SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS PROJECT

Social Media Analytics for Business Intelligence - DAT-9731 - BOS1 - Prof. Beau Giannini & Prof. Pavel Paramonov
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The European Super League

This analysis is about the current twitter climate for the European Super League, a new format soccer league for the best and most popular clubs in soccer. Looking at what the Super League can focus on to build a better campaign for an eventual relaunch.

The PR battle that followed the announcement of the European super league, will be a text book case in a few years. The mightiest most popular brands in sports were taken down by a social media and media campaign within two days. The whole battle was over before we managed to learn what the majority actually wanted. Now almost half a year later we can look at the sentiments of people now that the initial storm has calmed.

```python
In [9]:  import json
         import tweepy as tw
```

```python
In [11]: import config_twitter
```

In [12]:
```python
# function to establish an initial API connection, respecting the rate limit
def connect_api_client():
    auth = tw.OAuthHandler(config_twitter.consumer_key, config_twitter.consumer_secret)
    auth.set_access_token(config_twitter.access_token, config_twitter.access_token_secret)
    api = tw.API(auth, wait_on_rate_limit=True)
    try:
        # returns False if credentials could not be verified
        api.verify_credentials()
        user = api.verify_credentials()
        if not user:
            raise("Credentials could not be verified: Please check config.py")
        print(f"Connected to Twitter API as {user.name}")
    except Exception as e:
        raise e
    return api


api = connect_api_client()


# construct a search query
query = '"european super league" OR "the super league" -filter:retweets'


# decide how many tweets to query
ntweets = 2000


# search and collect relevant tweets
tweets = [tweet._json for tweet in tw.Cursor(api.search, q=query, lang="en", tweet_mode='extended').items(ntweets)]


# save tweets data to json file
file_out = f"raw_tweet_data_{ntweets}.json"
with open(file_out, mode='w') as f:
    f.write(json.dumps(tweets, indent=2))
```

Connected to Twitter API as Lars.M.S.Jappée

In [13]:
```python
# Check number of tweets in dataset.
len(tweets)
```

Out[13]: 2000

In [14]:
```python
# Check random tweets to quality controll content(will run several, only one showing here).
tweets[7]
```

```
Out[14]: {'created_at': 'Fri Jul 30 19:45:52 +0000 2021',
          'id': 1421195358122610688,
          'id_str': '1421195358122610688',
          'full_text': '@ReshadRahman_ Is the Super League going to be an open league governed by merit or is it goij
g to be a closed league? If it is open- dope, if not, just NO.',
          'truncated': False,
          'display_text_range': [15, 155],
          'entities': {'hashtags': [],
           'symbols': [],
           'user_mentions': [{'screen_name': 'ReshadRahman_',
             'name': 'Reshad Rahman',
             'id': 1064455718445740032,
             'id_str': '1064455718445740032',
             'indices': [0, 14]}],
           'urls': []},
          'metadata': {'iso_language_code': 'en', 'result_type': 'recent'},
          'source': '<a href="http://twitter.com/download/android" rel="nofollow">Twitter for Android</a>',
          'in_reply_to_status_id': 1421133714357166080,
          'in_reply_to_status_id_str': '1421133714357166080',
          'in_reply_to_user_id': 1064455718445740032,
          'in_reply_to_user_id_str': '1064455718445740032',
          'in_reply_to_screen_name': 'ReshadRahman_',
          'user': {'id': 1383896595595288580,
           'id_str': '1383896595595288580',
           'name': 'Harkrish Ahuja',
           'screen_name': 'TheHA97766643',
           'location': '',
           'description': 'Hey! lol.\nI write about things I like.\nAvid reader of science.\nMy blog : https://t.co/B
zA378vzXj',
           'url': None,
           'entities': {'description': {'urls': [{'url': 'https://t.co/BzA378vzXj',
               'expanded_url': 'https://whatithinkinmyopinion.blogspot.com',
               'display_url': 'whatithinkinmyopinion.blogspot.com',
               'indices': [73, 96]}]}},
           'protected': False,
           'followers_count': 10,
           'friends_count': 9,
           'listed_count': 0,
           'created_at': 'Sun Apr 18 21:34:03 +0000 2021',
           'favourites_count': 7486,
           'utc_offset': None,
```

```
          'time_zone': None,
          'geo_enabled': True,
          'verified': False,
          'statuses_count': 1439,
          'lang': None,
          'contributors_enabled': False,
          'is_translator': False,
          'is_translation_enabled': False,
          'profile_background_color': 'F5F8FA',
          'profile_background_image_url': None,
          'profile_background_image_url_https': None,
          'profile_background_tile': False,
          'profile_image_url': 'http://pbs.twimg.com/profile_images/1409964375889170432/7rR-JkSe_normal.jpg',
          'profile_image_url_https': 'https://pbs.twimg.com/profile_images/1409964375889170432/7rR-JkSe_normal.jpg',
          'profile_banner_url': 'https://pbs.twimg.com/profile_banners/1383896595595288580/1624996680',
          'profile_link_color': '1DA1F2',
          'profile_sidebar_border_color': 'C0DEED',
          'profile_sidebar_fill_color': 'DDEEF6',
          'profile_text_color': '333333',
          'profile_use_background_image': True,
          'has_extended_profile': True,
          'default_profile': True,
          'default_profile_image': False,
          'following': False,
          'follow_request_sent': False,
          'notifications': False,
          'translator_type': 'none',
          'withheld_in_countries': []},
         'geo': None,
         'coordinates': None,
         'place': None,
         'contributors': None,
         'is_quote_status': False,
         'retweet_count': 0,
         'favorite_count': 0,
         'favorited': False,
         'retweeted': False,
         'lang': 'en'}
```

