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Institutional Theory in Sport: A Scoping Review

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Institutional Theory in Sport: A Scoping Review

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2 Institutional theory has generated considerable insight into fundamental issues within sport.
3 This study seeks to advance Washington and Patterson's (2011) review by providing an
4 empirical review of institutional theory in sport. We follow Arksey and O'Malley's (2005)
5 scoping review protocol to identify 188 sport related institutional studies between 1979 and
6 2019. Our review provides evidence regarding the state of institutional scholarship within sport
7 via an analysis of authorship; year; journal; methodology; method; study population; and use
8 of institutional constructs (legitimacy, isomorphism, change, logics, fields, and work). Rather
9 than a hostile takeover or a joint venture proposed in Washington and Patterson's (2011)
10 review, the relationship between fields is more aptly described as a diffusion of ideas. By
11 developing an empirical review of institutional studies in sport, we hope to expedite the
12 diffusion of ideas between the two fields and work toward realising the collective benefits any
13 future joint venture may bring.

14
15 *Keywords:* legitimacy, isomorphism, change, fields, logics, work

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18 Date of Submission: October 4th, 2021

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Introduction

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We can state, without hyperbole, that concepts from the institutional theory perspective have become institutionalized in the sport management literature. Concepts such as isomorphism, institutionalization, legitimacy, and organizational fields dominate subsequent research in that area. Around the same time that Powell and DiMaggio's (1991) 'orange book' was released, early sport management scholars, led by Trevor Slack, started applying the concepts of institutional theory to the sport context. Since then, the neo-institutional approach (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991) has generated considerable insights into sport and has sought to explain fundamental issues within the field. These include what makes (sport) organizations so similar? Why do they adopt practices that are seemingly irrational? And how can we explain organizational change within sport organizations? Early institutional studies examined how institutional arrangements influence structure, design, and behavior of sport organizations (e.g., Kikulis, et al., 1992). This included explaining the shift from amateurism to professionalism within sport organizations and systems (e.g., O'Brien & Slack, 1999). These studies addressed how sport organizations can navigate their institutional environments to survive. Emphasis here included how and in what ways sport organizations respond to institutional pressures (e.g., Slack & Hinings, 1994).

More contemporary institutional research has challenged the underlying assumptions of neo-institutionalism and the deterministic viewpoint that actors are "cultural dopes" subject to the "iron cage" of institutional forces (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). Instead, institutional scholars, including some sport management researchers, have turned their attention to how actors are able to influence (i.e., create, maintain, and disrupt) institutional arrangements (e.g., Agyemang et al., 2018). This re-orientation towards agency has produced a raft of new institutional-related research in sport which has sought to examine how

44 individuals and sport organizations are able to change or adapt their institutional
45 environments (e.g., Nite & Edwards, 2021).

46 Despite the continued contribution of institutional theory to sport, there remains
47 definitional ambiguities surrounding the central concept of what constitutes an “institution”.
48 The term institution is homonymous. Ranging from narrow definitions of organizational
49 types such as prisons or universities (i.e., equating institutions to organizations), to broader
50 definitions such as “self-reproducing social order” which involves “cognitive, normative and
51 regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior”
52 (Scott, 1995, p. 33). We adopted Greenwood et al. (2017) definition of institutions as “more-
53 or-less taken for granted repetitive social behavior that is underpinned by normative systems
54 and cognitive understandings that give meaning to social exchange and thus self-reproducing
55 social order” (pp. 4-5). This broader view ensured our review encapsulated as much of the
56 institutional-related sport literature as possible whilst delimiting it to organizational
57 institutionalism (Greenwood et al., 2017). In adopting this definition, the purpose of the
58 present study is to empirically review the use of institutional theory in sport literature. In
59 doing so, we seek to review scholarship that has utilized institutional approaches to
60 investigate phenomena in the empirical context of sport and provide recommendations for
61 future research.

62 Periodically, institutional theorists have taken stock of the field to stimulate
63 discussion and advance knowledge. In the mainstream literature this has often occurred in the
64 form of key texts such as DiMaggio and Powell’s (1991) ‘orange book’ or more recently
65 Greenwood et al’s (2008; 2017) ‘green books’. Within sport management these discussions
66 have taken the form of narrative reviews of institutional theory and sport management
67 research (Washington & Patterson, 2011), and more specific discussions based on the
68 development of specific constructs such as institutional work (Nite & Edwards, 2021). Our

69 scoping review complements these studies by offering the first empirical review of the
70 institutional theory in sport literature. By reviewing the insights of 188 institutional theory
71 studies in the context of sport since 1979, we hope to add to this literature via an exploration
72 of the growth, breadth, and development of institutional theory in sport.

73 **Methods**

74 Scoping reviews enable researchers to review knowledge in a field by adopting a
75 “systematic approach to map evidence, identify main concepts, theories, sources, and
76 knowledge gaps” (Tricco et al., 2018, p. 467). More specifically, they allow researchers to
77 determine the extent, nature, and range of evidence on a topic, and are particularly useful for
78 summarizing findings within research domains characterized by a heterogenous body of
79 knowledge (Tricco et al., 2018). Relative to other types of reviews such as meta-research
80 (i.e., syntheses of existing reviews) and systematic reviews (i.e., exhaustive reviews of
81 narrow content domains based on pre-established inclusion and exclusion criteria), scoping
82 review protocols are particularly appropriate for developing a structured approach to mapping
83 the broad field of institutional studies in the sport domain (Dowling et al., 2020) and were
84 therefore selected for this study. This study adopted Arksey and O’Malley’s (2005) scoping
85 review protocol. Arksey and O’Malley outline a five-stage protocol (i) identification of
86 research question, (ii) determination of relevant studies, (iii) study selection, (iv) charting the
87 data, and (v) collating, summarizing, and reporting the results. We also adopted the Preferred
88 Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Review
89 (PRISMA-SCR) (Tricco et al., 2018) which provided a 20-point checklist for presenting
90 scoping reviews.

91 **Identification of Research Question**

92 Our review sought to answer the following research question: How has institutional
93 theory been employed within sport related studies? In particular, the project had three aims:

94 (i) to investigate what is known about institutional theory within the empirical context of
95 sport; (ii) to investigate how the use of different institutional constructs (i.e., institutional
96 theory) within sport related literature has changed over time; and (iii) to identify potential
97 future directions of research within institutional theory and sport related literature.

98 **Determination of Relevant Studies**

99 In August 2019, three electronic databases were searched (Scopus, Web of Science,
100 SPORTDiscus) to ensure a comprehensive coverage of institutional studies in sport. The
101 electronic database search terms “Institution*” AND “Sport*” (All-Fields) yielded a total of
102 3091 hits (Scopus n=1302, Web of Science n=1515, SPORTDiscus n=274). We further
103 refined our search by focusing on peer-reviewed and English-language journal articles only.
104 We also deliberately chose not to delimit our timeframe to ensure complete coverage of the
105 literature. Consequently, all articles prior to August 2019, and those “in press” at this time,
106 were included in our review. Through this process of refinement and once duplicates were
107 removed, a total of 1995 articles were identified for further analysis.

108 **Study Selection**

109 To eliminate irrelevant studies, the research team developed explicit inclusion and
110 exclusion criteria. Consistent with Arksey and O’Malley’s (2005) protocol, these inclusion
111 and exclusion criterion were developed post-hoc through an iterative process. In addition to
112 the journal article and English language delimiters outlined above, an article was included if
113 it utilized or engaged with concepts derived from organizational institutionalism (per Hall &
114 Taylor, 1996) or referred to new institutionalism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991) as opposed to
115 alternate schools of institutionalism such as institutional economics and rational choice. This
116 included any study which utilized core (e.g., isomorphism, legitimacy, logics, institutional/
117 organizational change, fields) or secondary (e.g., decoupling, deinstitutionalization,
118 entrepreneur, hybridity, social movements, pluralism, materiality, leadership) institutional

119 concepts identified within the SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism
120 (Greenwood et al. 2017). Delimiting studies in this way ensured that our final data set
121 included studies which utilized the theoretical, rather than normative use of the term
122 institution, which often describes organizational contexts (e.g., university, school, or
123 hospital), subsets of these contexts (e.g., institutional review board), or descriptions of
124 institutionalized persons (e.g., prisoners, mental health patients, aged care residents).

