



Università  
di Genova

DIEC DIPARTIMENTO  
DI ECONOMIA

*Economics and Quantitative Methods PhD Seminar Series*

**“Forced to face the truth:  
A meta-analysis on the effectiveness of moral reminders”**

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**Abstract**

Moral appeals, also referred to as moral reminders or moral nudges, are widely used by governments, companies, and NGOs to promote pro-social behavior. These appeals function by either increasing the salience of moral concerns or preventing participants from diverting attention away from relevant information on payoffs or social norms. Drawing on over 400 studies across psychology, sociology, management and economics, we present a meta-analysis of their effects. Our findings reveal that, on average, moral appeals are effective, with an effect size of 0.2 SMD in a random-effects model. We identify sources of heterogeneity based on disciplinary focus and methodological approaches. Crucially, we distinguish between four types of moral reminders: those that provide information on consequences, those that highlight descriptive or injunctive norms, and those that prime moral awareness. Our analysis shows that priming and information on consequences yield significantly larger effects than reminders about social norms, which appear less susceptible to motivated reasoning and, consequently, less responsive to moral appeals.

**Wednesday 19 March 2025, h. 14.30**

**Aula Acquario**