very evident in the notion that professional football is seen as an ambassador for supporting the integration process of the European Union (Forster & Pope, 2004).

Limitations of the Model

The model is limited in the sense that it encapsulates the use of a broad definition of CSR and integrates a range of CSR approaches and groups these along separate functions. By doing so it leaves the specific definition of CSR up to the context where it might be applied in and conceptually disregards that individual organizations usually embrace different goals at the same time (Cyert & March, 1963). While this helps to conceptualize advancement in understanding the role of CSR in professional football, it causes difficulties in actual operationalisation in empirical research as is evidenced in the case studies used in the study. This problem has frequently been raised as criticism against system theoretical thinking—and structural-functionalism or functional-structionalism in particular—but neglects the meta-level of analysis implied by such theories. Consequently, the over-writing advantage of the approach outlined is that it points out distinct areas that organizations may want to focus on when integrating CSR and stakeholder management.

The model clearly allocates areas in which professional football organizations can utilize value derived from integrating CSR thinking and actions in

order to develop the game. After establishing a model from the literature conceptualizing how different approaches to CSR fit into the organization of professional football and linking them to their potential value-creating role in the business, we now move on to investigate our research objective through four case studies.

Use of Case Study Research

Case studies are the method of choice when a phenomenon under investigation is difficult or impossible to distinguish from its context (Yin, 2003), with realism being the preferred paradigm for this type of research (Hunt, 1991). In the case of CSR the social, economic, cultural and political environment affects the way in which the phenomenon can be observed (see, e.g., Habisch, Jonker, Wegner & Schmidpeter, 2005). Case studies rely on analytical generalization, not statistical generalization (Yin, 2003).

Our case research draws on secondary data evenly collected across all four national cases. We adopted a qualitative approach and utilized content analysis (Mayring, 1983, 2000; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The analysis draws on the websites of clubs/teams, leagues and bodies, which have been analysed in their respective national context, because they are an iconic representation of professional organizations and their "reality" (Esrock & Leichty, 2000). The websites have been purposefully designed to present distinct identities to diverse audiences and stakeholder groups as has been evidenced in previous CSR research (Esrock & Leichty, 1998; Maignan & Ralston, 2002; Pollach, 2005). Thus, these media conveniently communicate an organization's definition, understanding and recognition of the importance of CSR and how it is applied within the organization and its associated activities. Qualitative content analysis is a type of design that is appropriate when existing theory or research literature on a phenomenon is limited (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Through our theoretical conceptualization of CSR in football and embedding our study in the specific contextual understanding of the phenomena's occurrence as described in the previous sections and especially the following chapter, the analysis shows internal validity.

Between June and August 2006, internet sites of all members of the Premier League (England, 20 teams), Bundesliga (Germany, 18), J. League Division 1 (Japan, 18) and Major League Soccer (USA, 12) were evaluated for information about CSR activities and stakeholder communication labeled as such by the organization, reflecting the organization's approach to CSR and consequent national meaning and perception of the concept at the same time. In addition paralleling this exercise the websites of the professional football leagues (the FA Premier League, England; German Football League, Germany; Japan Professional Football League, Japan; Major League Soccer, USA), and the governing national football bodies (the FA, England; DFB, Germany; JFA, Japan; US Soccer Federation, USA) were evaluated.

The rationale for our case selection is underpinned by the premise that the chosen regions are influential contexts in which CSR practice and theory has developed, and that the respective football markets are representing traditional centres of the game on one hand and the most important new markets on the other hand. We believe that this overlap of relevance for the analysis of the role of CSR in professional football provides a realistic approach for an international comparative advancement of investigation into this topic, and that the four cases are "typical" (Yin, 2003) in the sense that they are ambassadors of the general understanding and application of CSR.