125 To ensure the reliability of the selection process, the first and second author
126 conducted an inter-coder reliability test on 100 articles from the SPORTDiscus database (first
127 100 automatically sorted by relevance according to EBSCO Host's algorithm). This process
128 returned an initial result of 96% agreement, with only minor differences between reviewers
129 on the remaining 4% of citations that were rectified upon discussion. Following this, the first
130 four authors, then independently conducted a title and abstract review of citations to ensure
131 that they met the inclusion criteria. Through this process a total of 209 studies were selected
132 for full-text analysis. A further 50 studies were excluded upon an analysis of their full text,
133 leaving 159 studies in our database. We conducted a manual search of all reference lists of
134 these 159 studies identified in the database search to identify any additional citations that
135 were not captured in the initial search. This extra step identified 29 additional relevant studies
136 and took our final database to 188 studies.

137 **Charting the Data**

138 The next stage of the process involved charting and data extraction from the 188
139 citations identified from the search process. Data extraction was carried out using Microsoft
140 Excel and involved collecting the following information on all citations: author, publication
141 year, title, journal, journal type (i.e., sport or non-sport journal), abstract, study purpose,
142 research questions, study location, article type (i.e., empirical/non-empirical), methodology,
143 method, study population (e.g., national sport organizations), sport (e.g., football), use of

144 theory (specific/general), core constructs (e.g., isomorphism), dynamics and processes (e.g.,
145 coercive pressures). The selection of these variables was based upon the research question
146 and overall aims. All articles were then randomly divided across the research team to extract
147 the relevant data. The research team also met regularly throughout this stage to ensure
148 accuracy and consistency of the data extraction process.

149 **Collating, Summarizing and Reporting Results**

150 A frequency and thematic analysis of the final database was then conducted.
151 Frequency analysis is a descriptive statistical method that shows the number of occurrences
152 for each variable. This analysis primarily focused on publication frequency by year,
153 publication by journal, and geographical distribution of studies. We ran frequency analyses
154 for publication by authors, study population, type of sport, article types and methods. We
155 were also particularly interested in how institutional concepts had been adopted and utilized
156 within the sport literature, so we ran frequency analyses of constructs over time. For our
157 thematic analysis, we structured our review around the five core constructs (or tenets)
158 identified by Washington and Patterson (2011): legitimacy, isomorphism, fields,
159 organizational change, and logics. This enabled us to make direct comparisons about how the
160 use of institutional theory in sport had changed over time. Additionally, the research team
161 were also conscious of ensuring that we fully captured the use of any new concepts or recent
162 developments that emerged within mainstream management and sport literature. For this
163 reason, we added a sixth construct (institutional work and entrepreneurship), which emerged
164 as an increasingly influential area of research both within the mainstream and sport
165 management literature (Nite & Edwards, 2021). The next section presents the frequency and
166 thematic analyses in full.

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Findings and Discussion

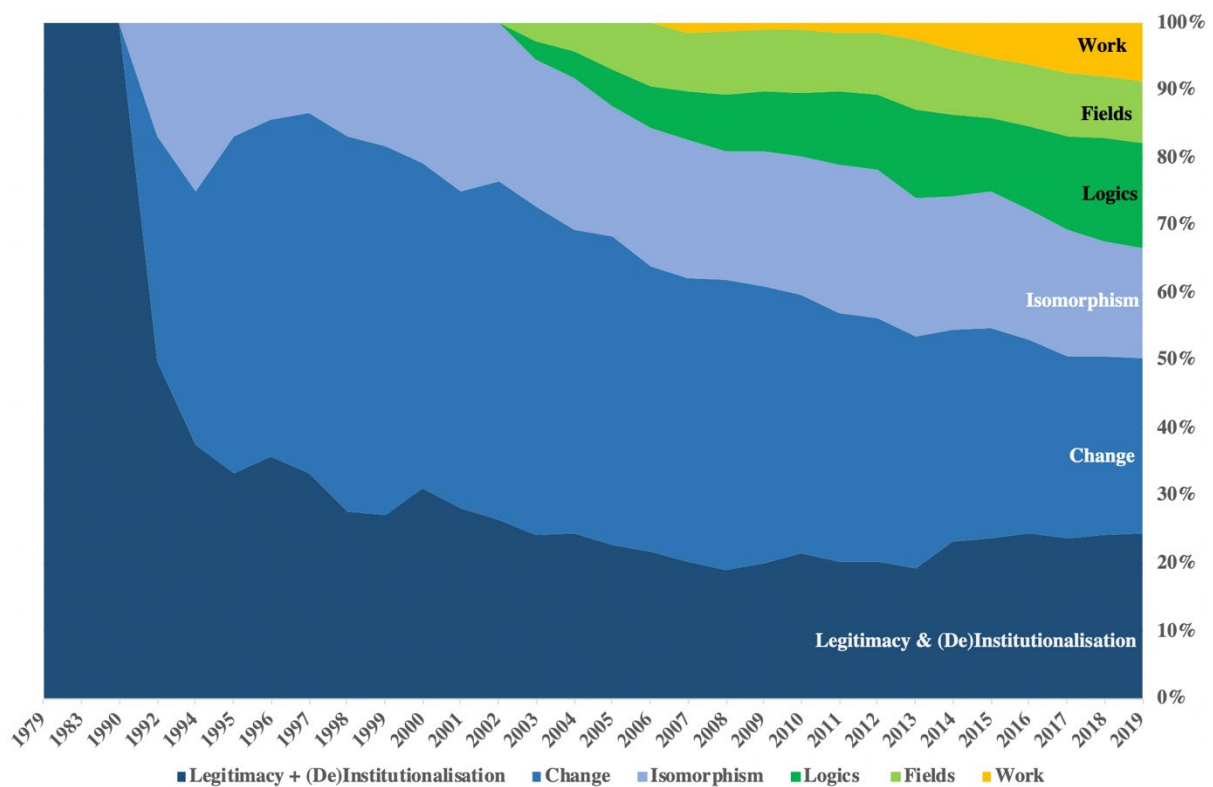
Descriptive Analysis

The analysis yielded a comprehensive framework from which to describe the state of institutional theory in sport. The findings indicated that 229 researchers had (co)authored 188 studies since 1979. Indicative of the growth of the field, and institutional theory itself, over half (54%) of these studies have been published since 2013. Three in four studies (76%) were located within sport journals, with the *Journal of Sport Management* (31, 17%); *Sport Management Review* (24, 13%); *European Sport Management Quarterly* (15, 8%); and *International Review of the Sociology of Sport* (12, 6%) the most prominent. The remaining studies mainly appeared in mainstream management literature with the most common journals identified as *Academy of Management Journal* (4), *Organization Studies* (3); and *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* (3). The most prolific researchers were identified as Trevor Slack (19), Marvin Washington (11), Eivind Skille (10), and Bob Hinings (10).

Nine in ten studies that utilized institutional theories were empirical (168, 89%), rather than conceptual or non-empirical (20, 11%). Qualitative methodologies were the most prominent within empirical studies (128, 76%); followed by quantitative (21, 13%); and mixed methods (19, 11%). Document analysis (41%), interviews (36%), observations (9%) and questionnaire/survey (6%) were the most frequently employed qualitative methodologies. Institutional theories were applied relatively evenly across a range of organizational contexts including national sport organizations (33, 18%); clubs (30, 16%); universities (primarily in the United States; 25, 13%); international federations (18, 10%); and leagues (15, 8%). A propensity for researchers to investigate multiple organizational contexts (32, 17%) within a single study was also noteworthy, in part due to the investigation of underlying social structures common within the institutional perspective.

