Chapter 16

The Business of FIFA World Cup: Digital and Social Media

Renan Petersen-Wagner

Introduction

In the last 150 years, societies across the globe have witnessed the emergence of distinct information and communication technologies (hereafter ICTs) such as the telegraph, telephone, radio, and television that have altered the way individuals and groups connect to each other (Briggs et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it was not until the end of the 20th century when digital technologies - the transformation of all kinds of content into 0s and 1s - the wider adoption of Internet protocols, and the further miniaturisation of microprocessors that we can evidence that there is nothing untouched by media(tisation) (Tomlinson, 2007; Deuze, 2011; McQuail and Deuze, 2020).

Thus, it is important to ask what are the reverberations of the pervasiveness of digital media on one of the most ubiquitous and serious ordinary elements of a truly global popular culture - association football (hereafter football) (Bromberger, 2004). Football, and in particular the women's and men's World Cup events organised by the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) that were watched by 1 billion and 3 billion individuals in their last two editions respectively (FIFA, 2018; 2019) symbolise the pinnacle of this novel digital human condition where everything is mediated; however, what are the transformations, disruptions, continuities and discontinuities to the historical symbiotic relationship between media and sport coming out of the digital revolution?

The chapter follows with a review of the symbiotic relationship between mass media and sport, and the digital disruptions when new media collide with this sedimented relationship; then, data from two distinct social media platforms (YouTube and Twitter) are used to illustrate how the digital revolution is better understood as transformations that contain both patterns of continuities

and discontinuities; finally, the chapter ends with a discussion on how digital media transformed the once sedimented relationship between mass media and sport by extending rather than replacing it.

Understanding the symbiotic relationship between media and sport

To write about the emergence of professional sport without discussing mass media - and vice-versa - is to portray just one side of a coin, thus neglecting that what we recognise today as sport is intrinsically connected to what we know as mass media. Both sport and mass media are part of the invented traditions of European modernisation (Hobsbawm, 1983), nevertheless traditionally inhabiting complete opposite worlds (Rowe, 2004). The relationship between the two, became indispensable during the last century to a point where Rowe (2004) conceptualises it as a symbiotic relationship. The lowering of production costs, the shifting to a business model where commercialising advertising spaces trumped the selling of access to content, and consequently realising that selling audiences' attentions to those advertisers were their core business (Wu, 2016), led mass media to constantly battle for content that captivates larger audiences (Rowe, 2013). For instance, the 2014 FIFA Men's World Cup in Brazil was broadcasted to over 200 territories (FIFA, 2015). Thus, by providing a constant influx of real human drama (Bellamy, 2013; Jackson, 2013) sport becomes a key content for media and advertisers (Bellamy, 2013). Above that, the open ended quality of sport such as football exceeds what happens during the 90 minutes and involves aspects of norm violations, scandals, and other ramifications that are important for commercial mass media (see Luhmann, 2000).

The symbiotic relationship rose through ICTs developments moving to the newest available media (Owens, 2006), but only found its *home* with live TV broadcasting (Rowe, 1996). The use of sport as a catalyst for *medium* adoption can be witnessed when football is used to lure users into subscribing to bundled offerings (e.g., BSkyB and the formation of the English Premier League) (David et al., 2017), and especially how new technologies (e.g., HD, 3D, 4K UHD) figure prominently when the FIFA Men's World Cup are held (BARB, 2010; FIFA, 2014). Traditional

media such as print, radio, and television can be characterised as predominantly linear and uni-directional, by moving standardised content to an undifferentiated mass (one-to-many) (McQuail and Deuze, 2020). Those characteristics alongside its historical roots mean that those spaces are reserved for a few who hold *power* (see Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Even that mass media are credited for fostering public spheres (Habermas, 1991), it is important to interrogate who is to be considered the *public* when *filters* (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) lead to situations of gender (Bruce, 2015; Petty and Pope, 2019; Petersen-Wagner, 2020b; Cooky et al., 2021) and sport imbalances (Coche and Tuggle, 2018; Petersen-Wagner, 2020a). As such, in a situation of broadcasting scarcity (Hutchins and Rowe, 2009) those outlets and individuals working for them become powerful gatekeepers in the mediated flow of information (Herman and Chomsky, 1988).

