

# The Institutionalization of Sport: A Case Study of Canadian Lacrosse, 1844-1914

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This paper examined the concept and process of institutionalization of sport using Canadian lacrosse during the period 1844 to 1914 as an example. In particular, a framework was adapted from Peter L. Berger's and Thomas Luckman's *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*. This framework of constant features of the process of institutionalization was utilized to characterize the process as one of shaping or channelling or funnelling of human behaviour in a particular context or time period. Secondly, the framework was used to unravel the layers of behaviour that account for the process of institutionalization of lacrosse by isolating 6 factors: competitive structure, amateurism/non-amateurism, professionalism/commercialism, strategy/tactics, violence, and regionalism. These factors were analyzed along with the constant features of institutionalization in four stages of chronological development.

The study found that institutionalization is a critical and complex factor of shaping sport/lacrosse behaviour. Institutionalization is a patterned process that crosses time boundaries and varies by the nature of human behaviour under consideration.