



MERIT REPORT ON MEDIA VALUE IN FOOTBALL

Season 2015/16



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1. Main Results

The following points summarize the main results of the MERIT report on Media Value in Football (Season 2015/16):

- Lionel Messi leads the ranking for the second consecutive year, followed by the Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo.
- FC Barcelona emerges as the club with greatest media value in 2015/16. Other top teams are: Real Madrid, Manchester United and FC Arsenal.
- The Spanish La Liga concentrates talent, as seven of the worldwide Top-10 players were in 2015/16 playing in this domestic league. Then, we find two of the Top-10 players in the Premier League and one in the French Ligue 1.
- Neymar's out-performing season, both with his club and with the Brazilian national team, upgrades his media status to achieve the 3rd worldwide place in the ranking.
- Real Madrid and Sevilla FC, winners respectively of the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League, strengthen the supremacy of the Spanish League as far as media value is concerned.
- For the first time this season, the MERIT report presents the "Dream Team", where Real Madrid concentrates the largest number of players.
- In the Premier league there is balanced media exposure across teams. In contrast, in the Spanish La Liga just 2 clubs, Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, concentrate around 75% of the total visibility in the media generated by the whole league (20 teams).

2. Presentation

MERIT (*Methodology for the Evaluation and Rating of Intangible Talent*) is part of an academic project with enormous applications in the field of business and company management. This methodology has proved to be useful in measuring the economic value of talent in professional sports and in other entertainment industries. In the estimations and elaboration of rankings two elements are taken into account: the popularity (degree of interest aroused between the fans and the general public) and the media value (the level of attention that the media pays).

The measurements can be made at specific points in time over the season, or accounting for the news articles generated in a certain period: weeks, months, years, etc. Additionally, the homogeneity amongst the measurements allows for a comparison of the media value status of individuals, teams, institutions, etc.

In addition to calculations and rankings, our databases permit conducting analyses on a wide variety of economic and managerial problems: estimates of the market value (or “fair value”) of players’ transfer fees; calculation of the brand value of individuals, teams and leagues; valuation of the economic return from alliances between sponsors; etc. The usefulness of these rankings and measurements is clear, given the growing number of companies whose business relies on media exposure and popularity as sources of potential income.

In the context of football, MERIT addresses issues like:

- Ranking and media evolution of players, teams and leagues.
- Estimate of the “fair” market value for contracting players.
- Appraisal of seasoned players and promising youngsters.
- Regional analysis of media value rankings of players and teams.
- Analysis of perception and reputation of players and teams in the media.
- Players’ individual brands and evaluation of strategic alliances with clubs.
- Measurement of the visibility of the sports sponsorship.
- Identification of the hierarchy of teams and leagues.

The approach adopted by MERIT allows us to reach where others cannot. Often the crucial point is not to have more information at one’s disposal but to be able to rely on the appropriate methodology and capabilities for analysis.



Our team includes analysts that apply a methodology verified in academic forums, providing valuable data for decision-making in professional sport.

More information can be found at:

www.meritsocialvalue.com | www.uic.es/merit

3. MERIT Media Value Ranking - Football Players (2015/16)

The table shows the results of the MERIT media value index for the worldwide main football players in the 2015/16 season. The values of the MERIT index are expressed with respect to the average of the 2,500 players with greatest media value in a database of more than 5,000 players. The individual indexes are expressed as the factor by which the player multiplies the number of news articles of the normal or representative (average) player in the sample.

Alike in the previous season, Messi surmounts the first position of the MERIT ranking in season 2015/16, followed by Ronaldo and Neymar. According to our analysis, Lionel Messi enjoyed a degree of visibility in the media 67.12 times higher than the representative player in our dataset (5,000 players). The second most popular star, Cristiano Ronaldo, came second with a score factor of 59.27.

Rank 2015/16	Player	Team	MERIT Media Value index
1	Lionel Messi	FC Barcelona	67.12
2	Cristiano Ronaldo	Real Madrid	59.27
3	Neymar	FC Barcelona	42.74
4	Wayne Rooney	Manchester United	30.49
5	Luis Suárez	FC Barcelona	28.77
6	Gareth Bale	Real Madrid	23.65
7	Zlatan Ibrahimovic	Paris St-Germain	16.83
8	Karim Benzema	Real Madrid	16.52
9	Sergio Ramos	Real Madrid	16.12
10	Jamie Vardy	Leicester City	16.01
11	Paul Pogba	Juventus de Turín	15.61
12	Manuel Neuer	Bayern de Munich	15.58
13	Mesut Özil	FC Arsenal	15.02
14	James Rodríguez	Real Madrid	14.33
15	Andrés Iniesta	FC Barcelona	14.21
16	Marcelo	Real Madrid	14.05
17	John Terry	FC Chelsea	13.71
18	Claudio Bravo	FC Barcelona	13.49
19	Alexis Sánchez	FC Arsenal	11.85
20	Rob. Lewandowski	Bayern de Munich	11.49
21	Kun Agüero	Manchester City	11.32
22	Thomas Müller	Bayern de Munich	11.06
23	Antoine Griezmann	Atlético de Madrid	10.88
24	Harry Kane	Tottenham Hotspur	10.81
25	Eden Hazard	FC Chelsea	10.64
26	Dani Alves	FC Barcelona	10.63
27	Olivier Giroud	FC Arsenal	10.62
28	Eden Hazard	FC Chelsea	10.48