Discussions about CSR, its integration into business strategies and conduct, governmental policies, and academic research can be observed in almost every region around the world. And, England, Germany, the US and Japan remain amongst the most influential countries in respect to the development of CSR. Arguably, the European Union is the most active trading bloc promoting CSR (Diamantopoulou, 2005), with the UK and Germany playing a leading role, as can be evidenced by the majority of worldwide CSR publications being published in the two countries (www.corporateregister.com). The US is particularly influential in the academic CSR and stakeholder management area as a result of key theoretical and empirical investigations into the area and the production of substantive literature and research. Japan, together with Europe and the US, is one of the world's leading economies and has some of the most significant global players. Japanese firms have a unique and long history of CSR (Demise, 2006), thus playing an influential role in shaping worldwide policies both through international governmental organizations and global business conduct.

In football, the English and German teams represent the traditional strength of the sport, rooted in the tradition of the sports club ("societies") system, and having a leading position in respect to the financial, cultural and institutional development of the game. The US and Japan are rather new football markets with their professional leagues running under a franchise system—thus a planned sports business activity. They are important regions for the game's economic development, as the allocation of the 1994 (USA) and 2002 (Japan/South Korea) FIFA World Cup demonstrate.

Roome (2005) argues that besides generic aspects of CSR (the adoption of new roles and responsibilities demand the process of organizational change and development of managerial routines) agendas and policies are influenced by cultural, economic, social and political—in short: context-specific—factors. Thus, different agendas and policies effect companies' and industries' approaches to manage CSR, and no company can claim mastery of it. Or putting it in Votaw's (1972) words: CSR "means something, but not always the same to everybody" (p. 25). Therefore, it is a difficult phenomenon to research, with case studies being a suitable approach to attach meaning to the concept in its respective context of appearance. Consequently by doing so we also follow researcher calls for "concrete

studies of real case studies'' in the industry (Freeman & McVea, 2001, p. 204).

CSR in England, Germany, Japan and the US

In order to set the context of the four national cases, we outline a brief introduction into the development and state of CSR in each country. These are intrinsically linked through the overlap of importance to the global football industry and relevance for the international development of CSR and management. In addition, Table 1 is utilized to give some insight into the specifics and differences of CSR agendas for each national context.

Table 1. Overview of general and professional football's CSR agendas in England, Germany, USA, Japan

Issues/Country	England	Germany	USA	Japan
General CSR agenda (compiled from Roome, 2004; Matten & Moon, 2004; Japan Research Institute; adapted and extended)	> Racial & gender equity > Issues around financial accountability and governance > Food safety and provenance > Financial service products > Protected areas and species > Supply-chain issues and auditing > Management systems and reporting > Area regeneration > Community projects > Public/private partnerships	> Issues around financial accountability, governance and executive rewards > Food safety and provenance > Waste recycling > Resource efficiency > Neighbourhood reporting and liaison > Strong commitment to education and training > Company-specific corporate community investment	> Good corporate governance > Executive rewards > Consumer protection > Consumer health and safety > Low level of legal obligations on business > Ethical policies regarding local community involvement > Philanthropic initiatives to sponsor art, culture or fund university education	> Corporate governance > Financial transparency > Social responsible investment > Social reporting standards > Food health, safety and provenance > Consumer trust and loyalty > Protection of privacy > Protection of intellectual property rights > Environmental preservation > Responsible supply-chain management > Community involvement
Professional Football's CSR Agenda	> Organisational governance > Club ownership > Racism > Hooliganism > Regional development > Local community involvement > Youth education (inside and outside the game)	> Organisational governance > Player rewards > Relation to politics > Racism > Resource efficiency of stadiums > Safety of new arenas for 2006 World Cup > Youth education (inside the game) > Foster volunteering > Neighbourhood rights	> Urban development > Local community involvement > Development of grassroots football > Social inclusion > Youth education > Charity/donations	> Financial transparency > Promotion of diversified ownership > Management responsibility > Organisational governance > Support for retiring players > Urban development > Development of grassroots football > Create model of community sports for whole family

England

The UK largely follows an explicit CSR approach based on its institutional manifestation in government (e.g., a "Minister of CSR") and business coalition (e.g., "Business in the Community") (Moon, 2005). Modern CSR's roots are grounded in the period of high unemployment, urban decay and social unrest in the 1980s, and—more recently—shrinking consumer trust and associated issues around employee relations (Moon, 2005).

