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## **The railway<sup>1</sup> and the ball, the spread of football in São Paulo State**

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### **Abstract**

This article presents an exploratory analysis of the expansion of the railway network and the practice of football in São Paulo state (Brazil). An isolated region of Brazil experienced an economic boom in the middle of the nineteenth century due to the expansion of the coffee production. This transformed the region from an underdeveloped province into the most populous and richest state in Brazil, which resulted in the rapid expansion of the railway network. Designed initially to take the coffee to the coast, and transport workers and industrialized goods, the railway connected the small cities to the larger population centers, bringing new trends and fashions from abroad. Football would also spread alongside the railway network. The people responsible for its construction and administration were also associated with the creation of the first football clubs in the state, presenting this new practice to the local elites and urban dwellers. This article focuses on the foundation of the first football clubs in the most important cities of São Paulo state, analyzing the impact that the expansion of the railway played in the popularization of football, especially how in the majority of the cases the first football clubs were founded by railway personnel.

Keywords: Brazil, Football, Railway, 20th century, Football Clubs

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## Introduction

Football is the most popular sport on the planet with complex economic and cultural ramifications in several areas, ranging from public health to foreigner relations. In Brazil this relationship is even more special. The country, five times FIFA World Champion, is globally known for its passion for the sport, often referred to as “The country of football” in the press and in informal conversations.

Given the centrality of the sport in the Brazilian way of life, it is only natural that the subject also receives academic attention. From a historical point of view, there has been a significant production, although mainly restricted to the founding fathers, large cities, and specific clubs.

The historical and sociological analysis of the origin of Brazilian football dates back to the 1950s, with two seminal and quite different works. The first one, Mario Filho’s 1947 “O Negro no futebol brasileiro”<sup>2</sup> (“The Black men in the Brazillian Football”), had great impact in the academic community. Discussing the influence of black Brazilian culture in the national football, Mario Filho used many of the racist notions accepted at the time. In spite of this fact, parts of his ideas still have a great influence on current football studies<sup>3</sup>.

The second work was published by Thomas Mazzoni, “The History of Brazilian Football 1894-1950”<sup>4</sup>, a more historiographical analysis, launched to celebrate the 1950 FIFA World Cup. Some of Mazzoni’s formulations remain in vogue in Brazilian sports historiography. For example, Mazzoni cemented the idea that football started in São Paulo in 1895 brought by Charles Miller, who is still considered the founding father of Brazilian football<sup>5</sup>. It is important to highlight that this claim is disputed by some modern historians, which discuss alternative hypotheses to the start of Brazilian football<sup>6</sup>.

The academic literature on Brazilian football is vast and numerous. One work of particular relevance (more so given the focus of this paper) is Wilson Gambeta’s 2014 book “Primeiros Passes”<sup>7</sup> (“First Passes”). It features an extensively documented piece of research into the sport in São Paulo city between 1897 and 1918. Due to its strong use of unpublished documents and firsthand accounts of the period, the work of Gambeta has become an important source of material to researchers studying that historical period.

It is important to highlight the very large variety of non-academic studies covering the history of some of the most popular Brazilian football clubs. A common gap in both the academic and non-academic attention to football history in Brazil, though, is the lack of attention to the expansion of the sport throughout the country outside the big cities. And this is of course relevant, given the size and heterogeneity of Brazil. There is only a small number of works dedicated to football outside the major cities<sup>8</sup>; moreover these are usually focused on the heroic tales of the founders, who arrived to build the beloved local clubs, leaving aside a more structured analysis that could discuss the different subjects and processes involving the practice of football and its expansion from England to the rest of the world.

This article aims to fill part of that gap by discussing the development of football clubs in the interior of the state of São Paulo (i.e. away from the major cities on the coast), and its relationship with the expansion of the state's rail network between 1850 and 1950. The relation between socio-economic developments and the expansion of football is not an unknown phenomenon. Indeed, there has been academic attention to the links between the expansion of transport networks and football both in Europe and Latin America<sup>9</sup>, and also in São Paulo<sup>10</sup> itself. However, when it comes to the interior of Brazil and smaller cities, there has been very limited attention.

The 100-year period between 1850 and 1950 was pivotal in the São Paulo region: the expansion of coffee consumption in the United States and Europe from the mid-19th century led to the appreciation of the (Brazilian) berry in the world market. São Paulo, thanks to its climate and soil, became the world's largest producer<sup>11</sup>. The new culture led to a series of cultural and economic transformations, including the construction of a modern transport network to service the important coffee industry. During that period, more than 7,000 kilometers of railway lines were built, connecting the furthest corners of the state with the city of São Paulo and the port of Santos<sup>12</sup>.

The coffee cycle, as it is often described in Brazilian economic history, transformed the state of São Paulo from an economically irrelevant province into the country's largest and richest state<sup>13</sup>. The cycle would come to an end with the crisis of 1929, which brought down the coffee prices, greatly reducing the profitability of the product. The railways would then also go into decline. In the early 1950s, the government embarked on an industrialization project, favoring road transport over rail, in an attempt to foster heavy industry<sup>14</sup>. This led to the rapid decay of the São Paulo railway network. Nowadays, this

means of transportation is economically irrelevant, especially if we compare it to its heyday in the 1930s<sup>15</sup>.

Besides some old rusty locomotives and abandoned warehouses, football clubs are actually the only remnants of that long gone era. Many of them still carry the word “railway” in their names; logos and crests are also reminders of an older time when the railways were the life of those cities.

As pointed out above, there has been extensive research on the introduction and expansion of football in São Paulo city, both theoretical and empirical<sup>16</sup>. However, the situation is completely different for the expansion of football into the cities away from the coast in the state. Whereas there are some case studies of the history of the more popular clubs, there is no wider macro analysis discussing the early stages of that expansion and what were the socioeconomic conditions that made it possible. Thus, this article does not only aim to fill an empirical gap, but also an analytical gap by focusing on the wider historical macro analysis. Our research objectives are twofold. First, we aim to describe and analyse the foundation and early development of the first football clubs in the interior of São Paulo state. Second, we aim to assess the importance that the expansion of the railway network had in those dynamics.

