

Chapter 2

Autobiography of Triadic Motor Games

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ABSTRACT

The triad is a tool for achieving quality education. Incorporating motor triads into physical education classes through games introduces an innovative pedagogical model that fosters meaningful learning. Through triadic games, students develop critical competencies, emotional empathy, and divergent strategic thinking (creativity). This chapter narrates the journey of discovering this sustainable ludic phenomenon, highlighting its significance for social development, prosocial skills, and the communicative openness it fosters for enjoyment and learning. This chapter explores how a thematic area of study and research emerged from the dissatisfaction with current ludic practices and observations of games during teaching and research activities. Two parallel narratives are presented: the inspirational chronological background and the struggle for theoretical advancement and clarification.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the phenomenon of games through their design reveals the nature of the games we play but not the rationale behind other cultural ludic forms. The triadic game is a structure that does not commonly align with our cultural tendencies. Team pursuit games served as the research model due to their strategic analytical advantages, untainted by sports elements. The milestones that define the quality of this research content unfold in a process beneficial to other researchers, emphasizing the key questions that lend meaning to this journey. An autobiographical narrative technique is employed to uncover the process that sparked the motivations and content leading to an understanding of the triadic phenomenon applied to motor games. This technique, more aligned with ludic anthropology, provides insight into the study and research processes, presented candidly for readers to judge the boundaries of what is disclosed.

The narrative delves into the discovery, qualitative leaps, specificity, beauty of motor triads, and their social sustainability, unpacking the narrative significance. It chronicles the inspiration, investigative approaches, and efforts to address the epistemological and methodological challenges of this research. A valuable aspect lies in embracing the sustainable social character surrounding motor triads, as illustrated by the concept of coalition as a break from dualistic thought, relativizing confrontation, equalizing roles

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and opportunities embedded in rules, embracing ambivalence through paradox, and recognizing the role of each player in relationships that transform opponents into temporary teammates. Additionally, the recognition of critical moments to support coalitions and the acceptance of risks in aiding adversaries in temporary coalitions highlights the sustainable nature of triadic games and their pedagogical direction, fostering group discussion and practical experiences. Ultimately, this chapter provides a detailed account of the knowledge and insights motor triads bring to fostering open social interaction through innovative gameplay.

THE FIRST MEETING WITH PARADOXICAL GAMES

I must begin by apologizing for writing in the first person. As a researcher, I have always adhered to the scientific style. However, the recurring idea of conveying to others the process of discovering triadic motor games often emerged when answering university students' questions on how to build theories from specificity and implement practical applications to corroborate them. In this context, a direct and personal style is more appropriate. Later, the narrative shifts to a collective perspective, reflecting the collaboration with my colleague, PhD. Miguel Pic, in developing triadic motor concepts.

The knowledge journey was counterintuitive, transforming the playground into a games laboratory. Almost abruptly, I stumbled upon a new form of play that disrupted the dual mental schema of two teams vying for the same goal—a rare occurrence. As a young and modest physical education teacher, I explored games guided by intuition and slight modifications or reflections based on observed player behaviors. In 1984, at Luther King School (La Laguna, Tenerife), I questioned why there were no pursuit games where teams captured each other simultaneously. While this seemed a mathematical issue, I suspected a missing premise to explain its motor viability. Initially, it appeared an irresolvable contradiction. My immediate response was to test it in my games laboratory: the playing area.

My overall experience with games in physical education classes was satisfactory. I had begun to grasp the logic behind motor situations and believed I understood them in gameplay. Initially, I was more of an intuitive teacher than one following a specific model. Once, I read that there isn't "a game" but "games," and I perceived that answers lay within this variety. Gradually, I found a guiding thread that connected questions to answers. Court experience teaches you that games can be optimized, complexity can always be increased, and roles are a key element in intervention. I embraced intuition blended with my personal learning.

I invented a dual confrontation game under the condition that teams could capture each other simultaneously, which I called 'The Maze' (1991, 1995, 2002, 2019). Drawing on experience with other games, I refined the idea that tagging an opponent should depend on the quality of the player's decision, avoiding meritless contact. Therefore, contact on an opponent's hands or arms—the most frequent targets—was invalid, while tagging their legs or torso brought merit. I was surprised by the game's fluency and that the number of players did not impact its development as long as the teams were symmetrical.

Over time, I learned to articulate how procedural task conditions resolved mathematical contradictions in practical reality. For example, the rule defining valid tagging eliminated strict advantages or disadvantages, creating scenarios perceived by players as advantageous or disadvantageous, which often defied initial expectations. The specificity of the game, driven by players' motor actions, heightened the speed of actions, resulting in outcomes that contradicted deliberate decision-making. In other words, the reality of the game humanizes and exposes the limits of motor actions.

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