



Migrant footballers in national teams

A critical reflection and alternative approach(es) to foreign-born football players at the FIFA World Cup, c. 1930-2014

G. van Campenhout, MSc.

PhD Candidate 'Sport and the Nation'

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands

vancampenhout@eshcc.eur.nl

www.sportandnation.com

[@SportandNation](https://twitter.com/SportandNation)



French squad without migrants



Not Pictured:

Eliaquin Mangala

Rio Mavuba

Bacary Sanga

International football as a prism

- Recent phenomenon?
- Lack of (historical) overview on migrant footballers and nationality changes in international football
- Database on FIFA World Cups, 1930-2014
 - Biographical data and genealogy
 - 9.400 cases/football players
 - Who counts as a migrant football player?



Acquiring Citizenship



Jus Soli



Jus Sanguinis



Jus Nexi



Source: FIFA (2017)



Foreign-born proxy (*Jus soli*)

- Foreign-born

“An international migrant is a person who is living in a country other than his or her country of birth.” (UN, 2015)

- Overlooks historical and geo-political contexts

- Territorial changes of borders
- Colonial relationships between states

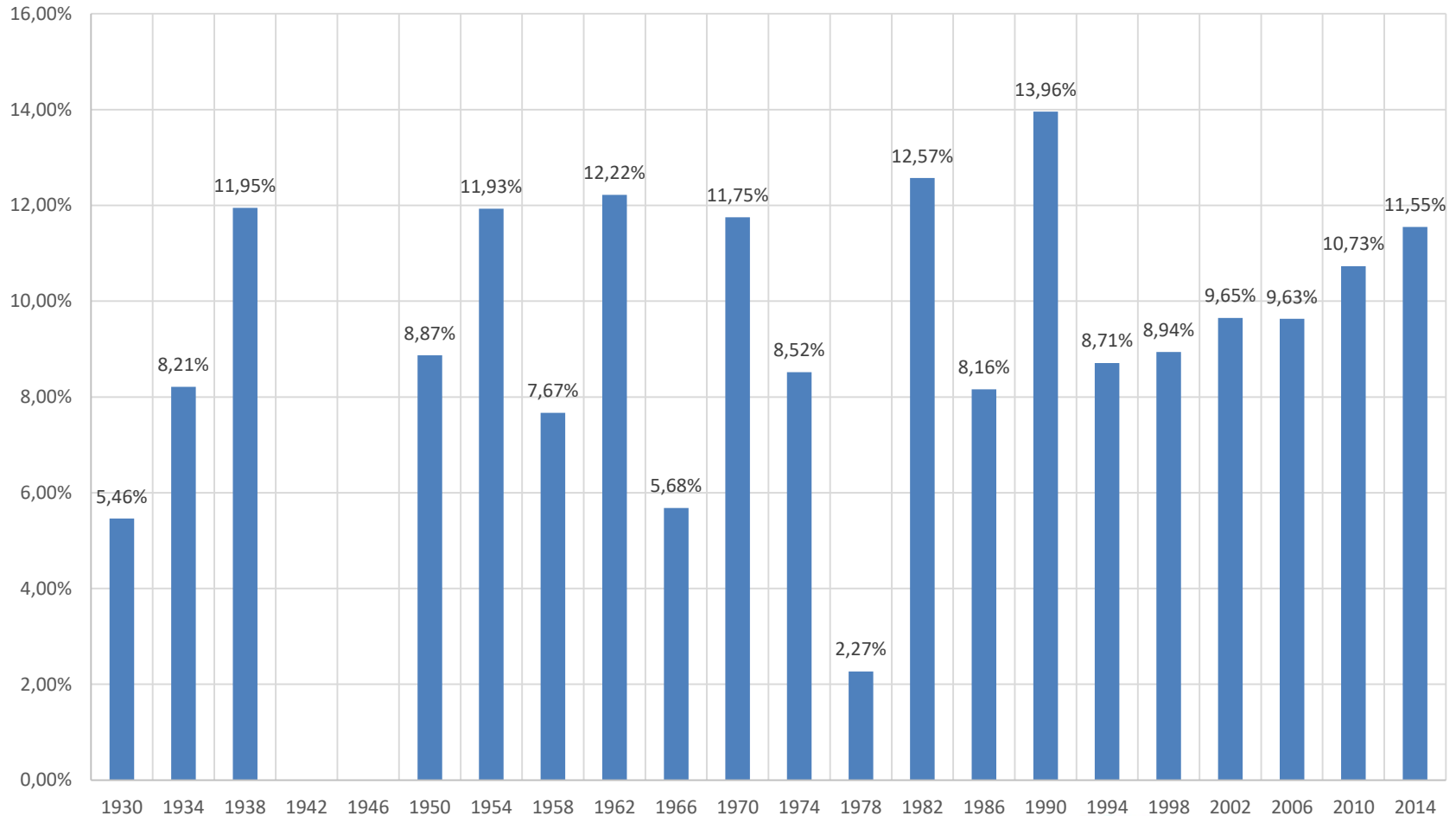
- Three approaches

- 1) Current state borders (2014)
- 2) Territorial borders at time of FIFA World Cup edition
- 3) Colonial ties



Approach 1: 2014 Borders

PERCENTAGE FOREIGN-BORN FOOTBALL PLAYERS 1930-2014,
APPROACH 1 [#CASES: 913, N=9.400]



2014: French foreign-born players

The France that Never Was

There are 25 French-born players representing other countries at this year's World Cup. That would be enough to field a full second squad for France — and have some emergency spare players to boot. Here's where those players have gone.

Sofiane Feghouli

In Algeria's first match of the tournament, Feghouli scored the country's first World Cup goal in 28 years on a penalty kick.

Andrew Ayew

American fans saw striker Ayew equalize against the US during its group stage match against Ghana. He plays for French club Marseille.

Benoit Assou-Ekotto

The outspoken and controversial left back has said he's surprised his black teammates at Tottenham feel accepted by English society.

Jean-Daniel Akpa-Akpro

A versatile defender, Akpa-Akpro has played every back-four position for Toulouse, his club team. He's been linked with English giants Arsenal this summer.

Gonzalo Higuain

Though born in France, the ex-Real Madrid star grew up solely in Argentina. He's scored 20 times for the World Cup challengers.

