

Publier dans une revue anglophone
Le research design



Outline

- Stylistic Guidelines
- Key Ingredients of a Paper

General
stylistic
advice

Style
MATTERS

**1. Keep the focus...
on the RQ & core argument**

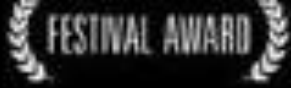
- EVERYTHING you write in the paper should be clearly aimed at only one thing: demonstrating your hypothesis, i.e. at answering your RQ.
- All the rest should be deleted.
- Remove all the superfluous parts, i.e. all the things that are not very specifically aimed at answering your RQ/at demonstrating your core argument.



2. Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF), Summaries and Transitions

- **At the beginning of each section (and in the Introduction):**
BLUF
 - The paper must have a core argument.
 - Each section should have a sub-core argument, which are building blocks in the demonstration of your argument
 - Make sure to always summarize the key argument that you seek to demonstrate (1) in the Introduction; and (2) at the beginning of each section and sub-section of the paper
- **At the end of each section: Summaries and Transition**
 - Summarize the key point that you have sought to demonstrate in that section and make a transition to the next section
 - The logical connection between different sections must **ALWAYS** be crystal clear and be geared toward the demonstration of your hypothesis





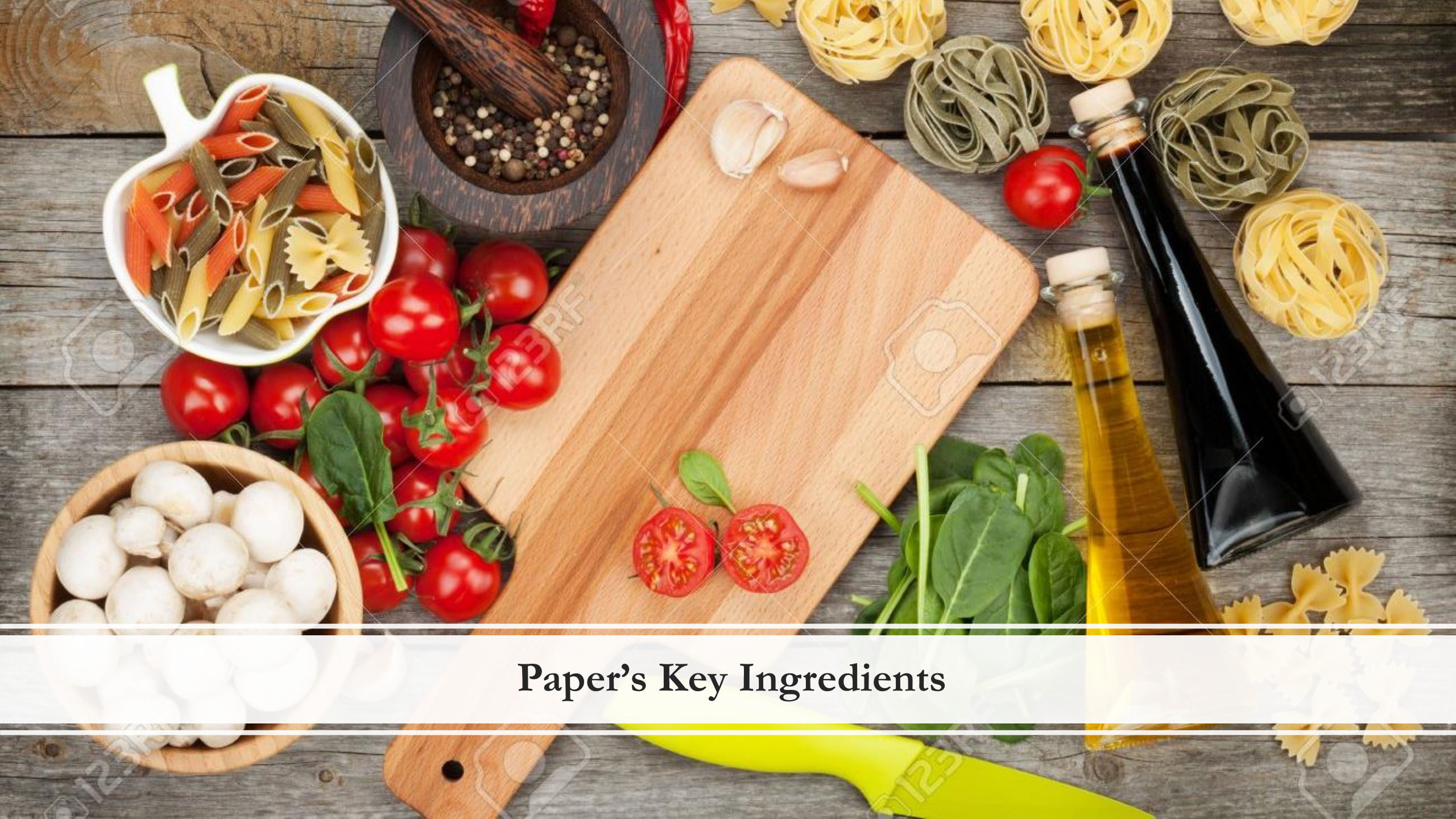
THE TITLE

A FILM BY THE DIRECTOR BASED ON THE NOVEL BY THE WRITER

COMING SOON

THE TITLE IS A PROJECT BY BARBIFUTURA © 2012

- The title should be punchy
- It should summarize your core argument
- If you can think of a word or label that ‘sticks’, and that can be associated to your work, even better