Tweets are relevant to the sentiments people display towards the European Super League.

In [48]: `tweets[7]['full_text']`

Out[48]: `'@ReshadRahman_ Is the Super League going to be an open league governed by merit or is it goijg to be a closed league? If it is open- dope, if not, just NO.'`

In [15]:
```python
import html
import string
import re
from nltk import word_tokenize
from nltk.corpus import stopwords
from textblob import TextBlob
from wordcloud import WordCloud
import pandas as pd
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
```

```python
In [16]:  fjson = 'raw_tweet_data_2000.json'

          with open(fjson) as file:
              data = json.load(file)

          df_tweets = pd.DataFrame([t['full_text'] for t in data], columns=['text'])

          df_tweets['retweets'] = [t['retweet_count'] for t in data]
          df_tweets['favorites'] = [t['favorite_count'] for t in data]
          df_tweets['user'] = [t['user']['screen_name'] for t in data]

          stop_words = set(stopwords.words('english'))

          def text_cleanup(s):
              s_unesc = html.unescape(re.sub(r"http\S+", "", re.sub('\n+', ' ', s)))
              s_noemoji = s_unesc.encode('ascii', 'ignore').decode('ascii')
              # normalize to lowercase and tokenize
              wt = word_tokenize(s_noemoji.lower())
              # filter word-tokens
              wt_filt = [w for w in wt if (w not in stop_words) and (w not in string.punctuation) and (w.isalnum())]
              # return clean string
              return ' '.join(wt_filt)

          df_tweets['text_clean'] = df_tweets['text'].apply(text_cleanup)

          def sentim_polarity(s):
              return TextBlob(s).sentiment.polarity

          def sentim_subject(s):
              return TextBlob(s).sentiment.subjectivity

          df_tweets['polarity'] = df_tweets['text_clean'].apply(sentim_polarity)
          df_tweets['subjectivity'] = df_tweets['text_clean'].apply(sentim_subject)
```

Competitive Stake Holders

```
In [17]: stake_holders = ['uefa', 'fifa', 'champions league', 'super league', 'premier league', 'la liga']

         df_stake_holders = pd.DataFrame(stake_holders, columns=['stake_holders'])

         def party_sentiment(b):
             return df_tweets[df_tweets['text_clean'].str.contains(b)]['polarity'].mean()

         df_stake_holders['average_sentiment'] = df_stake_holders['stake_holders'].apply(party_sentiment)

         print("Competitive Stake Holders")
         print(df_stake_holders)
```

```
Competitive Stake Holders
        stake_holders  average_sentiment
0                uefa           0.162458
1                fifa          -0.016177
2    champions league           0.215044
3        super league           0.186752
4      premier league           0.184950
5             la liga           0.189670
```

Looking at the average sentiment for the different stakeholders Surrounding the super league we can see that FIFA holds a generally negative sentiments, mostly related to corruption. The sentiments towards the super league is about the same as the premier league or La Liga when people discuss the three. The data is somewhat shaped by the fact that the query is for tweets about the super league.

