



Exploration of player nationality in European Football

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Abstract

“To test the relationship between these two variables, a differential analysis was performed with the results proving to be inconclusive. The differential analysis found there to be an average difference in nationality and origin of interactions, or mentions, of 39.37 percentage points for the five leagues in the 2021-2022 season. This suggests that a relationship between player nationality and origin of social media interactions potentially exists but also requires consideration of other factors.”

Do the nationalities of soccer players on teams across different domestic soccer leagues correlate to an increase in social media engagement from those players' home country?

Topic

**English Premier
League
England**

**Ligue 1
France**



**La Liga
Spain**

**Bundesliga
Germany**

**Serie A
Italy**

Introduction

Table 1. Overview of Top 5 UEFA Leagues

League	Number of Players	Number of Teams	Location	Season Start Date	Season End Date
Premier League	678	20	United Kingdom	August 13, 2021	May 22, 2022
La Liga	742	20	Spain	August 13, 2021	May 22, 2022
Serie A	773	20	Italy	August 21, 2021	May 22, 2022
Bundesliga	508	18	Germany	August 13, 2021	May 14, 2022
Ligue 1	567	20	France	August 6, 2021	May 21, 2022

- Soccer is the most popular sport in the world, and with the central place soccer represents in European society and increased investment by tv companies and foreign owners, merits further investigation
- Comparison between player nationality and social media posts is exceptionally unique

Literature Review

- FBref - Player data in each league
- Meltwater - Social media mentions of keywords based on origin of post
- Yemisi Adegoke of *CNN* - EPL is the most competitive in the world
- Keith, Edmund, and Sebastian in the *Journal of Sports Analytics* - Diverse teams in the Champions League tend to outperform less diverse opponents.

Literature Review

Jeff McCarthy: Social Media Marketing Strategies of Premier League clubs

- 77% of viewers used a smartphone while watching the game on TV
- “Taking the pub and moving it online”
- “Passion, based on an emotional connection with the club, is central to fans following clubs on social media... a sense of community is key to keeping fans engaged”

David Storey: Football, Place, and National Identity

- Nationality does not play a significant factor in which countries players choose to represent
- 8 European countries included a total of 42 players born in Africa or of African parentage

Methodology

- Player Nationality - Data as of the start of the 2021-2022 seasons of each league
- Mentions of the League from Social Media and News Sources - Aggregated results from Meltwater searched by the season date range and league keyword
 - Convenience Sample
 - Positive - Simple, Easy Query of Data on Web-based Sources
 - Negative - Target Population is the world (Cultural/Linguistic Differences)
- Transformed to Percentages, compared through Percentage Point Differences
- Aggregated Percentage Points Across Leagues through Variance between Player Nationality and Mention Percentage (con't)

Methodology

LaLiga League Player Nationality and News Mentions by Country as Percentages 2021-2022 Season