With the rise of the Internet there were possible transformations to this *closed club*. For instance, in their series of studies, Hutchins and Rowe (2009; 2012; 2013) documented how digital plenitude have disrupted this traditional symbiotic relationship, especially when accessibility is pulverised across multiple platforms (Hutchins and Rowe, 2012). For instance, individuals have now a plethora of options in terms of consuming sport to a point where platform selection is both complementary and competitive (Gantz and Lewis, 2014). The arrival of new media platforms was commonly received with enthusiasm in regards of *democratisation* of content prosumption (McQuail and Deuze, 2020).

New media disrupt traditional media in four interconnected areas, such as: power asymmetries; social integration and identity; social change; and space and time (McQuail and Deuze, 2020). Those areas are commonly identified when observing the symbiotic relationship with football as in the case of players, clubs and fans creating and distributing content (Rookwood and Millward, 2011; Rodriguez, 2017; Anagnostopoulos et al., 2018; Sauder and Blaszka, 2018), the networked structure of fan relations that concomitantly brings transnational cohesion and fragmentation (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007; Hayton et al., 2017; Petersen-Wagner, 2017a; 2017b; 2018; Ludvigsen, 2019), how new media can foster loosely defined social movements and

social change (Millward, 2012; Cleland et al., 2017; Hill et al., 2018), and above all how new places for consuming football emerge (Petersen-Wagner, 2018; Lawrence and Crawford, 2018; Woods and Ludvigsen, 2021).

In short, the symbiotic relationship between sport and media has metamorphosed by following new distribution technologies (e.g., print, radio, linear TV, over-the-top, social media platforms, etc.), nevertheless it is important to highlight how those technological processes are interconnected with the cultural practices associated with *consuming* content (Jenkins, 2006). Thus, understanding what people can afford with distinct delivery technologies is paramount for comprehending the now disrupted symbiotic relationship.

Methods

The impacts of digital transformations were also experienced in sociological inquiry practices to a point where an *enlarged tradition* of research has emerged. For Marres (2017), a digital turn to sociology implies: i) the acceptance of new places and contexts for research; ii) the application of distinct methods of research on those new spaces and contexts; and iii) new platforms for engaging with the public and wider audience. This chapter takes Marres' (2017) points one and two to the fore by investigating new places for consuming football and apply novel methods in order to comprehend how the symbiotic relationship unfolds on those places. In respect of point one, the focus of this chapter is on two distinct social media platforms - namely Alphabet Inc. owned video sharing platform YouTube, and Twitter Inc. microblogging platform Twitter, whereas for point two this chapter uses YouTube Data Tools (Rieder, 2015) to automatically scrap data from YouTube, and Gephi (Bastian et al., 2009) to scrap tweets and perform social network analyses.

Digital and social media - YouTube and Twitter

New digital media distinctiveness in relation to traditional analogue media centres around four features in terms of affordances: i) capacity for interactivity; ii) on-demand and real-time

access; iii) all users become consumers and producers; iv) hybridity of mixing one-to-many, one-to-one and many-to-many forms of communication (McQuail and Deuze, 2020). YouTube, as an agnostic content platform (Burgess and Green, 2018), possesses a business model that relies on the constant active engagement of its over 2 billion monthly logged-in users (YouTube, 2021) in producing, sharing, commenting, and watching content. Users on YouTube are able to produce, share and even monetise their own content (iii), watch others' content anytime/anywhere (ii) - more than 70% of watch time is done on mobile devices (YouTube, 2021) - comment and engage on conversations (i), and both videos and comments provide spaces for a mix of communication models (iv). Twitter as content agnostic platform[1] (Murthy, 2017) also relies on its over 190 million *Monetizable Daily Active Usage* (mDAU) (Twitter, 2021) for its business model that is anchored on advertising revenue. Similarly to YouTube, Twitter allows users to tweet, retweet and reply (i) on all distinct forms of communication (iv), consume on-demand content as focused on Twitter's letter to shareholders (Twitter, 2021: 5) and interact on real-time (ii), and ultimately provides multiple spaces for creation and consumption of content as through traditional tweets, fleets, direct messages, and spaces (iii) (Twitter, 2021).