The super league has it biggest competition from the champions league, as the competition it is looking to replace. While the adversary in a public PR campaign will be UEFA, with support from La Liga and the Premier League.

Key Figures

The key figure heads in this PR war is:

Florentino Perez - President of Real Madrid and the Super League, referred to as "perez".

Andrea Agnelli - President of Juventus and Vice-chairman of the Super League, referred to as "agnelli".

Aleksander Čeferin - President of UEFA, referred to as "ceferin".

Joel Glazer - Co-chairman of Manchester United and vice-chairman of the Super League, referred to as "Glazer".

Bayern Muchen - German Football club vocal against the formation of the Super League, referred to as "bayern".

Javier Tebas - President of the Spanish football league(La Liga), referred to as "tebas".

```python
In [25]: key_figures = ['perez', 'agnelli', 'ceferin', 'glazer', 'bayern', 'tebas']

df_key_figures = pd.DataFrame(key_figures, columns=['key_figures'])

df_key_figures['average_sentiment'] = df_key_figures['key_figures'].apply(party_sentiment)

print("Key Figures")
print(df_key_figures)
```

```
Key Figures
  key_figures  average_sentiment
0       perez           0.174635
1     agnelli           0.020370
2     ceferin           0.246296
3      glazer           0.128185
4      bayern           0.159593
5       tebas           0.027054
```

Ceferin has used this situation to attempt to strengthen his position in European soccer, building a stronger image for himself than previously. The UEFA president campaigned to stop the corruption UEFA is known for, but has so far allegedly fallen into the same flaws (Melnæs & Ødegård, 2017). His positive sentiment when mentioned in relation to the super league shows he has found something to strengthen his image.

Perez holds a positive sentiment among fans of the super league concept, he is the calm figurehead that is winning the legal battles following the initial loss in the PR sphere. This is increasing his image, and can perhaps help reinvigorate the Super League(Reuters, 2021).

Key Influencers

Several prominent soccer figures went out against the super league. These helped ignite the sparks that led to protest and online campaign against the Super League. Also some reportedly neutral twitter accounts spread news and leaks surrounding the Super League.

Looking at two:
Swiss Ramble - A twitter account dedicated to financial information, referred to as "swissramble".
Gary Neville - Former Manchester United player and current pundit, referred to as "neville".

```
In [50]: key_influencers = ['swissramble', 'neville', 'lineker']

         df_key_influencers = pd.DataFrame(key_influencers, columns=['key_influencers'])

         df_key_influencers['average_sentiment'] = df_key_influencers['key_influencers'].apply(party_sentiment)

         print("Key Influencers")
         print(df_key_influencers)
```

```
Key Influencers
  key_influencers  average_sentiment
0     swissramble           0.220833
1         neville           0.197333
2         lineker           0.166667
```

Looking at two of the most vocal we can see that twitter fans are reacting positively to tweets including financial information. Swissramble has included key financial figures for the clubs, both in terms of potential income, but also their current situation. The two clubs with the highest social media following in the world is currently in financial distress due to covid and other poor financial decisions (Jahns, 2021). The Super League would alleviate or remove those issues.

Tweet Content Analysis

Understanding the major positive for the Super League and the major negative sentiments against will help in current and future media campaigns for the Super League.