The article proceeds now in four steps. First, we review the historical background of Brazil and São Paulo state during the so-called coffee cycle of 1850-1950 and how the development of the coffee industry brought about modernization to the interior of São Paulo state. Second, we discuss our research methods. Third, we analyse the development of football clubs and their links to the railway network expansion. Finally we draw some conclusions to our study.

### **Coffee and modernity**

The analysis of any historical aspect of São Paulo State includes necessarily the role of coffee. Therefore, in this section we provide the necessary historical background to understand the socio-economic processes that contributed to the evolution of football in the state. In this section we first contextualise the economic development of Brazil, we then explain the expansion of coffee farming and the railway network, to end up with a sketch of the first origins of football in the state.

The coffee tree originated in Africa and the drink extracted from its dried beans was known well before the colonization of Brazil. Its consumption by Europeans and Americans, however, would only become popular, alongside with tobacco, during the first industrial revolution. Its stimulating effect would fit the new rhythm brought about by European modernity, hence quickly becoming an essential part of the Europeans daily life<sup>11</sup>. The growth in coffee consumption was also accompanied with a growth in the planting of coffee trees. This resulted, in a search for new and more productive regions. The first coffee trees arrived in Brazil in the early sixteenth century, rapidly spreading throughout the country, a small scale production mainly for the local market.

Coffee would only become a commodity in the middle of eighteenth century, with the spread of plantations in the Rio de Janeiro State. However, the production in the region quickly dwindled, mainly due to predatory outdated practices and was transferred to the neighboring state of São Paulo. The climate and soil of São Paulo's northwestern region was more adequate to the new product, making plantations more effective and efficient. The Terra Roxa (purple soil), a type of fertile soil characterized by its strong red color, is suitable for the coffee tree. The region proved so productive that, between 1910 and 1920, 70% of the coffee consumed worldwide came from Brazil, mainly from São Paulo<sup>17</sup>.

Nowadays the state of São Paulo encompasses over 248,000 km<sup>2</sup>, with 40 million inhabitants; its homonymous capital is the largest metropolitan area in South America, with more than 20 million inhabitants. São Paulo is the economic center of Brazil, responsible for a third of the country's GDP, and possesses a modern globalized economy and the largest port in Latin America. São Paulo was the center of the coffee production. The so-called coffee cycle was Brazil's third great economic development, preceded by the heydays of gold and sugarcane production<sup>18</sup>.

In 1850, life in the province of Piratininga, as São Paulo was formerly known, was very similar to the colonial times. The region was distant from the major population centers in Europe and North America, and did not possess any valuable commodities that could part of other economic cycles. Geography also contributed to the region's isolation, more specifically the Serra do Mar, a 1,000km-long mountainous formation with altitudes ranging from 1,200 to 2,200 meters that stretches from southern Brazil to Espírito Santo and separates the coast from the inland plateau. The Serra do Mar was a major obstacle

to the economy of São Paulo: in order to reach the inland plateau, goods from Santos harbor had to negotiate the 800-meter difference in altitude through the Serra do Mar. This, of course, was extremely difficult at that time. The journey usually took around two days until 1867<sup>19</sup>. However, this all changed with coffee production. This new cycle moved again the economic center of the country, from Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro to the interior of São Paulo state, now responsible of the large majority of Brazilian exports.

That newfound economic and industrial development in São Paulo's inland plateau would demand a more efficient transport method to reach the port. Thus, the economic elites of the state began to lobby the government to build railways into the plantations region. The first step of the ambitious project was completed in 1867 with the inauguration of the Santos-Jundiaí Railway. Built by a British company, it was a major feat of engineering<sup>20</sup>.

The railway connected the Santos harbor to the countryside, the last station was the city of Jundiaí, around 130 kilometers from the coast. Besides the drastic reduction of the cost and time of travel, the new railway also consolidated São Paulo city as the state's economic center. On the edge of the Serra do Mar, it was the last stop before the descent and the first after the ascent. It quickly became a hub, as the migrants and industrialized goods transported to the inland cities, as well as the coffee coming from the interior and heading overseas through Santos harbor, went through São Paulo. It is difficult to explain why Santos, where the harbor was located, did not become the economic center of the state. Some authors have suggested that São Paulo was historically the center of the state, and the new economic elite disliked Santos because of the humid and hot climate, preferring the slightly more benevolent weather of the capital, which is cooler as it is located at a higher altitude than Santos<sup>17</sup>. This is, however, a debate outside the scope of our article.

São Paulo was in 1872 a small provincial city of just 30,000 inhabitants. The capital became the center where the new economic elite, scattered in the vastness of the countryside, came to do business. São Paulo became also a multicultural metropolis, with part of the immigrants that originally worked in the coffee plantations settling in the city. Indeed, the immigrants constituted half of the city's population in the early twentieth century<sup>21</sup>.

In order to fuel the new planting areas, there was also an ever-growing need of workforce. The Brazilian colonial economy relied on slavery, as most of the American continent. The abolition of slavery in 1888 would change this scenario, thus the new coffee growing regions had the need of free workforce, supplied mainly by migrants which made the state's population grow from 800,000 in 1872 to over 7 million in 1940 (See table 1 below).

