

ANT 261: Science, Policy, and Society
Spring 2019: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:30 - 12:20 am, Studio D

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Elements of a Policy Paper for your Case Study



While there are many types of “policy papers” (aka policy memos, briefs, etc.) all try to convince a person who is very busy that a certain course of action needs to be followed. “A policy paper is a decision-making tool that: defines an urgent policy issue; identifies and evaluates policy options; and recommends a preferred alternative.”¹

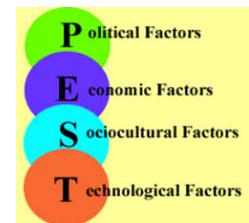
A policy paper is not a research paper nor an opinion piece; it does present essential historical, comparative, social, or scientific data that is essential in showing why a particular policy should be followed.

The course moodle site will have many different policy paper guides that you can reference, but in summary, all policy papers should have the following elements:

- **Title**
- **Executive Summary:** designed to interest readers, it provides a concise summary of the findings and recommendations.
- **Overview/Background:** this includes a statement of purpose (context, why an action is important now); overview, background of current situation and policy/biological environment; explanation of necessity for change,
- **Options:** alternatives to current situation that could be followed, with pros and cons (with essential supporting evidence) of each option.
- **Recommendation:** clear identification of argument as to why a particular option should be followed, including implementation (details on how, when, and who should implement a particular option).
- **Appendices:** Tables, charts, maps and other supporting evidence that is important but not essential for placement in the text
- **Bibliography.**



Two acronyms may also help you think through what is essential evidence and context in piecing together a policy paper: PEST (Political, Economic, Sociocultural, and Technological Factors) and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). These should be seen from the perspectives of different options and stakeholders.



Policy papers are the bridge between academia and policymakers; the challenge is to be concise without being superficial. Pictures, worth about a thousand words, can be useful; but don't overuse them. Remember the inverted pyramid: start strong with your conclusion or main points for each section.

¹ http://www.foodsec.org/fileadmin/user_upload/eufao-fsi4dm/docs/1_policy_paper_guide.pdf, accessed 6 Jan 2014.