



## **Tips and Tools for Sociologists**

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### **SUGGESTED OUTLINES FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF MANUSCRIPTS**

(Adapted from Bill REIMER April 9, 1992)

#### **1. Formal Academic Papers or Articles (Hypothesis Testing)**

- Introduction:
  - the problem
  - the research question
  - why it is important
- Theoretical Framework:
  - The theoretical context for the problem
  - How it has been dealt with in the literature
  - Strengths and weaknesses of how it has been dealt with
  - Justification for how you will examine it
  - Central research proposition(s)
- Research Design:
  - theoretical definitions
  - research design description
  - operationalizations
  - hypotheses
- Results of the research
- Discussion (interpretation) of the results
- Conclusions: summary of issues, and implications of the research

#### **2. Descriptive Papers or Articles**

- Introduction:
  - the problem
  - the research question
  - why it is important
- Theoretical Framework:
  - The theoretical context for the problem
  - How it has been dealt with in the literature
  - Strengths and weaknesses of how it has been dealt with
  - Identify the central research focus or question
- Major Issues to be dealt with (may be repeated a number of times):
  - Identify the issue
  - Describe and discuss the data and theory related to the issue
  - Discuss the implications of your data for the research question
- Overall implications of your findings and discussion
- Conclusions: summary of issues, and implications of the research

### **3. Client-oriented Reports**

- (Possible executive summary: one page)
- Introduction:
  - the problem (as it occurs to the client)
  - objectives of the study
  - how you have organized the report
- Conceptualization of the problem (may require explaining how and why you have reconceptualized the problem as it occurs to the client)
- Research Approach
  - justification in client's language
  - description of research
- Results and interpretations of the research
- Overall conclusions of the research
- Recommendations