Germany

The German socio-political and economic system has been described as having a traditional stakeholder model with its corporative heritage famously labeled "Rhenish capitalism" (Habisch & Wegner, 2005). The pivotal role of business and institutions for the provision of the common good are relatively explicitly outlined. However this structure is under growing social and economic pressure and slowly collapsing, CSR is intrinsic in nature in Germany and is linked to paternalistic charity, citizenship and sustainable development.

USA

In the US CSR is widely seen in the tradition of corporate philanthropy. Because of its scale and size, philanthropy is a particular characteristic of American society, voluntarily in nature, and observed as a significant factor in the vitality and success of American democracy (Kelly, 2005).

Japan

The recent rise of CSR in Japan has paralleled the revelation of major corporate scandals such as those in 2000 (www.csrjapan.jp). As a consequence, for example, "The Keidanren Charter for Good Corporate Behavior" was announced by the Japan Federation of Economic Organizations (Nippon Keidanren) and emphasizes strengthening compliance and building trust with consumers (Hirose, 2006). In addition, Japanese corporations also have a long and unique history of contributing to society (Demise, 2006), for example, through customer-oriented products and services, stable employment, philanthropy and community involvement (www.csrjapan.jp). Much of the new formation of business within society was developed between the late 1980s and early 1990s as a result of the collapse of the "bubble economy" and consequent higher organizational transparency and social responsiveness (Deminse, 2006). Kaku (1997) in their analysis of Japan emphasize the cooperative approach between groups of corporations as crucial to understanding powerful forces for social, political, and economical transformation.

The considerable differences in CSR heritage and agendas consequently influence stakeholder expectations and CSR management. The four national

cases outline the relevance of the value-creation model and outline the strategies and tactics used by football organizations in the four respective national contexts.

CSR in Professional Football: The Evidence

The "Home" of Football: CSR in English and German Football

European football is the epicentre of the global game. At the same time, the EU is the most vibrant area for CSR debate, discussion and consequent development (Diamantopoulou, 2005). Football is deeply rooted in the English and German culture and society; the cases provide insight into the complexity of relationships, and its linkages to different national modes of CSR.

England: Back in the Community

England is considered by many the home of football—and may well be the home of the modern football business, too: West Ham United introduced a shareholder structure as early as 1900. Korr (1986) has illustrated how the limited company's ownership structure led to alienation of the club from its local community, eventually resulting in a clash of business with supporter interests (see also Cannon & Hamil, 2000). In the 1990s these controversies peaked, driven by the (attempted) take-over of clubs from media companies, most notably in the "Shareholder United" against BSkyB case (Crick, 2001). As a result, the government backed the supporter-shareholder movement with "Supporters Direct" becoming fully operational in 2000 (Smith, 2001). In another attempt to bring the game, especially professional clubs, back into the community, supporters' trusts were established, mainly in lower leagues. These have been seen as important to foster beneficial dialogue with a number of stakeholders and the local community above all (Holt *et al.*, 2005). Holt *et al*'s (2005) surveys looking into the links between supporters' clubs and the football club initiative "Football in the Community" show that these relationships are often weak and need to be further strengthened in order to provide real mutual benefit and gain.

   Over the last decade, a steady decline in the number of leading clubs in the top echelon of the game as a result of a growing in balance in terms of clubs' financial capabilities has threatened the broad nature and open status of English football (Smith, 2001). In the 1990s the transformation of football into a business accelerated as a result of the floatation of clubs listed on the stock market, the increasing importance of the game for non public sector media expansion (and in turn, media sales for expanding the game), and as a result setting off major debates over the future of the game in the public policy arena, including TV viewer access (Hamil, Michie, Oughton, & Warby, 2000). Interestingly, these debates occurred primarily outside the traditional regulatory bodies of the game, but were instead made within parliament, governmental committees (e.g., the Monopolies and Merger

Commission), the EU Commission, boardrooms of international media companies and investor roundtables which emerged as the decision-making and regulatory entities. Football seemed to be no longer in charge of its own game or destiny (Hamil *et al.*, 2000) and lost its leverage and power in the policy making process.