In [65]:
```python
# Some examples of tweet content with the highest and the lowest sentiment values.
print("Highest:")
print(df_tweets.sort_values(by='polarity', ascending=False).head(10))
print("")
print("Lowest:")
print(df_tweets.sort_values(by='polarity').head(10))
```

```
Highest:
                                                      text  retweets  favorites  \
1187  Maxim Uchaykin-Head coach of Zenit Seniors 202...         0          2
1683  Chelsea opened talks with Kounde and are now a...         0          1
1581  4 times Champions League Winner takes the No. ...         0          1
1930  @Varneyshairline @LUFCbot Their owners don't h...         0          0
1457  @cforster26 @MikeGrady04 Probably best to unde...         0          0
781   @iFooty77 What? The super league will be the b...         0          0
1494  @utdreport The Super League's turned out to be...         0         10
1512  @Jimmic29 I know mate I know. I try and put my...         0          1
813   they sold their best cbs and haven't made sign...         0          3
1852  Ed Woodard resigns and we have a great transfe...         0          0

                 user                                         text_clean  \
1187        DomenVial  maxim coach zenit seniors 2021 best coach supe...
1683  realmadridideas  chelsea opened talks kounde sign premier leagu...
1581         murshedz  4 times champions league winner takes 4 shirt ...
1930      TimHoolahan  varneyshairline lufcbot owners dont best inter...
1457       Grow_Rugby  cforster26 mikegrady04 probably best understan...
781        marlopunk  ifooty77 super league best thing happen footba...
1494       AlfieVille  utdreport super league turned best thing happe...
1512      Powelly1985  jimmic29 know mate know try put shoes id fumin...
813         pieeperr  sold best cbs havent made signing besides alab...
1852     LechALection  ed woodard resigns great transfer window hail ...

      polarity  subjectivity
1187  0.777778      0.422222
1683  0.777778      0.422222
1581  0.758333      0.566667
1930  0.666667      0.483333
1457  0.666667      0.483333
781   0.666667      0.483333
1494  0.666667      0.483333
1512  0.666667      0.483333
813   0.666667      0.483333
1852  0.644444      0.705556

Lowest:
                                                      text  retweets  favorites  \
1685  I hate this crap. Hate it with a passion. \n\n...         0          1
1772  These stupid pundits annoy the hell out of me ...         0          0
```

```
 363    Football the Industry! \nThis could be a landm...        3        10
1883    The masterplan was the Super League and he fai...        0         3
1528    @Oly_Gav They're the worst. Even though they h...        0         1
1890    The rights deal is irrelevant, at the end of t...        0         1
 135    @JUSTIN_AVFC_ That long! Already looking grim ...        0         0
1031        @GrandpaBeer It's the Super League.   Boring        0         0
 101    @SJohnsonSport Uefa made y'all believe that th...        0         2
 841    I hope the Super League starts asap, football ...        0         2

               user                                text_clean  \
1685    robmooreavfc  hate crap hate passion remember outrage league...
1772        Khulaniii  stupid pundits annoy hell stupid rhetoric woul...
 363          AshabaA  football industry could landmark shake foundat...
1883      CFCLosBlues          masterplan super league failed miserably
1528        tdotonian  theyre worst even though irrelevant years some...
1890    Kwamzfinesse  rights deal irrelevant end day bbc ioc fumbled...
 135        Def68Villa  long already looking grim media driving intere...
1031            RobG64                  grandpabeer super league boring
 101        DanLaden7  sjohnsonsport uefa made believe pioneers super...
 841      barca__fan__      hope super league starts asap football boring

        polarity  subjectivity
1685 -0.600000      0.837500
1772 -0.422222      0.888889
 363  -0.400000      0.400000
1883 -0.388889      0.655556
1528 -0.388889      0.888889
1890 -0.364583      0.802083
 135  -0.357738      0.730952
1031 -0.333333      0.833333
 101  -0.333333      0.833333
 841  -0.333333      0.833333
```

We can see that while some of the positive tweets are about how the clubs have fared after the initial launch and failure. Clearly some people are expecting it to be a positive revolution:

In [77]: `tweets[781]['full_text']`

Out[77]: `'@iFooty77 What? The super league will be the best thing to happen to football and usmanov and David dein wo`
`uld be all for it aswell'`

The interesting point here is also how some negative sentiments are actually about UEFA and not the Super League, highlighting how UEFA managed their PR campaign successfully. And for a rare occasion UEFA managed to take the moral high ground(Melnæs & Ødegård, 2017). This moral high ground might be at a risk with the legal battles and perhaps a better campaign from the Super League to highlight UEFA warehouses of skeletons (Reuters, 2021).

In [69]: `tweets[101]['full_text']`

Out[69]: `"@SJohnsonSport Uefa made y'all believe that the pioneers of the Super League were evil lmfao"`

In [78]:
```python
# Examples of the most retweeted content.
print("Most retweeted content")
print(df_tweets.sort_values(by='retweets', ascending=False).head(20))
```