Algeria: 16

Ghana: 2

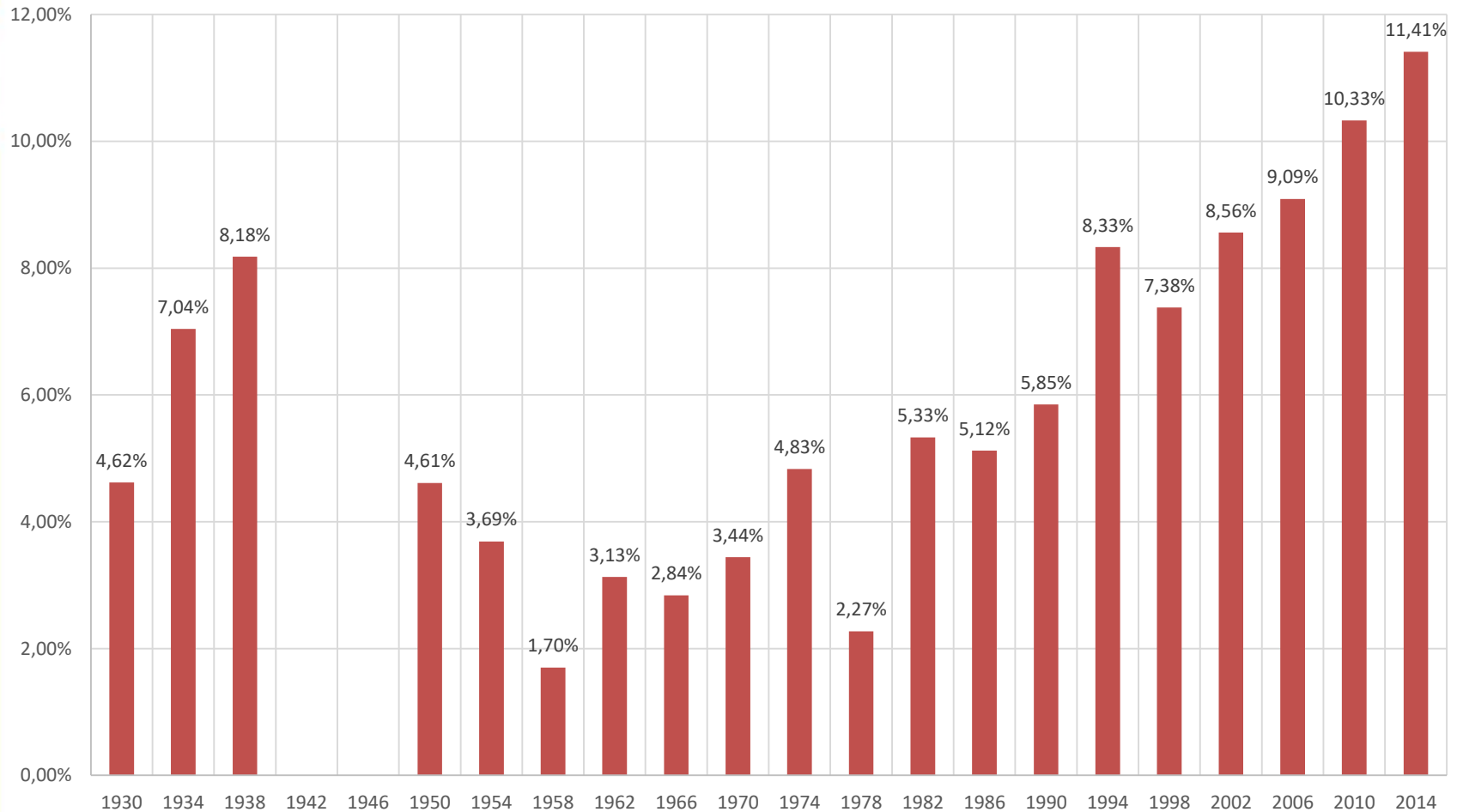
Cameroon: 3

Ivory Coast: 3

Argentina: 1

Approach 2: Territorial Changes