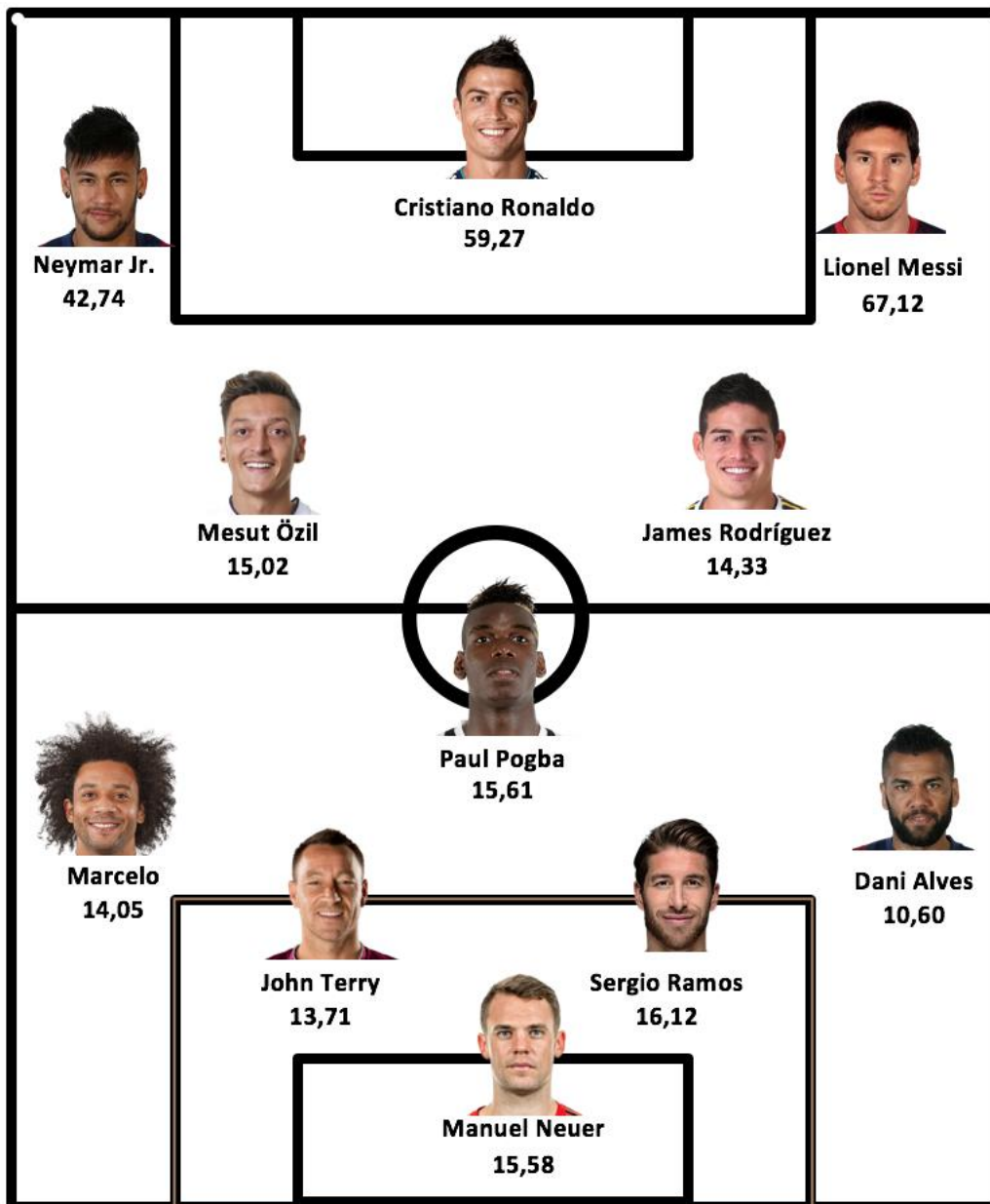
29	Jordi Alba	FC Barcelona	10.45
30	Diego Costa	FC Chelsea	10.40
31	Pepe	Real Madrid	10.37
32	Romelu Lukaku	Everton FC	10.36
33	Anthony Martial	Manchester United	9.42
34	Memphis Depay	Manchester United	9.12
35	Gerard Pique	FC Barcelona	9.11
36	Álvaro Morata	Juventus de Turín	9.05
37	Daniel Sturridge	Liverpool	8.99
38	Thiago Silva	Paris St. Germain	8.70
39	Gianluigi Buffon	Juventus de Turín	8.61
40	Luke Shaw	Manchester United	8.11
41	Theo Walcott	FC Arsenal	8.11
42	Bastian Schweinsteiger	Manchester United	8.08
43	Petr Cech	FC Arsenal	7.97
44	Edinson Cavani	Paris St. Germain	7.88
45	Ángel Di María	Paris St. Germain	7.76
46	Christian Benteke	Liverpool	7.68
47	Aaron Ramsey	FC Arsenal	7.66
48	Juan Mata	Manchester United	7.56
49	Paulo Dybala	Juventus de Turín	7.54
50	Yaya Touré	Manchester City	7.34