Table 1. Migrants entry in São Paulo State, 1890-1937<sup>17</sup>

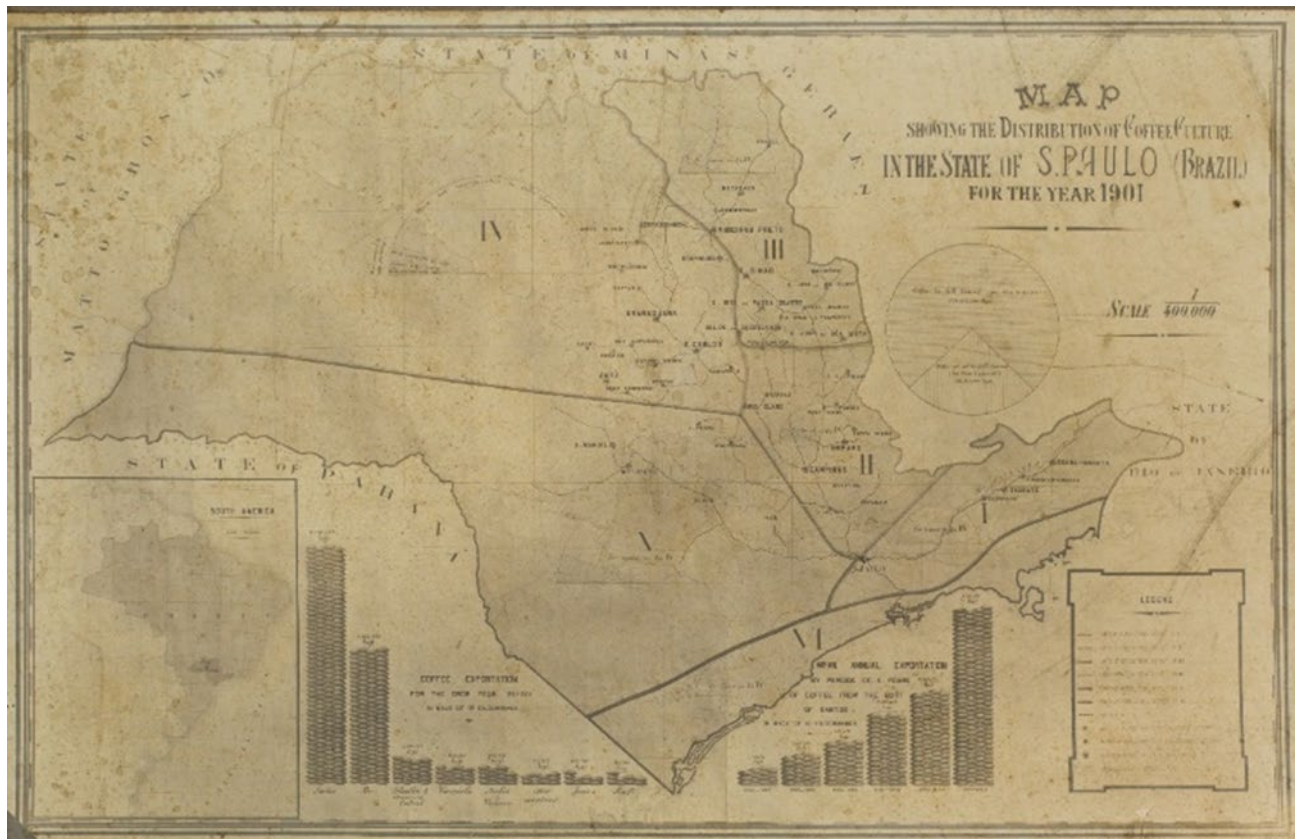
<b>Period</b>	<b>Entry of Immigrants</b>
1890-1894	319,732
1895-1899	415,253
1900-1904	171,295
1905-1909	196,539
1910-1914	362,898
1915-1919	83,684
1920-1924	197,312
1930-1934	128,997
1935-1937	48,369

With an objective to reduce the precedence of local ethnic groups, the government of that time focused on attracting European migrants, mostly Italians. However, as the availability of Europeans diminished, the state also received large groups of Japanese migrants (São Paulo hosts nowadays the largest Japanese community outside Japan), as well as Syrians, Armenians and Lebanese. The migrants would first arrive in São Paulo city, staying at the Immigrant Hostel, in the Brás neighborhood, which could accommodate about four thousand migrants. There they could stay for eight days until they were sent out to the coffee farms. The Hostel was inaugurated in 1887 and was the place where the landowners came in search of the workforce they needed.<sup>22</sup>.

In order to better understand the evolution of the coffee plantation and the expansion of the railway lines, a map from 1901 depicts the occupied zones of the state (see figure 1 below). The map depicts six different regions, marked with roman numerals (I to VI).



Figure 1 Map showing the distribution of coffee culture in the State of São Paulo (Brazil) for the year 1901<sup>23</sup>



The Region marked I (1) in the map, on the border with Rio de Janeiro state, is the place of the first coffee farms in São Paulo state. However, in a few years coffee production in that area became impossible, mostly due to the outdated practices, derived mostly from sugarcane production, that depleted the soil and reduced the productivity and quality of the beans. Despite being the first part of the state to introduce coffee production, it was left behind when the modernization processes started.

The production of coffee rapidly moved to Region II, which thrived due to more modern farming methods. This was the place of the first expansion of the railway system. The major junction of Region II was the city of Campinas, located roughly 40 km from Jundiaí. The ever-growing coffee demand from Europe and the USA fueled the continuous need for new land, firstly the region III and then IV. The occupation of region III had a similar pattern of II, with the main hub there being Ribeirão Preto, 300km from São Paulo.

Region IV was the easternmost reach of the coffee farms. When production began in that area, coffee prices were already in decline due to the oversupply and external competition. So the struggling coffee production in this region shared space with thriving cattle ranchers. Meat production became an important industry after the end of the coffee cycle, expanding to the country's center-western region. Originally, it supplied the new population centers around São Paulo city, later becoming an important part of Brazilian exports. The most important hub in this area is the city of Araraquara, 280 km from São Paulo. As coffee plantations expanded, all these regions were connected by a growing railway network that expanded from the few hundred kilometers of the initial Santos-Jundiaí railway line in 1862 to more than 6,000 km in 1920. Table 2 (below) summarises the growth of the railway network, population and coffee plantation in São Paulo state.

Table 2. Railways, population and coffee trees in São Paulo<sup>24</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Railways km</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Coffee Trees</b>
1860	0	695 000	26 800
1890	2 245	1 385 000	106 300
1910	4 825	2 800 000	696 702
1930	7 099	7 161 000	1 188 058

The expanding railway lines provided much more than transport for agricultural goods to the shore. Commerce, the need for agricultural supplies and the indirect trade networks brought great dynamism to the capital and the harbor city of Santos, which, in just a few years, became the biggest port in Latin America. In a short period of time, São Paulo changed from a provincial village to a multi-cultural metropolis<sup>17</sup>. Cultural and urban transformations brought a series of new activities to the main hubs across the state, especially new patterns of consumption and hobbies, such as sports.

These new 'modern' trends were first adopted by the economic elite, which quickly abandoned old imperial traditions to embrace the new culture brought from abroad, mainly England, as a sign of status and modernisation. Initially restricted to the elite, these trends would eventually transform the cultural practices of other social groups within the cities<sup>25</sup>.

