

# A EXPERIMENT TESTING FOR MORAL LICENSING IN SUPERMARKET SHOPPING

DEPARTMENT  
OF LAND  
ECONOMY

Environment,  
Law, and  
Economics

{WHERE} Mill Lane Lecture Room 1

{WHEN} Wednesday 22 February, 4-5pm

{SPEAKER}  
Dr Luca Panzone,  
Newcastle University

## {ABOUT THE SPEAKER}

Dr Luca Panzone is a Lecturer in Consumer Behaviour who joined Newcastle in 2014. His research interests focus on the analysis of social problems related to agriculture, food and the environment. In particular, his interest is mainly focused on the analysis of food consumption and demand from a quantitative, applied micro-econometric perspective on households and consumers.

There is extensive experimental research on consumer behaviour which involves making a single choice. This limits the understanding of how past decisions influence current ones. In particular the notion of moral licensing (applied to environmentally-friendly choices) implies an initial “desirable” act (e.g. purchasing organic fruit) may license the consumer to undertake subsequent “undesirable” acts (e.g. purchasing an environmentally damaging meat product) because she may believe she has met her “environmental goal”. The objective of this study is to use an experimental online supermarket setting designed to be incentive-compatible to study shopping behaviour over two episodes in order to assess whether moral licencing occurs and whether it is affected by a public policy intervention in the form of a carbon tax. We show that recalling past environmentally friendly behaviour (and the amount of carbon saved by such behaviour) does not result in moral licensing, and only affects behaviour when supported by a carbon tax.

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