Most retweeted content

	text	retweets	favorites	\
287	Barcelona, Juventus and Real Madrid have vowed...	535	3274	
807	[PRESS RELEASE]\n\n¡ Statement on the European...	334	3069	
803	🅰 | The Super League is very much still alive. ...	86	1456	
786	Juve, Barca and Real Madrid still won't let th...	74	820	
835	🅰 Super League Statement: "We will not be subje...	59	488	
774	Whatever your opinion on the Super League is, ...	56	298	
610	A court has ruled UEFA must remove penalties (...	50	567	
811	🅰 Joint statement from Real Madrid, Barcelona ...	45	240	
1617	Still wondering where the punishment is for th...	39	840	
657	🅰 | Super League statement: "The Super League w...	39	429	
225	Barcelona, Juventus & Real Madrid took UEF...	39	94	
824	🅰 | "Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus expres...	37	464	
840	Statement by Juve, Real Madrid & Barcelona...	32	130	
299	Still trying to make the Super League happen? ...	32	359	
482	Official: FC Barcelona, Juventus and Real Madr...	32	575	
641	🅰 | Super League statement: "Our aim is to keep...	31	462	
738	"Our aim is to keep developing the Super Leagu...	31	275	
1484	Florentino Pérez saw how much money the Englis...	29	139	
654	The Super League is a good idea and will revol...	28	213	
469	BREAKING Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus t...	24	77	

	user	text_clean	\
287	SkySportsNews	barcelona juventus real madrid vowed carry pla...	
807	FCBarcelona	press release statement european super league ...	
803	MadridXtra	super league much still alive real madrid barc...	
786	FootyAccums	juve barca real madrid still wo let super leag...	
835	EduardoHagn	super league statement subjected constant thre...	
774	FinallyMaeglas	whatever opinion super league spot	
610	jonathandveal83	court ruled uefa must remove penalties approx ...	
811	MilanEye	joint statement real madrid barcelona juventus...	
1617	TyBracey	still wondering punishment teams super league ...	
657	theMadridZone	super league statement super league welcomes t...	
225	Engr_Series	barcelona juventus real madrid took uefa court...	
824	MadridXtra	real madrid barcelona juventus express satisfa...	
840	juvefcdotcom	statement juve real madrid barcelona regarding...	
299	Ankaman616	still trying make super league happen broke bois	
482	barcacentre	official fc barcelona juventus real madrid cf ...	
641	theMadridZone	super league statement aim keep developing sup...	
738	henrywinter	aim keep developing super league project const...	

```
        1484   Nigerianscamsss   florentino prez saw much money english footbal...
         654      honest_pepsi   super league good idea revolutionize football ...
         469    MirrorFootball   breaking real madrid barcelona juventus pursue...

                polarity   subjectivity
         287    0.286667       0.543333
         807    0.166667       0.333333
         803    0.208333       0.391667
         786    0.266667       0.483333
         835    0.194444       0.461111
         774    0.333333       0.666667
         610    0.237500       0.366667
         811    0.266667       0.483333
        1617    0.466667       0.783333
         657    0.250000       0.500000
         225    0.177778       0.322222
         824    0.266667       0.483333
         840    0.266667       0.483333
         299    0.333333       0.666667
         482    0.226667       0.413333
         641    0.305556       0.527778
         738    0.166667       0.333333
        1484    0.177778       0.288889
         654    0.223333       0.466667
         469    0.177778       0.322222
```

The Super League is still alive, as we can see that the recent positive information regarding their legal battle is trending. We can also see that mostly positive news about the future or existing view of the super league is popular.

Also links towards the original statement behind the creation of the super league is still "trending as shown by this tweet linking to a key part in the statement. These points should be addressed further, and be an important part of the message going forward.

```
In [80]:  tweets[774]['full_text']
```

```
Out[80]:  'Whatever your opinion on the Super League is, this is spot on. https://t.co/f8TCehD2mE'
```

Text in tweet link:

"We have the duty to address the very serious issues facing football: UEFA has established itself as the sole regulator, exclusive operator, and unique owner of rights of European football competitions. This monopolistic position, in conflict of interest, is damaging football and its competitive balance. As shown by ample evidence, financial controls are inadequate, and they have been improperly enforced. Clubs participating in European competitions have the right to govern their own competitions."(Marsden & Llorens 2021).

```
In [83]:  # Top-20 users producing the most retweeted content.
          print("Users producing the most retweeted content")
          print(df_tweets.sort_values(by='retweets', ascending=False).head(20)['user'])
```

```
Users producing the most retweeted content
287           SkySportsNews
807             FCBarcelona
803              MadridXtra
786             FootyAccums
835             EduardoHagn
774          FinallyMaeglas
610          jonathandveal83
811                MilanEye
1617               TyBracey
657            theMadridZone
225             Engr_Series
824              MadridXtra
840            juvefcdotcom
299              Ankaman616
482              barcacentre
641            theMadridZone
738              henrywinter
1484          Nigerianscamsss
654             honest_pepsi
469            MirrorFootball
Name: user, dtype: object
```

Club fan accounts have the most retweeted content, showing that the Super League have a potentially large fan base to utilize, they should keep their supporters updated, as some of the surprise around the announcement of the Super League might have been part of the reason for the strong backlash.