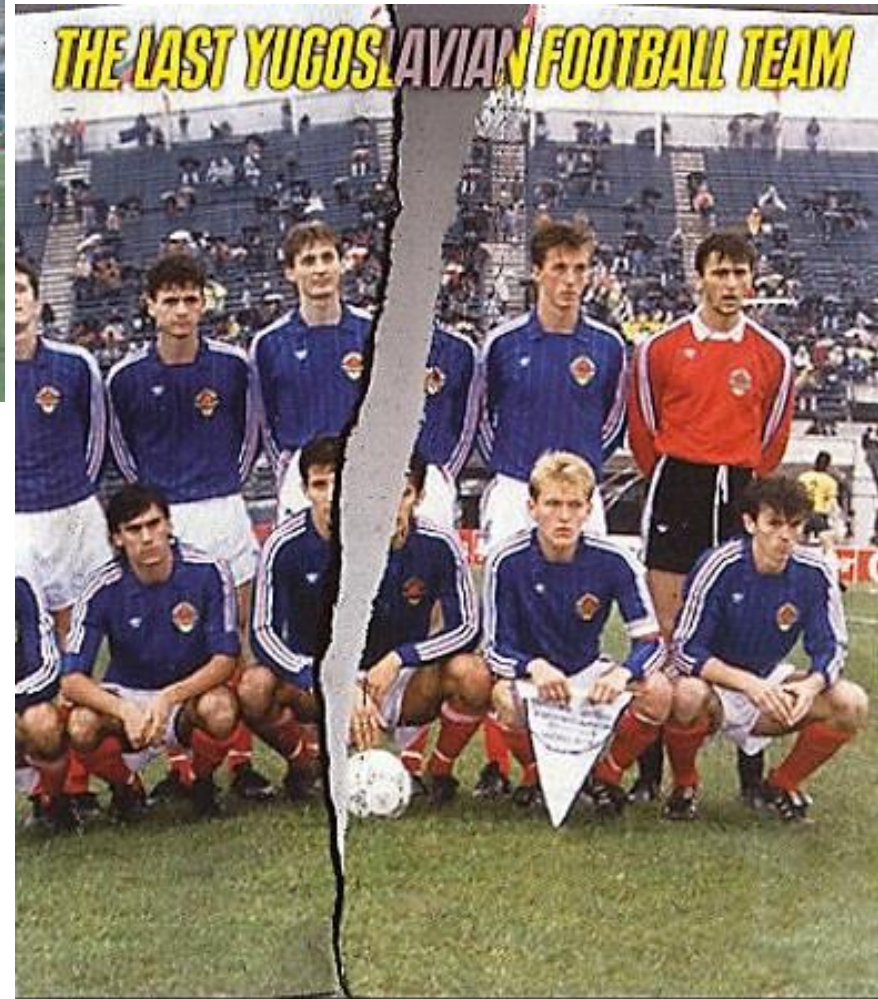
PERCENTAGE FOREIGN-BORN FOOTBALL PLAYERS 1930-2014,
APPROACH 2 [#CASES: 623, N=9.400]