Paper's Key Ingredients

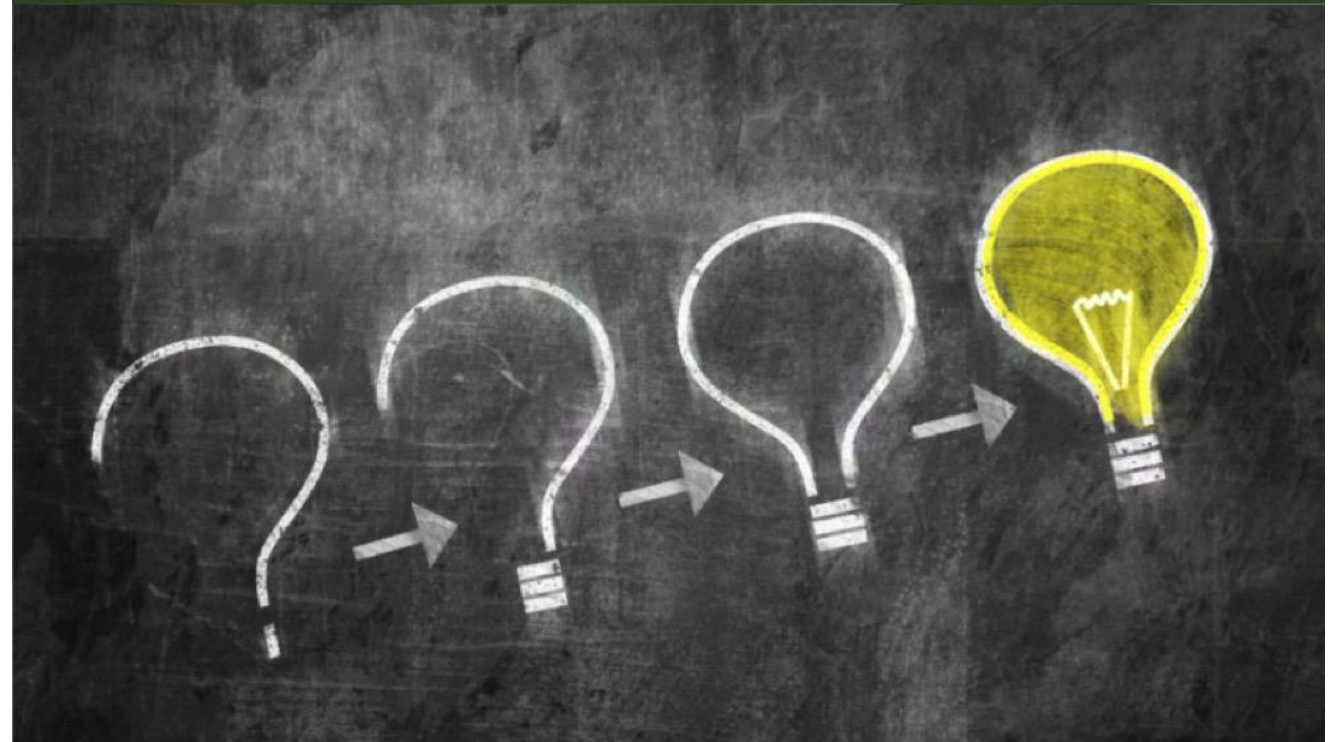
- Strong **Introduction**: so what?
- Clear, well-defined **research question**
- **Literature review**
 - Shows **existing answers to your RQ**; and **their shortcomings**
 - **And/or** existing **gaps** in the literature (e.g. RQ has not yet been addressed)
- Clear, well-defined **core argument/hypothesis = the answer to your RQ**
- [**Alternative Explanations/Competing Hypotheses**]
- Clear **theoretical and empirical contribution to the literature**
- Rigorous **Case Selection**
- Well-structured, empirically solid **case study/ies**
- **Conclusion**: back to the big picture

Introduction

- **Hook**
 - Or Empirical hook (anecdote; headlines; etc.)
 - Theoretical hook (theoretical puzzle)
- Present the **research question** (RQ)
- **Literature Review** (i.e. existing explanations): *Summary or Full Explanation* [i.e. developed in a standalone section of the paper]
- Your **Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis**/Core Argument: *Summary*
- [**Alternative Explanations/Competing Hypotheses**]: *Summary or Full Explanation*
- **Contribution to the Literature**: theoretical and empirical *Summary or Full Explanation*
 - Explain the big so what, why does it matter?
- **Case Selection**: *Summary or Full Explanation*
- **Outline of the Paper**
 - At the end of the Introduction, briefly present the outline/structure of the paper (i.e. how you will demonstrate your core argument)
 - E.g. “The paper is structured as follows. First, second, Third, In conclusion.