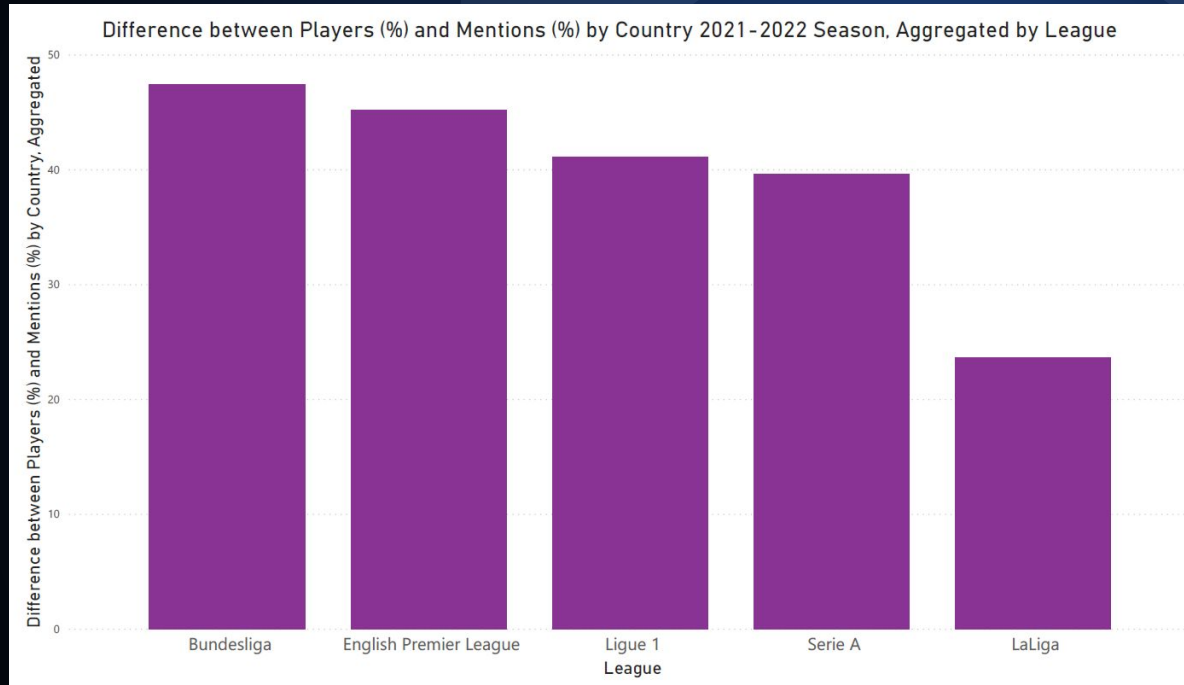
Country	No of Players	Players (%)	Mentions	Mentions (%)
Spain	469	72.38	704225	71.25
Argentina	37	5.71	37592	3.80
France	25	3.86	58546	5.92
Brazil	22	3.40	35248	3.57
Uruguay	18	2.78	6984	0.71
Serbia	12	1.85	0	0.00
Portugal	11	1.70	10864	1.10
Colombia	9	1.39	44355	4.49
Senegal	8	1.23	7618	0.77
Mexico	8	1.23	76140	7.70
Netherlands	7	1.08	6860	0.69
Morocco	7	1.08	0	0.00
Belgium	5	0.77	0	0.00
Croatia	5	0.77	0	0.00
Denmark	5	0.77	0	0.00

Difference between LaLiga League Players and Mentions by Country as Percentages

Players (%)	Difference between Players and Mentions (%)
72.38	1.13
5.71	1.91
3.86	2.06
3.40	0.17
2.78	2.07
1.85	1.85
1.70	0.60
1.39	3.10
1.23	0.46
1.23	6.47
1.08	0.39
1.08	1.08
0.77	0.77
0.77	0.77
0.77	0.77