FIFA, CONMEBOL and UEFA YouTube channels

YouTube (launched in 2005) was initially conceived as a platform that removed barriers for *non-professionals* to share videos on the web (Burgess and Green, 2018). The platform has metamorphosed over the years and now operates in multi-sided market by hosting *non-professional* videos, and balancing the interests of other *stakeholders* as pro-amateurs and professional content creators, media partners, and advertisers (Burgess and Green, 2018). It is possible to talk about two YouTubes (Burgess and Green, 2018) as in one side there are professionally curated channels

[1] Both platforms have drew considerable attention because of their nature as content agnostic when hate speech appears (for their hateful speech policies see Twitter 2021a; YouTube 2021a) to a point where there is at the time of writing this chapter a movement for a football-wide boycott on social media platforms in the UK (BBC, 2021).

operating similarly to traditional broadcasting, and on the other there is still an *idealised* open-Internet where you can just 'broadcast yourself™' (Jarret, 2008).

In respect of sport, YouTube is considered as a secondary medium by its remediation characteristic where content previously considered relevant is made available in shorter format (Stauff, 2009)[2]. Hence, governing bodies and clubs realising that the threat imposed by Alphabet's (the parent company of YouTube and Google) digital disruption meant that the sole option was to join it rather than fight it (Hutchins and Rowe, 2012). As Checchinato et al (2015) argue, football supporters are prone to engage and consume more professionally curated official channels content rather than user-generated-content (UGC), thus transforming it as an alternative for TV broadcasting.

To check this, the author collected data from the official YouTube channels of FIFA (FIFATV, 2021), CONMEBOL (CONMEBOL, 2021), and UEFA (UEFA, 2021). A summary of the data can be seen below in Table 1.

Channel	Creation	Subscribers	Videos	Views
FIFA TV	September 2006	9,510,000	8,631	3,146,037,975
UEFA	March 2006	2,860,00	3,259	682,128,415
CONMEBOL	February 2014	244,00	2,517	50,541,464

To put the above data into perspective just the final game between Germany and Argentina during the 2014 FIFA Men's World Cup in Brazil had an in-home and out-of-home audience (+60s) of over 1 billion (FIFA, 2015). The average length of videos on those channels were 339s (FIFA), 232s (CONMEBOL), and 241s (UEFA), but ranged between 10s-3593s, 7s-3553s, 9s-3560s respectively[3], with live streamed events (congresses, draws, eSports, futsal, youth, and women

[2] As an example currently not all content on YouTube is remediation, as the Major League Baseball (MLB) YouTube channel streams live regular season games, and the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) YouTube channel streamed some of its events such as the 2021 Cyclocross World Championship, whereas BT has offered free live streams of UEFA Men's Champions League finals for the past five years (Forbes, 2019; BT, 2020)

[3] Videos with over 1h of content had their duration in seconds considered as short of 3600s according to the data scraped from YouTube (durationSec on YouTube's API)

games) going up to 10h. Those figures are in line with Millennials and Generation-Z preferences for shorter video formats that are less than 60s (61% share) and between 120 and 300 seconds long (50% share) (Statista, 2020; Statista, 2021). What the data from FIFATV shows (see Table 2 below) is that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between duration and dislikes, and only a weak but statistically significant negative correlation between duration and comments suggesting that shorter videos might create more engagement.

Table 2 – FIFATV General Stats Correlation

Correlations

			durationSec	viewCount	likeCount	dislikeCount	commentCount	total engagement
Spearman's rho	durationSec	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.017	.003	.080**	-.023*	.002
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.104	.765	<.001	.036	.821
		N	8628	8622	8566	8566	8610	8628
	viewCount	Correlation Coefficient	.017	1.000	.921**	.861**	.846**	.919**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.104	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	8622	8623	8567	8567	8611	8623
	likeCount	Correlation Coefficient	.003	.921**	1.000	.867**	.902**	.996**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.765	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	8566	8567	8567	8567	8567	8567
	dislikeCount	Correlation Coefficient	.080**	.861**	.867**	1.000	.832**	.891**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	8566	8567	8567	8567	8567	8567
	commentCount	Correlation Coefficient	-.023*	.846**	.902**	.832**	1.000	.916**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	8610	8611	8567	8567	8611	8611
	total engagement	Correlation Coefficient	.002	.919**	.996**	.891**	.916**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.821	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	8628	8623	8567	8567	8611	8634