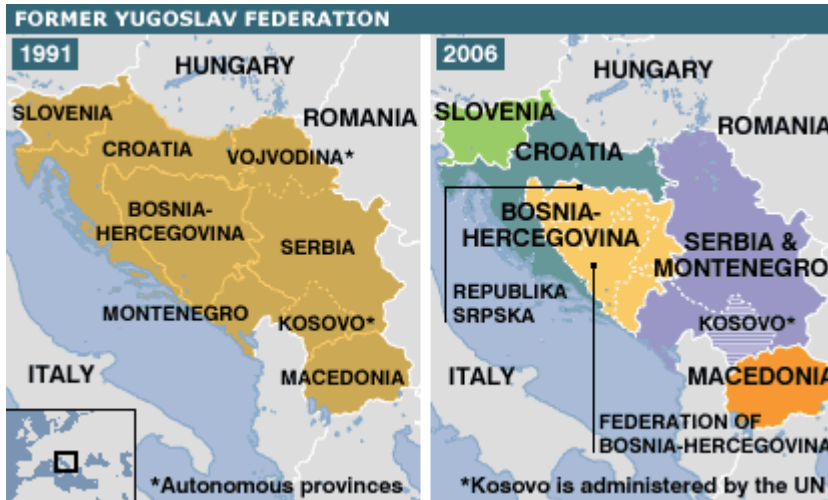
Disintegrated States



Yugoslavia: World Youth Champions 1987



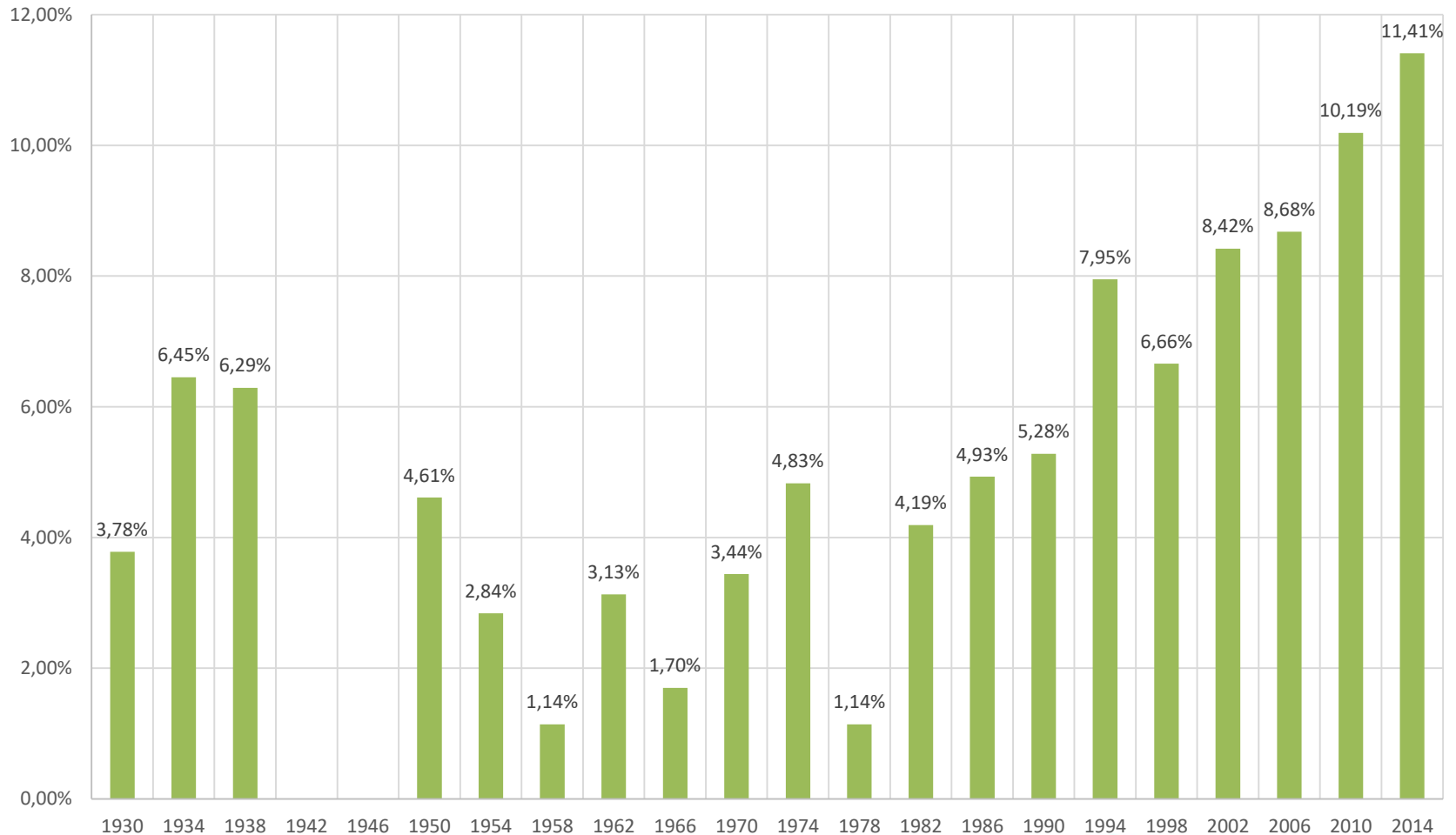
Source: Diallo (2013)



Source: BBC News (2006)

Approach 3: Colonial Ties

PERCENTAGE FOREIGN-BORN FOOTBALL PLAYERS 1930-2014,
APPROACH 3 [#CASES: 578, N=9.400]