Logically, the state capital and Santos served as the entry points for these new modernizing cultural trends, which then gradually spread through the rest of the state.

The railway, in turn, was the main carrier of these transformations. Local newspapers often described town station's inauguration as synonymous with modernization, the symbolic moment in which the underdeveloped interior was connected to the new trends and transformations of a broader modern society, as is evident in this report from Rio Preto:

“Finally comes the Railroad, and with it, new streams of activity also came, which, added to those that already existed, transformed at a glance, the peaceful and monotonous life of Rio Preto, as well as that of all the centers still in outline by the whole area of our administrative domains, resulting in, the indescribable if not fantastic activity, which today we can observe in all corners of the County unfolded in outbreaks of progress”<sup>26</sup>.

All these transformations, however, were not evenly distributed, but rather adopted initially by the elites and then spread towards the lower classes, as mentioned above. To better understand this situation, the local traditional elite in São Paulo were landowners, descendants of the first settlers who controlled the political institutions and the coffee production. As landowners, the elite usually divided their time between the countryside where they had their plantations, and capital. During the colonial times this group did not have any influence in national politics, but during the 19th and early 20th century it achieved unprecedented economic and political power. It is important to highlight that urban (and social) development followed a twofold dynamic during that time. Some of the new urban hubs (such as Araçatuba and Mairinque) were simply created from scratch due to the expansion of coffee farms and the railways. These cities did not had a traditional elite. On the other hand, other cities that had been important hubs since the colonial times (such as Campinas and Junídiá) did have a well-known established social and political elite.

São Paulo, the capital, was home to not only unskilled immigrants, but also an upper-class of foreigners such as bankers, engineers, lawyers and commercial representatives. They came from various parts of the world, mainly Britain, but also from Germany, France and the United States. These groups brought the new social and cultural trends from Paris and London to the city, and the interaction of these upper-class migrants with the national elite brought a series of new behaviors and activities, such as the concept of

leisure time and football. The improvement in the transport network also permitted the Brazilian elites to travel abroad, and have firsthand contact with the most modern European trends<sup>27</sup>.

Despite simultaneous attempts and sporadic games around the country by sailors and foreign workers, the first official football match took place on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1895 between the British workers of the Gas Company of São Paulo and the São Paulo Railway Company. The players were members of São Paulo Athletic Club (SPAC), the main club of the British colony. The organizer, Charles Miller, a Brazilian son to a Scottish father and a Brazilian mother, is considered the founding father of Brazilian football. The sport rapidly spread to the local elites and lower classes<sup>28</sup>.

The history of Charles Miller is an interesting example of how historical moments are defined by historians. The 1895 match was identified by historian Thomas Mazzoni in the 1950s as the starting point of football in Brazil. The 1950s were period of great rivalry between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and the definition of São Paulo as the birthplace of football had, actually, political implications. Mazzoni's argument found little opposition at the time, but, as historiography is always evolving, those claims have been disputed. Charles Miller played a major role to promote the football in the city of São Paulo, but, as we show in this research, the spread of the sport in the country was a much more complex dynamic process.

The practice of football in São Paulo city initially took place in the floodplains (*várzea* in Portuguese), a region of low real estate value that remained untouched by the rapid urbanization, thus providing quality pitches in the central area of the city. The term, 'Várzea Football' is still used today to refer to grassroots football. The first championship took place in 1903 and the first stadium opened in 1905. The old Velodrome Paulistano<sup>8</sup> was adapted to host football matches and a crowd of 10,000 people. The land belonged to the Prado family, one of the most ancient and richest in the state. The Prados were also involved in the foundation of Clube Athletico Paulistano in 1900.

The first football clubs in São Paulo were created and managed by foreigners. For example, the São Paulo Athletic Club was founded in 1888 to be the club of the British colony, and Germania in 1889 as the meeting place of the German colony. The first club

founded by Brazilians was C.A Paulistano the most successful and socially exclusive club of the amateur era. Another interesting example of the upper class ethos of this early years was that of A.A Palmeiras, founded in 1902.

A.A Palmeiras was one of the most successful clubs of the amateur era, the first State Champions. Even by the standards of the time it was considered elitist only accepting physicians, engineers and lawyers. C.A Paulistano, A.A Palmeiras and other elite clubs abandoned football in the early 1930s, when the sport became professional<sup>29</sup>. From the elite and foreigners clubs the sport reached the lower classes, to the distaste of the upper classes. Having explored the historical background to coffee farming, the railway network and the first origins of football in the region, we pass now to discuss our methodology.

### **Methods**

This article is of an exploratory nature, as little attention has been devoted before to the expansion of football in the interior of São Paulo state. The first important decision for our research design lies on the choice of cities and railway lines to focus on. As São Paulo has more than 7,000 kilometers of railway and thousands of cities, in-depth research encompassing all of them is impossible. Instead this initial research focuses on the most relevant cases.

Politically speaking, Brazil is a federal country, organized in states and municipalities. However, for statistical and economic purposes, further administrative entities exist between state and municipalities: the so-called administrative regions. This division groups municipalities with similar characteristics, where each administrative region has a central city.

In 1930 São Paulo state had 22 of those central cities: Araçatuba, Araraquara, Assis, Atibaia, Bauru, Bragança Paulista, Campinas, Candido Mota, Descalvado, Franca, Itapetininga, Itu, Jundiaí, Mairinque, Mogi Mirim, Ribeirão Preto, Rio Claro, Rio Preto, Santo Anastácio, São Carlos, Sorocaba and Piracicaba. These were important hubs following the division into administrative regions, so they were selected as cases for an in-depth analysis.

Documentary analysis regarding football in these cities was conducted in the archives of the National Library<sup>30</sup>, the Public Archive of São Paulo State<sup>31</sup>, the Historical Archive of the Municipality of São Paulo<sup>32</sup>, the Mario de Andrade Library<sup>33</sup>, the Archive of the Football Museum<sup>34</sup>, the archives of the Sports History Research Centre at the University of São Paulo<sup>35</sup>, as well as the private archives of football clubs that were still active in those cities<sup>36</sup>. This archival research sought to find out which were the first clubs founded in the mentioned cities.