As a result of being increasingly under political and media attention, football has moved up the public agenda and has seen calls for an independent regulator of the national game (Sutcliffe, 2000; Taylor, 2000) as well as growing recognition that professional football faces a number of critical issues (House of Commons, 2003): (1) governance at club and association level; (2) the treatment of supporters in terms of ticket prices, accessibility to matches, merchandise, recognition as stakeholders by their various clubs; (3) the football transfer system; (4) the Wembley national football stadium; (5) football hooliganism and crime; (6) racism in football; (7) the financial divide between football's elite, medium and small sized clubs.

In a coalition of interests, the Football Association (FA) as well as individual clubs has joined forces to tackle the above problems and has started to implement stakeholder-driven CSR activities as an effective method to address football's relationship to society and its traditional grassroots. To date, it includes various campaigns, programmes, schemes and charities (see The FA, 2005; www.premierleague.com). The FA itself strongly believes that football has a unique place in British society and can act as a power for good off the pitch in a number of policy areas and has stated on CSR that ''we also think that the Government can and should use the power of football to this effect'' (The FA, 2005, p. 33).

Drawing on recommendations from the ''Taylor Report'', Bale (2000) outlines four reasons for the changing relationships between football and its communities after the Hillsborough disaster: firstly, a number of clubs relocated themselves; secondly, stadiums have been significantly upgraded; thirdly, multi-functional, thus revenue generating stadiums are now spread across England; and finally, a growing number of stadium communities emerged. Football stadiums are symbolic places to change the face of the game and to bring it back from the boardrooms/committees in the community. Professional clubs have become valuable players in social development (www.bitc.org.uk) and regional economies and urban regeneration (Sandy, Sloane, & Rosentraub, 2004), particularly in terms of place marketing. The urban decay of the 1980s is seen as the stimulus for CSR in England and the establishment of its explicit model of CSR (Moon, 2005). With organized crime and hooliganism in and around the stadiums as social consequences, football as well suffered from urban decay (Sudgen, 2002). Football has been offering itself as a public agent to help to solve such problems in a win-win partnership with local communities (House of Commons, 2005b), most notably through education schemes under the umbrella of ''Football in the Community''.

In addition to creating economic and societal value, at the same time, there is the potential to leverage and use the power of brands of professional clubs

through community involvement. A good example is the "Arsenal Double Club", a programme by the Arsenal London Club and Arsenal Stadium, combining literacy and numeracy with football in after-school, holiday and curriculum-time classes (Arsenal, 2005; www.bitc.org.uk). For more than two decades the club has had an "Arsenal in the Community" department. With racism on the top of the international and national agenda, the club is engaged in anti-racism campaigns. Diversity is an issue on England's CSR agenda and plays an important role in terms of the competitiveness of English football—Arsenal, for example, signed the biggest club sponsorship deal in English football history (Arsenal, 2005) with a Dubai-based airline allowing the building of the new "Fly Emirates Stadium". Here, the economic interest supports the potential for the club and the local administration to initiate CSR activities in a new environment. Thus, the governmental call for football as a partner (Pendry, 2000) in community development offers professional football the chance to integrate the public agenda with its own organizational goals through self-enlightened CSR that brings the modern game back to the English community.

Germany: Football and Political Endorsement

Germany has a traditional sports club and professional body system that organizes and governs football. Clubs are communities of interests, granted certain rights to govern their matters and tax reductions from the public. Until 1998 only football teams from such "incorporated societies" were allowed to be members of the German Football Association ("Deutscher Fussball-Bund": DFB) is the world's largest national single sports association with 6.3 million members) and takes a full part in the national competitions. Clubs as well as governing bodies have always had strong links into the local community with high-profile public administrators involved. For example, Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, former president of the DFB, was a state minister, president of a first league club and member of DFB and UEFA committees at the same time. This special relationship has been strongly expressed by the president of the standing sports committee of the German parliament, who has emphasized the crucial role sport plays in democratic societies and politics, seeing it as a duty of politics to strongly support sports affairs and particularly in relation to the 2006 FIFA World Cup held in Germany (www.bundestag.de/ausschuesse/a05/grusswort.html).

