

# Emotions and Bridge

  
 Bridge: A MindSport For All  
 Connects People. Challenges Minds.

**Playing with Emotions:  
 The Management and Complexity of Emotion in an Elite Mind-Sport**  
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**The sociology of bridge**

52 interviews (UK, US and Europe)  
 How do players cope with emotions during competitive bridge?








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**Symbolic Interactionism**

- Mead (1934): the social self, taking the role of others, a social construction, developing through interactions with others over time, not innate, fixed or intrinsic
- Goffman's dramaturgy: frontstage & backstage, the performance of roles, impression management






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**The Sociology of Emotions**

- The social construction of emotion draws attention to the *contexts* in which emotions take place.
- Emotion management as impression management and the performative nature of emotion (Feinstein and Switlat 2019)
- Emotions as reflexive, cultural and communicative

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**Playing With Emotions**


Table 1: Emotions experienced by players.

Emotion	Male (n25/i25)	Female (n25/i25)	Totals
Total sample	(12/20)	(8/12)	52
Upset	4/1	5/1	10
Excited	4/1	3/1	9
Annoyed/Irritated	1/2	2/5	9
Angry/Mad	3/3	2/-	8
Disappointed	1/1	4/1	7
Frustration	1/4	1/1	7
Happy	1/1	2/2	6
Humiliation/embarrassed	1/-	1/1	3
Totals	27	32	59

\*number of responses exceeds number of players due to recording multiple emotions from single players


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**Emotions as detrimental to bridge**

I try not to let emotions appear when I'm playing bridge.  
 (Yvonne Wiseman, under 35, UK)

Concentration is more difficult if you allow yourself to get emotional. (Brian Senior, over 35, UK)



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# Emotions and Bridge



Keep Bridge Alive

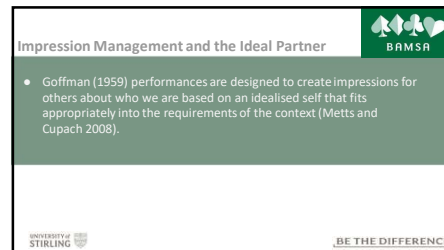
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Temperament is everything. You really just have to be encouraging and keep a positive attitude. You can't get too emotional. You've got to be supportive of your partner. (Jeff Meckstroth, over 35, US)

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Impression Management and the Ideal Partner

- Goffman (1959) performances are designed to create impressions for others about who we are based on an idealised self that fits appropriately into the requirements of the context (Metts and Cupach 2008).

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Keep Bridge Alive

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Some partners need space, some partners need some nice words and some partners need bollocking, being nasty. This is a human relationship. A good partner should know what his partner needs and see it. (Artur Malinowski, over 35, UK)

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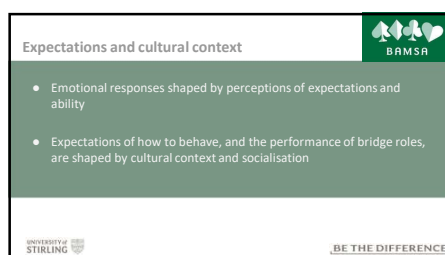
How easy is it to be a good partner in practice?

In the heat of the battle I certainly sometimes fall from grace. I think that away from the table I'm pretty good in that I'm not at all a black and white person and I can usually see that there were reasons for a losing decision even if it wasn't the one I would have made. (Chip Martel, over 35, US)

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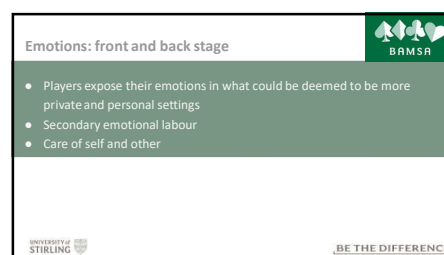
Expectations and cultural context

- Emotional responses shaped by perceptions of expectations and ability
- Expectations of how to behave, and the performance of bridge roles, are shaped by cultural context and socialisation

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Emotions: front and back stage

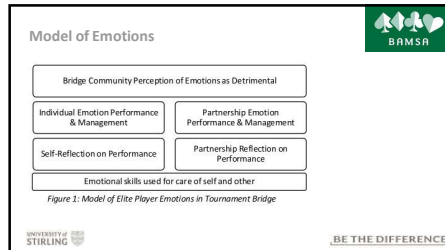
- Players expose their emotions in what could be deemed to be more private and personal settings
- Secondary emotional labour
- Care of self and other

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**Conclusion**

- Emotions front and back stage
- Understanding of emotionally charged contexts (Ng and Kidder 2010)
- Symbolic interactionism for understanding the emotions, identities and interactions of elite bridge players: the performative nature of emotions

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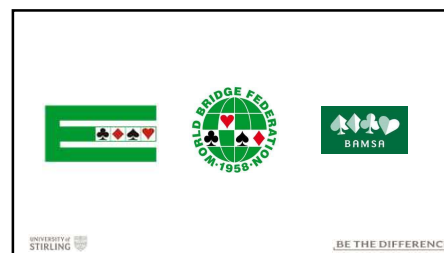
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