Total	23.60
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Interpretation

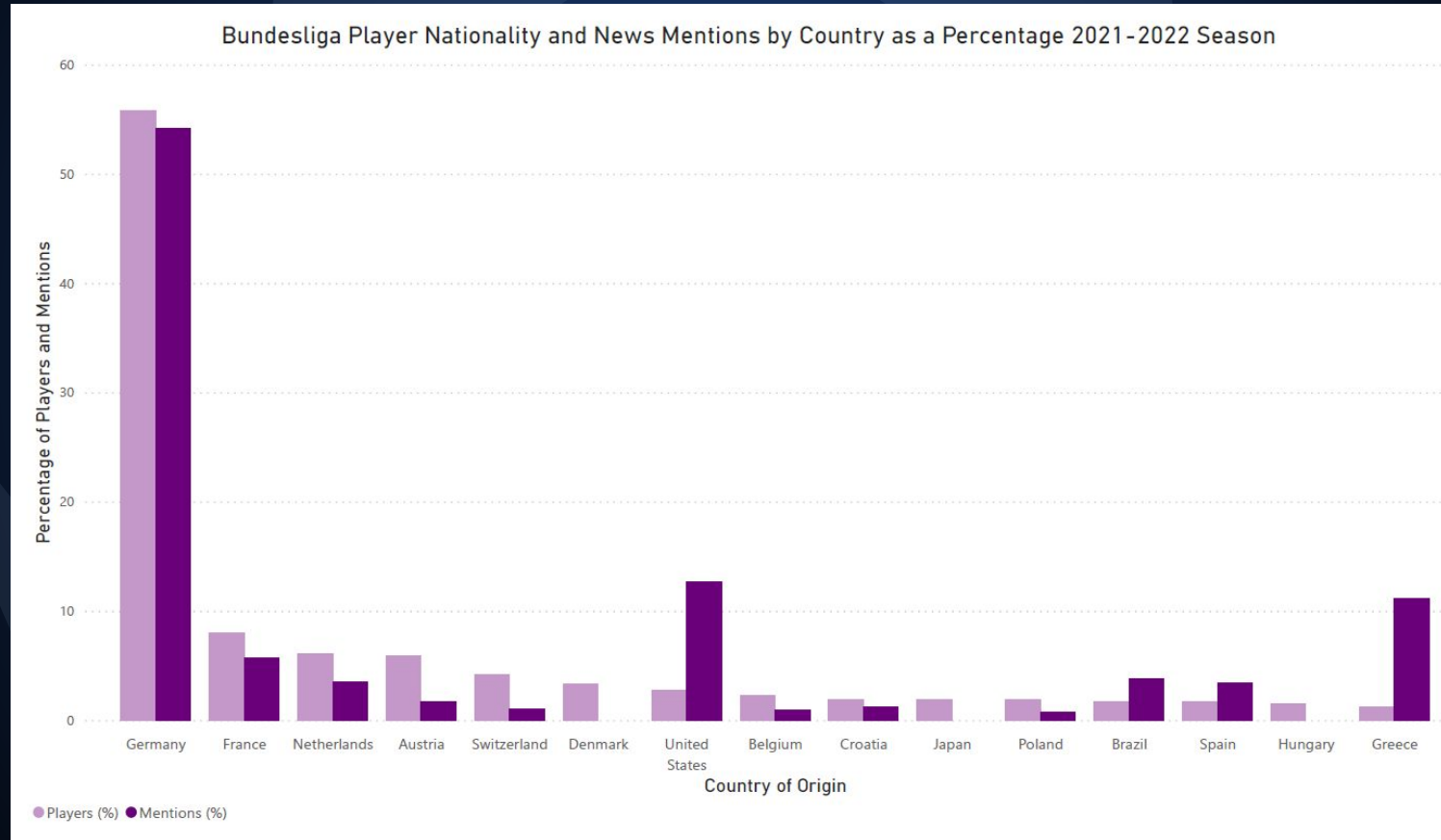


