

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).

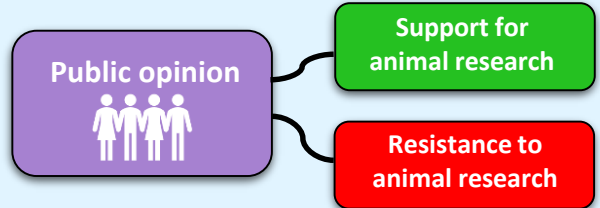


- In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on improving the transparency and openness of animal research – i.e. the 2014 Concordat on Openness on Animal Research.
- This push for transparency is viewed, at least partially, as a response to public concerns over secrecy surrounding animal 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).

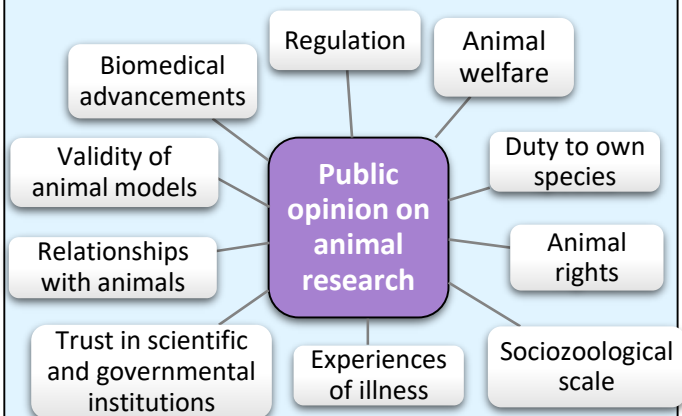


2. Publics

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

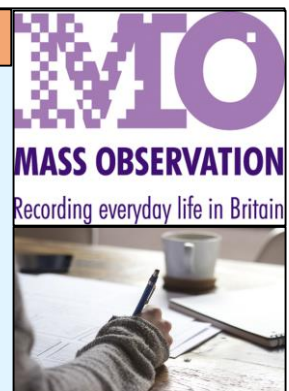


- Underlying the push for transparency of animal research is an assumption that with more information on animal research any public concern over the practice may shift.
- The opinions of publics are often constructed in terms of agreement/ disagreement. However, this approach inevitably oversimplifies 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?

Home Office. (2016) Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain, Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 21(7) and 21A(1) of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

Hobson-West, P. (2010) The role of 'public opinion' in the UK animal research debate. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, Vol. 36, 46-49.