1. Introduction

• The production of modern medical knowledge and medicine continues to rely on animal research and in 2016 there were 3.94 million procedures using animals in the UK. (Home Office, 2016).

• In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on improving the transparency and openness of animal research – i.e. the 2014 Concordat on Openness on Animal Research.

• This push for transparency is viewed, at least partially, as a response to public concerns over secrecy surrounding animal research.

• With public debate on animal research dating back to the late 19th century, public opinion has long held a key role in shaping the surrounding ethical discussions (Hobson-West, 2010).

2. Publics

• Stakeholders often claim that public opinion shows support for or resistance to animal research.

• Underlying the push for transparency of animal research is an assumption that with more information on animal research any public concern over the practice may shift.

• The opinions of publics are often constructed in terms of agreement/disagreement. However, this approach inevitably oversimplifies public understanding.

• Hence, my study seeks to capture the sociocultural contexts that inform ethical and technoscientific judgements and engages with the complexity of public thought on animal research.

3. Methodology

• Public opinion on animal research has predominantly been captured through quantitative research – i.e. polls and surveys.

• This research uses the Mass Observation Project (MOP) to examine the qualitative accounts of voluntary correspondents.

• Questions on a given topic are sent to over 500 correspondents who can take their time to respond in their own words. This approach will offer a more in-depth insight into the thoughts of publics on animal research.

4. Research questions

• How do public understandings of animal research complicate the framing of the issue as science vs. ethics?

• What are the public expectations around scientific accountability?

• How do publics feel about the push for institutional openness on animal research?

5. Questions for you

• Should publics play a greater role on AWERBS? And how can lay representation be further developed?

• How should cases of disagreement be engaged with in public discussions around animal research?

• Should publics have more input into animal research policy?

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