  In its statutes, the DFB proclaims that football has an immense impact on society and the environment at large (www.dfb.de). It sees as its foremost purpose the initiation and development of "social activities" which are primarily largely charities, volunteer campaigns, support of disadvantaged people and humanitarian projects. It acts as an agent of public concerns about violence and discrimination and public health and even helps to re-integrate criminal offenders into society. And with sustainability and global warming being twenty-first century popular policy imperatives in the 2006 World Cup, the DFB promoted the implementation of an environmental protection

scheme called "Green Goal", a sustainable development objective that reflected the general German attitude towards CSR.

Inside the national game DFB's challenge consists of balancing and backing the interest of the professional clubs against generally much broader and traditional goals. In the last six years especially the "Deutsche Fußball Liga GmbH" (DFL) has become an influential voting-member of the DFB. The DFL is responsible for the licensing of clubs, promotion of the two professional national leagues and collectively selling their media rights. In contrast to its English counterpart, the DFL is not involved in any major CSR activity. However, it cooperates with social marketing campaigns mainly driven by the DFB ("Keine Macht den Drogen").

Other dynamics impacting upon German football's objectives and position in recent years were driven by both marketing effort and public pressure. Clubs started to seek more aggressively new sources of revenue from box office sales, merchandising and retailing and thus promoted football as entertainment to new groups of customers and consumers. With football hooliganism raising public concern and threatening the image of the game, the attraction of new groups of supporters (e.g., women, families) along with stricter observation of rules and bylaws were used to squeeze out unwanted disruptive groups and supporters.

Professional clubs rarely mention CSR related activities on their website, but are much present as ambassadors of cause-related marketing campaigns of their sponsors' or public programmes. Bayern Munich, a public listed company 90% owned by the club and 10% by its long-standing partner Adidas, now has bundled together its formerly scattered activities in the charity organization "FC Bayern Hilfe e.V.". The aim is to actively and openly communicate the social activities of the successful club (www.fcbayern.t-com.de). To prevent alienation of professional football from its supporters and reassure local roots through symbolic means of their connections and heritage a good example is the regular appearance of Bayern Munich players jumping into Teutonic folklore leather pants.

As a result of the difficulties associated with developing Munich's new stadium, the restructuring of CSR related activities and mindful media targeting at Bayern Munich reflects the implementation of a new and more focused business-like organization which recognizes the critical importance of external affairs and engagement with its stakeholders. The club had seen its home ground, the stadium of the 1974 Summer Olympics, as being increasingly uncompetitive in comparison to other leading European clubs in economic and sporting terms. Eventually, it needed strong backing from the local and state government to push the need for a new stadium through, including a local referendum. The bulk of opposition to the new development came about as the new arena is a private investment worth approximately EUR 350 million supported by Germany's leading insurer Allianz to develop the business objectives of the club and with the city and state building the surrounding infrastructure with public money worth about EUR 200 million. However, such joint venture projects typical of German corporatism are now increasingly questioned by regulating bodies such as

the European Commission as to what extent public financial support of new private premises are illegal subsidies and or are anti-competitive activity (Financial Times Germany, 2002).

In contrast to England, German political opinion and policy makers are less suspicious about the new football businesses because they are seen as coherent groups of people and a vehicle to achieve the common good for citizens and society. A good example of this is that equipment and trainers sent to Afghanistan by the DFB are seen as Germany's humanitarian contribution to nation building. Arguably, politics has paternalistic feelings towards football, thus supporting the game and new infrastructure for its own glamour (Financial Times Germany, 2002). Certainly, the public pressure on professional football to explicitly embrace CSR is less than in other industries. Even with the growing interconnectivity of German football and politics, the importance of the game in terms of social cohesion and increased positive public support post the 2006 World Cup, CSR has so far been widely neglected as an organizational management objective.

Same Game, Different Business: CSR in Japanese and US Football

Japan and the US have a relatively short history of professional football. Nevertheless, both markets have prospered and established significant organizational and cultural roots for the future development of the game, both countries developed their leagues virtually from scratch. In each case the leagues run under a franchise system—thus they are explicitly business-driven. In addition they face strong competition from other, incumbent sports, for instance, NFL in the US. Thus football CSR activities, especially the investment into local infrastructure, have been strategically used to get a stake in the communities and at the same time foster support for the game.