Source: MERIT social value - Data collection

There are four Real Madrid players and three Barcelona players in the Top-10 ranking, meaning that the Spanish La Liga emerges as the main contributor in the upper end of the talent distribution. Regarding individual giant media leaders, in addition to Messi and Ronaldo, we identify Neymar, Rooney and Luis Suarez as worldwide superstars.

4. “Dream Team” (2015/16)

For the first time, MERIT reports the “Dream team” of the 11 players with the uppermost media value ratings in season 2015/16. Our results indicate that Real Madrid is the leading team to contribute with the largest number of players. The information is shown in the following diagram, which illustrates a football team where selected players are chosen, based on their media value level, at each field position (defense, middle field and attack).



Source: MERIT social value

The “Dream Team” of Season 2015/16 is thus featured by:

- Goalkeeper: Manuel Neuer (15,58)
- Defenders: Dani Alves (10,60) - Sergio Ramos (16,12) - John Terry (13,71) - Marcelo (14,05)
- Midfielders: James Rodríguez (14,33) - Paul Pogba (15,61) - Mesut Özil (15,02)
- Forwards: Lionel Messi (67,12) – C. Ronaldo (59,27) - Neymar (42,74)

This analysis shows the player with the greatest presence in the media for each of the pitch position. Among defenders, for instance, Sergio Ramos achieved a degree of media exposure 16.12 times greater than the average representative player. Then, other significant defenders include: Marcelo, Terry and Dani Alves. Regarding midfielders, Paul Pogba multiplies the number of news articles of the normal average player by 15.61, slightly ahead of James and Mesut Özil. In attack, the first position is held by Lionel Messi, prevailing over his rival Cristiano Ronaldo and his team-mate Neymar.

5. Comparative Media Value Growth – Top 30 Players

This section collects data on the Top-30 players and compares variations on their media value indexes between seasons 2015/16 and 2014/15. The information on these variations is presented in two ways: first, as the increase in absolute terms; and second, as the growth factor that results from dividing the MERIT index in 2015/16 by that in 2014/15. In the table, the players are ranked from top to bottom according to the increasing factor from one season to the previous one.

