

# Research paper

- Addresses a gap in scientific knowledge
  - tells us something we don't know from the literature
  - in a BA thesis, this contribution can be small
- Presents an argument based on empirical analysis
  - the argument speaks to existing research
- May present a new concept or theory
  - presenting a new theory may be a bit too challenging at BA level

# Structure of a research paper

## 1. Introduction

- State the topic, defend its relevance, state your research question
- Summarize what is known about the topic and what gap in knowledge you are addressing
- Briefly summarize your findings and **state your argument**
  - argument = a statement based on empirical results that ties the results to theories
  - the argument makes the results relevant outside the cases you studied
- May describe the structure of the chapters

# Structure of a research paper, cont.

## 2. Literature review/ Theoretical part

- Review literature
  - What answers to your research question does the literature provide?
- Say what is missing/wrong in the literature
  - plus emphasize that you are going to address it (&how)
- State the expectations for your analysis, supported by arguments derived from literature or reasoned arguments
  - Expectations stated in the form of hypotheses (sometimes research questions)
  - Each hypothesis should have a theoretical explanation

# Structure of a research paper, cont.

## 3. Data and variables

- Describe your data
  - what, where from, ...
  - Why these data are suitable
- Describe variables
  - describe and defend your choices on conceptualization (may already appear in theoretical part) and operationalization

## 4. Analysis

- Identify the type of analysis and defend your choice
- Present your results, tie them back to hypotheses
  - Keep the hypotheses in mind, avoid tangents
- Could be more than 1 chapter

# Structure of a research paper, cont.

- 5. Conclusion
    - Summary: What& why, findings, argument
    - Discussion of the weaknesses
    - Argument's implications
    - Often includes suggestions for future research
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- Does my thesis include everything it should? Thesis evaluation criteria:
    - <https://irep.fss.muni.cz/bachelor/current-students/bachelor-thesis#>
    - [https://is.muni.cz/auth/do/fss/SO/48302846/48302949/pokyny\\_pr\\_o\\_zpracovani\\_bc\\_a\\_mgr\\_kvalifikacnich\\_praci/zanry\\_BC\\_a\\_MGR\\_pr aci\\_obor\\_EVS\\_vcetne\\_hodnoticich\\_kriterii\\_od\\_PS\\_2017.docx](https://is.muni.cz/auth/do/fss/SO/48302846/48302949/pokyny_pr_o_zpracovani_bc_a_mgr_kvalifikacnich_praci/zanry_BC_a_MGR_pr aci_obor_EVS_vcetne_hodnoticich_kriterii_od_PS_2017.docx)
    - [https://is.muni.cz/auth/do/fss/SO/48302846/48302949/pokyny\\_pr\\_o\\_zpracovani\\_bc\\_a\\_mgr\\_kvalifikacnich\\_praci/2021\\_04\\_22\\_Zanry\\_k\\_valifikacnich\\_pracii\\_MV\\_PS\\_2020\\_nove\\_programy\\_final\\_2.docx](https://is.muni.cz/auth/do/fss/SO/48302846/48302949/pokyny_pr_o_zpracovani_bc_a_mgr_kvalifikacnich_praci/2021_04_22_Zanry_k_valifikacnich_pracii_MV_PS_2020_nove_programy_final_2.docx)
      - Good as a check list
      - Ideal for peer feedback

# Extended position paper

- Adopts and presents an argumentative stance in response to a position held by another author
  - similar to a research paper but more focused on challenging an argument
  - not necessarily filling a gap in knowledge

# Structure of a position paper

- Similar to a research paper, plus the following:
  - Emphasizes the challenged thesis
  - No hypotheses, "just" a defended counter-thesis
  - Data analysis has less space&importance than in a research paper
    - discussion of arguments in existing literature as a source of evidence plays an important role
  - The conclusion evaluates the strength of provided counter-argument
    - In addition to summarizing your counter-argument

