

Bridge as Serious Leisure

Bridge: A MindSport For All
Connects People, Challenges Minds

Serious Leisure Experience in a Mind-Sport:
Elite Player Motivations and Participation in Tournament Bridge

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1

Researching the sociology of bridge

- Interviews conducted with 52 elite players spanning US, UK and Europe
- Elite Bridge is a serious leisure pursuit
- What motivates players of elite bridge?

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2

Theoretical Context & Literature

- A 'multi-paradigmatic' approach to leisure experience
- The Serious Leisure Perspective (SLP)
- Recreation Specialisation
- Social Worlds
- Complex leisure experience

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Stebbins' SLP: Motivations

Motivations as rewards and costs:

- Personal rewards: self-fulfilment, self-gratification etc.
- Social rewards: group accomplishment etc.
- Costs: dislikes, disappointment and tensions

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4

Personal Rewards

It has many, many aspects and it's the fact that it has all these aspects that attracts me. When I started playing it was more the technical side... but there's the psychology, and the partnership relationship and so on.

(John Matheson, Scotland)

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5

Social Rewards

Well it's the social part. Bridge has taken me around the world and still takes me around the world. It opens doors for me that I otherwise would never have gone through and I'm meeting people that I otherwise would never have met, which I think is exciting. [...] You feel like you have friends all over the world and wherever you go you know somebody.

(Sabine Auken, Germany)



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Costs


...when things go wrong you feel as if you've been betrayed, you feel as if you've been let down by somebody who is supposed to be on your side and that's not a pleasant thing for people to deal with in any walk of life. I mean, any sort of aspect of human co-operation. (David Burn, England)



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7

Constraints



When I'm playing I'm playing but the rest of the time, some of the pros here they play 20 weeks a year I'm not doing that because I can't leave my kids for that many weeks so if you really want to be a top bridge player you have to put in a lot of weeks of work. (Jenny Wolpert, US)



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Career & Commitment

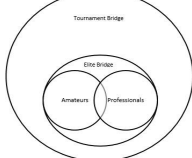


...it's my occupation, it's what I do for a living and it's definitely one of my strong passions so, you know, it's right there in the front centre. (Eric Rodwell US)

I couldn't have progressed in bridge living in Pakistan or playing for Pakistan, it just, it wouldn't- I needed to, you know, go to England, go to America. (Zia Mahmood US)

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9







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10

Conclusion

- Differentiated social world of elite bridge shapes motivations
- Rewards and costs are individual & interpersonal - the latter especially
- Set within wider structural constraints and career contingencies
- A multi-paradigmatic approach is useful for understanding complex leisure experience

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11

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
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12

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13