194 **Institutional Constructs**

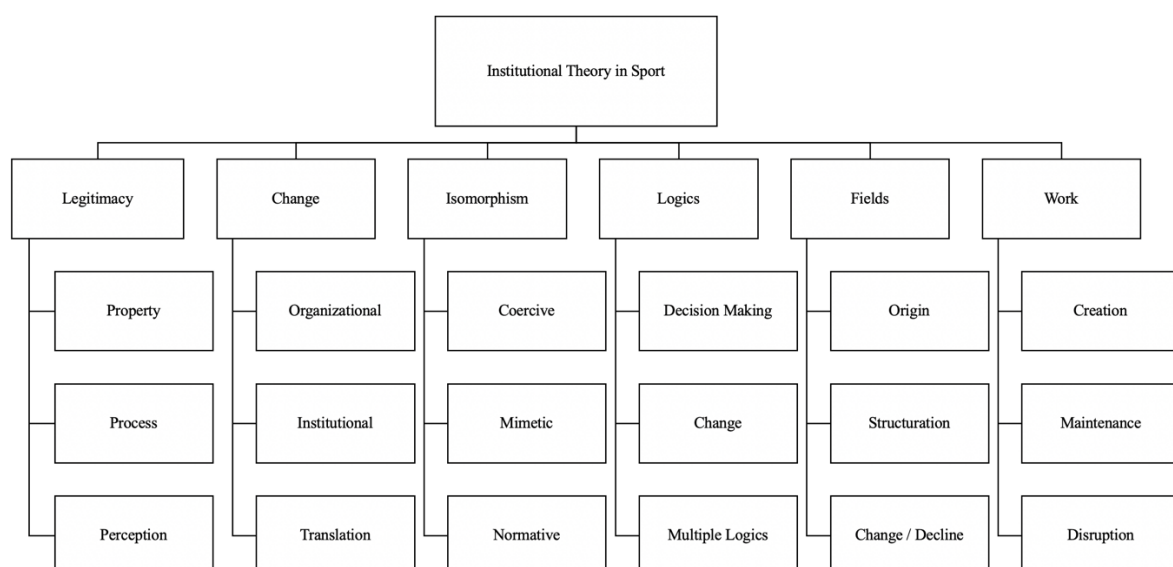
195 Three-hundred-and-six institutional constructs were utilized within the 188 studies
 196 identified in our population, averaging 1.6 constructs per study. Building on the work of
 197 Washington and Patterson (2011), the most applied constructs were *change* (77);
 198 *legitimization* (including [de]institutionalization) (73); *isomorphism* (49); *logics* (46); *work*
 199 (including entrepreneurship) (26); *fields* (27); and *other* (i.e., translation, leadership,
 200 decoupling) (8). Figure 1 outlines the relative usage of constructs over time (i.e., the
 201 percentage of studies that used a construct to that point in time).



202 The first generation of constructs in blue consisted of legitimization, change and
 203 isomorphism and were the foundational constructs upon which neo-institutionalism
 204 developed in mainstream management and sociological discourses from the late 1970s to the
 205 mid-1990s (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This group of
 206 constructs accounted for all studies in our analysis until the mid-2000s. The second
 207 generation of constructs consisted of logics and fields (e.g., Friedland & Alford, 1991);
 208

209 Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). These views came to prominence within the sport management
 210 literature in the mid-2000s to explain issues of competing logics within predefined areas of
 211 organizational life. They also spawned several sub-domains including complexity, pluralism
 212 and hybridity that are becoming more common in the literature. The third and final
 213 generation picks up on the agency turn in institutional scholarship that broadly encompasses
 214 notions of institutional work and entrepreneurship (DiMaggio, 1988; Lawrence & Suddaby,
 215 2006). These constructs focus more on the links between institutional structures and agency
 216 to better understand how agents (e.g., individuals, organizations) can influence the creation,
 217 maintenance, and disruption of institutions.

218 Figure 2 presents the six constructs of institutional theory developed by Washington
 219 and Patterson (2011) and Greenwood et al. (2008). In addition, we extend on their work by
 220 incorporating contemporary reviews and sub-classifications of each construct to help us, and
 221 the field, conceptualize the broad domain of institutional theory in sport (e.g., Durand &
 222 Thornton, 2018; Micelotta et al., 2017; Suddaby et al., 2017). We do not claim or assert the
 223 relative propriety of these frameworks in comparison to the multitude of others available,
 224 however, we look to these works as effective conceptual tools to organize our thinking and to
 225 demonstrate the scope of the field. Each construct will be discussed below.



227 **Legitimacy and Institutionalization**

228 Our analysis revealed forty-one studies that investigated legitimacy. Organizational
229 legitimacy can be defined as “the perceived appropriateness of an organization to a social
230 system in terms of rules, values, norms, and definitions” (Deephouse et al., 2017, p. 32).
231 Whilst the literature has identified many types of legitimacy (e.g., pragmatic, moral,
232 cognitive), we draw from the legitimacy review study conducted by Suddaby et al. (2017)
233 that identified three sub-research domains: legitimacy-as-property (i.e., as something an
234 organization owns); legitimacy-as-process (i.e., socially constructed via interactions between
235 actors); and legitimacy-as-perception (i.e., a collective social judgement or evaluation).

236 The concept of legitimacy as a property that an organization owns has been utilized to
237 explain a wide range of settings including the regulatory legitimacy of new lifestyle sports
238 (e.g., Batuev & Robinson, 2018) and the utility of legitimacy to attract funding, support
239 policy goals, and to provide governance oversight (e.g., Stenling & Sam, 2017). When
240 viewed as a process, legitimacy studies have investigated the legitimation processes of
241 various sport leagues, associations, and regulatory bodies (e.g., Read et al., 2019). Finally, a
242 small but promising area of research has investigated perceptions of legitimacy. Particularly
243 noteworthy here is the development of a framework that identified six themes that influenced
244 how stakeholders perceive the legitimacy of a sport organization: role in community, staff
245 and organizational behavior, valuing community, development approach, local players, and
246 trialling procedures (Lock et al., 2015).

247 Institutionalization and legitimacy often work in a symbiotic manner (e.g., Meyer &
248 Rowan, 1977). From this perspective, institutionalization can be thought of as a “specified
249 process of the social construction of value and the attainment of legitimacy... where certain
250 practices can be seen as the only natural way of action” (Washington & Patterson, 2011, p.
251 5). Our analysis identified twenty-one studies that specifically investigated a form of

252 institutionalization. For example, the institutionalization of governance and control structures
253 (Kikulis, 2000); or anti-ambush marketing legislation within the Olympic movement (Ellis et
254 al., 2016). Eleven further studies investigated deinstitutionalization (i.e., the reversal of
255 institutionalization processes) and were particularly prevalent in early institutional change
256 studies (e.g., O'Brien & Slack, 1999). An inherent difficulty in institutionalization studies is
257 the description of a program or structure that has, or is becoming, taken for granted or the
258 natural way of action. Consequently, many studies couple institutionalization as a point of
259 reference for historical activity that has subsequently been challenged or changed.

260 **Change**

261 Seventy-seven studies were identified in our review that broadly related to change.
262 Although we recognize their overlap, studies were categorized into three indicative areas:
263 *organizational change* (n=26); *institutional change* (n=44), and *translation* (n=7).

264 ***Organizational change***

265 The first generation of change research grew out of an attempt to understand how the
266 institutional environment influenced the structure, design, and values of sport organizations
267 (e.g., Amis et al., 2004) (n=19). This body of research utilized design archetypes as
268 representations of organizations (e.g., Kikulis et al., 1992), and plotted these archetypes
269 against change tracks to determine the “incidence, nature and cause of movements and the
270 absence of movement *between* archetypes” (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988, p. 303). The
271 cumulation of this work was a more nuanced theoretical understanding of differences in the
272 pace (initially quick, then slower), sequence (initially high-impact areas such as the board),
273 and linearity (or more accurately non-linearity of change involving “oscillations and
274 reversals”) of organizational change (Amis et al., 2004). A second group of studies utilized
275 Pettigrew’s (1987) contextualist approach to understand change based on content, context,
276 and process (n=4). This viewpoint offered a strong grounding in the external conditions for

277 change to help explain organizational change in transforming societies, or broad shifts in
278 national sport systems (e.g., Girginov & Sandanski, 2008). The final subset of studies built on
279 Laughlin's (1991) models of rebuttal, reorientation, colonization, and evolution to explain
280 organizational change (n=3), drawing from more critical forms of inquiry to surface internal
281 complexities and tensions in the change process (e.g., Zakus & Skinner, 2008).