Tweet Focus Words

Looking at what people are tweeting about can help both understand what is popular, but also what message is not coming across.

```python
In [84]: def parties_all_text(b):
             # https://stackoverflow.com/a/51871650
             return ' '.join(df_tweets[df_tweets['text_clean'].str.contains(b)]['text_clean'])


         print("Content keywords for tweets about the Super League")
         b = 'super league'
         wc = WordCloud(width=1200, height=800, max_font_size=110, collocations=False).generate(parties_all_text(b))
         plt.axis("off")
         plt.imshow(wc, interpolation="bilinear")
         plt.show()


         kwords_super_league = WordCloud().process_text(parties_all_text(b))
         df_kwords_super_league = pd.DataFrame(list(kwords_super_league.items()), columns=['keyword', 'count']).set_in
         dex('keyword')
         print(df_kwords_super_league.sort_values(by = "count", ascending=False).head(10))
         print(df_kwords_super_league.sort_values(by = "count", ascending=False).head(10).plot.bar())
```
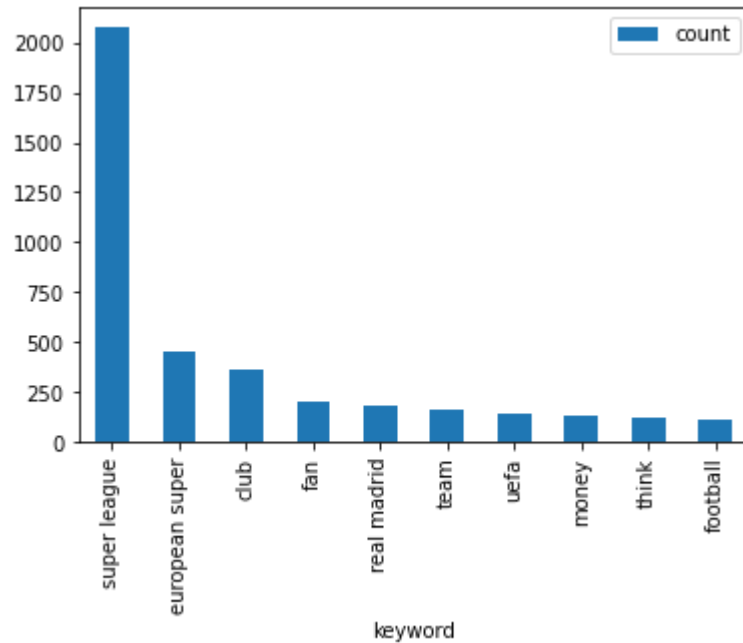
Content keywords for each brand


```
                 count
keyword
super league     2074
european super    456
club              366
fan               208
real madrid       181
team              162
uefa              139
money             129
think             123
football          113
AxesSubplot(0.125,0.125;0.775x0.755)
```

Looking at the talking points for the Super League, we can see that the financial aspects are popular, fans care about the financial wellbeing of their clubs. Also what is interesting is that the debate is no longer about relegation, or the lack of relegation, as the Super League clubs have amended this. Unfortunately the same goes for no focus on corruption by UEFA or Suspected Qatar influence on the clubs that did not join the Super League (Hanna, 2021).

Recommended steps

The European Super League should take the following steps:

- Promote their financial need for the new system
- Keep pushing the same reason behind the change
- Be open about updates, keep the fans in the loop
- Support Investigations into the negative sides of UEFA and the opposition
- Wait until the right moment to relaunch, the need for the clubs to launch was present, but not the negative news about the opposition
- Design and promote a new relegation system
- Reaffirm the moral high ground, utilize the legal victories
- The PR battle was won online, and mainly through soccer twitter, the protest was just a result of this. The Super League needs a much stronger Social Media campaign ahead of their relaunch

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