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Following Khan (2017) in recognising both *passive* (views) and *active* (like, dislike, comments) forms of consumption it is possible to recognise how patterns of cultural consumption associated with television are still dominant. For instance, videos' average views are 364,940 (FIFA), 20,096 (CONMEBOL), and 209,404 (UEFA), whereas the average for all combined *active* consumption activities are 3,100 (FIFA), 60 (CONMEBOL), and 2,171 (UEFA), equating to a *passive/active* ratio of 0.0135, 0.0034, and 0.0544 respectively. This suggests that while YouTube affords users to enhance their consumption, they are still reproducing similar patterns found on TV. Nevertheless, there is a strong positive correlation in respect of FIFATV (see Table 2 above)

between all *active* and *passive* forms of engagement suggesting that while the preference is still oriented to a *passive* consumption the platform affordance is utilised by users. Moreover, in respect of FIFATV there was a negative statistically significant correlation (-.188*) between the age of the post in days and the numbers of views, suggesting that older videos become part of the past meaning that remediation still favours *newness*. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the line of best fit is *skewed* towards the 1,000 days mark that reflects the period of the FIFA 2018 Men's World Cup in Russia.

In as much the digital revolution was initially embraced with optimism, the reality coming out of FIFATV's data paints a more negative picture in respect of gender equality. By analysing and comparing videos on two paired playlists ('FIFA World Cup | Original Content' and 'FIFA Women's World Cup | Original Content'; '2018 FIFA World Cup | Match Highlights' and 'FIFA Women's World Cup France 2019 | Match Highlights') it was firstly possible to note the discrepancies in number of videos - 44 to 11 on the original content playlists; and 64 to 52 on match highlights playlists - still putting women's football in a disadvantaged position. Moreover, when analysing the average on views, likes, dislikes, comments, total engagement (sum of all views, likes, dislikes and comments), likes by views, and dislikes by views it is possible to note how women's football videos consistently get less engagement across most metrics.

Nevertheless, when performing an independent sample Mann-Whitney U test on views, likes, dislikes, comments, total engagement (sum of all views, likes, dislikes and comments), likes by views, and dislikes by views it was possible to note that women's highlights have more likes by views than men's highlights suggesting a disruption to traditional symbiotic relationship where women sport is commonly neglected (see literature review). Further to that, the distribution of likes by views in the original content pair is similar across the two genders evidencing that there is a favourable audience for both competitions, even when women's one is smaller in size (viewcount) (see Tables 3 and 4 below).

Table 3 – Gender comparison on Match Highlights' playlists (Mann-Whitney U)

Highlights - Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of viewCount is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of likeCount is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of dislikeCount is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of commentCount is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of total engagement is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of total engagement by views is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of dislikes by views is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.289	Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of likes by views is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
9	The distribution of comments by views is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.053	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Table 4 – Gender comparison on Original Content's playlist (Mann-Whitney U)

Original Content – Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of viewCount is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of likeCount is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of dislikeCount is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.636	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of commentCount is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of total engagement is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of total engagement by views is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.599	Retain the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of Dislikes by views is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of likes by views is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.768	Retain the null hypothesis.
9	The distribution of comments by views is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.721	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Moreover, it is interesting to highlight that for the two past FIFA World Cup tournaments' highlight playlists the distribution of dislikes by views is similar across Men's (2018) and Women's (2019) edition indicating that the dislike engagement happens irrespectively of the gender of the competition. This might point that the dissatisfaction expressed through disliking those videos are addressed to FIFA at large reflecting themes found on Petersen-Wagner and Ludvigsen (forthcoming).

2022 Qatar FIFA Men's World Cup UEFA Qualifiers on Twitter

Twitter Inc's microblogging platform (launched in 2006) is considered as a space where users can maintain public asynchronous conversations that facilitates the formation of discrete networks (Murthy, 2017). Because of its low bandwidth requirements and similarity to older forms of communication it was adopted as a medium for *keeping informed* and participating in *interactive multicasting* (Murthy, 2017). As such, Twitter can be considered as a place for telepresence where users are constantly in-touch without being physically in-touch (Tomlinson, 2007).