# Examples to follow

- Extended position paper
  - Sovacool, B. K. 2016. "How long will it take? Conceptualizing the temporal dynamics of energy transitions." *Energy Research & Social Science* 13: 202-215.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2015.12.020>

# Research paper - examples

- BA theses:
- RAMMER, Jakob. *The Political Discourse Regarding the War in Afghanistan: A Comparative Analysis Between American Presidents Bush and Obama* [online]. Brno, 2021 [cit. 2021-09-08]. Available from: <https://is.muni.cz/th/q40x7/>. Bachelor's thesis. Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies. Thesis supervisor Maya HIGGINS.
- MALÁ, Zuzana. *The Varied Effects of the Structural Adjustment Programs on Women's Well-Being in Mexico* [online]. Brno, 2021 [cit. 2021-09-08]. Available from: <https://is.muni.cz/th/btg66/>. Bachelor's thesis. Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies. Thesis supervisor Jan OSIČKA.
- DENDYSOVÁ, Zuzana. *Fake News and Its Perception among EU Citizens* [online]. Brno, 2022 [cit. 2022-09-29]. Dostupné z: <https://is.muni.cz/th/rirwt/>. Bakalářská práce. Masarykova univerzita, Fakulta sociálních studií. Vedoucí práce Zuzana RINGLEROVÁ.
- POLLÁKOVÁ, Lucia. *Brexit a jeho vplyv na verejnú mienku o EÚ na Slovensku* [online]. Brno, 2020 [cit. 2021-08-30]. Dostupné z: <https://is.muni.cz/th/nn5zn/>. Bakalářská práce. Masarykova univerzita, Fakulta sociálních studií. Vedoucí práce Zuzana RINGLEROVÁ.

**Examples of research articles from which you can draw inspiration for your these. Notice the research questions they ask, how they are written - their structure, how they formulate what contribution they make, how they review the existing literature, how they describe the evidence that they are providing, and how they formulate their argument. Of course, a BA thesis does not have to be such a significant contribution to scientific knowledge. The logic and the structure, however, should be the same as in the best articles.**

Lai B, Thyne C. The Effect of Civil War on Education, 1980—97. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2007;44(3):277-292. [doi:10.1177/0022343307076631](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343307076631)

- this is a nice example of a study in which the authors examine empirical support for two theories. One theory is supported, the other is not.

Beardsley K, McQuinn B. Rebel Groups as Predatory Organizations: The Political Effects of the 2004 Tsunami in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 2009;53(4):624-645. doi:[10.1177/0022002709336460](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002709336460)

- this is an interesting article that uses a case study design. Notice how the selection of cases helps with the identification of causes of political development in the two regions.

Hanania R. The Humanitarian Turn at the UNSC: Explaining the development of international norms through machine learning algorithms. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2021;58(4):655-670. doi:[10.1177/0022343320929728](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320929728)

- This is a good example of a paper where even a descriptive analysis is highly relevant

Gonzalez-Ocantos E, de Jonge CK, Meléndez C, Nickerson D, Osorio J. Carrots and sticks: Experimental evidence of vote-buying and voter intimidation in Guatemala. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2020;57(1):46-61. doi:[10.1177/0022343319884998](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319884998)

- This is an example of an experimental research design in IR

Nagel RU. Gendered preferences: How women's inclusion in society shapes negotiation occurrence in intrastate conflicts. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2021;58(3):433-448. doi:[10.1177/0022343319899456](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319899456)

- this is an example of a typical research paper: formulates a theory, tests the hypotheses using quantitative analysis

Kreft A-K. Responding to sexual violence: Women's mobilization in war. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2019;56(2):220-233. doi:[10.1177/0022343318800361](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318800361)

- this paper combines a large-N quantitative study with a qualitative analysis. At the same time, it is a nice example of a case study.

# Structure of a research paper

- Online resource:
  - <https://zuzanaringlerova.weebly.com/for-students.html>
  - "Recommended thesis structure"