282 *Institutional Change*

283 Institutional change is broadly understood as differences in the "form, quality, or state
284 over time in an institution... [between] two or more points in time on a set of dimensions
285 (e.g., frames, norms, or rules)" (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006, p. 866). We adopt the
286 typology developed by Micelotta et al. (2017) that consists of: displacement, alignment,
287 accommodation, and accretion, to classify the institutional change literature. Displacement
288 studies investigate how institutions change when one set of institutional frames, norms, rules,
289 or logics, are displaced by another (n=7). Within sport, this included how professionalism
290 displaced amateurism in English cricket organizations (e.g., Wright & Zammuto, 2013), or
291 how cultures of similarity were challenged by diversity initiatives (e.g., Cunningham, 2009).

292 Alignment research (n=19) has investigated how "institutional entrepreneurs embed
293 changes into existing institutions and how macro-environmental evolutions can entail gradual
294 and piecemeal institutional transitions" (Micelotta et al., 2017, p. 1901). For example, as
295 societal norms and expectations changed toward concussion (e.g., Heinze & Lu, 2017); pay
296 (e.g., Wright & Zammuto, 2013); and intercollegiate sport (e.g., Nite et al., 2019); powerful
297 organizational actors worked to align their institutional fields with these changes to preserve
298 the prevailing institutional structure. In fragmented and contested domains, forms of
299 accommodation may occur between challengers seeking "to profoundly reconfigure the
300 redistribution of material and symbolic resources" and incumbents who benefit from the
301 existing arrangements and seek to protect their position (Micelotta et al., 2017, p. 1902)

302 (n=6). Studies have demonstrated the complex stakeholder environments in sport necessitate
303 accommodation (e.g., Pedras et al., 2020) and can turn to innovative ideas such as the
304 development of a separate shareholding company to accommodate competing logics within a
305 single organization (Skirstad & Chelladurai, 2011). Finally, an emerging area of institutional
306 research investigates the accretion of “bottom-up”, “uncoordinated”, or the “amplification of
307 micro-level interactions” that can lead to transformational institutional change (n=3). For
308 example, changes in sport participation (Borgers et al., 2019); discursive practices between
309 institutional entrepreneurs and defenders (Lakshman & Akhter, 2015); and the “unintentional
310 coproduction” embedded in the everyday organizational life of sport organizations (Fahlén &
311 Stenling, 2019) can all, over time, lead to substantive institutional change.

312 ***Translation***

313 Translation primarily investigates how ideas travel (n=8). The concept is broadly
314 defined as when “new ideas are combined with already existing institutional practices and ...
315 involves the combination of new externally given elements received through diffusion as well
316 as old locally given ones inherited from the past” (Campbell, 2004, p. 80). The concept of
317 translation has been used in a relatively specific manner in sport studies. Predominately by
318 Scandinavian scholars to investigate how sport policies and programmes from central
319 formulators are translated and applied by implementors in local contexts (e.g., Skille, 2011).

320 ***Isomorphism***

321 Generally, isomorphism refers to the notion that institutionalized ideas can influence
322 organizations to embrace structures and forms that resemble other organizations in the field
323 and as a result become increasingly similar (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). More specifically, it
324 has been argued that “organizations increasingly become isomorphic [i.e., similar] over time
325 as they collectively incorporate templates for organizing from their institutional environment
326 in search of legitimacy” (Heugens & Lander, 2009, p. 61). However, this process assumes

327 that adopting these specific practices will help provide a competitive advantage for the
328 organization (i.e., adoption = survival) when in reality this notion is a myth (Meyer &
329 Rowan, 1977). Forty-nine studies in this analysis considered isomorphism in their research.

330 Several moderating field level influences on isomorphic processes have been
331 identified. For example, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) detailed three generic isomorphic
332 pressures that can lead organizations to become increasingly similar (mimetic processes,
333 normative pressures, and coercive isomorphism). Mimetic processes are often caused by
334 uncertainty (ambiguous goals or environmental) and during these times, organizations will
335 try to copy or imitate others who are seen as successful or legitimate (DiMaggio & Powell,
336 1983). Normative pressures on the other hand are associated with the adoption of practices or
337 structures concerning what is generally considered to be a proper course of action within a
338 particular field (e.g., professionalization) (Greenwood et al., 2008). Finally, coercive
339 isomorphism is the product of power relationships and politics. Often, it results from “both
340 formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which
341 they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations
342 function” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 150). Many of the studies in this review (n=31) that
343 applied isomorphism as a main construct also discussed the impacts of all three pressures. For
344 example, Slack and Hinings (1994) used the concept of isomorphism and related institutional
345 pressures to explore the emergence of professional and bureaucratic organisational structures
346 in Canadian national sport organizations. On the other hand, some studies referred to the
347 generic isomorphic pressures without specifically discussing isomorphism as a core construct
348 (n=4). Leopkey and Parent (2012) for example, used DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) three
349 generic pressures to describe how the concept of event legacy became institutionalized within
350 the Olympic Movement. Twelve studies utilized isomorphism as a core construct but did not
351 detail the isomorphic processes involved.

352 Logics

353 The concept of institutional logics emerged and evolved in response to common
354 concerns within organization studies generally, and neo institutionalism specifically (e.g.,
355 agency, bounded rationality, and disproportionate attention on both mimetic isomorphism
356 and the structural influence of organizational fields) (Durand & Thornton, 2018). Thornton
357 and Ocasio (1999) defined institutional logics as “the socially constructed historical patterns
358 of cultural symbols and material practices, assumptions, values, and beliefs by which
359 individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and
360 provide meaning to their daily activity” (p. 804). Ultimately, logics are understood as guiding
361 principles that are both influenced by, and have an influence on, the behavior of actors and
362 organizations within social and institutional contexts. It is this (i.e., Thornton & Ocasio,
363 1999) approach to logics, alongside that of Friedland and Alford (1991), that guided the
364 majority of the forty-six studies in this review.

365 We structure our review of logic studies in sport by combining areas of focus
366 identified in Durand and Thornton’s (2018) review and those of Lounsbury et al., (2017).
367 Together these studies observe that research on logics tends to cover three key areas: logics
368 and decision-making, changing logics, and dealing with multiple institutional logics.

369 *Logics and Decision-making*

370 Fundamentally, logics are understood as a frame for organizational decision-making
371 and action. While some studies have specifically examined this relationship, fewer have
372 focused here compared to the other two areas. Those that have, largely concentrated on the
373 differing impact of multiple logics. For instance, Southall et al. (2008) examined how the
374 dual logics of education and commercialism impacted the television representation of the
375 National Collegiate Athletic Association’s (NCAA) “March Madness” basketball event. In
376 doing so, they found that the education logic had very little influence on related strategic

377 decision-making, while the dominant commercial logic directly impacted strategic choices
378 related to television production. They argued this supports the contention that even when
379 multiple logics were present, a dominant logic held a greater influence on decision-making,
380 while other logics may exist purely for “ceremonial conformity” (p. 694) in aid of legitimacy.

381 *Changing Logics*

382 Despite the stability often associated with institutions, the idea that logics emerge and
383 evolve over time in response to various social and institutional pressures is central to our
384 understanding of logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). As such, changing logics is among the
385 most prominent and enduring elements of logics research in both mainstream- and sport-
386 management literatures. Researchers have centred their examinations on the antecedents of,
387 and organizational responses to, changing logics and the consequences of those changes on
388 organizations. With respect to antecedents, studies have identified a variety of internal and
389 external, actions, forces and pressures that have influenced change (e.g., Borgers et al., 2018).
390 Organizational responses to, and consequences from changing logics have also received
391 attention. Nite (2017) for instance examined how the NCAA used media message framing to
392 undertake the institutional maintenance work to protect existing logics in response to external
393 pressures for change. Finally, some studies in this area have specifically addressed a call for
394 research by Washington and Patterson (2011) on the dynamics of creating and changing
395 logics in field level institutions. Hemme and Morais (2021), for example, identified and
396 described five rhetorical strategies used by the National Parks and Recreation Association to
397 develop and promote the field-level logic of public recreation in the United States.

