Abstract:

In recent years there has been a wealth of research into how the game of football developed, however, rather than establishing a common theme this research has led to competing theories with some historians taking an 'orthodox' perspective, believing that the public schools played the lead role in the development of the sport. Others subscribe to a 'revisionist' position, arguing that the public schools were not as influential as traditionalists believe and that the lower-middle-classes were more relevant in the game’s ultimate development.¹ This paper informs the debate by considering the evidence to suggest an alternative way of viewing the history of the world’s leading professional team game. Much has been written about the game’s birth, even if academics have differing views on what constitutes the birth of the sport. This paper considers how to utilise the evidence provided within the existing debates to establish a new framework. This framework will determine how best to work the orthodox-revisionist debate into an all-encompassing framework which, it is hoped, will prove a model for the sport, and potentially for all sports in the forthcoming years.