Japan: "Making the country happier through sport" (100 year vision of J.League)

The professional J.League was launched in 1993 as a successor to the amateur Japan Soccer League which comprised non-professional company teams. Birchall (2000, in Dobson & Goddard, 2001) has described the creation of the J.League as "perhaps one of the greatest mass-marketing events even Japan, probably the world, has ever seen" (p. 107). Leading Japanese companies were involved in promoting and sponsoring the league from the start using it as a marketing platform, but also reacting to the need to re-integrate with society (Demise, 2006) and governmental policies for "lifelong partnerships in sports" by jointly developing sports environments (MEXT, 2007).

The J.League runs under a franchise system comparable to professional US sports leagues, and centrally markets the league through several of its enterprises. Football competes against baseball as the most popular sport in the country and the game remains in a subsidiary position in schools curricula (Dobson & Goddard, 2001). However, "rather than competing in

a narrow, sport-specific market, league franchises now compete in a broader entertainment market" (Mason, 1999, p. 406). Hence, the launch strategy included the creation of strong community partnerships that jointly play a significant role in urban redevelopment. In the mission statements of the Japan Football Association and the J.League it says:

> To raise the level of Japanese football and promote the diffusion of the game through the medium of professional football. . . . To foster the development of Japan's sporting culture, to assist in the healthy mental and physical growth of Japanese people. (www.jfa.or.jp, www.j-league.or.jp)

Contributing to society is totally obligatory for J.League teams as is prescribed in the league's regulations. These regulations demand involvement and active participation in urban redevelopment. Clubs are expected "to unite with the community, familiarize people with the sport-oriented lifestyle, and contribute to the physical and mental well-being and pleasure of local society . . . [as well as] players' participation in these activities". By modeling the concept of "community sports", referring to the German tradition, the aim of the J.League is "to establish sports clubs deeply rooted in the community" (www.j-league.or.jp). Team names must refer to their hometowns, thereby gaining instant nationwide prominence and attracting further economic benefits.

Football acts as a medium for public objectives by establishing the game as an integral part of the redevelopment of community life and building mutual relationships with city councils, supporter groups and the media. This is reflected in the club philosophy of one of the most successful clubs Urawa Red Diamonds:

1. Urawa Red Diamonds aims to contribute to the healthy growth of youth, and the fostering of valuable, conscientious members of society.
2. . . . strives to provide an arena for healthy recreation for the local community.
3. . . . aims to be Saitama's [the clubs home town] window to the world. (www.urawa-reds.co.jp).

A commentator reports that "there's red everywhere" on match day, which forms an atmosphere that motivates gathering for the sporting entertainment as well as buying merchandise and other goods (Walker, 2005). The club's philosophy to be "Saitama's window to the world" contains the idea of improving city image through sports for regional economic benefits (Sandy *et al*., 2004).

CSR initiatives range from inviting children in special care facilities to attend the league's official football schools for parents and children, coaching clinics at schools, visits to welfare facilities and hospitals, participation in local events and environmental clean up campaigns, cooperation with various charities, fund-raising activities, cooperation with campaigns organized by administrative bodies and other community work. In respect to club's public accountability, in 1998 a league crisis saw

the introduction of tangible guidelines for club management and measures to promote financial stability: including joint public disclosure of all club accounts, establishment of a management advisory committee, and the promotion of diversified shareholding (www.j-league.or.jp).

USA: "Establish soccer as an institution in the United States" (MLS mission)

Football in the US ("soccer") had a kick-start with hosting the 1994 World Cup. A year later, fulfilling demands from FIFA, the Major League Soccer (MLS) was established. It aims to "continue to make exciting and important strides to establish soccer's viability as a business, an entertainment property, and most importantly, as an institution in the United States" (www.mlsnet.com). Thus, it perceives football as an agent for change and the development of American culture and societal cohesion.