398 *Dealing with Multiple Institutional Logics*

399 Greenwood et al. (2017) argue that “understanding how organizations cope with
400 multiple logics is a priority in institutional research because scholars acknowledge that such
401 plurality is rather the norm than the exception” (p. 11). The importance and pervasiveness of

402 multiple logics is reflected in the fact that many logic studies identified here considered
403 multiple logics. Organization can exist within more than one institutional sphere
404 simultaneously, and are consequently faced with negotiating multiple, pluralistic logics.
405 Institutional complexity subsequently arises out of the existence of pluralism and generates
406 varied responses to coping with conflicting and competing logics, such as hybrid forms of
407 organizing (e.g., Svensson, 2017). The exploration of responses to institutional complexity
408 was found to be central to the sport literature (e.g., Pedras et al., 2020). In particular, the
409 strategies of structural differentiation, or compartmentalization and effective leadership,
410 cultural buy-in, and stakeholder management were noted (e.g., Skirstad & Chelladurai, 2011).
411 Finally, researchers in sport have taken a closer look at the impact (real or hypothetical) of
412 specific sets of circumstances on the tensions between multiple logics at both the
413 organizational and field level. For example, Pedras et al. (2020) found that the threat of
414 insolvency “coalesced tension and compatibility between logics” (p. 494) at Triathlon
415 Australia, whilst Agyemang et al. (2018) found that tensions between competing logics were
416 eased by the perception of having to maintain an institution in response to a threat.

417 **Fields**

418 Fields are arguably the central organizing concept of institutional theory, Scott (2014)
419 suggests their understanding and use continues to be both “widely accepted and hotly
420 contested” (p. 219). The conceptual focus in sport studies seemingly revolves around the
421 formative definition of fields put forward by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and supported by
422 Bourdieu’s (1990) foundational notion of field. Of the 27 studies identified as directly
423 engaging with the concept of fields, 18 provided a clear definition of fields and of those, 16
424 utilized DiMaggio and Powell’s conceptualization to guide their understanding, while seven
425 of those also explicitly engaged with Bourdieu’s concept of field. Kitchin and Howe (2013)

426 provided a review of how elements of Bourdieu's practice theory (namely habitus, capital,
427 and most importantly field) could be integrated into sport management research.

428 DiMaggio and Powell (1983) define organizational fields as "those organizations that,
429 in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of life: key suppliers, resource and product
430 consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or
431 products" (p. 148). Washington and Patterson (2011) argued that "research in the
432 organizational field tradition is one of the places where the research in institutional theory has
433 moved faster than the research in the sport related institutional theory tradition" (p. 7). In the
434 years since their seminal study, we have seen more sport studies focusing on fields. But with
435 only 16 studies having been published since 2011 the increase has not been substantial. Scott
436 (2014) argued that "some of the most important organizational scholarship of the past four
437 decades has examined the origin, structuration, and change and/or decline of organization
438 fields" (p. 223). With this in mind we used these categories to frame our discussion of sport
439 studies that have utilized fields as their focal unit of analysis.

440 *Origin*

441 Consideration of the origins of institutional fields was found to be an area of research
442 that is underrepresented in sport studies. While this could be related to conceptual overlap
443 between origin, structuration, and change, with the focus of more studies falling under the
444 latter two, this is nevertheless a gap in the research. This gap is important as empirical
445 examinations of field origins could arguably provide a foundational depth of understanding
446 that would contribute to other institutional work in that field as well as offering practical
447 insights (Washington & Ventresca, 2008). In this review, only three studies were notable for
448 a clear focus on understanding how, why, and/or under what conditions a field comes to exist
449 in a way that is definable. For example, Washington and Ventresca (2008) explored the
450 origin of the field of US college athletics, whilst Hoibian (2006) adopted a historical narrative

451 approach to examine both the genesis and institutionalization of the field of mountaineering
452 by “analyzing the origin and developmental conditions of [the] social setting” (p. 341).

453 ***Structuration***

454 DiMaggio and Powell (1983) emphasize that “fields only exist to the extent that they
455 are institutionally defined” (p. 148) and it is this process of definition that we understand as
456 structuration. Scott (2014) further notes that in organizational fields structuration can be
457 referred to as “the extent of interaction and the nature of the inter-organizational structure
458 that arises at the field level” and more broadly, the activities that produce and reproduce these
459 social structures (p. 235). Within sport we see studies that examine many elements of field
460 structuration. For example, Wright (2009) introduced the notion of fields as “nested” within
461 one another, like a Russian Babushka doll, scrutinizing institutional change and formation via
462 the interplay of societal, field, and organizational mechanisms. This same mechanism was
463 then also adopted to examine multilevel (i.e., field) institutional change in the International
464 Paralympic Committee (Gérard et al., 2017), finding that field level logics are simultaneously
465 shaped by pressures coming from the top-down (i.e., from society to field) and from the
466 bottom-up (i.e., organizations influencing the broader field).

467 Research that focused on the influence of central powerful actors on field
468 structuration was also identified. Wright and Zammuto (2013) also added a horizontal
469 element to field structuration by investigating social positions relative to a central value
470 system (or logic) identifying central, middle status, and peripheral actors’ roles in multilevel
471 institutional change in English county cricket. Similarly, Washington (2004) considered how
472 the NCAA, as a powerful interest association central within the field of US collegiate
473 athletics, challenged the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics to maintain
474 dominance and control over field structuration.

475

476 *Change and Decline*

477 Change in institutional fields was found to be the most widely adopted area of field
478 research within sport studies. In addition, as has been noted, there is broad overlap between
479 examining change and structuration, meaning that many of the studies discussed in the
480 previous section could also be discussed here and vice versa. Alternatively, no studies were
481 identified as focusing on the decline of a field, signalling a key future research opportunity.

482 Principally, studies that considered field change looked at the process of change, the
483 nature and extent of change, and/or influences affecting change, although like the broader
484 categories many studies cover more than one of these areas. Among the most broadly cited
485 sport studies on the nature and extent of field change comes from Cousens and Slack's (2005)
486 analysis of the field of North American major league professional sport. They investigated
487 changes in four facets of the field over time, specifically: "communities of actors, their
488 exchange processes, their governance structures, and their beliefs and institutional logics of
489 action" (p. 13). They found that a shift in dominant logics from embracing sport specific
490 qualities, to stressing the entertainment value of major league sport, resulted from changing
491 governance models brought about primarily by the deregulation of cable television.

492 A final group of studies on field change bring attention to the influences that can
493 affect organizational change. Batuev and Robinson (2018) for instance identified three
494 influences that framed the evolution of the field of skateboarding: the symbolic importance
495 traditional non-competitive values, expanding commercial opportunities for professionalism
496 and sponsorship, and the perceived impacts (both positive and negative) of entrance into the
497 Olympic movement. In looking at field level change in English Rugby Union, O'Brien and
498 Slack (2003) concluded that "a shift in the field's dominant logic is promoted, and indeed
499 was prompted by a widespread change in its other components; notably, its communities of
500 actors, exchange processes, forms of capital, and regulatory structure" (p. 443).

501 **Institutional Work and Entrepreneurship**

502 One concept which has gained notable traction within institutional scholarship in the
503 last decade is institutional work. The perspective emerged from two broader literature bases
504 that emphasized the ability of individuals to shape institutional arrangements (DiMaggio,
505 1988), and the sociology of practice tradition which examines how individuals manage and
506 influence day-to-day activities (Bourdieu, 1977). Institutional work challenges the traditional
507 neo-institutional assumptions of structural determinism, and the notion that actors are
508 ‘cultural dopes’ at the whim of institutional arrangements. In their seminal work, Lawrence
509 and Suddaby (2006) define institutional work as “the purposive action of individuals or
510 organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions” (p. 215) and outline
511 various forms of institutional work. Since then, the perspective has “evolved from a concept
512 introduced to capture a set of actions described in institutional research, to a perspective on
513 the relationship between institutions and actors associated with a distinctive set of questions,
514 assumptions, findings and theoretical claims” (Hampel et al., 2017, p. 558). This shift is
515 apparent from the notable scholarly attention that has been dedicated to institutional work
516 within sport management over the past decade (Nite & Edwards, 2021).

