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Public Trust in Science and Science Communication

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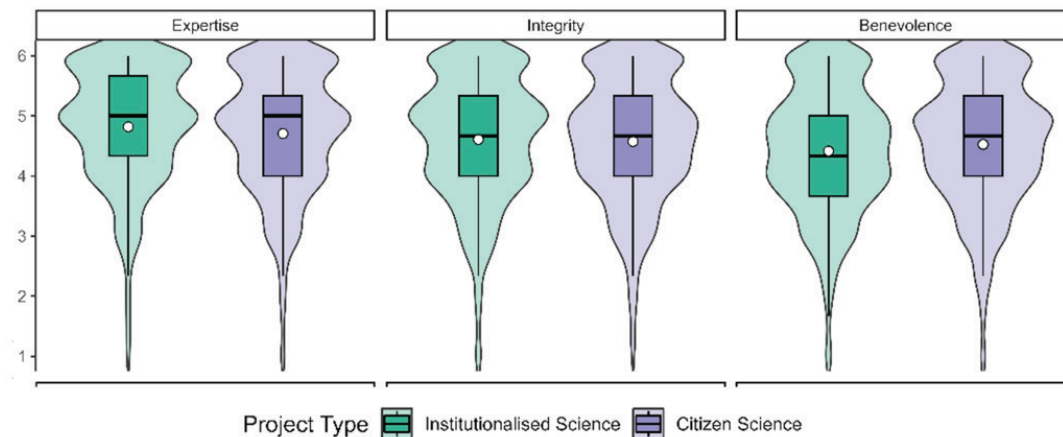


Fig. 1 Violin plots showing distributions of ratings by N = 1036 participants (cross-quations for gender, age, and education), who ascribed teams that consist only of researchers (Institutionalized Science) higher expertise, but lower benevolence compared to Citizen Science teams consisting of researchers and citizens. Boxplots indicate medians and interquartile ranges, while white dots mark means.

weigh their trust in scientific experts in the face of uncertainty. It then shows how novel approaches of doing science (like Open Science or Citizen Science) and of communicating science (like science outreach or participatory science communication) may support public trust in science.

Public Trust in Science is subject to a fundamental tension: On the one hand, scientific knowledge is of fundamental relevance to people's lives: in their every-day decision making, use of technology, as well as civic participation. On the other hand, scientific knowledge is rapidly evolving. As a consequence, science communication draws on sometimes uncertain, sometimes conflicting evidence. The resulting tension between the public's information needs and sciences' fundamental uncertainty is especially prevalent when scientific knowledge is used to inform personal or public decision-making in so-called socio-scientific issues, such as antibiotic resistance or autonomous driving. How do members of the public decide whether to trust scientific experts and whether to rely on scientific knowledge when it is yet uncertain? The talk will introduce a notion of epistemic trust, and provide empirical evidence on people's abilities to