

Chapter 9

Walking with Reinhard Selten and the Guessing Game: From the Origin to the Brain

Giorgio Coricelli and Rosemarie Nagel

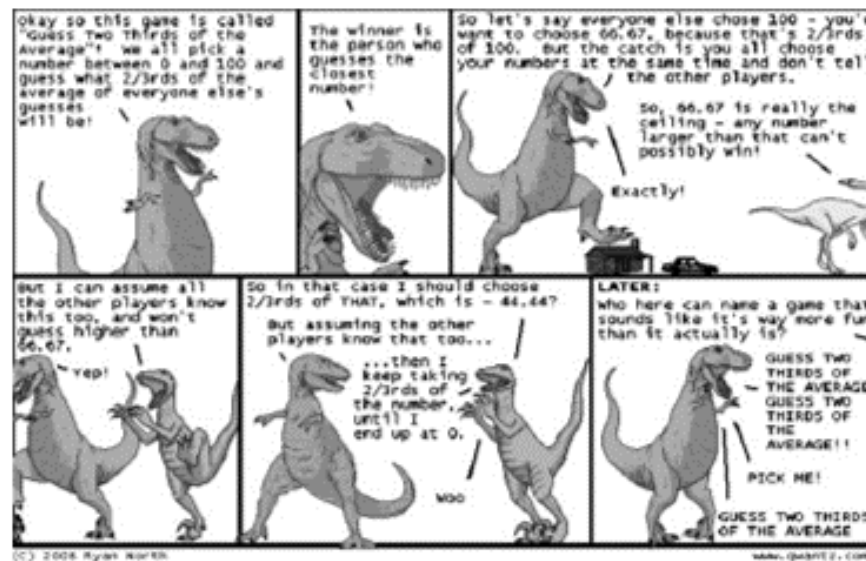


Fig. 9.1 Dinos thinking aloud about the guessing game. With the permission from Ryan North

G. Coricelli
 Institut des Sciences Cognitives, CNRS, 67 Boulevard Pinel, 69675 Bron, France
 R. Nagel (✉)
 Department of Economics and ICREA, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Ramon Trias Fargas, 25-27,
 08005 Barcelona, Spain
 e-mail: rosemarie.nagel@upf.edu

Abstract

What could be the relationship between Reinhard Selten and the dinos' story? An easy answer is that he was Nagel's "Doktorvater" (PhD advisor) and the guessing game was one of the topics in her thesis. A more challenging connection is to Reinhard Selten's constant fear to be trapped and blinded by the mathematical reasoning of game theory as a description of human behavior like the dinos seem to be trapped in YEP, WOO. Doesn't the dinos' story how to play the game sound appealing? Certainly it does for many game theorists. When they play it a large proportion chooses 0 while the winning number among them is between 10 and 15! Other theorists, on the other hand, found the game rather boring since not playing the theory didn't seem a surprise and at the same time a clear structure of behavior was not at hand.