It is important to point out that an unknown number of small groups appeared and disappeared during this period. These were no more than small group of friends who met casually to play football. The focus of this work is to analyse football practice as a structured organized initiative, though. Therefore, we not intend to produce a full list of football clubs of that period; we rather intend to identify those clubs and teams whose existence can be confirmed by multiple sources and documentary evidence. These criteria led to the identification of 33 clubs in the 22 cities, which were then subjected to in-depth analysis of their history, their founders, first training grounds and initial years.

In order to assess the relationship between the railway and football, the second step was to define the construction of the railway in these cities. An analysis of the collection of the Railway Museum<sup>37</sup> and Coffee Museum<sup>38</sup> showed that at the time the state had seven main lines: São Paulo Railway, Paulista Railways Company, Sorocabana Railway Company, Railway Bragantina, Mogiana Railway Company, Araraquara Railway and Northwestern Brazil Railway. All central cities were crossed by at least one main line. In light of this fact, the inauguration date of the railway station in each city was also established.

In order to identify the first football clubs in those cities research focused on identifying their foundation date, founders and first training grounds. This information was crosschecked with the inauguration date of the railway crossing these cities in order to establish if the railways had some degree of influence in the spread of football in each one of those cities in the interior of São Paulo state. We move now to present the results and analysis of that archival research.

## Results

### Football and the railway

In a region roughly the size of the UK and sparsely populated, the arrival of the railway was a revolution connecting the cities to the outer world. The population could now afford a series of new products, which had previously been restricted to the upper classes. The cities chosen to receive the stations automatically became regional centers, places that connected the area to the world<sup>12</sup>. These cities congregated most of the region's production and were the first stop of the imported goods. By 1930 there were no central cities without a major railway. Table 3 (below) summarises information of the railway inauguration date, first football club(s) and their foundation year in the identified central cities.

**Table 3. The expansion of railway lines and football through São Paulo state**

Railway Inauguration	City	Teams	Year of creation
1872	Jundiaí	Jundiahy Foot Ball Club	1903
1872	Jundiaí	Paulista Futebol Clube	1909
1873	Itu	Ituano Futebol Clube	1947
1875	Campinas	Associação Atlética Ponte Preta (Black Bridge Athletic Association)	1900
1875	Campinas	Guarany Foot-Ball Club	1911
1875	Campinas	Esporte Clube Mogiana (Sport Club Mogiana)	1933
1875	Mogi Mirim	Mogi Mirim Esporte Clube	1932
1875	Rio Claro	Rio Claro Football Clube	1909
1875	Sorocaba	Sport Clube São Bento	1914
1875	Sorocaba	Estrada de Ferro Sorocabana Football Club (Sorocabana Railway Football Club)	1930
1876	Descalvado	Equipe Descalvadense de Futebol (Descalvado Football Team)	1912
1876	Descalvado	Esporte Clube América de Descalvado (America Sport Club from descalvado)	1944
1877	Piracicaba	Sport Club XV de Novembro	1913

1877	Piracicaba	Associação Atlética Sucrierie (Sucrierie Athletic Association)	1914
1883	Ribeirão Preto	Comercial Futebol Clube	1911
1883	Ribeirão Preto	Botafogo Futebol Clube	1919
1884	Bragança Paulista	Clube Atlético Bragantino	1928
1884	Atibaia	Associação Atlética Cetêbe	1934
1884	São Carlos	Expresso São Carlos Esporte Clube (Express São Carlos Sport Club)	1953
1884	São Carlos	Clube Atlético Paulistinha	1958
1885	Araraquara	Associação Ferroviária de Esportes (Railway Sports Association)	1950
1887	Franca	Associação Atlética Francana	1912
1889	Botucatu	Associação atlética Ferroviária de Botucatu (Botucatu Athletic Railway Association)	1939
1895	Itapetininga	Clube Atlético Sorocabana de Itapetininga (Sorocabana Athletic Club from Itapetininga)	1945
1905	Bauru	Esporte Clube Noroeste (North West Sport Club)	1910
1908	Araçatuba	Clube Atlético Ferroviario de Araçatuba (Araçatuba Railway Athletic Club)	1963
1912	São José do Rio Preto	Sport Clube Noroeste	1910
1912	São José do Rio Preto	Rio Preto Esporte Clube	1919
1912	São José do Rio Preto	América Futebol Clube	1946
1914	Candido Mota	Associação Atlética Ferroviária (Railway Athletic Association)	1949
1914	Assis	Associação Atlética Ferroviária de Assis (Assis Railway Athletic Association)	1927
1920	Santo Anastácio	União Ferroviária Anastaciana (Anastaciana Railway Union)	1952
1937	Mairinque	Clube Atlético Sorocabana de Maringue (Sorocabana Athletic Club from mairinque)	1940



The railway also produced broader cultural changes. As a complex operation, it required specialised workforce. Initially, there were no local people with the relevant skillset, so that the companies hired many workers from abroad, mainly from Europe. These people brought new fashions and cultural trends that modified the region's way of life. The railway workers, engineers, accountants and managers were considered upper class, educated foreigners, who esteemed their European culture; many of their customs and tastes were emulated by the local elite<sup>39</sup>.

The railways played a fundamental role in stimulating the practice of football, as officials from several levels participated in the creation of clubs. The popularisation of football radically transformed the public's relationship with the city. Newspapers enthusiastically reported on this new urban and modern lifestyle; crowds gathered to applaud the city's new idols, the sportsmen.

Our archival research has found that there is indeed a deep connection between railway line expansion and creation of football clubs. From the 33 clubs analysed in this article, 20 are somehow connected with the railway; eight of them carried the railway in their formal names, and others were founded by employees of rail companies, or played on the companies' ground. Moreover, none of the cities researched had football clubs prior to the arrival of the railway. These cities might have had football earlier, but these were sporadic initiatives without any kind of formalisation. Some of the earliest clubs predate the opening of the local station in the city, but were founded by workers involved in its construction. Table 4 (below) summarises the information of the clubs that are considered to have a direct connection with the railway.

Another consequence of the development of railway lines was a reduction in cost and travel time between the cities, which made possible the creation of the first regional competition in the state. The train wagons carried the new athletes, who brought their boots and footballs, stimulating the taste for football in the interior or São Paulo state.

