

Research Project Statement

My research project will be titled 'How has devolution affected the UK's response to the coronavirus pandemic?' I will analyse the media and public response to the communication of various government policies across the four nations of the UK. Whilst I will need a basic understanding of the variations in policy across the UK, I will focus on the communication as it is important for public faith in government. The expected outcomes of the project are to discover whether the communication of policy has created confusion among the public and to understand whether trust in government has declined because of communication policy throughout the pandemic. My project will fit under the 'culture and communication' research theme because it focuses on the communication of the four governments across the UK to their populations and the respective cultures of the four nations.

I have chosen this project because I have strong interests in both constitutional affairs and communications policy. Furthermore, the coronavirus pandemic has been predicted to change public behaviour, attitude, and opinion. Therefore, I would like to investigate the effect of the British constitution on the pandemic. There are also real-world implications as there are many questions surrounding the constitution at the forefront of British politics, such as Scottish Independence. For this reason, it is necessary to analyse the impact of the pandemic on such a vital institution, especially as I will be examining issues of trust in government which will be a key part of campaigns for and against Scottish Independence. I also anticipate finding a change in public opinion towards devolution in Wales and Northern Ireland.

My plan for the research projects is as follows:

- I will summarise the different communications methods used by governments across the four nations.
- Then I will use media reports to gauge the reaction to the different communications of policy. I will first use media as it influences public opinion and is representative of the public.
- Next, I will check that the media reports analysed previously are accurate and reliable using public opinion polls.
- Finally, I will use basic outcomes, such as excess deaths, to see whether opinion over communications policy correlates with a basic view of the success of the government in handling the pandemic.

I do not believe that my research project would be applicable for an in-field project in the second year. Therefore, I would like to take on the leadership expedition or a position of leadership in an organisation. Currently I am leaning towards the leadership position in an organisation, however I would appreciate further discussion and advice over the options as I have not decided my preference yet. I am sensitive to the idea that the leadership expedition could give off the attitude of a 'white saviour' which is something that I am morally against. I want to reassure you that this is only an initial view and I am excited to find out more information so that I can make the correct decision for me.