SRA conference 2019

Audience questions to the plenary speakers (via Slido)

Sir Adrian Smith

- Speaking child poverty reduction, was there any use of AI done so far on that? 2. Any thoughts on Ethics on that kind of research?

- The examples mentioned are mostly national. What work at city / regional levels to apply these approaches? Should the emphasis be local or national? Why?

- What plans do you have to bring Local Government into this space as well?

- What is the potential for public involvement in data science & AI research? How can lived experience as well as government and research agendas inform the narrative?

- Are there immediate next steps or quick wins where government could be doing better now, whilst the longer-term, large-scale work is in development?

- To what extent do you feel the terms "data science" and "artificial intelligence" are currently adequately defined to be researched in a useful way?

- Do we have any insight into the public's attitudes to changes driven by machine learning? E.g. how many would be happy to have an AI diagnose their x-rays.

- How can we make algorithmic systems fair, ethical and transparent - and ensure they're used ethically (like maybe not to put people out of work)?

- Policy requires political judgement as much as analysis. Is AI just calculation to many decimal spaces with spurious accuracy? (edited)

- What will the role be for qualitative researchers in the age of big data?

- What is the state of training provision for social researchers to do data science?

- How important is it for social researchers to understand how AI works. Or should we accept hyper specialisation and working in cross cutting teams?

Lorraine Whitmarsh

- When do you think the 'tipping point' was reached in public acceptance that climate change was happening and serious? Or is that still to come?

- Could you apply the same approaches to business stakeholders whose behaviours also need to change?

- While inclusion is of course important do you think being hung up on 'representativeness' can hamper public involvement and be a way to dismiss it?

- What happens when policy makers ignore public views because they don't fit the political narrative e.g. nuclear power site location

- Should social research be oriented towards "social" or "behaviour change" or towards developing laws and policies?

- How do lessons you've learnt about involvement apply to other areas of policy & link to areas with established traditions of public involvement (e.g. health)

- Message framing in other settings has found that messages people self-report resonating with don't necessarily translate into behaviours? Is this different?

- Do you think this participatory approach would work in other policy areas? If so, which do you think would benefit from it?

- How do you bring public views, natural science evidence and industrial lobby positions together?

- How do you ensure that the process remains fully participatory throughout rather than expert led policy making taking over towards the end?

- How can we ensure those who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change are involved in these conversations?

- On reflexivity: Should research funders insist on low-carbon research, e.g. not funding flights whenever surface travel or virtual conferencing is feasible?

- Would you go full Greta Thunberg and sail to conferences?

- Do you bring climate change deniers into the public participation process and does that prove helpful in terms of understanding different perspectives.

- "The public" implies everyone, but only a few will take part in e.g. 'public & stakeholder deliberative workshops'. How can you make the process representative?

Pamela Cox

- How can your work on hidden work be used to raise the profile of informal care?

- What about funding for interdisciplinary research? How open are research funders to this in practice?

- Is interdisciplinarity just a fad?

- Much of the narrative around interdisciplinary research focuses on its utility in solving global social challenges. Is it relevant beyond this?

- Interdisciplinary research is a buzz word that has been floating around for awhile. What mechanisms can we use to learn from previous failings?

- How do we better incentivise researchers to carry out interdisciplinary research?

- Do you feel destination of research through TV programmes alters public perceptions of trust in experts/research?

- How can we access these TV programmes?

- What impact do projects like Cambridge Analytica do to academics' credibility in terms of providing safe spaces for doing research for the public good?

- Given previous presentation, what is/should be the role of public involvement in the design & delivery of interdisciplinary research for the public good?

- Interdisciplinary research can have problems, e.g. poor communication, lack of clarity, unwillingness to compromise - how much of a 'public good' is it then?

- There are many, many researchers outside academia and industry. What do you think SeNSS might be missing by excluding them?

- How should the RSA become more prominent in conducting interdisciplinary research as public good?

- How do we build respect for non-academic research so it's not seen as a 'poor cousin' of research done within the ivory tower?