In 1994 The US Soccer Foundation opened its doors with an endowment of almost $50 million drawn from the surplus from the World Cup. The underpinning of its range of initiatives "is to enhance, assist and grow the sport of soccer by seeking out and supporting new community partnerships and programmes." (US Soccer Foundation 2005, p. 6). The foundation's "Grants Programme" at the core of its philanthropic activities provided resources to over 345 projects across the country, supporting the development of fields, players, coaches and referees with an increasing focus on economically disadvantaged urban areas.

Despite being a popular game among children, and Hispanic and European immigrants, professional football has been less successful in economic terms than the "big four" of basketball, American football, ice hockey and baseball. Teams from these sports are powerful partners in relationships with their host community and can "extract financial inducements from cities that are either fearful of losing an existing franchise, or desperate to gain the status of being considered a 'Major League City'" (Mason, 1999, p. 409). Thus, football's CSR strategy especially aims towards principles of social inclusiveness and diversification and the development of facilities in social spaces neglected by other sports.

Enhancing football's competitiveness is based on building new sorts of relationships that reach the base of people more immediately than other high-flying professional sports. Pitches are built and neglected sites are redeveloped to get a physical and symbolic stake in communities. Urban sociology stresses the meaning of space with symbolized power and influence, as well as the impact on consumption (Castells, 1978). Thereby, the game gains institutional relevance and provides exposure for sponsors through physical investment and becomes a partner of urban development (e.g., Hudson River Park's Pier 40 Athletic Field in Manhattan/New York). It may help though that US Soccer is lead by a former high-profile public administrator still networked through fellowships in various organizations.

The MLS franchisees act as the games local, regional and national ambassador for several branded schemes and programmes:

- "Passback" (nation-wide): a donating programme under the header of "Share the equipment—share the game").
- "SCORES" (nation-wide): an after-school programme offering inner-city public school students the opportunity to play football while learning how to express themselves through creative writing and community service.
- "United Drives" (DC United): this programme benefits worthwhile non-profit organizations by collecting much-needed items to help with each beneficiary's mission (dcunited.mlsnet.com).
- "Kicks for Kids" (MetroStars): a programme that enables companies to show their commitment to community service by supporting under-privileged children by giving them the opportunity to experience MetroStars games at Giants Stadium (metrostars.mlsnet.com). Here, football aims to be provider and profiteer of CSR thinking.
- "The Galaxy Shuttle" (Los Angeles Galaxy): a mission to increase awareness of the Los Angeles Galaxy through the participation at community events such as football tournaments, community festivals and pre-game festivities (la.galaxy.mlsnet.com).
- And collectively teaming up with the MLS, the National Education Association, and America SCORES for "Get the kick out of reading": a local, bilingual programme to show kids nationwide how much fun reading can be (www.getakickoutofreading.org).

In summary, corresponding with the state of development of football and its strong competition with other sports, its CSR approach is directly linked to the development of facilities as a medium to make the game relevant within the public sphere. Kick-start like, this was generously supported from the international football family, notably by the allocation of the right to host the 1994 men's World Cup, in order to open this market for the otherwise global game.

Strategies and Tactics used to Develop Aspects of Professional Football through the Integration of CSR

The case studies of professional football in England, Germany, the US and Japan illustrate how football is trying to establish itself as a positive agent of social change: as it seeks to compensate for the negative aspects of (post-)modern life, and offers key functions to governments and communities who see traditional state providers retreating from their former role as direct public service providers. Paralleling this process football follows its intrinsic motivation to foster and flourish in a commercial environment for the financial and give other benefits to people within the football family and the coalitions of interest surrounding the game.

The four cases support the conceptualization captured in the value-creation model (Figure 4) and exemplifies the following CSR approaches:

- The *political approach* is very present in "old" football countries that are rooted in the nineteenth century club tradition, but is alternatively used

strategically by the planned business activities operated by the franchise systems of Japan and the US.

- The *integrative approach* is outlined in the English and German cases, where expectations and demands are linked with football affairs and its relevance to social life. Here, professional football thrives through competitiveness by positioning itself as relevant in an institutional sense and an effective medium of public functions within the societal network.
- The *ethical approach* is evident in the social activities and societal involvement of the DFB rooted in the paternalistic, Christian–humanitarian tradition (DFB, 2003).
- The *instrumental approach* of, e.g., using free coaching and training for schoolteachers in the US (investment in competitive context) or cause-related marketing activities (e.g., joint activities like DFB and the brewery Bitburger, raising money from every crate of non-alcoholic beer sold to redevelop/build street football pitches) is evident in all cases.

