

SOMETHING ON WRITING & PUBLISHING

ACUNS Workshop “SDGs and Security”
SIGLA, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

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WHAT KIND OF 'PAPER'?

What kind of paper do you want to produce?

Who is your audience?

- Academic
- Policy
- Working paper
- Book chapter
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DECIDE ON THE JOURNAL (AND THUS AUDIENCE)

Early on decide on the journal (or publisher): where is your epistemic community?

Which journals are you quoting most?

Study the journal:

- What kind of language
- Ranking, impact factors, refereed, publisher, open access
- Which discussions are taking place
- How are articles in this outlet structured

FOR YOUR TOPIC ASK:

- 1) What do we know about the topic (what are the different positions)
- 2) What do we NOT know about the topic (or what is being debated, what are the controversies)
- 3) Why should we know about it (relevance – practical, theoretical, social), the ‘so what’ question; what will you add that is ‘new’
- 4) What are you going to do about it (your research approach) and what is your contribution (to the debate, existing knowledge, problem solving)

REMEMBER: MIND THE GAP OR....

This is an example from my research field of Organizational Studies, but it applies across disciplines in my view!

“The most common way across paradigmatic camps is to spot various ‘gaps’ in the literature and, based on that, to formulate specific research questions. The dominance of gap-spotting is surprising, given it is increasingly recognized that theory is made interesting and influential when it challenges assumptions that underlie existing literature. The article discusses why assumption-challenging approaches are rare, and it identifies a range of social norms that favour gap-spotting. Finally, the article proposes some ways of constructing research questions that move beyond gap-spotting, and discusses how these ways are likely to promote more interesting and significant theories.” (from the abstract)

Sandberg, J., & Alvesson, M. (2011). Ways of constructing research questions: gap-spotting or problematization? *Organization*, 18(1), 23–44.

DEVELOP A QUESTION / HYPOTHESIS

- a) Why is your question important?
- b) What have others said? (e.g. key assumptions and concepts which reflect the knowledge of your field)
- c) What can I contribute to the debates? (and therefore to the knowledge in your field)
- d) What – as a result of my research – will be better understood? (or, what will the outcomes look like?)
- e) Scope and focus Including specification of ‘setting/context’

DO NOT FORGET TO ADDRESS:

Explain your **methodology** (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) + **how you analysed your data**

- Survey (using questionnaires or structured interviews)
- Experimental research (setting up test-setting)
- Interpretive research (using methods such as in-depth interviewing, shadowing, and observation)
- Case study (using many types of data collection methods)
- Action research (bring change together with participants)
- Archival research (using documents such as company minutes of meetings to investigate how decisions were made)
- Document analysis (systematic review of all kinds of docs)

THE WRITING

Take the reader by the hand....(readers are lazy)...signpost important points, make sure the arguments flow (in academic papers); shorter points (for policy papers)

Simple message executed to perfection!

Support and substantiate your arguments (data, references, reports; think about your outlet...if more academic make sure the references speak to them, if more policy refer to policy works); we want to know how you developed your arguments

Conclusion/recommendations: both should rely on what you have addressed before (no new info)

IN THE END...THE WRITING:

Has a logic to it.....

..... your question or hypothesis drives the paper and needs to be addressed, answered...and you need to show us how.....in the middle we want to read where your research positions itself as this is where the contributions relate to.....

It can be that simple.....

As to SDGs and security...only address it if it makes sense in your paper!