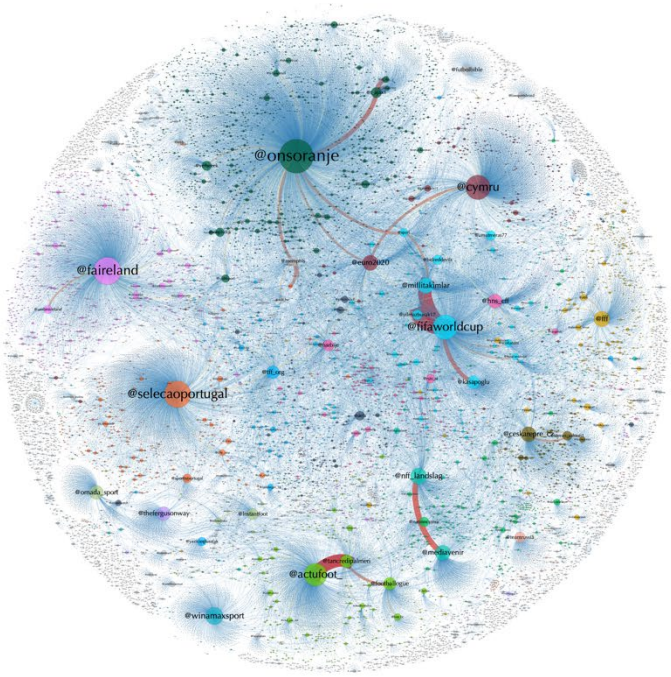
In respect of the relationship between sport and Twitter (see Wenner, 2014), the social media platform is broadly conceptualised as a place where the power of *communication* resides on tweets' reverberations (Billings, 2014) that might bypass - either by appropriation or avoidance - traditional gatekeepers. Moreover, Twitter can be considered a disruptive force to the symbiotic relationship by the way the platform evolved concomitantly towards *informative* and *social* aspects, and how it became part of the cultural fabric of consuming sport (Pegoraro, 2014). This is further evidenced by Twitter's unique position within media ecology in providing networking capabilities (many-to-many) (Hutchins, 2011).

In line with Twitter's networking properties, the author scraped tweets from the 2022 Qatar FIFA Men's World Cup UEFA Qualifiers' games. For the 24th March games it was used Gephi to collect tweets of all involved teams[4] (mentions, tweets, retweets) employing the user network logic

[4] Turkey (@TFF_Org) vs Netherlands (@onsoranje); Serbia (@fssrbije) vs Ireland (@faireland); Malta (@maltafa1900) vs Russia (@teamrussia); Belgium (@belgianreddevils) vs Wales (@cymru); Estonia vs Czech Rep (@ceskarepre_cz); Cyprus (@cyprusfa) vs Slovakia (@sfzofficial); Finland (@palloliitto) vs Bosnia Herzegovina

that creates a visual representation of the interactions between users. For the 25th March games, tweets were collected using FIFA and UEFA's[5] official hashtags as words to follow with the same user network logic. In respect of the first group of games, the author run eigenvector centrality analysis (Borgatti et al., 2018) and modularity analysis (Blondel et al., 2008) in order to create the below visualisation (see Figure 1) where nodes (users) are sized by their eigenvector centrality and coloured by their distinct communities.

Figure 1 – Twitter communities and influencers



It is possible to identify communities around bigger nodes who are more popular because of their immediate connections, suggesting that those users can be considered influencers within this network. In a way, it suggests that those bigger nodes operate as gatekeepers by controlling the flow of information across a network that contains 36,841 users connected by 80,391 edges. By delving further on the eigenvector centrality measure of the highest 50 users and distributing them by type it was interesting to note that the most represented category was national federations or national teams

