

Methodology and Writing of Scientific Papers

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Formal Structure of Seminar Papers:

- (i) Title
- (ii) Contents
- (iii) Abbreviations
- 1. Introduction
- 2. Chapter
- 3. Chapter
- 4. Chapter
- 5. Conclusion
- Literature

Contents of Seminar Papers:

- (i) Title: subject or topic; title of the seminar; semester; name of the professor; author, address, phone, e-mail
 - (ii) Contents: structure of the seminar paper
 - (iii) Abbreviations: all abbreviations used in the paper
 - 1. Introduction: subject; literature review; research question; hypothesis; methods; structure; definitions
 - 2. Chapters: Description and analysis of the facts of interest for giving an answer to the question
 - 3. Conclusion: presentation of findings; answering the question; validating or disproving of the hypothesis
- Literature: all titles or sources used in the paper

How to select a subject?

Most interesting problems concern complex policy fields or institutional settings.

The first step of writing a paper, therefore, is to make the subject operationable for a seminar paper, that means:

- „Less is more!“
- Concentrate on a certain question
- Concentrate on a special aspect
- Ensure that sufficient literature is available

How to formulate a research question?

The function of the research question is to indicate:

- what aspect or phenomenon will be investigated,
- what explanation will be provided.

The most common types of questions are:

- “Why?”
- “How?”

The function of conceptual definitions:

It is very useful to give definitions of the core concepts of the seminar paper, because:

- many phenomena have multiple definitions
- they serve as a guide for the reader
- they include connotations the author agrees with
- they indicate your theoretical approach
- they should make the subject operationalisable for empirical research

How to get a hypothesis?

Hypotheses are explicit statements that indicate how a researcher thinks the phenomena of interest are related.

Like: „The European Union is a system of governance without government.“ or „The institutional framework of the European Union generates certain forms of governance.“

To develop a hypothesis it is useful to:

- survey the relevant literature to avoid „reinventing the wheel“
- reflect on your theoretical approach

How to structure a paper?

A good structure is essential for a paper and should fit with the research question and the hypothesis and reflect the different aspects of the problem.

2. The Governance Approach in European Studies
 - 2.1 Empirical background: changes in IR
 - 2.2 Governance without government
 - 2.2.1 The international relations debate
 - 2.2.2 The steering debate and its followers
 - 2.3 The multi-level governance debate on the EU
 - 2.3.1 Changing approaches to the integration process
 - 2.3.2 Empirical findings on EU policies
 - 2.4 Conclusion: Analysis of European policy making

What is presented in a paper?

Facts that are collected from different sources as:

- original documents
- literature
- data
- observation
- interviews

Analysis of these facts by:

- quantitative or qualitative methods
- case studies or comparative case studies
- theoretical reflections

How to conclude a paper?

A scientific paper ends with a conclusion containing:

- presentation of your findings
- precise answer to your research question
- support for or rejection of your hypothesis
- research gaps and further research perspectives
- if preferred, a normative reflection of the results