

PhD Funding for the Sociology of Bridge

by [Samantha Punch](#) April 20

I'm delighted to say that the new research partnership of EBED (English Bridge Education and Development), all the UK Bridge Unions and the University of Stirling have provided funding for a 3 year PhD Studentship (fees plus living expenses). The title of the first ever PhD in the Sociology of Bridge is: Bridging the Gap: An Exploration of Transitions in Play through the Lifecourse.

The formal advert will be out by the end of next week (on [jobs.ac.uk](https://www.jobs.ac.uk) and Find a PhD), meanwhile please spread the word (further info below) as we are looking for a PhD candidate ideally with a masters, or a good undergraduate degree, preferably within the social sciences. No knowledge of bridge is required, and a UK or EU student are eligible to apply. International students can also apply, but would have to make up the difference between EU and international fees. If you know of someone who might be interested ask them to contact me – s.v.punch@stir.ac.uk

The Sociology of Bridge is a new field of study. Bridge is one of the world's most widely played, stimulating and challenging card games that requires skill, concentration and practice. Understanding what drives individuals to take up bridge and what keeps people playing across the lifecourse is at the heart of this PhD studentship. Bridge provides a contemporary example to understand the role of a mind sport in developing social well-being through community participation at different ages.

Key research aims are:

To understand why people play bridge and the motivations for taking up the game

To explore the potential of bridge to contribute to building intergenerational relationships

To investigate the ways in which players' bridge journeys vary over the lifecourse.

This study of pathways into (and out of) bridge will include a comparison of gender and age across the lifecourse in order to examine differences between cohorts and generational changes over time. Methods will include focus group interviews with children and young people who play bridge at school or university; focus group interviews with adults who have learnt to play but have not transitioned to playing more regularly in a bridge club and in-depth 'life history' interviews with bridge players across the life course.

24 Comments



[Richard Fleet](#)

Well done, Sam!

April 20



[Michael Hopkins](#)

People in my generation (i.e., old) played games around the dinner table. It was part of family and social life. My family did not know bridge, but we played several other trick-taking games. Of course, not only card games but board games. I learned bridge as a teenager as I visited friends and their families played it.

I think this activity was even stronger in the pre-war generation as later. In the 50s and 60s, television was already eroding family game activities.

With my own family, television and computers and work further eroded family and neighbor get-togethers.

That at least is my experience.

April 20



[James Huntington](#)

Sounds great! Since I a) have played bridge for 45 years, b) have a bachelor's degree in sociology, and c) have a Ph.D., I'd say this idea is right up my alley!

April 20



[John Larkin](#)

Except you already got the PhD.

April 20



[Geeske Joel](#)

one can always have more than one Ph.D ;-)

April 20



[Michael Hopkins](#)

Do they then call him Dr.Dr.Larkin ?

April 21



[John Larkin](#)

Oddly enough....

And my son has the potential of being Dr.Dr.Dr..... but doesn't tend to use any.

I wonder which one comes first, technically (I had a boss in the past who insisted on being called "Professor Sir Abraham XX.." - the order (!) was very important to him.)

April 21



[David Levin](#)

I wonder too. Should it be "Dr. Dr. Dr." Or perhaps "Dr. Dr. Dr."

April 21



[Alan Frank](#)

Only in Germany. The U.S. tends to use only the highest title.

April 21



[John Larkin](#)

DL

First suggestion OK, but the second is just
Ridiculous.

April 21

John Larkin edited this comment April 21



[John Holmes](#)

BS= Bull*** MS= more of the same Ph.D.= Piled higher deeper ;)

April 23



[Robert Greene](#)

Robert Putnam of Harvard "Bowling Alone" documents the decline of all group activities. I'm not from Hopkins generation but I think the invention of TV killed family get togethers.

April 20



[Michael Hopkins](#)

Yes, and also Freemasons, Odd Fellows, Grange, Eastern Star, etc. Ian Frazier wrote an excellent book 20 yrs ago called Family. In one part, he visited a place outside of Cleveland where people in his grandfather's generation took a train by the hundreds on a Sunday afternoon for picnics, lectures, etc. In the 1990s, it was a suburb with no one outside on a July Sunday afternoon.

We have changed to a more insular culture, and not for the better.

April 20



[Steve Moese](#)

It would be wonderful to understand the key factors across many bridge playing cultures and not just WE or NA.

April 20



[Ewan McNay](#)

I could get a second PhD, right? And I bet we could get funding to apply neuro methods here - fMRI at the bridge table, anyone? :)

April 20



[Jim Perkins](#)

Pulsing lights. Away from the table.

April 20



[Robert Greene](#)

Whenever someone fails to return partner's lead they get an electric shock.

April 20



[David Levin](#)

That would be an especially effective deterrent when Partner is a computer.

April 20



[Robert Greene](#)

They have self learning computers now. They get an electric shock when they do bad. A green LED glow when they do good. Repeat a hundred million times. Then they play bridge better than any human. And curse partner like r lee ermey. I don't know how they learn that but they do. It's part of the learn bridge process.

April 21



[Larry Robbins](#)

this is a tremendous project..congratulations.....

April 20



[Samantha Punch](#)

Thanks all. Will post advert soon, and do please help to advertise it, ideally to social science Masters departments. Exciting opportunity...

April 22



[Barry Capal](#)

Excellent, delighted you got this going.

April 22



[Allan Graves](#)

What a wonderful program.

April 23



[Jeannie Fitzgerald](#)

Nice work Sam and congrats on your recent Lady Milne win with Scotland.

April 2