Rank 2015/16	Players	Teams	Media Value 2015/16	Media Value 2014/15	Absolute Variation	Growth Factor	
10	Jamie Vardy	Leicester City	16.00	0.43	15.57	37.34	▲
24	Harry Kane	Tottenham H.	10.81	1.06	9.75	10.21	▲
26	Olivier Giroud	FC Arsenal	10.62	1.66	8.96	6.40	▲
23	Antoine Griezmann	Atlético Madrid	10.88	1.89	8.98	5.74	▲
18	Claudio Bravo	FC Barcelona	13.49	2.84	10.66	4.75	▲
17	John Terry	FC Chelsea	13.71	3.01	10.70	4.55	▲
20	R. Lewandowski	Bayern Munich	11.50	2.62	8.87	4.39	▲
28	Jordi Alba	FC Barcelona	10.45	2.82	7.63	3.71	▲
22	Thomas Müller	Bayern Munich	11.06	3.00	8.06	3.68	▲
7	Zlatan Ibrahimovic	Paris St. Germain	16.83	5.92	10.91	2.84	▲
8	Karim Benzema	Real Madrid	16.52	7.93	8.59	2.08	▲
11	Paul Pogba	Juventus Turín	15.60	8.95	6.65	1.74	▲
15	Andrés Iniesta	FC Barcelona	14.21	8.29	5.92	1.71	▲
3	Neymar	FC Barcelona	42.74	26.50	16.24	1.61	▲
9	Sergio Ramos	Real Madrid	16.13	10.00	6.13	1.61	▲
16	Marcelo	Real Madrid	14.05	8.84	5.21	1.59	▲
12	Manuel Neuer	Bayern Munich	15.59	10.78	4.81	1.45	▲
1	Lionel Messi	FC Barcelona	67.12	52.78	14.34	1.27	▲
30	Pepe	Real Madrid	10.37	8.59	1.78	1.21	▲
2	Cristiano Ronaldo	Real Madrid	59.27	49.92	9.35	1.19	▲
13	Mesut Özil	FC Arsenal	15.03	13.18	1.85	1.14	▲
25	Dani Alves	FC Barcelona	10.63	9.65	0.98	1.10	▲
6	Gareth Bale	Real Madrid	23.66	22.13	1.53	1.07	▲
5	Luis Suarez	FC Barcelona	28.78	29.94	-1.16	0.96	▼
4	Wayne Rooney	Manchester Utd.	30.52	36.94	-6.42	0.83	▼
27	Eden Hazard	FC Chelsea	10.48	15.75	-5.27	0.67	▼
21	Sergio Agüero	Manchester City	11.32	17.61	-6.29	0.64	▼
29	Diego Costa	FC Chelsea	10.40	17.79	-7.39	0.58	▼
19	Alexis Sánchez	FC Arsenal	11.85	21.03	-9.18	0.56	▼
14	James Rodríguez	Real Madrid	14.34	33.99	-19.65	0.42	▼

Source: MERIT social value - Data collection

The analysis of the table identifies Jamie Vardy, Harry Kane and Oliver Giroud as the players who experienced the biggest media exposure increase in 2015/16.

Besides, Jamie Vardy – the main attacker in Leicester city – stands out due to the significant relevance he earned in the spotlights. This result is of course related to the surprising victory of Leicester city in the Premier League.

Harry Kane also deserves a special mention, as he won a great deal of visibility thanks to the amazing performance he delivered while playing with Tottenham Hotspurs.

6. MERIT Media Value Ranking - Football Clubs (2015/16)

The following table offers the MERIT media value ranking of the main international football clubs in season 2015/16. Teams' indexes are obtained by aggregation of individual media value ratings of the 15 most popular players in each team roster.

Rank 2015/16	Equipo	Liga	Índice MERIT de Valor Mediático
1	FC Barcelona	La Liga	223.7
2	Real Madrid	La Liga	192.0
3	Manchester United	Premier League	104.9
4	FC Arsenal	Premier League	97.4
5	FC Chelsea	Premier League	76.1
6	Juventus de Turín	Serie A	74.1
7	FC Paris Saint-Germain	Ligue 1	70.0
8	FC Bayern de Múnich	Bundesliga	69.8
9	Liverpool	Premier League	69.6
10	Manchester City	Premier League	67.4
11	Tottenham Hotspur	Premier League	36.1
12	Fenerbahçe	Süper Lig	34.9
13	Everton	Premier League	32.8
14	Leicester	Premier League	31.4
15	Atlético de Madrid	La Liga	25.4
16	AS Roma	Serie A	24.3
17	Borussia Dortmund	Bundesliga	23.0
18	Inter de Milán	Serie A	15.2
19	AC Milán FC	Serie A	14.4
20	Lazio	Serie A	13.9

Source: MERIT social value - Data collection

In 2015/16 FC Barcelona was found on the highest spot in terms of media exposure. The Catalan team overcomes his rival, Real Madrid, opening a gap of around 30 points. This result is certainly related to the outstanding performance and sporting achievements: winner of the Spanish La Liga and "Copa del Rey".

Far behind the two media giants we find Manchester United and, a few steps behind, Arsenal FC and Chelsea FC. Leicester city climbed to the 14th position in the worldwide ranking, which is the result of their shocking victory at the Premier League.

Even if the ranking is dominated by Spanish teams, the Premier League overcomes the other leagues as it is represented by the largest number of clubs in the top 20: Manchester United, Arsenal FC, Chelsea FC, Liverpool, Manchester City, Tottenham Hotspur, Everton and Leicester city.

In summary, the Spanish La Liga displays a greater concentration of individual talent (in few teams), whereas the Premier League seems stronger if looking at the number of teams within the Top-20 ranking. Besides, we find as well in the top positions of the ranking the main club of each domestic league: Juventus (Italy), Paris Saint Germain (France), and Bayern Munich (Germany).