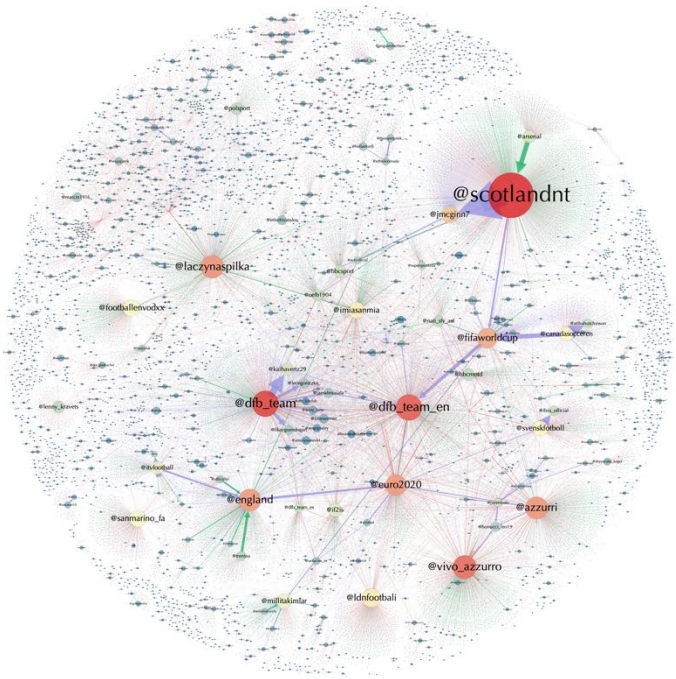
(@nfsbih); Latvia (@kajbumba) vs Montenegro (@fudbalskisavez); Slovenia (@nzs_si) vs Croatia (@hns_cff); France (@fff) vs Ukraine (@uafukraine); and Gibraltar (@gifootball) vs Norway (@nff_landslag)

[5] #wcq (FIFA); Israel vs Denmark (#isrden); Bulgaria vs Switzerland (#bulsui); Sweden vs Georgia (#swegeo); Germany vs Iceland (#gerisl); Moldova vs Faroe Island (#mdafro); Spain vs Greece (#espgre); Scotland vs Austria (#scoaut); Romania vs North Macedonia (#roumkd); Andorra vs Albania (#andalb); Hungary vs Poland (#hunpol); Italy vs Northern Ireland (#itanir); England vs San Marino (#engsmr)

(15), followed by new media outlets (11), players (6), and then competitions or international federations (4). In line with digital disruption discussions (see literature review) both traditional media outlets (1) and journalists (1) did not feature prominently in this network suggesting that their role as gatekeepers and mediators were transformed (McQuail and Deuze, 2020).

For the 25th March games, the visualisation below (see Figure 2) focuses on eigenvector centrality (node size), edges weighted degree (size) and colour (mention - purple; retweet - orange; quote - green) to highlight how the interactive multicasting nature of Twitter brought other relevant participants into conversations (18,243 nodes; 41,002 edges). Slightly distinct to the above analysis, by collecting hashtags we have national federations and national teams (16), players (11), old media (5), and then new media (4) with higher centrality measures indicating that digital disruption should not be equated to a simple replacement but is better understood as convergence where both old and new co-exist (Jenkins, 2006). Moreover, it is of significance that *ordinary* fans (4) are also influential in shaping discussions, demonstrating how participatory culture and grassroots intermediaries operate in this platform (Jenkins et al., 2013).

Figure 2 – Hashtag network



What is also important to emphasise is the difference between @england (the Football Association) and @dfb_team (*Deutscher Fussball-bund* - DFB) approaches to social media communication as the latter promotes their star players by mentioning them on different tweets (direction of edges and colour), whereas the former is more often quoted by the players themselves. This can be further evidenced by recognising that out of 11 players with the highest eigenvector centrality measures seven are German and only one is English. Another important point to highlight is the transnational nature of social media platforms as both German and English versions of the DFB, and the Italian and English versions of the *Federazione Italiana Giuco Calcio* (FIGC) possess higher eigenvector centrality measures (2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th respectively).