**Table 4. Clubs whose foundation is related with the railway.**

Railway Inauguration	City	Teams	Year of creation
1872	Jundiaí	Jundiahy Foot Ball Club	1903
1872	Jundiaí	Paulista Futebol Clube	1909
1873	Itu	Ituano Futebol Clube	1947
1875	Campinas	Mogiana Esporte Club	1933
1875	Mogi Mirim	Mogi Mirim Esporte Club	1932
1875	Rio Claro	Rio Claro Football Clube	1909
1877	Piracicaba	Sport Club XV de Novembro	1913
1877	Piracicaba	Associação Atlética Sucrierie (Sucrierie Athletic Association)	1914
1883	Ribeirão Preto	Botafogo Futebol Clube	1919
1885	Araraquara	Associação Ferroviária de Esportes (Railway Sports Association)	1950
1889	Botucatu	Associação atlética Ferroviária de Botucatu (Botucatu Athletic Railway Association)	1939
1895	Itapetininga	Clube Atlético Sorocabana de Itapetininga (Sorocabana Athletic Club from Itapetininga)	1945
1908	Araçatuba	Clube Atlético Ferroviario de Araçatuba (Araçatuba Railway Athletic Club)	1963
1912	São José do Rio Preto	América Futebol Clube	1946
1912	São José do Rio Preto	Sport Clube Noroeste	1910
1914	Assis	Associação Atlética Ferroviária de Assis (Assis Railway Athletic Association)	1927
1914	Candido Mota	Associação Atlética Ferroviária (Railway Athletic Association)	1949
1920	Santo Anastácio	União Ferroviária Anastaciana (Railway Union Anastaciana)	1952

1937	Mairinque	Clube Atlético Sorocabana de Mairinque (Sorocabana Athletic Club from Mairinque)	1940
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### **The arrival of the first football ‘entrepreneurs’**

As pointed out above, one of our first findings is the fact that there is a small, yet noticeable, time lag between the inauguration of the first railway stations and the foundation of the early clubs. This is more evident, for example, in the cases of Jundiaí or Campinas (see Table 4 above). This can be explained by some specific aspects of Brazilian history and, specially, by the socio-political dynamics. Following independence from Portugal in 1822, Brazil was ruled by Dom Pedro I, a member of the Portuguese royal family. The Brazilian Republic was only established in 1889. The old imperial elite showed little interest in football, which prevented the early adoption of the sport<sup>40</sup>. The situation only changed after the proclamation of republic, as the republican sectors enthusiastically adopted football practice.

The local political and economic elites in the cities of the interior, mostly composed of powerful landowners and politicians inherited their social position from the times prior to the Republic, which would explain why it took 30 to 40 years for some of the football clubs to be founded after the arrival of the railway lines to the city. Unlike in São Paulo city, the members of that more traditional and conservative elite kept their traditional pastimes, such as horse-riding or hunting, not partaking in the new trends that were brought from the outside<sup>41</sup>, such as football.

There are also some sociological factors that could possibly help explaining why those elites tended not to adopt the newly arrived trends, such as football. Social transformations, such as overpopulation and urban expansion, made the old traditional pastimes inaccessible to the majority of the population<sup>42</sup>. Urban migration, the rise in land prices and deforestation made it harder to hunt and own horses. But this was a trend only in the most populated areas, especially close to the capital.

In the massive lands in the interior of São Paulo state, urban expansion was only starting. Even with the exponential growth brought about by the industrialization linked to coffee production, the state remained largely unpopulated and the traditional pastimes as horse hiding and hunting remained available and relatively inexpensive. Therefore, that old imperial elite formed by landowners had no reason to change their habits

The wealthiest landowning families had to divide their time between the interior (where coffee farms were) and the capital, where business exchanges were actually made. Therefore, most of them had houses both in their interior hometowns and in São Paulo city; most families ended having part of their members in the capital, dealing with the financial part of the business, while the others stayed in the farms managing the plantations. In this respect, it might be safe to affirm that the more “modern” part of those families chose to settle in the capital, whereas the more conservatives were drawn to stay behind enjoying country life, and showing little interest in football and other modern activities.

It is also noticeable the absence of another social group: the rural workers. There are no registered initiatives of organised football practice by rural workers, or teams created inside the farms. Football remained a city activity. It kept the urban ethos linked to the urbanisation process, and it was not adopted by the more rural inhabitants of the region. This does not mean that the rural workers did not play football (they probably did), only that this pastime still had not evolved into organised initiatives.

Thus, given the disinterest of local elite and the rural workers, the creation of football clubs was actually a matter for railway workers and local merchants. The personnel employed in the construction and management of the railways was the most involved in the creation of football clubs<sup>43</sup>. Our research shows that the best-paid employees, for example engineers and managers, were more commonly involved and were the leaders of these initiatives. However, workers from all positions participated in the teams. There are registers of cleaners, security guards, clerks, conductors and other low-paid employees not only playing, but also involved in the foundation and management of the teams. The inclusive character of the football practice in the countryside shows a strong difference from the city of São Paulo, where the upper-class clubs fought to keep an elitist and amateur ethos in the sport until 1930, when professionalisation became inevitable.

The initiatives to set up football clubs usually had no official link with the companies, even if the team carried the name of the company, as for example the Paulista Futebol Club from Jundiaí, founded in 1909 and whose name derived from the Paulista Railway Company, where its founders worked. Such clubs were the result of the individual action of employees and managers who in some cases used their influence inside the companies to help their team. These people were real football enthusiasts, who took their passion wherever their work sent them, some of them being responsible for the creation of more than one club.

Indeed, the history shows some names appearing in multiple occasions, such as the case of Thomas Scott, a Scottish engineer who came to work with the railway in Campinas towards the end of the 19th century. He was one of those responsible for the introduction of football in the city, and also a founder of Ponte Preta in 1900. In 1902, he was transferred to Jundiaí to work as chief foreman. There, he would demonstrate his love for football by founding in 1903 the Jundiahy Foot Ball Club.

A similar case happened with the engineer Antonio Tavares Pereira Lima, who participated in the creation of the America Futebol Clube in 1946 in São José do Rio Preto and then, in 1951, with the foundation of the Railway Athletic Association in Araraquara. These examples show how the spread of railway workers is associated with the economic and social changes and the evolution of football. Those enthusiasts, whose occupation are connected with the railway expansion, helped to bring football to new communities, presenting football to the far corners of the regions.