517 Our analysis identified 16 studies which explicitly adopted the institutional work
518 perspective. Consistent with the mainstream management literature, these studies have
519 predominantly focused on organizational and field-level institutional arrangements and have
520 explored various research contexts including governing agencies (Dowling & Smith, 2016),
521 sport clubs (Lok & de Rond, 2013), sexual abuse (Nite & Nauright, 2020), and mixed martial
522 arts (MMA) organizations (Helms & Patterson, 2014; Woolf et al., 2016). We structure our
523 review of this body of works by utilizing Lawrence and Suddaby’s original categorizations:
524 creation, maintenance, and disruption.

525

526 Creation

527 Institutional work represents a fundamental departure from traditional institutional
528 sport scholarship that predominantly emphasized the influence of changing institutional
529 pressures on sport organizations (e.g., Slack & Hinings, 1994). More recent studies have
530 begun to focus on how actors are able to create institutional arrangements. For example,
531 Helms and Patterson (2014) analysis of MMA organizations demonstrated how actors were
532 able to utilize stigma, negative labels, and narratives created by others to attract audiences
533 and increase the popularity of the sport. Similarly, Woolf et al. (2016) provided a micro-level
534 account of how the sport of MMA developed within a training facility in Canada. Their
535 analysis extended on Lawrence and Suddaby's original framework by identifying *refinement*
536 and *barrier work* which Woolf et al. (2016) suggest both simultaneously helped grow, and
537 hinder, the development of the sport. Both studies revealed the paradoxical role that
538 institutional entrepreneurs – actors who create or transform institutional arrangements – can
539 play in disrupting the very institutions they have sought to create.

540 Maintenance

541 Maintenance work refers to how institutions are maintained by actors to ensure
542 institutional stability. Both Lawrence and Suddaby's original review of institutional work and
543 Washington and Patterson's (2011) review of institutional theory in sport highlighted the
544 need for more studies specifically within the area of maintenance. Our review suggests that
545 much work has now been done within this area. Lok and de Rond (2013) explained how
546 highly institutionalized practices are maintained by micro-level processes. Employing a year-
547 long ethnographic case study of one of the oldest sporting institutions, the Oxford-Cambridge
548 University Boat Race, the authors demonstrated that institutions contain a degree "plasticity"
549 whereby institutional scripts "are stretched to accommodate ever-changing practice
550 performance" (p. 186). Other studies have focused on how key sporting agencies maintain

551 their dominance within organizational fields. For example, the historical and longitudinal
552 analysis conducted by Nite et al. (2019) revealed how the NCAA maintained its dominance
553 through boundary work, adjustment of its own practices, and control of cognition (i.e., how
554 other actors understood collegiate sport).

555 *Disruption*

556 Our analysis indicated that there were few studies that explicitly focused on actors'
557 attempts to disrupt institutions within sport. This finding is consistent with Lawrence and
558 Suddaby's (2006) assertions that empirical studies of institutional disruption and
559 deinstitutionalization are rare. A recent exception was the study of Agyemang et al. (2018)
560 that examined how actors employed maintenance work to respond to attempts to disrupt
561 institutional arrangements in the case of Tommie Smith and John Carlos' silent protest at the
562 1968 Olympic Games. Although strictly speaking not a disruptive study, the analysis
563 demonstrates how actors at the micro-level respond to other actors' attempts to disrupt an
564 institution. Of note, the authors highlight the institutional complexity and the inter-play
565 between several competing logics which can be temporarily produce what they described as
566 an "institutional cease-fire" (p. 576).

567 We suggest that more work is needed within this specific area to understand how
568 actors attempt to disrupt institutions. Agyemang et al. (2018) recognized this in their
569 conclusionary remarks, "despite their role within change, we know very little about those
570 who defy institutional rules and norms in an attempt to highlight a given cause" (p. 578). This
571 is particularly surprising given that sport provides a rich context in which there are many
572 highly visible attempts to disrupt arrangements. Recent examples include Colin Kaepernick's
573 kneeling to the national anthem in response to racial prejudices and injustices, national
574 boycotts of mega-events, and individual athlete and state-sponsored doping violations. We
575 suggest that institutional theory has much more to offer in terms of being able to explain both

576 the processes and outcomes of these recent events. Further empirical examination of these
577 disruptive acts will offer unique opportunities to contribute to theory in general and explore
578 the interplay between actors, institutions, and logics specifically.

579 *Entrepreneurship*

580 A concept closely linked to institutional work is institutional entrepreneurship
581 (Maguire et al., 2004). Institutional entrepreneurship refers to “the activities of actors who
582 have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create
583 institutions or transform existing ones” (Maguire et al., 2004, p. 657). This research domain
584 emerged, in part, in response to the “paradox of embedded agency” problem which questions
585 how it may be possible to be embedded within an institutional field whilst simultaneously
586 able to shape it. Institutional entrepreneurs typically operate at micro-foundational level,
587 “work” on the periphery as boundary-spanners and can leverage their unique political and
588 social skills to enable institutional change.

589 Only a handful of studies (n=10) have adopted the institutional entrepreneurship
590 perspective. Researchers have utilized the sport context to provide more detailed analysis of
591 the micro-foundational level of how entrepreneurs operate. This includes the antecedents,
592 mechanisms, and outcomes of change (Lakshman & Akhter, 2015) and how entrepreneurs
593 can work to disrupt socially and ethically undesirable institutional practices (Khan et al.,
594 2007). Collectively, the above studies have contributed to an agency-focused approach that
595 helps explain how institutions can be created, maintained, and disrupted.

596 **Future Directions and Research Agenda**

597 This study sought to empirically review research that utilized institutional perspectives within
598 the sport context. In reviewing the literature, our analysis identified 188 studies, revealing
599 that sport, as an endeavor, is ripe to examine institutional phenomena. To work toward a joint
600 venture between institutional theory more broadly, and sport management literature

601 specifically, this section sets out to achieve two goals. Firstly, we identify gaps in our current
602 understanding based on our review of sport related institutional studies. Secondly, we attempt
603 to align these gaps in our knowledge with the current movements of institutional theory in
604 mainstream management to provide directions for future research.

605 With regards to our findings more generally, it seems to be that the sport management
606 literature is following the movements of institutional theory more broadly. Thus, when the
607 institutional theory literature was dominated by concepts of legitimacy, isomorphism, and
608 change, so too was the sport management literature. However, once concepts such as logics
609 and work were introduced to the institutional theory lexicon, so too did these concepts begin
610 emerging in the sport management literature. In this way, building on Washington and
611 Patterson (2011), the relationship between sport and institutional theory does not appear to be
612 a joint venture or a hostile takeover, but instead a sort of diffusion of ideas. Like how a store
613 gets a cult following in one location and then expands into other locations, so too has
614 institutional theory developed a following in mainstream management's literature prior to
615 expanding into sport management.

616 We would like to advance the conversation from a diffusion of ideas, toward a joint
617 venture in which both mainstream- and sport- management "share in the costs and share in
618 the benefits" of institutional analysis in sport (Washington & Patterson, 2011, p. 2). In Table
619 1 we identify sites of shared value to act as foundations for such a joint venture. The first
620 column (left) summarizes the sport related institutional knowledge based on our review of the
621 extant literature. The second column (middle) encapsulates the main thrust of future research
622 directions proposed by leading institutional scholars in recent reviews of specific institutional
623 constructs. Finally, the third column combines gaps in our sport-related knowledge with
624 future research directions of institutional theory more broadly for the purpose of laying the
625 foundation for a stronger joint venture between institutional theory and sport in future. Sites

626 of shared value should enable the pursuit of both derivate and sport-focussed models of
 627 research (Chalip, 2006). The former locates sport as an empirical context to affirm, apply,
 628 and advance mainstream theories (e.g., Lok & de Rond, 2013). The latter creates or adapts
 629 existing theory grounded in the phenomena of sport (e.g., Lock et al., 2015). We expand on
 630 these sites of shared value below.