Mean Percentage Point Variance
Across Leagues = 39.37

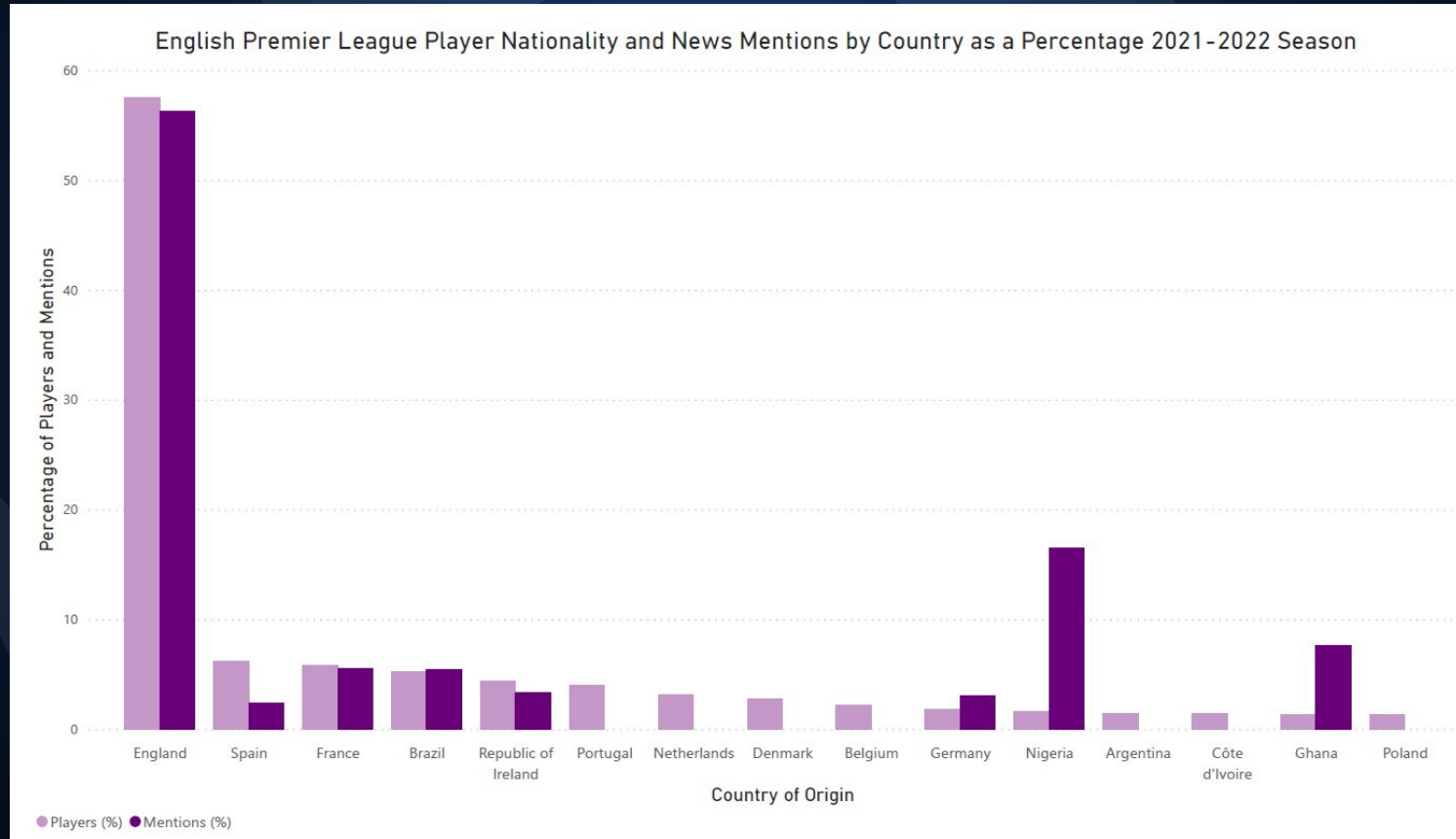
Lowest Variance = LaLiga (23.60)

