

The purpose of this research was to identify the differences in the propensity of cooperation and of punishment among three samples of individuals represented by students, camorristas, and ordinary prisoners.

Two experiments were carried out, based on two different research designs: the classic game of Prisoner's Dilemma (PD ) and a Prisoner's Dilemma with punishment of a third party (TP-PD).

The camorristas in PD have shown a propensity to cooperate much higher than that of students and of common prisoners, while in the TP-PD experiment the two samples of criminals showed an essentially identical level of cooperation, although compared to the threat of incurring in a penalty they reacted in an opposite way: the camorristas reduced the level of cooperation with respect to PD while ordinary prisoners increased it.

Students, like camorristas, in the TP-PD cooperated less than they did in the Prisoner's Dilemma.

Moreover, both camorristas and common prisoners in TP-PD showed a propensity to punish stronger than students, even under different conditions of application.

A questionnaire was also administered to the three samples of individuals in order to verify the similarities/differences between the decisions actually taken in the game and the profile of the respondents.