### **The role of local merchants**

Railway workers were the most common enthusiasts of football, being responsible for the foundation of the majority of the teams we have analysed. There is a second group of interest, though. That of local merchants, who were involved in the creation of the rest of the teams analyzed in this article

One interesting example is the city of Ribeirão Preto, 312 kilometers from São Paulo, which became the commercial and financial capital of the northwest region of the state.

The city enjoyed a thriving football scene in the early 1910s that culminated in the creation of the two major clubs of the city. The first one was founded in 1911 by a group of merchants, thus receiving the name “Commercial Football Club”, and is up to today the oldest active football club in the city. The second club was founded in 1918 by a union of three teams, União Paulistano, Tiberense and Ideal Futebol Clube, which played in the neighborhood of Vila Tiberio. The first president of that club was an employee of the Mogiana Railways Company, which also had the adhesion of employees of Antarctica Brewery.

As the football scene expanded through São Paulo state, these two groups (merchants and railway workers) began to interact, expanding championships and creating clubs, such as the case of Piracicaba. The first club of the city, Piracicaba Sport Clube, was founded in 1903 by the students of the local Agricultural College and the members practiced football, swimming, rowing and other activities. However, that initiative was short-lived.

In 1910s two more clubs were founded, both belonging to the merchant families Pousa and Guerrine. The Pousas owned the Esporte Clube Vergueirense, while the Guerrines owned the 12 de Outubro (October 12). In an almost perfect amalgamation, the Guerrines family owned a woodworking factory that produced railway ties, and the team (12 de Outubro) started with factory employees who used their lunch time to play football. Those two teams enjoyed a local rivalry, but eventually decided to join forces. So, on November 15th 1913 the Esporte Clube XV de Novembro (Sport Club November XV) was created.

### **The exception of Campinas’s local league**

Campinas is the only exception of the cities we have studied. Founded in 1772 and located around 100km from São Paulo, it is the most influential city in the interior of São Paulo state. Nowadays Campinas is still an important hub; it is one of the two Brazilian cities with more than a million inhabitants that is not a state capital (the other one being Guarulhos). Campinas has been an important trade center since colonial times, when it was founded as an outpost to caravans coming from the gold producing region of Goiás<sup>44</sup>.

Due to its size and influence, the football practice followed a unique pattern in that city, different from both the dynamics found in the capital and other large urban centers in the

interior of the state. Our research uncovered the foundation, between 1900 and 1911, of around 25 football clubs created by railway employees, students and workers. These led in 1912 to the foundation by six clubs of the Campineira Foot-Ball Workers League<sup>45</sup>. The majority of these clubs were short-lived and little information about their history remains, which is why only four Campinas clubs appear in tables 3 and 4 (above).

It is not possible to assert whether other cities in the state had similar local leagues such as the one in Campinas, but there is no evidence of it that we could locate. Campinas, due to its size and economic influence, had a variety of newspapers<sup>46</sup> and public archives<sup>47</sup>. Consequently, the information about the life in Campinas is more preserved and accessible than other smaller poorer towns.

The first documented football matches in Campinas link the initiative to the students of the school *Culto à Ciência* (Cult to the Science), who played most matches on its grounds. Founded in 1874 by the local elite, the school's pedagogical methods were heavily influenced by August Comte's positivism. It was republican and secular, the only one of its kind in the countryside. The local Campinas elite of landlords, merchants, and liberal professionals sent their children to that school.

The republican origin of the school and the enthusiasm for football seem to confirm the idea pointed out above that the republican elites were much more prone to adopt the sport than the older traditional imperial elite. The city of Campinas evolved to become a football stronghold with two surviving teams, Guarani and Ponte Preta. Guarani, founded in 1911 by the students of the *Culto à Ciência*, is one of the two teams outside a state capital (Santos being the other one), to win a Brazilian National Championship

Ponte Preta (Black Bridge), presents a very interesting case. Founded on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1900, is the second oldest active club in Brazil (the oldest is Sport Club Rio Grande, from Rio Grande do Sul, founded less than a month before)<sup>48</sup>. The club was founded by an association of students of the school *Culto à Ciência* and the residents of the nearby neighborhood Ponte Preta. At the time, Ponte Preta was a blue-collar community mainly of craftspeople and railway employees. The name of the team comes after a train bridge that stands in the middle of the neighborhood.

Ponte Preta also was the first club in Brazil to have a black player, Miguel do Carmo, a railway employee. He was one of the founders of the club, defending the team between 1900 and 1904. The relation of football, black culture and Brazilian identity is a central topic in sports studies, mainly because of Mario Filho's 1949 published book "O negro no Futebol Brasileiro", which helped to popularize the history of Arthur Friedenreich.

Friedenreich was not the first black player. Ponte Preta and Bangu (a club in Rio de Janeiro) had black players prior to him. However, his history became well known to the majority of football fans in Brazil. Born in 1892 as a son of a German public employee and a black school teacher, he was the most famous player of the amateur era. His career began in 1909, playing by the Sport Club Germania, the team of the German colony in São Paulo. His life history became anecdotal because of the book. He had to straighten his hair and apply powder in his face to hide his origins and be able to play for the upper class teams of the city<sup>49</sup>.

All of it makes the case of Ponte Preta more meaningful. The team was founded five years after Charles Miller's match, and some months before the foundation of Clube Athletico Paulistano. The presence of a black player contradicted many of the disseminated first accounts of football practice in Brazil, specially related to the upper class ethos of the amateur era. It shows that the spread and adoption of football happened throughout the country and had different characteristics, with a multitude of social groups and process.

The adoption of football has happened at the same time in the capital and on the countryside. However, the groups involved were different. In the capital, the sport was adopted first by the upper classes<sup>50</sup>, while on the countryside it was related with urban middle classes and blue-collar workers. This fact does not aim to romanticize this process or picture football as an inclusive practice. Brazilian society at the time was very racist. Slavery was only abolished in 1888 and many of its structures were still in place at the beginning of the 20th century. The more inclusive ethos of Ponte Preta was mocked by the adversaries, who nicknamed the team "the monkeys", an aggression that was eventually appropriated by the team by adopting the monkey as their official mascot.