7. Media Value Share of the “Big-5” Domestic Leagues

To determine the media value of each domestic league we aggregate the MERIT individual indexes of the most highly rated 400 players among all those registered in the competition. (To check the robustness of our results, we actually replicate the calculations using 300 and 500 players, but either alternative produced very similar results).

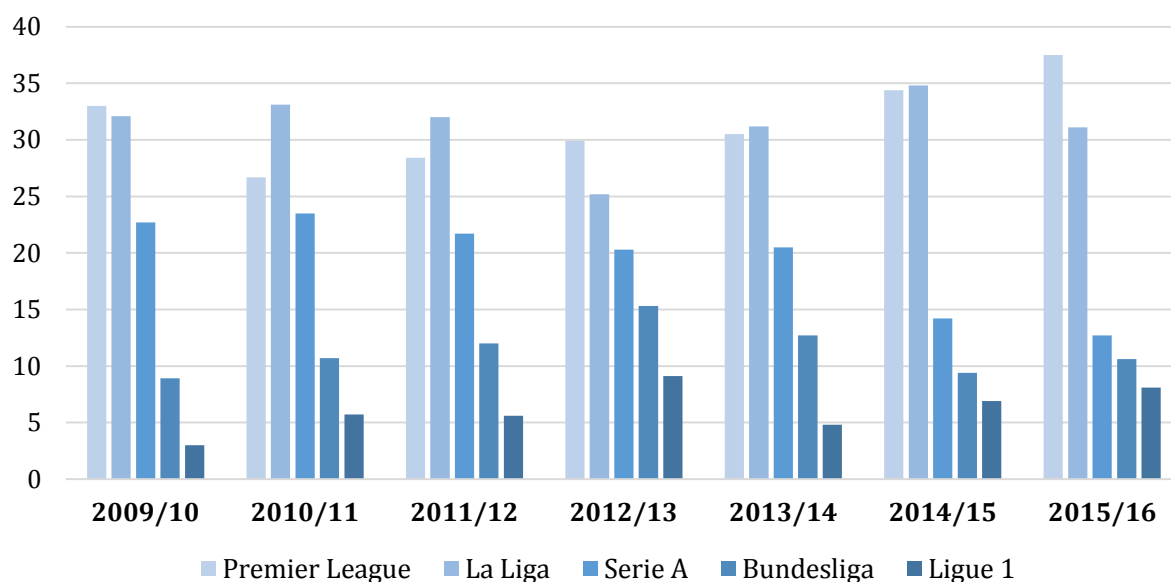
The following table summarises the results of the last 7 seasons by showing the relative share of media exposure (in percentage) of each domestic league.

League	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Premier L.	33.0	26.7	28.4	29.9	30.5	34.4	37.5
La Liga	32.1	33.1	32.0	25.2	31.2	34.8	31.1
Serie A	22.7	23.5	21.7	20.3	20.5	14.2	12.7
Bundesliga	8.9	10.7	12.0	15.3	12.7	9.4	10.6
Ligue 1	3.0	5.7	5.6	9.1	4.8	6.9	8.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: MERIT social value – Data Collection

Media Value - Main European Competitions

Season 2009/10 to 2015/16



Source: MERIT social value - Data collection

On the battle between Spain and England, the Premier League has recently managed to topple the Spanish League from the top spot. Both competitions have however widened a gap with the other major European leagues.

On one side, the examination of the ranking for individuals and teams imply that we expect finding the Premier League and the Spanish La Liga ahead of the rest of European competitions. Hence, the media value approach helps to establish the hierarchy across the main European leagues: in the first place the Premier League, followed by the Spanish league, the Italian Serie A, the German Bundesliga and finally the French Ligue 1.