Highest Variance = Bundesliga
(47.40) – Greece and United States

Results

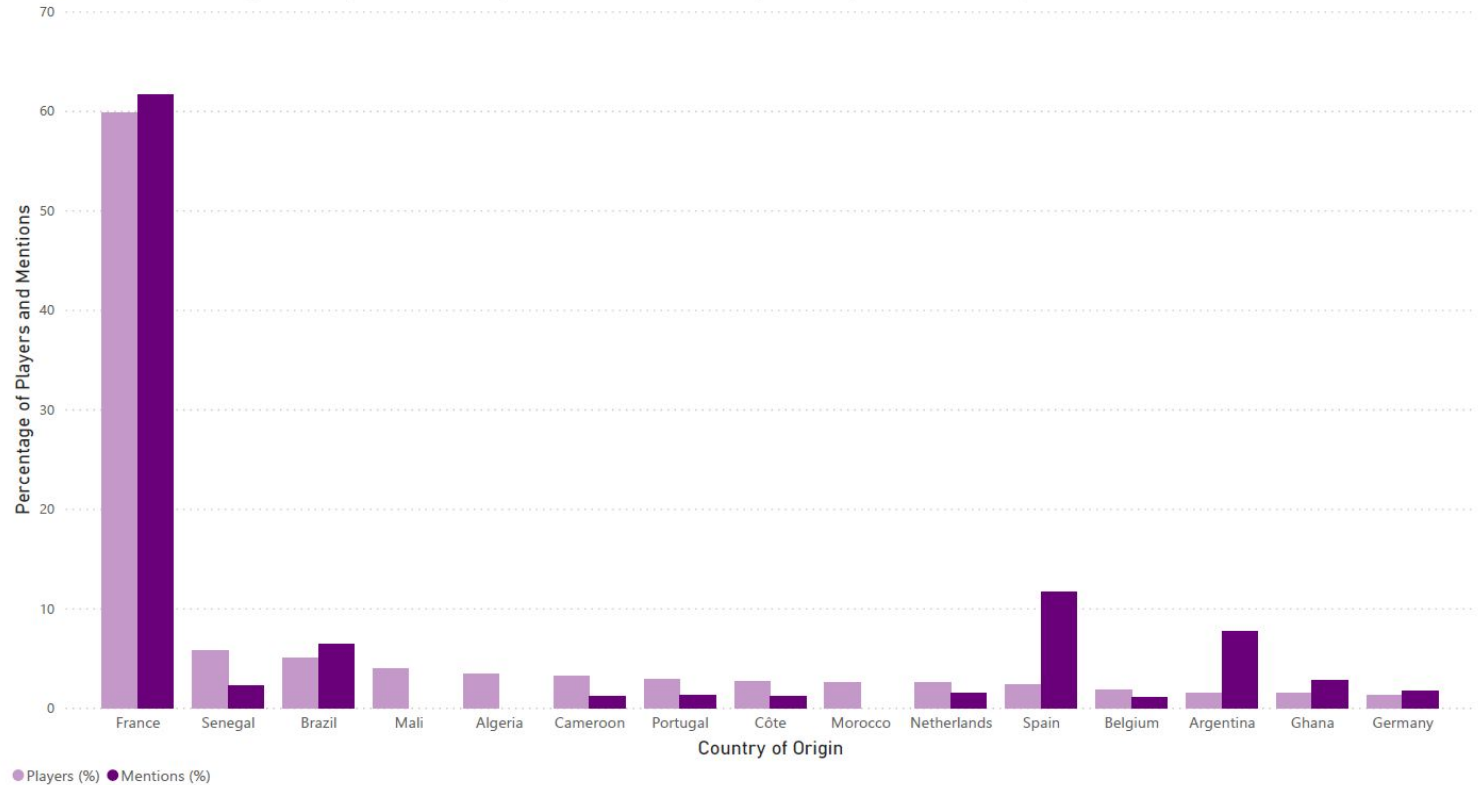


Results