631 Table 1 – Summary of findings, future research directions and potential sites of shared value
 632 for a joint venture
 633

Summary of findings	Future research directions	Potential sites of shared value
<p>Legitimacy & Institutionalization</p> <p>Researchers’ have primarily employed pragmatic questions to examine the utility of legitimacy as a property for sport organizations. The process of gaining or losing legitimacy, and in particular the perception or social evaluation of sport organizations legitimacy are less understood.</p>	<p>Derived from Deephouse et al (2017).</p> <p>(1) Critically review, integrate, and consolidate different approaches to verbal legitimation tactics. (2) Investigate how both symbolic and substantive management approaches influence legitimacy judgements (3) How do new governance mechanisms develop and maintain legitimacy? (4) How does digital technology affect legitimation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are verbal legitimation tactics used to justify transgressive behavior in sport? • How are social judgements (i.e., perceptions) regarding the legitimacy of sport organizations formed between different stakeholder groups? • What processes of legitimation and institutionalization have led international sport organizations to develop and maintain degrees of self-governance?
<p>Change</p> <p>Change was present within and across all our institutional constructs. Our analysis indicated a shift away from organizational change towards institutional change in recent years. Revolutionary top-down changes in which logics have either displaced or come to co-exist with</p>	<p>Derived from Micelotta et al (2017).</p> <p>(5) How is transformative change influenced by field pluralism? (6) How is balance between multiple logics negotiated and maintained in complex organizations? (7) How do institutional entrepreneurs craft legitimation strategies and articulate frames that resonate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do national sport organizations operating simultaneously in multiple fields, institutionalize transformative change? • How can institutional change help us understand social change in sport? • In what ways can micro-social practices

<p>other logics have dominated the change literature (e.g., the professionalization of amateur sports). Less understood is evolutionary, bottom-up change in which individuals and micro-processes change institutions over time.</p>	<p>with culturally heterogeneous audiences? (8) Under what conditions do micro-level acts of improvisations stimulate broader field-level transformations?</p>	<p>(e.g., kneeling) lead to institutional change in sport? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are sport policies translated between national, regional, and local levels? </p>
<p>Isomorphism</p> <p>Isomorphism studies have become relatively less frequent in the last decade. Most studies conducted utilized DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) three isomorphic pressures: mimetic processes, normative pressures, and coercive isomorphism and in line with mainstream literature found that organizations became increasingly similar within the same field.</p>	<p>Derived from Heugens and Lander (2009).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through what processes do organizations experience, interpret, and manage isomorphic pressures? • What field level mechanisms accelerate and coordinate collective organizational action? • How do micro sociological processes (i.e., agency) interact with isomorphic pressures? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does symbolic isomorphism to the sport ethic influence the substantive performance of sport organizations? • What field level mechanisms lead to ‘breaking the iron cage’ and the adoption of non-conforming organizational templates in sport organizations? • Does field structuration of a sport influence isomorphic mechanisms?
<p>Logics</p> <p>Many studies examined binary logics that contrasted forms of commercial sport logics (i.e., professionalization, elite, business ideals) with forms of voluntary sport logics (i.e., play, participation, amateurism ideals). Logic studies primarily focused on how a once dominant logic came to accommodate a new logic into their organizational meaning systems and decision-making processes.</p>	<p>Derived from Ocasio et al (2017).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do actors influence the micro foundations of institutional logics? • How do organizations assess and activate logics from the multiple logic systems that are available to them? • Under what conditions are actors able to invoke or combine different logics, and with what effects? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By what processes do sport organizations assess and activate logics within complex stakeholder environments? • Do different logic systems exist between similar sports? If so, why? • How has the combination of logics over time influenced the field structures and individual agency within given sports? • Do athlete behaviors, over time, transform institutional logics?

<p>Fields</p> <p>Many studies used fields as a conceptual boundary condition, rather than as a focal unit of analysis. A paucity of research on the origin and structuration of fields was identified. Sport has advanced our understanding of nested fields and provides a useful basis for the examination of multilevel institutional change</p>	<p>Derived from Zietsma et al., (2017).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the pace, sequence, and linearity of field changes? • How do organizations manage connections to multiple fields (i.e., those organizations in interstitial positions)? • What are the effects of field-to-field interactions on the structuration of respective fields? • How can issue fields influence the creation of institutional infrastructure to address societal problems? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By what mechanisms and processes does multilevel change occur within nested fields in sport? • How do social activists influence field dynamics in sport? • What is the role of proto institutions in field development in sport? • How has the pace, sequence and linearity of sport policy adoption differed between sports?
<p>Institutional Work & Entrepreneurship</p> <p>The main findings indicated that preliminary work had been completed in the areas of creation and maintenance, however there was yet to be any studies completed in the area of institutional disruption. This may be because of sport’s rigid institutional arrangements and the difficulties actors within sport can have in disrupting institutional arrangements.</p>	<p>Derived from Hampel et al. (2017).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does institutional work influence ‘big’ societal institutions (i.e., those beyond organizations and fields)? • When, why, and how do networks of heterogeneous actors work together to shape institutions? • How does institutional work relate to material objects such as new technologies? • How does institutional work shape policy and practice to address the world’s grand challenges? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the mass media distribution of sport, how can high profile athletes and sport organizations influence societal institutions? • How has new technology influenced the institutional work performed by sport managers? • To what extent do microsocial behaviors (e.g., passion, emotion) influence institutional work in the context of sport?

634
 635 Legitimacy and institutionalization are central to institutional analysis. Most of the
 636 work on legitimacy has focussed on legitimacy as an organizational property, a resource or
 637 asset that sport organizations gain or lose. Less research has investigated the process of how
 638 legitimacy is constructed, or the way the legitimacy of sport organizations is perceived or
 639 evaluated by their constituents. Regarding the process of legitimation, sport seems a good site

640 to integrate and consolidate different types of verbal legitimation tactics due to the highly
641 publicized and chronicled audio-visual content (e.g., sport commentary, press conferences,
642 government debates) and legitimacy struggles (e.g., doping, violence, match-fixing, race, and
643 gender issues). Analysing such content over a period of time could yield new theoretical
644 insights into the tactics used by institutional entrepreneurs to legitimate actions within the
645 field of sport. A second avenue for future research in the legitimacy domain, may be to
646 further the work of Lock et al. (2015) who developed the *Capture Perceptions of (Sport)*
647 *Organizations Legitimacy* framework to examine social judgements of an Australian
648 community sport organization. Expanding and testing this tool in new contexts could inform
649 the strategic legitimation efforts of sport organizations more broadly. Given that legitimacy
650 has ‘a clear effect on social and economic exchanges’ (Deephouse et al., 2017, p. 34) and the
651 social judgements of constituent groups are socially constructed and context dependent, the
652 expansion of this type of work to different types of sport organizations (e.g., international
653 federations, professional teams, sponsors, national sport organizations) could open up a range
654 of future research opportunities.

655 Change was omnipresent within the sport related institutional literature and within our
656 institutional constructs. Our findings indicated a shift away from focusing on the narrow
657 concept of organizational change, toward the broader concept of institutional change.
658 Building upon the observation that sport often leads discussions of societal change,
659 institutional scholars in sport could engage in the grand challenges research program as a way
660 of investigating the influence of sport on social change in broader societal institutions. As
661 institutional studies on race (e.g., Agyemang et al., 2018), inclusion (e.g., Robertson et al.,
662 2019), diversity (e.g., Cunningham, 2009), concussion (e.g., Heinze & Lu, 2017), sexual
663 abuse (e.g., Nite & Nauright, 2020), child labor (Khan et al., 2007), and doping (Read et al,

664 2019) all indicate, institutional theory can be a powerful lens from which to investigate some
665 of sport, management, and society's grandest challenges.

666 Like the construct itself, research in sport studies using isomorphism were found to be
667 relatively similar and generally aligned with forms of testing DiMaggio and Powell's (1983)
668 original hypotheses. Heugens and Lander's (2009, p. 78) meta-analysis of 144 isomorphism
669 studies concluded conformity with isomorphic pressures increased the symbolic performance
670 of organizations. However small average effect sizes (0.07 for coercive and normative
671 pressures and 0.09 for mimetic pressures) indicated relatively weak isomorphic forces and
672 hardly the inescapable iron cage that early structural determinists presented as a stylized fact
673 of organizational life. Consequently, whilst there is some theoretical meat left on proverbial
674 isomorphism bone, scholars need to be careful not to replicate what is known. One area of
675 promise, highlighted by Greenwood and Meyer (2008) is the investigation of power and
676 politics, and the degree of heterogeneity between organizations. They suggest that given
677 variance in 'field structuration,' 'complex institutional arrangements,' and 'multiple
678 institutional prescriptions' a more nuanced and multidimensional exploration of the degree of
679 similarity may be warranted (p. 263). One way this may be approached within sport studies is
680 to treat isomorphic mechanisms as "categories of mechanisms, not variables with specific
681 effects, and focus on how these mechanisms operate" (Washington & Ventresca, 2004, p.
682 93). Linking isomorphic mechanisms to agents (e.g., powerful elites) or historical field
683 structuring events (e.g., broadcast rights deals) could inform a more structural view of
684 institutional change that has been relegated in institutional scholarship following the agency
685 turn with its associated focus on actors, actions, and micro-social processes.