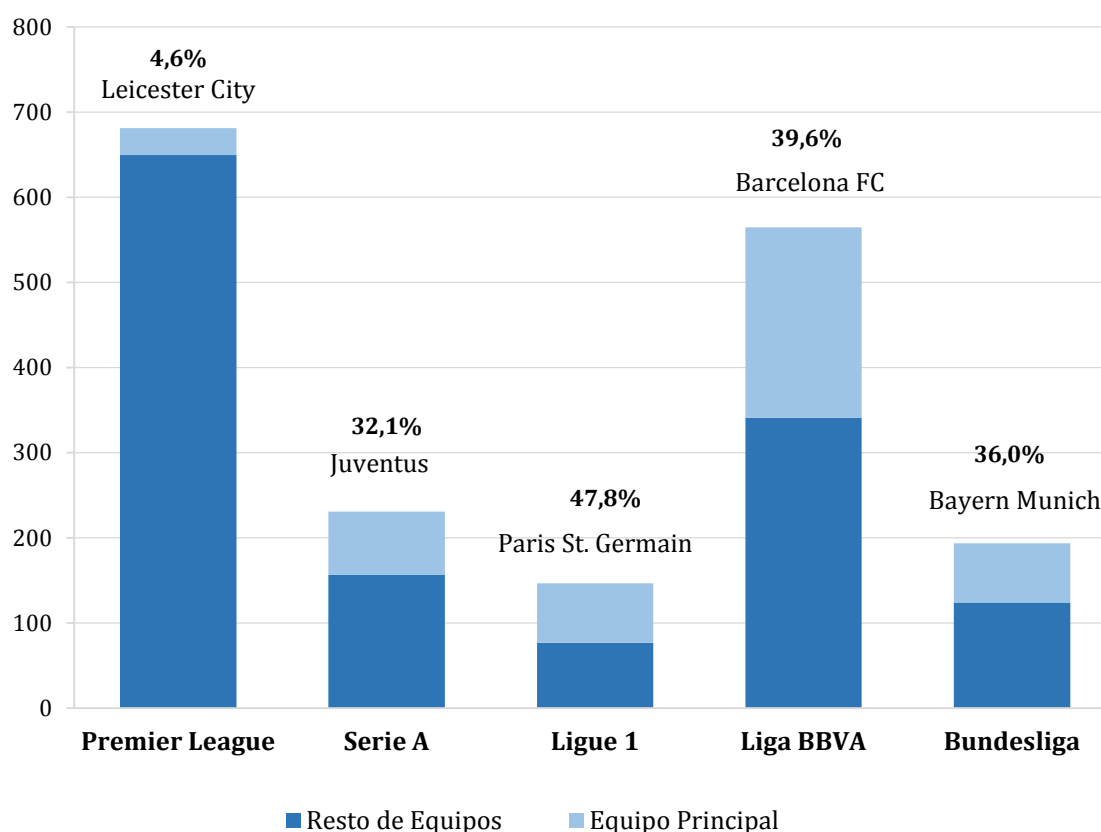
It is worth noticing the widening gap (in terms of media status) between the Premier and Spanish leagues and the other three domestic competitions. At any rate, the evidence does not seem to allow concluding that there is a loss of interest in La Liga due to the claim that it is an unbalanced sporting competition.

8. Media Value Concentration of the Main European Clubs

This section studies the media value concentration of the winner teams relative to the overall media value in the respective competition. The analysis is developed upon the information used in previous sections.

Our results points to the existence of “winner-take-all” effects, implying that the main protagonists monopolize the spotlights. That is to say, some few individuals or teams attract the interest of the media more intensively than what would be expected according to their performance.

Media Value Concentration Champions of each league



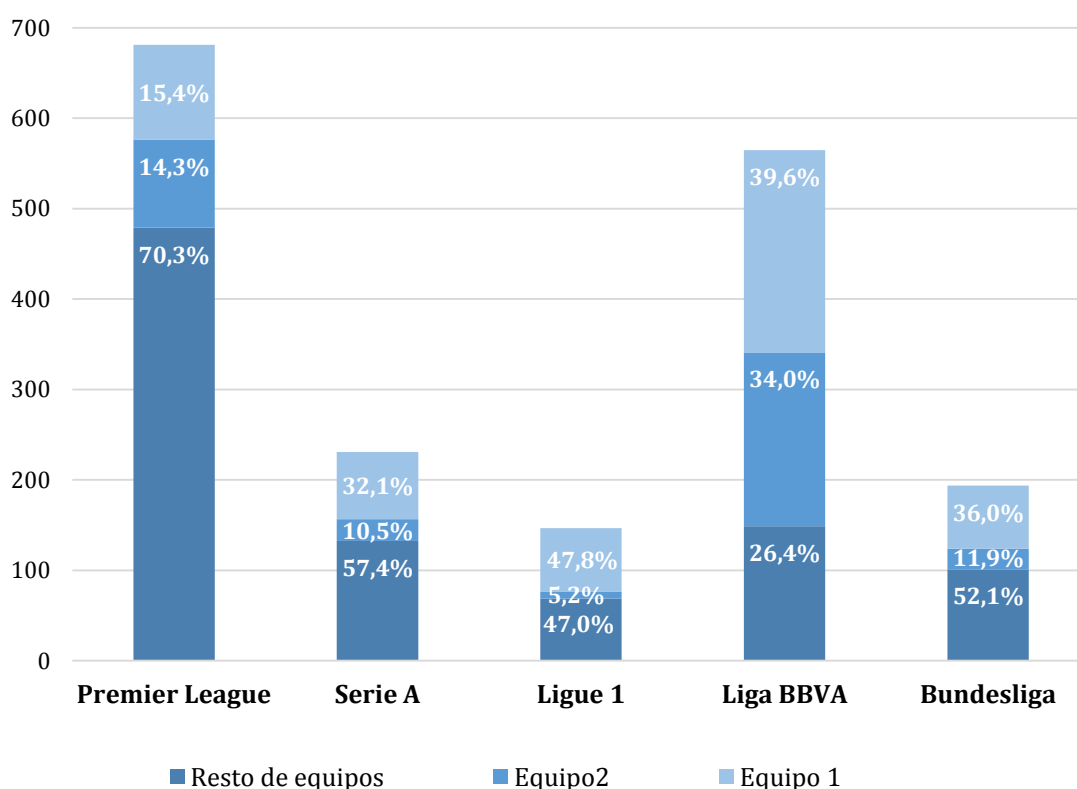
Fuente: MERIT social value - Data collection

