



JOURNAL ARTICLE
“Stable strategies?”

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Game Theory: An intensely studied field

Economists use experiments to investigate the behavior of individuals. Games with financial incentives are used in research to elicit preferences and to gain insights into decision-making. This is especially interesting when there are financial and moral dimensions to those decisions.

Is cooperativeness stable across different games?

Michael Eichenseer and Johannes Moser from the University of Regensburg, both members of the International Doctorate Program "Evidence- Based Economics", investigated whether individuals displayed a similar tendency to cooperate in two different types of games.

The two researchers conducted an online experiment in which individuals played these games in a random order. They found that cooperativeness is quite stable across these games. If a participant is classified as a "cooperator" in game 1, it is likely that this will also be the case for game 2. This was not the case for the label of a "selfish" individual. The label "selfish" in one of the games was not a good predictor for the label "selfish" in the other game. This is an important insight that should lead to further research in the field of game theory.

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