

# Studying Bridge and Lessons Learned

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## Studying Bridge and Lessons Learned

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Leisure fosters order and meaning

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Play (leisure) promotes the formation of play groups

Leisure fosters community

Smith, Michael A. (1985). A participant observer study of a "rough" working-class pub. *Leisure Studies*, 4, 293-406.


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Social worlds are amorphous collections of actors, organizations, events, and practices that have coalesced into spheres of interest (or culture areas) (Unrh, 1980)

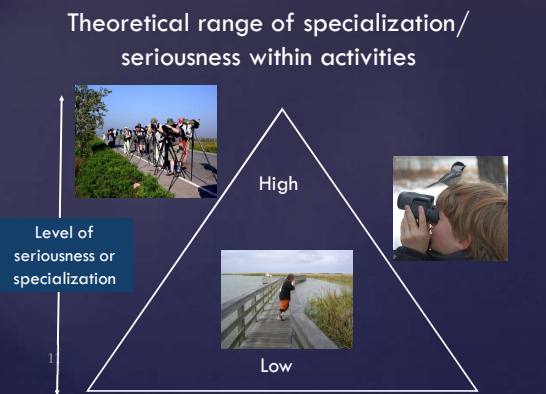
Diversity in social worlds





Theoretical range of specialization/seriousness within activities

Level of seriousness or specialization



Why study bridge?



# Studying Bridge and Lessons Learned




## Guiding research questions

- What are the various segments within the bridge world?
  - How is segmentation related to patterns of activity?
  - What is the basis of activity legitimacy?
- What does participation mean to members?
  - What types of players are there in the social world of contract bridge?
  - What indicators are useful in differentiating among players?
  - Are the types of bridge players sequentially organized as stages along a continuum?




## Bridge groups varied in sociability and seriousness



David Scott & Geoffrey C. Godbey (1992). An analysis of adult play groups: Social versus serious participation in contract bridge. *Leisure Sciences*, 14, 47-67.

## Bridge players varied in terms of intensity of involvement and their desire to progress over time



David Scott & Geoffrey C. Godbey (1994). Recreation specialization in the social world of contract bridge. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 26(3), 275-295.



## Popularity of bridge has waned due to changes in society and rising popularity of other pastimes



Wall Street Journal, April 29, 2019

David Scott. (1991). A narrative analysis of a declining social world: The case of contract bridge. *Play and Culture*, 4(1), 11-23.

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“What comes to mind when I think of bridge players? The older generation! My grandmother always asked me, ‘Don’t you kids ever play bridge?’ To me it is a game for older people. I mostly picture little blue haired ladies playing.”



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Bridge groups facilitated **and** constrained people’s participation in the game



Wall Street Journal, April 29, 2019

Members of the St. Leabron Bridge Group at their 1999 Christmas gathering. Top row from left: Sandy Laughlin, Phyllis Hunt, Maureen Campbell, Lisa Pasick. Bottom row from left: Nancy Weatherford (indistinct player), Sharril McCann and Donna Williams. Photo: St. Leabron Bridge Group.

David Scott. (1991). The problematic nature of participation in contract bridge: A qualitative study of group-related constraints. *Leisure Sciences*, 13(4), 321-336.

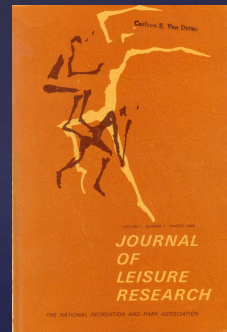
Post-mortems helped (serious) players make sense of their involvement



Scott, David and Justin Harmon. (2016). Extended leisure experiences: A conceptualization. *Leisure Sciences*, 38(5), 482-488, 2016

Final thoughts...

- Leisure scholars often ignore “the connectedness of humans” (Meyersohn, 1969)
- Unwise to assume participants naturally progress
- Leisure social worlds are highly racialized and gendered
- Social world members coalesce on the meaning they ascribe to activity



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