The graph shows the proportion of the media exposure that the winner team accumulates as compared to the total visibility of the respective domestic league. As can be seen, FC Barcelona concentrates almost 40%, a large portion on the overall media presence of the Spanish league as a whole. Moreover, the sum of the media value share of Barcelona and Real Madrid altogether accounts for almost 75% of the media exposure generated by the Spanish La Liga.

Then, in season 2015/16 the Premier League winner was the Leicester City. This modest club, despite its small size in terms of income, surprised the world of football and conquered the Premier League title. In terms of media value, the concentration level of Leicester represents only 4.6% of the total media value of the English main football league. Paris Saint Germain holds its supremacy in the Ligue 1, monopolizing almost half of the spotlights of the French competition. In the other European leagues (Bundesliga and Serie A), the main clubs concentrate around 35% of the overall media value associated to the respective domestic tournament.

Then, a replication of the previous analysis is found below. This time, however, we have included the two main clubs of each league into the figures. It allows us to see, for example, that the Manchester United is the English team with the biggest share of media value, followed by FC Arsenal, both with very similar figures.

Media presence concentration Two main team of each competition



Source: MERIT social value - Data collection

The graphic shows the media concentration of the two main clubs relative to the domestic competition, which also indicates the extent at which the respective league depends on particular teams. We also learn that the Spanish and English leagues overcome the others in terms of media value. Then, a few steps back we find the other European leagues: the Italian, German and French competitions.

In the Premier League, the leader is Manchester United, with a share of 15.4% of the total. A few steps behind we find FC Arsenal with 14.3%, while the rest of the clubs gather altogether around 70%. The Premier League is not only the competition with the largest media visibility, but it is also the one that shows the most balanced distribution of media spotlights. This is the result of having a large number of media stars distributed among various teams.

In contrast to the case of the English tournament, the Spanish La Liga displays a very different structure. In this case, the two giants monopolize the biggest share of the spotlights. FC Barcelona leads the ranking, gathering 39.6% of the total media exposure. Then, Real Madrid, its main rival, generates 34%. The rest of the clubs of the Spanish competition accounts for the remaining 26.4%. It means that each of the Spanish giants generates a greater level of interest in the media than the remaining 18 clubs altogether. Certainly, we witness here an extreme case of the “winner-take-all” effect that we have already mentioned. This distinctive phenomenon of sports industries implies that the media intensively pays more than proportional attention to the teams and leagues with the largest number of stars and talent concentration.

