

## **SYMPAB - (16032) - FROM 'BLUNT MEASURES' TO SOCIAL PROJECTION: A NOVEL METHOD FOR EXPLORING SOCIAL ATTITUDES TO EVOLUTION**

James Riley (United Kingdom)<sup>1</sup>; Will Mason-Wilkes (United Kingdom)<sup>1</sup>; Fern M. Elsdon-Baker (United Kingdom)<sup>1</sup>

1 - Science, Knowledge and Belief in Society Research Group, University of Birmingham

### **Short Abstract**

*Recent criticism of large-scale surveys measuring public attitudes to evolutionary science has focused on the lack of nuance or complexity in the instruments used for examining public attitudes. Measures within educational settings have been criticized for conflating knowledge about evolution, with attitudes towards evolutionary science. Furthermore, identified high-levels of creationism are argued to be artefacts of issues framing within 'blunt measures' used in large-scale surveys.*

*In this theoretical paper we will critically examine some of the limitations of survey data collection approaches adopted to date and discuss ways in which the investigation of social attitudes to evolutionary science might benefit from drawing on multidisciplinary approaches. We will outline how drawing on social psychological research literature and approaches has allowed the development novel forms of data collection that allow for analysis of the roles that social identity formation and social projection play in public perceptions of evolutionary science across a spectrum of worldviews and belief. We will exemplify this by drawing on data from a large-scale survey carried out in the UK and Canada as part of the Science and Religion: Exploring the Spectrum project, specifically, the results of a series of questions on how easy or difficult individuals imagined other individuals – from a range of specified cultural identities – find it to accept evolutionary science.*

*This critical analysis highlights some of the extant cultural narratives in regards to evolutionary science and religion and enables us to begin to trace the prevalence or impacts of these wider cultural narratives at the individual and group level. This research has significant implications for issues including social stereotyping, STEM pipeline and diversity and inclusion in STEM.*

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