- You need a clear explanandum = a dependent variable, DV
= the thing that you want to explain
- RQ = *Why does the DV vary?* (over time, across countries, across sectors, etc.)
- The RQ should be puzzling, counter-intuitive, intriguing

The research question



Literature Review

- **No laundry list!**
 - No laundry list of everything that has been written/you know about the topic!!
 - The literature review should exclusively revolve around your RQ, and the existing answers to your RQ
- **Has this RQ been addressed in the existing literature?**
 - *If it has not:* stress the gaps in the literature, e.g. that this RQ has not been addressed
 - *If it has:* Identify shortcomings in the literature in answering the RQ
 - Key point that you must explain: *What is it that existing frameworks cannot explain?*
 - => goal is to show that existing explanations/frameworks cannot make sense of one/several aspects of your RQ
 - => therefore there is a need for a new framework of analysis (yours)



KEEP
CALM
AND
TEST THE
HYPOTHESIS

Theoretical Framework

&

Hypothesis

*Keep the focus on the Core
Argument !*

- You need a very clearly defined **hypothesis/core argument = your answer to your RQ**
 - Ideally, the argument should be counter-intuitive; it should be punchy; it should have large implications for the study of IR
 - No cherry picking; develop a clear and coherent theoretical framework and hypothesis
- An hypothesis describes **the causal relationship between one (or more) independent variable(s) [IVs] and the dependent variable [DV]**
 - Dependent Variable: explanandum, the thing you want to explain
 - Remember: you want to explain a variation in the DV [RQ]
 - Independent Variable(s): explanatory factor(s)
- Hypothesis: **Variation in IV => Variation in DV**
 - The hypothesis must explain the *causal mechanism*: how do changes in the IV affect changes in the DV?
- **Example:**
 - RQ: What accounts for the variation in alliance structures across time and space? i.e. why are they sometimes bilateral, sometimes multilateral?
 - Hypothesis: the level of regional threat diversity drives the type of alliance structure
 - IV: regional threat diversity
 - DV: Alliance structure: bilateral or multilateral = discrete variable (either/or), but can also be a continuous variable
 - Hypothesis: + regional threats => + alliance will have a bilateral structure; - regional threats => + multilateral structure

Keep the focus on the core argument!

- Introduction
 - Argument of the paper (X) [= your hypothesis, the answer to RQ]
 - + economic interdependence (IV) => - coherence of foreign policy (DV)
 - In order to demonstrate X, I will demonstrate x1 and x1
 - + econ interdependence => processual fragmentation => substantive fragmentation => - coherence
 - Section 1
 - Argument of section 1 (x1)
 - + econ interdependence => + processual fragmentation
 - Section 2
 - Argument of section 2 (x2)
 - + Processual fragmentation => + substantive fragmentation
- ➔ The combination of x1 and x2 demonstrates my argument X



WHAT IS
YOUR
CORE
ARGUMENT

Alternative Explanations / Competing Hypotheses

- Explain what are the other hypotheses that can be derived from the existing literature and that provide an alternative explanation/a competing hypothesis to your answer to the RQ
 - *Option 1*: dismiss them ‘preemptively’ in the literature review
 - Polarity cannot explain variation in alliance structures: In Cold War bipolarity there were both multilateral and bilateral alliances
 - *Option 2*: in each case study, you test different hypotheses: your hypothesis and one/more competing hypothesis/es
 - Cold War: US alliances in East Asia
 - Cold War: Europe
 - Post-Cold War: US alliances in East Asia
 - Post-Cold War: Europe

Contribution to the Literature: theoretical and empirical

- To what big IR debates does your argument/findings contribute?
- Identify 2-3 areas
- Explain the big so what, why does it matter?
 - The academic (empirical/theoretical) and maybe policy implications, if you want

Case selection

- Why did you chose these case studies?
- You need a rigorous method for case selection
- The case selection must be justified based on the fact that these specific case studies are relevant to evaluate your hypothesis and thus answer your RQ
- Ideally, case studies should be selected on the IV, with different values of your IV in different case studies, so that you show how variation in your IV drives variation in your DV (show causation)
- Examples (if comparison):
 - Most similar cases
 - Most dissimilar cases

Case Studies

- Should not be ‘mere description’
- Rather, you leverage the empirical evidence to demonstrate your hypothesis
- Clear structure (e.g. structured focused comparison)

Conclusion

- Summarize the findings and link them to your RQ
 - Theoretical and empirical findings/innovation/contribution
- Highlight the big “so what”: the academic (empirical/theoretical) and maybe policy implications, if you want
- And identify areas (e.g. 3) of future research

References

- Stephen van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997), .
- Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT Press, 2004)
- Gary Goertz, *Social Science Concepts, a User's Guide* Princeton University Press, 2006)