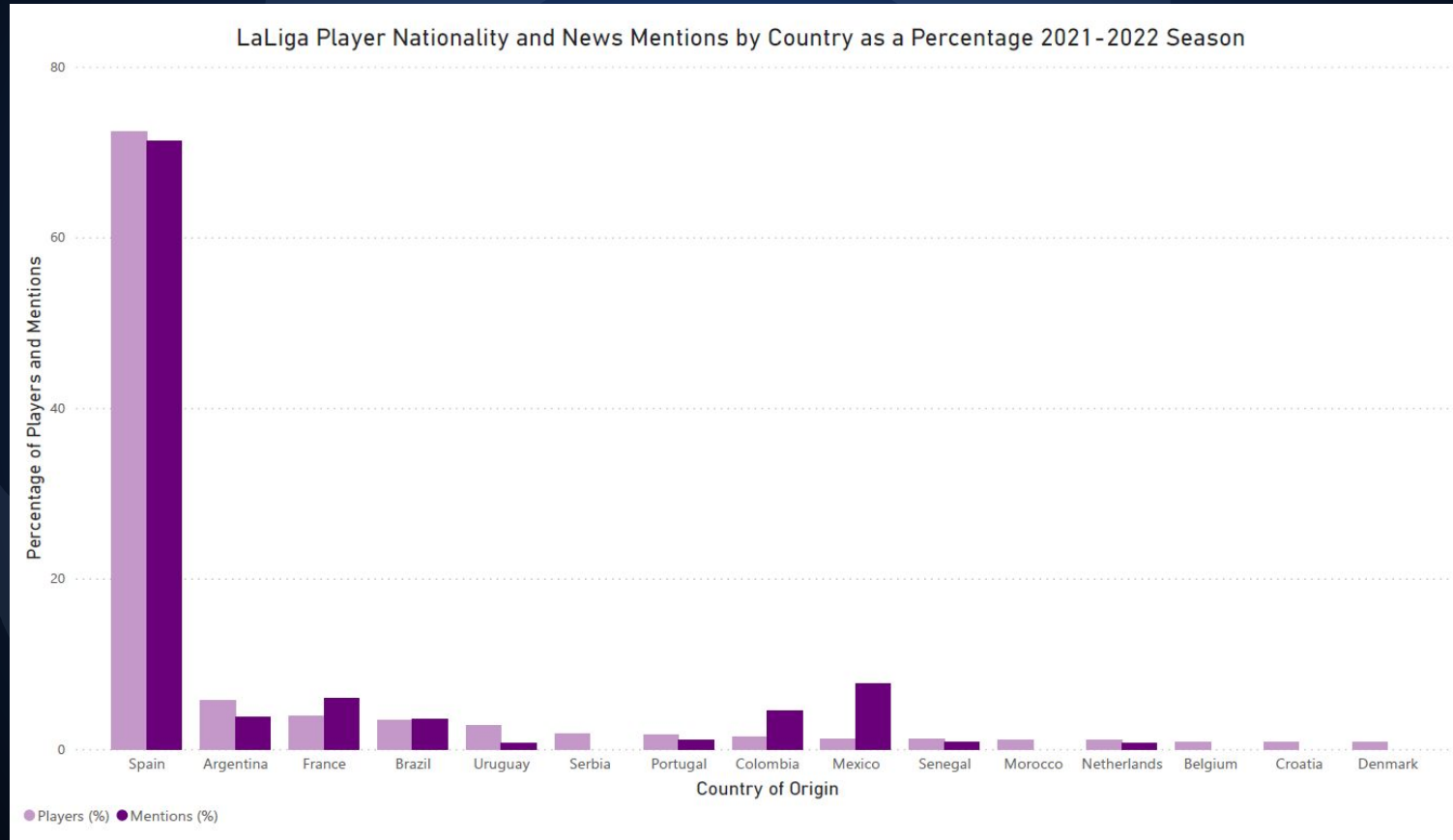


Results

Ligue 1 Player Nationality and News Mentions by Country as a Percentage 2021-2022 Season