Reflections on this Research and Implications for Sports Management

The prime focus of this article is the proposed model we have developed using a deductive approach (Figure 4), which synthesizes the core findings from our four case studies into four "typical" national professional football contexts. It is underpinned by the premise that resources determine the performance and outcome of value creating processes (Barney & Arikan, 2001; Fahy, 2000). The professionalization and commercialization of professional football and its high public profile create a demand to integrate CSR into the game. Four kinds of approaches emerged from the case studies: integrative, functional, ethical, power-related. If implemented and managed rightly, these approaches can create specific sources of value among stakeholders, which can lead to significant benefits for the game itself: growing participation in football, increasing institutional relevance, (financial) profits, and thus strategic advantages in terms of competitiveness. In order to realize such healthy future development, sports management needs to widen their perspective and acknowledge the "embeddedness" of their organizational actions into social relations, where economic actions are only a special, if important, part of society (Granovetter, 1985). Our investigation shows that a number of football organizations, especially German clubs, have not yet integrated the concept of CSR into their management. As argued, thinking strategically about this increasingly important concept offers great value.

This article we hope has started to investigate the role that CSR plays in professional football and has begun to conceptualize its managerial relevance and value. Despite being a major topic of interest in other industries it has been largely ignored by international sports management, yet is becoming of increasing relevance as we look for the legacy of major sports facilities, clubs and activities for their communities and enhanced competitiveness in an increasingly global world. We hope our contribution stimulates more research into the topic since it is closely linked to a growing

body of research into the management of stakeholders and associated issues management initiatives.

We see key implications from this article for sports managers who have not yet considered the CSR concept as part of their business. Drawing on ideas from strategic management, we argue football organizations can take the role as social change agents and can utilize this role for the further growth and development of the game. In addition, the underlying reasoning of the value creation model through CSR and stakeholder management can be utilized by managers in other sports that have the critical mass and that have established professional, industry-like structures. Historically what has come to be called the football business (previously game) was reluctant to take responsibility outside the gate in the first instance and even seemed to ignore public policies, but more recently has begun to respond to the growing demands of stakeholders. This osmosis of attitude and approach can be seen in other industries, where companies move from the stage of rejecting engagement with their communities and stakeholders through more and more involvement and commitment to strategic sustainable business approaches (Benn & Dunphy, 2004). Consequently, we hope this article may encourage football to embrace CSR as an opportunity-driven rather than problem-driven concept.

We have brought together existing academic work from the areas of strategic management, CSR, marketing and sports management. It is by its nature limited because of its meta approach to the role of CSR in professional football. Nevertheless, we believe the case studies relate the presented model of value creation through CSR to empirical contexts. This has been achieved primarily through an analysis of organizations' websites, i.e., secondary data reflecting the self-perception of organizations.

Future research into different sporting and national CSR contexts we believe will help embed the present work in a broader understanding of how and where CSR can be applied in sports management and sports marketing. We see at this stage explorative, in-depth studies into the complexity and dynamic of organizations and their stakeholder environment as providing the best method for building research in this area. In addition surveys and interviews covering whole leagues, and other sports systems are necessary to map the terrain, and can help to compare and contrast different sports and regions. By doing so, sports management researchers can also contribute to the general discussion of CSR management, which emerges as an established and distinctive academic field (Lockett *et al.*, 2006). Our contribution investigates the relationship of CSR and sports primarily from the sole professional football organizations' perspective. We see future research that may reveal interesting issues around the direction of football organizations' business development which are important for managers to consider by adopting the perspective of subversive opinions, not necessarily expressed or even silenced in the publications of professional football clubs and governing bodies and utilizing discourse analysis. The guiding principle should be to

understand the role of sports management and sports bodies in the public arena and how the concept of CSR can prove to be of strategic value for respective organizations and the social-economic-political environment at the same time. The conceptual model presented in this article is proposed as a possible way forward for the development of such research.

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