



Reconceptualising the Intensity of Video Game Practices : a Socio-Anthropological Approach

Project brief

The study explores how the intensification of video game practices over the past decade in Europe is reshaping players' socialisation processes. Acknowledging the diversity of intensive practices and their varied effects (from stabilisation to social reconfiguration), this ongoing research aims to redefine the concept of intensity in video game studies, as a marker of relational tensions between players' biographical trajectories and the sociocultural contexts of play.

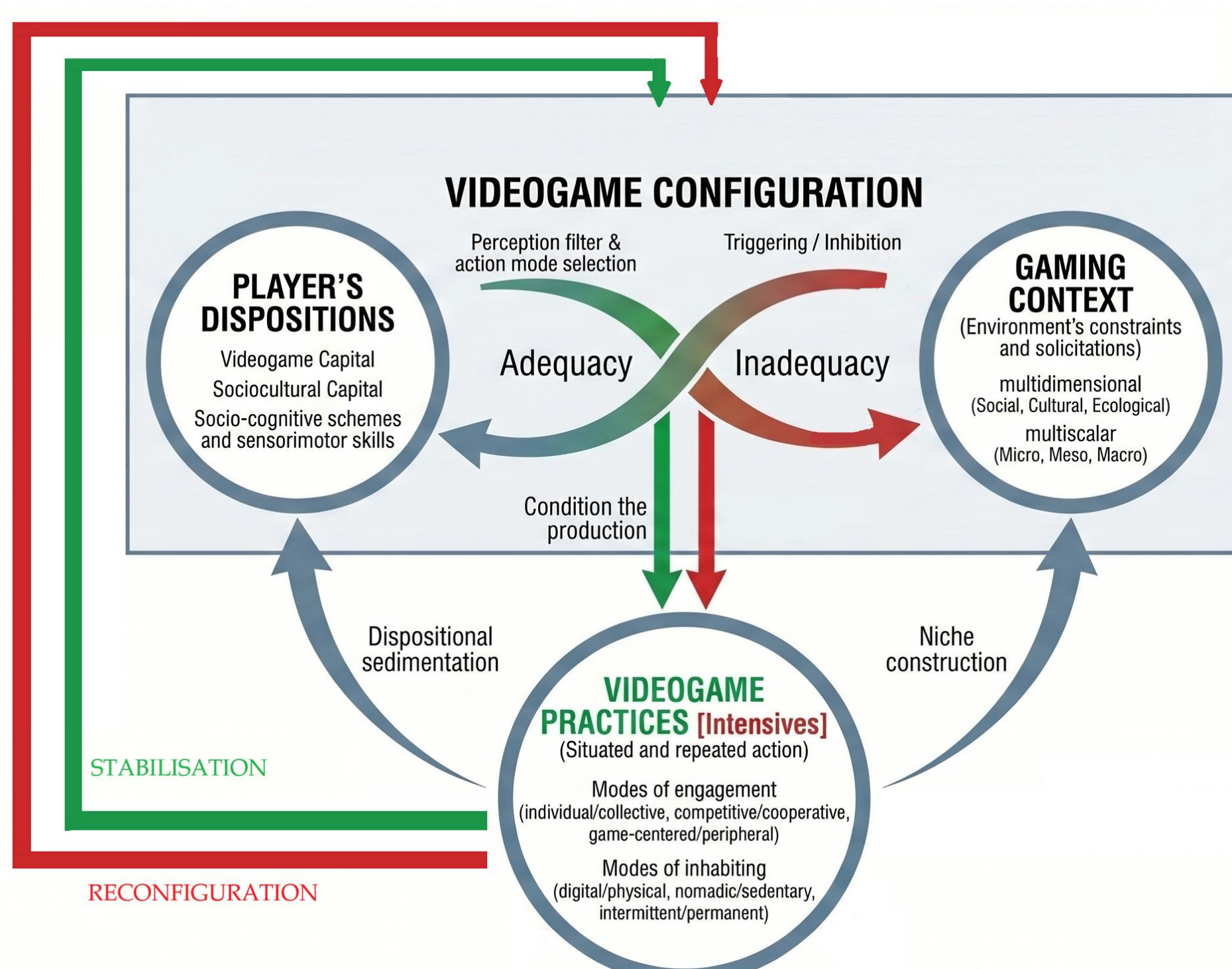
Methodology

Anchored in the socio-anthropology of digital practices, the methodology relies on a multisited “In-play” ethnography. It combines a one year-long period of participant observation of intensive practices on two front: through digital immersion in various games and physical in dedicated gaming spaces in Belgium, France, and Malta (convention, gaming bar, association, residence). This is complemented with 20 biographical interviews involving a purposive sample of adult players and their close social networks (of diverse ages, genders, places of residence, socio-cultural backgrounds and gaming experiences).

In-Play Ethnography Methodology



The Socialisation Process of Intensive Gaming



Results & conclusions

Preliminary results provide relevant intergenerational and cross-cultural comparisons, highlighting the importance of sociocultural and geo-historical contexts in the differentiated effects of video game socialisation. Redefining intensity displays the evolving boundaries of gaming practices, situated between of the player physical and mental constraints and their sociocultural and ecological milieu. These insights offer new perspectives on humans' growing dependence on digital artefacts to inhabit within increasingly artificial and interconnected ecosystems.