



**BAMSA CONFERENCE**  
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*Mind Sports in Competition: Globalisation and Socio-Political Influence at the Local Level – the Case of Bridge*

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### About the author

**Education:**

- PhD Student in Global Studies
- Social Sciences – Major in Political Science & Administration
- Background Chemical Engineering

**Bridge:**

- Started learning how to play bridge in 1989
- Joined FPB in 1991
- TD & bridge teacher since 1996
- NBO International TD since 2019



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### Global Studies

(main subjects and topics)


- Interdisciplinary study of global processes.
- Focus on the broader issues relating to economic and cultural globalisation, global power structure and human effect on environment.
- Migrations, climate change, global governance and globalization.



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### Characteristics of Global Studies

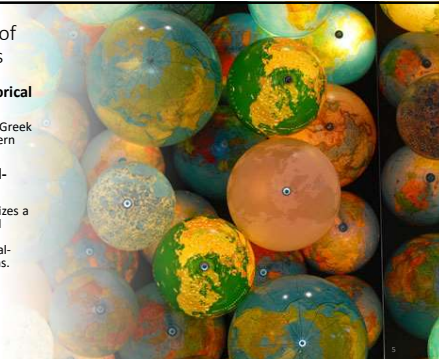
- **Transnationality**  
focus on global processes (rather than the connections between individual states studied in international relations);
- **Interdisciplinary**  
politics, economics, history, geography, anthropology, sociology, religion, technology, philosophy, health, environment, gender, ethnicity, etc.;



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### Characteristics of Global Studies

- **Contemporary & historical**  
examples range from the transnational activity of the Greek and Roman Empires to modern European colonialism;
- **Postcolonial & Critical-theoretical**  
global studies often emphasizes a postcolonial perspective and attempts to analyse global phenomena through a critical-theoretical, multicultural lens.



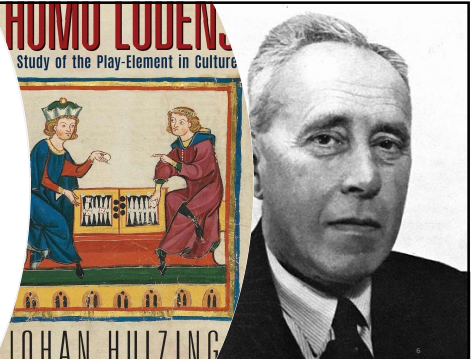
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### Johan Huizinga

Homo Ludens

Study of the Play-Element in Culture


- Dutch philologist, historian and scholar of play
- Play as the primary formative element in human culture



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Huizinga's definition of play

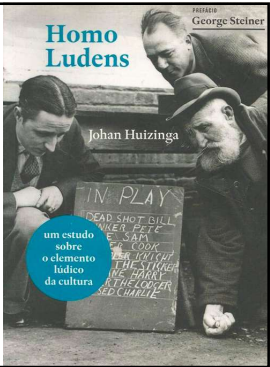
«Play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is "different" from "ordinary life"» (Huizinga, 1938).



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The Magic Circle

- A type of social space, separate time and space where all play takes place;
- The Magic Circle is so important that, according to Huizinga, we're very likely to regard the cheater more leniently than we do the spoilsport: "This is because the spoilsport shatters the play world itself. He robs play of illusion."



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Globalization of Sports

- According to Rahul Kumar (2012:97), Sports are «modern traditions created from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century», by the elites in UK universities.
- Sports became popular throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century spreading to all social classes to a point where they became «forms of representation of social and political identification, especially in the affirmation of nation-states in the international arena».



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Card games and globalisation


- Card games are part of European culture since the 15<sup>th</sup> Century
- Whist – 16<sup>th</sup> Century
- Hoyle's Short Treatise – 1742
- Whist-bridge – Bosphorus – 1783
- J T Mitchell's Movements – 1892
- Auction Bridge – 1904
- Plafond Bridge – 1918



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Contract Bridge

- 1925 – Harold S Vanderbilt
- 1927 – Ely Culbertson
- 1929 – "The Bridge World"
- 1932 – International Bridge League
- 1937 – ACBL
- 1947 – EBL
- 1958 – WBF



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A Global (Mind) Sport


- "Bridge enjoys a global playing base and infrastructure comparable to any traditional sport", Peter Stockdale, EBU Communications Manager
- WBF – 103 countries
- 8 Zones: Europe, North America, South America, Asia & Middle East, Central America & Caribbean, Asia & Pacific, South Pacific, Africa.



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IMSA (est. 2005)

- Bridge
- Chess
- Draughts
- Federation of Card Games
- Go
- Mahjong
- Xiangqi



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### Is Bridge a Mind Sport for All?

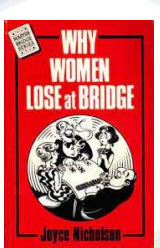
- Mind Sports are less circumscribed by gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and physique.
- Bridge is both competitive and cooperative
- Bridge teaches how to trust and communicate with others for mutual gain.



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### An eye opener

- In 1985 Joyce Nicholson published *Why Women Lose at Bridge* a study on the reasons for being so difficult for women to reach the top in international competition.
- Spoiler alert – General Conclusions: Time and Money, Upbringing, Attitude towards women
- But we are no longer in 1985...



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### Sports as Softpower

- Persuasion: The goal is to convince in a non-coercive manner another political actor to want the same things one wants for oneself.
- Sport diplomacy and politics are not limited to the realm of foreign policy; they can be used domestically as well for building peace and nationhood



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### IOC - UN Women partnership on sport for gender equality

- "Sport is an invaluable tool to equip women and girls with leadership skills, reduce marginalisation and dismantle stereotypes" – UN Women ED, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
- "With this MoU, we will build on our efforts already underway to promote access to sport for girls and work towards gender equality" – IOC President, Thomas Bach



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### Empowering young girls and women

- "Leadership skills, such as decision making and negotiation, equip girls with knowledge that allows them to navigate adolescence, relationships, and the world of finance and savings." in Malala.org
- A three-year program aimed at empowering girls and teaching leadership skills through sports in Bangladesh increased girls' scores on an index of leadership competencies.



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### Back to the Magic Circle

- Competences and abilities learnt inside the Magic Circle can be applied outside
- For instance, the ability to adapt and adjust the plan when additional information becomes available – inferential thinking.
- The Magic Circle is porous in both directions...



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### Bridge is a serious investigation field


- Professor Samantha Punch and the BAMSAs team have proved that bridge is a rich and transdisciplinary field for investigation in Social Sciences: Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Economy...
- And now we can add Global Studies 🤪



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### The final question (or a new starting point?)

- We started by asking “Can bridge be an interesting way to promote a more inclusive, fair, and cohesive society, and at the same time increase longevity and social wellbeing?”.
- But maybe we can improve this question slightly: “How can we make bridge an interesting way to promote a more inclusive, fair, and cohesive society, and at the same time increase longevity and social wellbeing?”



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Bridge: A MindSport For All  
Connects People, Challenges Minds

thank YOU

JJ Curado  
2021

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