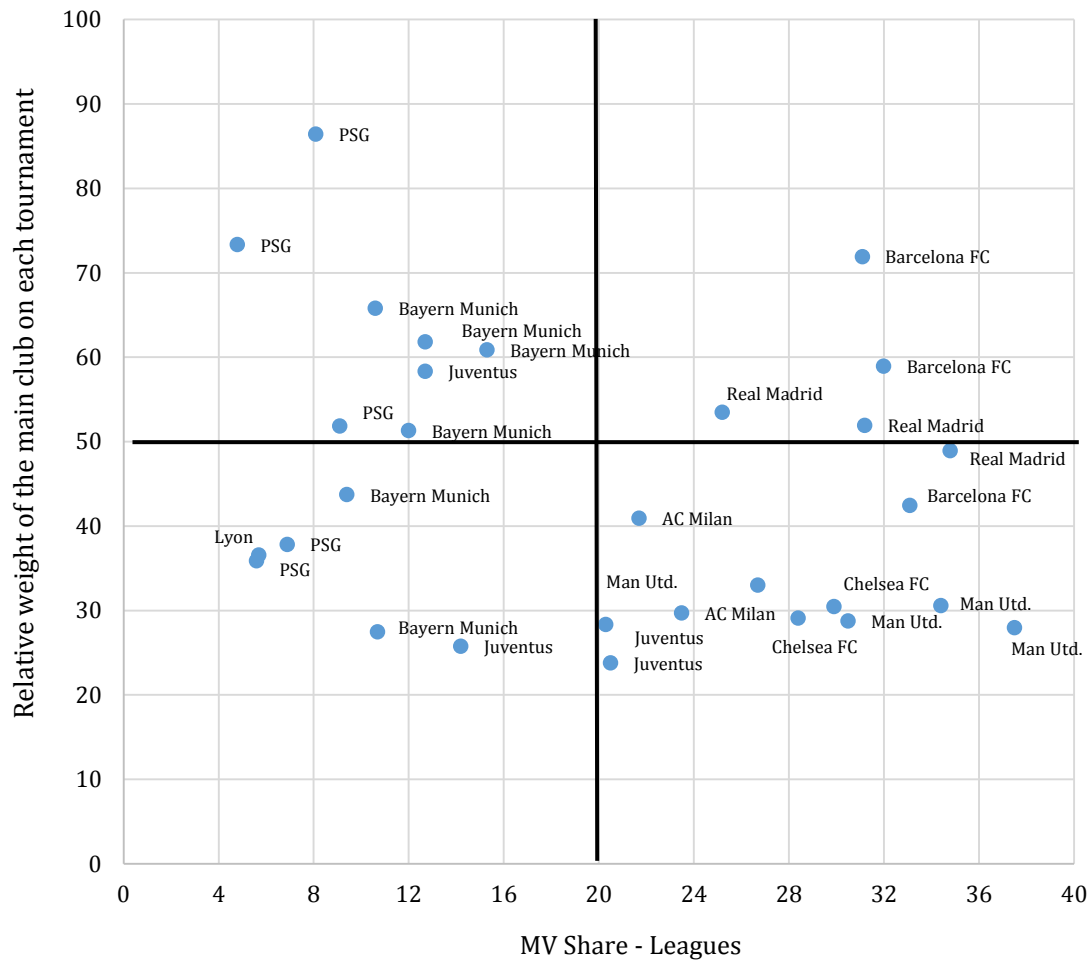
In the Serie A, Juventus generates 32.1% of the media value in Italy. Then, far behind follows AS Roma, with a share of 10.5%. In Germany, at the top of the Bundesliga we find Bayer Munich, which gathers the 36% of the overall media value. A few steps back, we found Borussia Dortmund, with 11.9% of the total. Finally, in Ligue 1 we find the monopoly, in terms of media presence, of Paris St. Germain, which accumulates 47% of the total media exposure in France, and shows a huge gap with respect to the rest of the clubs. We find then AS Monaco in the second position with just a 5.2%.

Finally, we offer an additional analysis in a scatter plot, confronting the share of media value of each league (with respect to the total Big-5 European leagues: horizontal axis) against the relative weight of the main club on each tournament (vertical axis). In the figure, we present data of the last six seasons, in search of different patterns that allow us to achieve some conclusions.

First of all, we can see how the main teams of the Spanish league are located in the upper right quadrant. This finding suggests that, although displaying an unbalanced distribution in terms of talent and media exposure, La Liga enjoys a relative high media value (relative to the total of the Big-5 leagues in Europe).

In contrast with the previous situation, the principal teams in the Premier League are located in the lower right quadrant, a sign of the small dependency that the English competition has on just one single club. Another important feature is precisely the fact that the seasons where Manchester United conquered the English title, are also the years where the Premier League has attracted more attention, in terms of media value.

League Media Value vs. Main team's share
(Season 2010/11 to 2015/16)



A different pattern is found in the French league, whose teams are systematically located at the bottom (left) of the Big-5 domestic competitions. It is also interesting noticing the transition experienced by the Paris Saint Germain, as it has in the last seasons opened a very large gap with respect to the other French clubs. This change is illustrated in the figure by the evolution from the left lower quadrant to the left upper quadrant. This can be explained with the huge importance PSG has won in the French tournament, and the strong dependency this competition has on this club.

Regarding the German Bundesliga, notice the predominance that Bayer Munich shows as compared to the other German teams. The main teams of the Italian league are the two teams that attract the highest levels of attention: AC Milan and Juventus, which are systematically found ahead of the German and French teams. Besides, the Italian Serie A displays a more balanced distribution, concerning the media attention across teams.

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