Colonial Nationals

1934: Dutch international Beb Bakhuyjs



Portuguese national football team in 1966

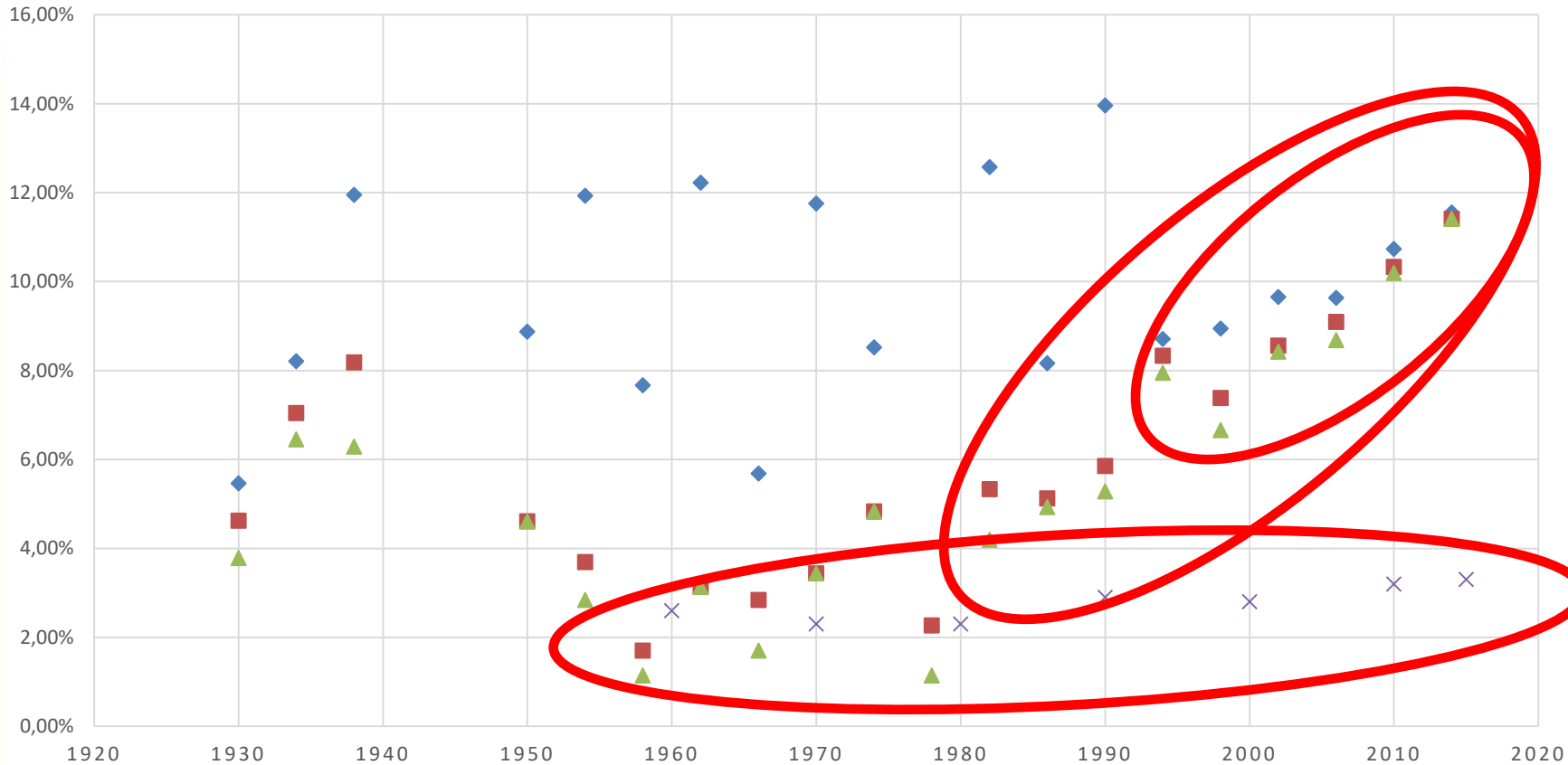


Source: Alchetron (2017) | Soccernostalgia (2016)

Outcomes

APPROACHES FOREIGN-BORN FOOTBALL PLAYERS AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS

◆ Foreign-born Footballer C1 ■ Foreign-born Footballer C2 ▲ Foreign-born Footballer C3 × International Migrants





Thank you for your attention Questions?

G. van Campenhout, MSc.

*PhD Candidate 'Sport and the Nation'
Erasmus School of History, Culture
and Communication*

*Erasmus University Rotterdam,
the Netherlands*

vancampenhout@eshcc.eur.nl
www.sportandnation.com

[@SportandNation](https://twitter.com/SportandNation)



Source: Football Whispers (2016)