



Constructing Leisure: Historical and Philosophical Debates

Karl Spracklen

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This book looks back at the meaning and purpose of leisure in the past. But this is not a simple social history of leisure. It is not enough to write a history of leisure on its own – in fact, it is impossible without engaging in the debate about what counts as leisure (in the present and in the past). Writing a history of leisure, then, entails writing a philosophy of leisure: and any history needs to be a philosophical history as well. That is the purpose of this book. It provides an account of leisure through historical time, how leisure was constructed and understood by historical actors, how communicative reason and free will interacted with instrumentality at different times, how historians have reconstructed past leisure through historiography, and finally, how writers have perceived the meaning and purpose of leisure in alternative histories.

Providing a sweeping overview of the field, Karl Spracklen charts how the concept of leisure was understood in Ancient history, through to modern times, and looks at leisure in different societies and cultures including Byzantium and Asian civilizations, as well as looking at leisure and Islam. Spracklen concludes with a chapter on future histories of leisure.

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