Discussion

As a proponent of a *total* digital revolution *break*, Negroponte (1995) has predicted that our interaction with media content would evolve towards a total individualisation of consumption experience based on "machines' understanding individuals with the same degree of subtlety (or more than) we can expect from other human beings" (Negroponte, 1995, p. 165), and "our own ability to pull information asynchronously with on-demand content dominating the digital life" (Negroponte, 1995, p. 169). Additionally, the aftermath of digital revolution would see traditional mass media being displaced by new digital media to a point where a *mass* culture would become a thing of the past (see Jenkins, 2006). In as much algorithms dominate our experiences on digital and social media platforms by acting as our digital content butler, and on-demand is pervasive on multiple delivery channels, those transformations have not completely dislodged the shared cultural consumption practices associated with *mass* media. A more subtle analysis of digital revolution is proposed through a convergence paradigm where both old and new cultural practices co-exist (Thorburn and Jenkins, 2004; Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins et al., 2013). Hence, instead of talking about breaks, we should be focusing on both continuities and discontinuities in terms of digital revolution.

The above analyses demonstrate the co-existence of both digital and analogue media *paradigms* where distinct cultural consumption practices happen. While those two platforms similarly possess all new media affordances, the way individuals (e.g., fans, journalists, players) and groups (e.g., clubs, media, national federations) incorporate them into their ecology of media ultimately vary. It can be argued that the variances encountered between the platforms come down to the type of content that is shared through them. On one hand YouTube as a platform is predominantly used through on-demand remediated shorter format and standardised content; on the other, Twitter's use tends towards immediacy and real-time access. The on-demand or real-time nature of content impact on the other three affordances by encouraging or discouraging interactivity, *prosumption*, and different forms of communication. For instance, YouTube showed low levels of interactivity as cultural consumption practices were predominantly passive emulating the dominant experience of analogue medium of TV. The immediacy of Twitter on the other hand encouraged interactivity from all users as through conversations via official hashtags or mentions/tweets/retweets. The low or high levels of interactivity are then related to the different roles assumed by users as either taking more a *consuming* or *producing* part in the communication flow within that particular medium. For instance, the interactivity nature of Twitter meant that players and ordinary fans became influential in shaping conversations by actively creating and sharing content, while on YouTube this role was primarily taken by the official channels and ordinary users tended to passively engage with the content. Finally, it was possible to perceive how each platform had a predominant form of communication, as on YouTube the content was primarily produced and consumed through the traditional one-to-many model, whereas on Twitter the networking effect of many-to-many was more visible.

Hence, when discussing the disruptions and transformations of digitalisation to the business of football it is important that each platform is considered independently as part of ecology of media instead of assuming that all digital and social media platforms are similar. Whereas both platforms share similar affordances and technologies, the way they weave into the complex fabric of

culturally consuming football is distinct. Therefore, the cultural convergence seen on those two distinct social media platforms is part of an accommodation - rather than a disruptive break - between the distinct available media - digital or not - for consuming football. The adjustments materialised by the adoption of a new delivery medium within an already established media ecology is composed by both discontinuities as more evident in the case of Twitter, and continuities as in the case of YouTube.

Conclusion

The pervasiveness of media, digital technologies, and social media platforms mean that we are living in a media life (Deuze, 2011). The cognizance of this condition has bolstered claims of a digital revolution with complete ruptures to our less mediated life and to our analogue relationship with media (Negroponte, 1995). Nevertheless, what has been witnessed since the boom of the Internet and other digital technologies in the 1990s was a period of transformations where older and newer media continue to operate side-to-side (Jenkins, 2006). In a technological perspective it is possible to argue that digital has predominantly substituted analogue, with older media migrating to digital (e.g., digital TV, news portals, digital radio) and newer media (e.g., social media platforms) emerging at a faster pace. Nevertheless, by observing how individuals and groups incorporate newer media into their lives allows us to avoid a technological deterministic position and to witness patterns of both continuities and discontinuities to our interactions in media. Hence, it is important to understand how distinct digital media technologies are woven on already tie-knitted cultural consumption practices that involve a historical ecology of media. What the analyses and discussion above demonstrate was that digital revolution in the case of YouTube and Twitter involves more accommodations with patterns of discontinuities and continuities, therefore extending rather than substituting our relationships in and with media. Thus, it is imperative to take a more nuanced and

less technological deterministic approach to *digital revolution*, consequently avoiding falling in the trap of fashionable buzzwords[6].

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