



Bridge A MindSport For All

*Connects People,
Challenges Minds*

Building a More Inclusive Community

Prof Samantha Punch
BAMSA

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bridgemindsport.org



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SOCIAL INCLUSION

Access, opportunity and outcomes in relation to bridge

Access: Can all social groups gain access to bridge?

Opportunity: Do all social groups have equal opportunities not just to take part, but also to **progress**?

Outcome: What is the effect of this, who is over-represented and who is under-represented?

Inequality is all about challenging underrepresentation, injustice and lack of opportunity

Consider above in relation to gender, race, disability, LGBTQ?





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Bridging Gender Research

- Debating whether sexism exists in bridge maintains the status quo
- Meaningful change as a key goal

Playing bridge happens in an unequal world, which reflects and reproduces a range of inequalities.

Two projects explored gender and bridge:

- *Bridging Gender*: Email Questionnaire data with 151 players of all levels
- *Bridging Minds*: Interviews with 52 elite bridge players






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Bridging Gender

Rogers, A., Snellgrove, M.L. & Punch, S. (2021) *Bridging Sexism: Gender Inequality at and away from the Bridge Table*, BAMSA Working Paper 2, Stirling: University of Stirling, <https://bridgemindsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/bamsa-working-paper-bridging-sexism-05-2021.pdf>

Bridging Brains: Exploring Gendered Attitudes and Inequalities in a Mindsport <https://bridgemindsport.org/home/research/bridging-gender>

Punch, S. and Rogers, A. (2021) 'Building, not Burning Bridges in Research: Insider/Outsider Dilemmas and Engaging with the Bridge Community', *Journal of Leisure Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2021.1887782>

Rogers, A., Snellgrove, M.L. and Punch, S. (2022) Between Equality and Discrimination: The Paradox of the Women's Game in the Mindsport Bridge, *World Leisure Journal*



Bridging
Gender
Attitudes &
Inequalities

Read more

<https://bridgemindsport.org/home/research/bridging-gender>



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- *How is sexism defined?*
- *Is sexism a relevant and/or useful term in the bridge world?*
- *Examples of sexism in bridge*
- *How might gender inequalities be addressed?*

Not just top-level bridge:
"gender issues also abound among less serious players, especially at the bridge club level"

"the constant drip-drip of gendered assumptions is probably worse than outright sexism"

"Realisation that sexism is shockingly prevalent and needs stamping out."

Bridging Sexism Report:
Gender Inequality at and away from the Bridge Table



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Sexism seems to me to flourish in competitive situations: for example there is a clear 'glass ceiling' in bridge

...the naff sexist jokes, and sexist remarks all the time.

Recognition is the biggest issue. A significant number of males may not recognise the issue

"patronising or derogatory language" that becomes "commonplace, even on the part of directors"

All my male team mates kept getting offers to play with really good players in our home country, to play in the highest division etc. I never got any such offers

Microaggressions at the table by men are normal at all levels of the game

A lot of people are unaware of what is going on and might behave differently if they were.

I think it needs to be made clear, at least within junior circles, that such behaviour is not acceptable. There should be some way for players to raise any concerns they have





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Participation requires:
‘judgement free spaces’

1. Acceptance not ‘exposure’
2. Participate in ways that are individually meaningful
3. Personal and private spaces that are safe and appropriate

(Trussell & Mair, 2010)

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Social inclusion and disability

Social Inclusion vitally important for everyone

Access to Leisure and Recreational Spaces is restricted and limited for people with disabilities

This results in less autonomy and community engagement and greater social isolation

(Merrels et al. 2017)

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Step Change

1. Acknowledging the problem
 - EBL & NBOs to take it seriously
2. Awareness raising
 - e.g. unconscious bias training
3. Policy development



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Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

- What should be included in the policy?
- How it should be developed?

Policies and procedures form part of the **structural framework that supports an inclusive leisure environment**. Policies demonstrate the commitments of the organisation, provide accountability and empower people to work in an inclusive way.

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Questions to Discuss

Scope and purpose of the policy
Guiding principles, aims and commitment

Forms of discrimination
Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

What areas should be included?
Eg Selection for national representation
Behaviours in clubs and at tournaments
Players, TDs, tournament organisers

Breaches of the policy

- Relevant procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour

Existing policies that can be drawn on?
- e.g. Transgender policy (EBU)

PROCESS of policy development

- Who? How? When?
 - Set up a working group?
 - Draw on internal expertise?

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Initially I hope it will help individuals in seeing where they are flawed in making everyone feel welcome. In the longer perspective I believe it will help attract more young people and especially women. I have several female friends from my early junior years who stopped playing after a few years when they grew tired of the environment. Understanding all genders and getting rid of the barriers between them will make the sport much more attractive.

(Female Junior player, Under-25)

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Addressing gender discrimination

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