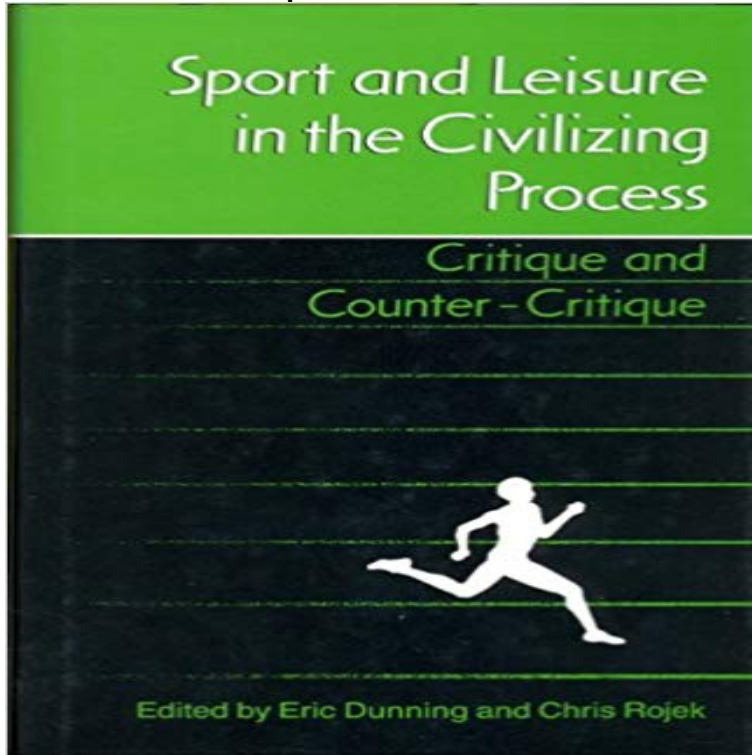


# Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process: Critique and Counter-Critique



Figurational sociology is associated with the writings of Norbert Elias. In his theory of the civilizing process and his work on the activity of sociology, Elias devised an approach to the study of human life which is now recognized as one of the major contributions to twentieth-century social science. Working in collaboration with Eric Dunning, Elias developed a series of writings on sport and leisure. These have been so influential that in some circles they are identified as the leading approach in the field. However, the figurational approach has also been widely criticized. For some critics it exhibits all of the worst features of the now discredited liberal, functionalist school of sociology. This collection provides a major critical assessment of the figurational approach to our understanding of sport and leisure. Contributors explore the distinctive features of such an approach and show its application to matters of sport and leisure. However, this is not a one-sided collection. The editors invited critics of figurational sociology to set out their points of view. Feminist and neo-Marxist contributors, for example, spell out why they judge the approach to be of limited value. The concluding chapter, written by Eric Dunning, offers a major statement of what figurational sociologists argue and how their arguments differ from other leading approaches both generally and in the field of sport and leisure. This unique and accessible collection is an important contribution to the growing area of sport and leisure studies.

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