686 Logic studies generally investigated versions of the binary logics that contrasted
687 forms of commercial sport logics (i.e., professionalization, elite, business ideals) with forms
688 of voluntary sport logics (i.e., play, participation, amateurism ideals). These studies often

689 discussed two types of logic multiplicity, (1) where two logics lacked compatibility within a
690 single organization, and hence existed in a state of tension or conflict, or (2) how an existing
691 logic was displaced by a new logic. Rarely did logic studies investigate other types of logic
692 multiplicity such as the relationships between peripheral and dominant logics, or where
693 central logics were highly compatible (c.f. Besharov & Smith, 2014). Additionally, with few
694 exceptions (c.f., Borgers et al., 2019; Fahlen & Stenling, 2019), institutional logics and
695 change have been investigated from a top-down perspective in which changing logics at
696 societal, field, or organizational level influence forms of alignment and accommodation of
697 logics at lower levels. What is less well understood is how these changes can occur from a
698 bottom-up perspective, or how existing institutional arrangements can be slowly transformed
699 by the aggregation of micro-social processes. Given sports relative rigid institutional logic
700 systems, a view toward how micro-social processes transform field level logics over time
701 may be a beneficial future research avenue.

702 Our research aligned with Washington and Patterson's (2011) observation that the
703 organizational (or institutional) field construct, seems to be the one construct that has not
704 diffused as much as the others (less than 8% of all studies, but having been around since
705 2000). Potentially this could be attributed to the fact that most published sport studies only
706 examine one sport (or one organization, association, etc.) at a time. Whereas organizational
707 field studies tend to study movements of broader activities that are nested across multiple
708 organizations. A particular limitation of many field studies we observed was the use of fields
709 as a tool for delimiting the contextual boundary for studies focussing on other institutional
710 constructs (e.g., logics or isomorphism), as opposed to 'saying something' about the field
711 itself. Within those studies that have been undertaken, our analysis specifically revealed a
712 lack of research on the origin and structuration of fields. This has implications in three ways.
713 Firstly, how field formation relates to institutionalization and legitimation of fields/sports at

714 inception. Secondly, as Washington (2004) demonstrated, fields merge, split, grow, and
715 decline over time. Many major sport institutions around the world formed based on
716 combining fields. Third, the structuration of fields can influence how symbolic and material
717 resources are distributed, how norms are formed, and what type of actors have power relative
718 to the accepted norms and values of the field. Better understanding the historical
719 development of, and structuration processes within fields, could help us more accurately
720 develop an understanding of how modern sport came to be, and why certain groups hold
721 decision making power.

722 Our final call for future research is a call for a continued divergence between
723 institutional work and other notions of institutional change. Our findings broadly align with
724 Nite and Edwards (2021) review of institutional work literature in sport management, in
725 particular their call for a stronger integration of institutional work with other core institutional
726 constructs (particularly fields, legitimacy, and logics). As institutional scholarship
727 increasingly focusses on agency, there is a heightened need to bring micro sociological
728 approaches back into institutional theory, and in doing so link these with existing institutional
729 constructs which better explain macro sociological phenomena. Given the applied focus of
730 sport management, it is hardly surprising that sport scholars have gravitated to institutional
731 work to explain the changing arrangements within sport. We feel there are opportunities for
732 investigating how individuals in sport can influence society. If 2020 has taught us anything, it
733 is that sport might be the first place where societal institutions are de-institutionalized or
734 disrupted. Sport leagues were one of the first professions to shut down during the onset of
735 COVID-19 and empty stadia became one of the iconic symbols of changed societal
736 institutions impacted by COVID-19. The Black Lives Matter protests not only almost
737 disrupted the restart of those leagues, but it also reverberated across the globe. In addition,
738 delving deeper into the psychological mechanisms (e.g., passion, emotion) and field location

739 (e.g., central, middle status, and peripheral) of actors may also help advance institutional
740 theory in the sport context. Moreover, this line of research has the potential to further develop
741 concepts of institutional entrepreneurship and institutional leadership.

742 Building upon the idea of sport management and institutional theory as a diffusion
743 process, it is encouraging to see the introduction of new ideas into sport management journals
744 (e.g., leadership, emotions, perceptions of legitimacy etc.). This suggests that just like
745 institutions change, so too will the institutional theory studies that are published in sport
746 management (albeit with lots of work and slowly). We only hope that with the maturation of
747 institutional theory in the sport management literature that there are enough gatekeepers
748 (editors and reviewers) that are equally aware of these newer concepts and do not constrain
749 contemporary institutional scholarship to the 1980s version of institutional theory.

750 Recognizing institutional theory's explanatory potential, it is incumbent on scholars to see
751 beyond the theory's historical beginnings and utilize the wide variety of perspectives that
752 contemporary institutional scholarship offers.

753 **Conclusion**

754 Scoping reviews possess several limitations, particularly in comparison to other
755 review types such as systematic reviews or meta-analyses. Firstly, scoping reviews do not
756 assess the quality of the studies included in the review, nor are they as exhaustive as
757 traditional systematic reviews. Secondly, the homonymous nature of the term institution (and
758 its derivatives) in combination with multiple types of institutionalism (i.e., political,
759 economic – see Hall & Taylor, 1996) make the conceptual boundaries of any search, at best,
760 porous. Whilst we included an additional evaluation stage that involved an ancestry search of
761 all citations in our analysis to identify any boundary spanners to minimize this limitation, we
762 do not claim that our review is an exhaustive representation of studies that have utilized
763 institutional theory in sport. Finally, common limitations in scoping reviews were also

764 apparent in our study. For example, whilst we have made efforts to include the seminal books
765 of the field in general, such as the orange (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991) and green books
766 (Greenwood et al., 2008; 2017), our search only included journal articles written in English.

767 Institutional theory has become one of the central theoretical perspectives in sport
768 studies. Contemporary institutional theory now covers a vast territory, from individual
769 agency to world society. Despite this, no structured empirical review of this literature had
770 been attempted. This is an important oversight for a discipline wishing to theoretically
771 advance as an academic field, and practically influence the provision of sport. By providing
772 an empirical review of institutional theory in sport we hope to expediate the diffusion of ideas
773 between mainstream- and sport- management in the hopes of realising the collective benefits
774 of a joint venture in the future.

775 This scoping review has advanced Washington and Patterson's (2011) study by
776 systematically reviewing and consolidating sport related institutional studies. Institutional
777 theory can be a daunting theoretical landscape for new (and experienced) scholars to enter.
778 By reviewing the literature (see appendix 1) we hope to have contributed in a small way to
779 advancing the accessibility of contemporary institutional theories as they relate to sport. Our
780 second contribution looked to map the extant literature into conceptual groups. By outlining
781 and classifying the notable features of the theoretical landscape (Figure 2), our hope is that
782 scholars are more able to easily navigate their way through the institutional terrain.

783 Our third contribution was to demonstrate the growth, breadth, and development of
784 institutional theory in sport (Figure 1). Institutional theory is not singular, but rather a
785 composite of theoretical viewpoints, the major constructs of which were analyzed in this
786 study. Our final contribution was the development of a road map for future research (Table
787 1). In the decade since Washington and Patterson's (2011) study, the number of studies that
788 have used institutional theory in sport have more than doubled. Consequently, the theoretical

789 landscape is substantively different now, then it was then. By providing a clear road map for
790 future research, with signposts to contemporary reviews, we hope to expediate diffusion of
791 ideas between mainstream- and sport- management.

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