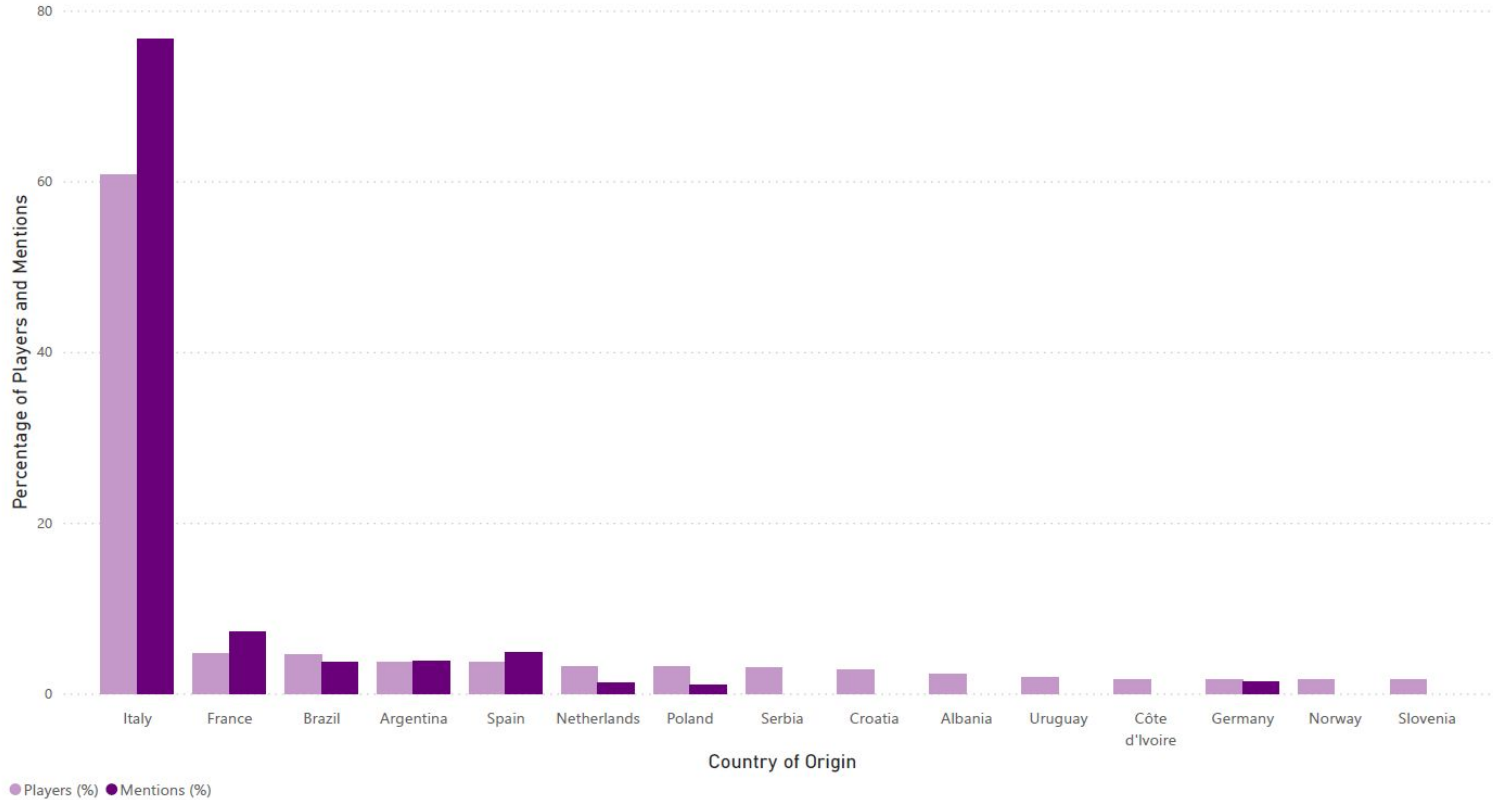


Results



Results

Serie A Player Nationality and News Mentions by Country as a Percentage 2021-2022 Season



Conclusions

- Evidence of correlation but not proven to be conclusive
- Lack of available data regarding social media mentions by country
- Barrier in meltwater through different acronyms of leagues (EPL and Premier League)



Recommendations

- Larger Sample Size
 - Look at more European leagues
 - Look at leagues in different continents
- More time
 - Look at data over a longer period of time
 - Dive deeper into variables that affect social media engagement and viewership

CONMEBOL
LIBERTADORES
LA GLORIA ETERNA

GRUPO A	GRUPO E
PALMEIRAS	BOCA JUNIORS
EMELEC	CORINTHIANS
DEPORTIVO TÁCHIRA	DEPORTIVO CALI
INDEP. PETROLERO	ALWAYS READY
GRUPO B	GRUPO F
ATHLETICO PR	RIVER PLATE
LIBERTAD	COLO-COLO
CARACAS	ALIANZA LIMA
THE STRONGEST	FORTALEZA
GRUPO C	GRUPO G
NACIONAL	PEÑAROL
VÉLEZ SARSFIELD	CERRO PORTEÑO
RED BULL BRAGANTINO	COLÓN
ESTUDIANTES	OLIMPIA
GRUPO D	GRUPO H
ATLÉTICO MINEIRO	FLAMENGO
INDEP. DEL VALLE	UNIV. CATÓLICA
DEPORTES TOLIMA	SPORTING CRISTAL
AMÉRICA-MG	TALLERES

2015

January	February	March	April	May	June
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

2016

January	February	March	April	May	June
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2017

January	February	March	April	May	June
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Questions?