### **Long term processes and limitations**



It is important to note that it took a long time for some cities to establish the first football teams. We do not argue that there is a clear-cut and deterministic relation between the railway and the spread of football in São Paulo state. It is important to recognize that there are exceptions and specificities in each case. However, we suggest these were concurring socio-economic processes with clear links and, therefore, they deserve to be explored from a historical point of view in order to understand the rather complex networks of social groups involved, their interests and similarities.

There a number of elements that can help explain why the development of football in some of those cities took longer than in others. The most important is the distance to the capital. The majority of the population of the state is concentrated around the capital, and population numbers decrease in the western areas of the state. In this sense, it is possible quite plausible to argue that in cities at the end of a railway line it took longer to organise a team. This is for example the case of Santo Anastácio, 532 kilometers away from São Paulo. Its train station opened in 1920, but the club “União Ferroviária Anastaciana” was only founded in 1952. Or Araraquara, that was the end of a railway line was finished in 1885. However, its first club, “Associação Ferroviária de Esportes”, was only founded in 1950. The distance and lack of population probably presented a serious challenge for these early clubs that had to travel long distances to meet their adversaries.

Another possible explanation for the slower pace in which football grew in those smaller towns at the end of the railway lines is that the urban centers of Ribeirão Preto and Campinas dominated the football scene. As pointed out above, clubs from Campinas did not need to travel outside the city to compete. These teams played mostly in the local championship, which in turn might have discouraged the formation of clubs in the smaller cities as there was a constant need to travel away to play and compete. Further to that, we also need to acknowledge that the existence of more complete and larger archives in Ribeirão Preto and Campinas might also have contributed to shape these findings.

This article does not focus on the introduction of football as a social activity, but on the institutionalization and the creation of the first football clubs and teams. We cannot discard the possibility, of course, that some of the cities included in our study, especially the smallest ones, had some sort of organised competition or clubs prior to the ones we have been able to locate. However, the lack of documentary evidence would suggest that,

if they existed, these were short-lived unorganized clubs that failed to play regional competitions or receive press coverage.

The presence of major urban centers, mainly Ribeirão Preto and Campinas, also contributed to the football scene. These cities had a thriving football scene at the beginning of the 20th century. These teams played mostly in the local championship. Nevertheless, these entities also disputed friendly matches against out-of-town clubs. The presence of more complete and larger archives also contributes to this fact: the existence of some clubs was not confirmed by local archives, but by the newspapers of Campinas and Ribeirão Preto, which enthusiastically covered intercity games.

## **Conclusion**

The fundamental aim of this article was to present the influence of the railway and, subsequently, of urbanisation in the practice and dissemination of football in the state of São Paulo. In this sense, this article related the expansion of the railway network between 1850 and 1950 with the creation of the first organised football clubs, first determining inauguration of the train station and then the foundation of the first football clubs.

The article analyzed 22 cities, determined by their importance, and searched for data related to the first football clubs. The research uncovered 33 clubs founded in these cities during the period analyzed, out of which 22 clubs had some relation to the railway.

As an exploratory analysis, and with no other studies discussing the spread of football throughout São Paulo state, some of the findings are necessarily tentative, but we would nevertheless argue that some relevant socio-economic dynamics have been unearthed that can contribute to understand the development of Brazilian football. First and foremost, perhaps, what our research suggests is that the development of football in São Paulo state (and wider Brazil) is far from a linear and clear-cut process. Given the size and heterogeneity of the country it should come as no surprise the fact that the historical dynamics were different in different areas and contexts; and this is relatively clear for example when comparing São Paulo city and the rest of the state. Thus, the socio-historical research of Brazilian football needs to pay attention to this diversity and we would call for adopt a broader agenda of inquiry.

In relation to our main research objectives, we can conclude that the railways were indeed very important in stimulating the practice of football in the state of São Paulo. There were no clubs founded prior to the arrival of the railway in any cities. Employees from several levels participated in the creation of the clubs in the interior of the state, from managers and engineers to low-skilled workers. Furthermore, the railway provided a means of transportation, which reduced the travel time and cost, allowing the creation of the first regional competitions. The popularisation of football, as well as other sports, radically transformed the relationship of the public with the urban space, developing a new concept of leisure activities, such as sports.

Newspapers enthusiastically reported on this new urban and modern way of life, with a different dynamic from the quiet life on the countryside. The audience gathered to applaud the new idols of the cities and the sportsmanship.

A relevant finding of the study is how football represented a leisure practice for urban workers, but not for the rural working class. This is an area of prospective further research, as the relationship between football, workers and social class in Brazil might be important to better understand the phenomenon of sport at a macro level. In this respect, the absence of both the land owners and agricultural workers is important. Different from the urban centers of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, football on the countryside did not begin with the adoption of the traditional ruling elites, but rather started as a more inclusive practice with liberal professionals and urban workers. The clubs we have identified in our research were founded by a mixture of urban middle classes and blue-collar workers, mainly railway workers and merchant families. It is remarkable that there is no record of clubs created in coffee farms.

It is of course difficult to specify the exact number of clubs that were founded on the countryside of São Paulo during that period. But this article has sought to discuss the symbiotic relationship between football and the expansion of the railway system. Perhaps many other clubs that originated in this way no longer exist, which can be explained by economic, administrative factors or even the devaluation that rail transport suffered in the second half of the twentieth century.

This socioeconomic development linked to the railways and the coffee farms, which included the creation of football clubs, would end abruptly in the 1950s with the economic changes and the government decision to focus on the highways and trucks as the primary means of transportation. The railway would begin a quick period of decadence, losing economic power and prestige to the point that today few clubs remain active. The stations ceased to be the central point of the cities and their employees were no more the elite workers bringing the new fashions and trends from the capital and beyond.

Although football is a central activity in the life of many Brazilians, there are still many aspects of its historical roots that remain little or not at all discussed. The historiography of football is still focused on the major cities and the tales of the founding fathers, tied to the idea of the romantic era of football dominated by the amateur elitist ethos. This research showed that the process of spreading of football is more complex and dynamic than described by the most common sources, not only restricted to the urban elites or the foreigner employees.

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