

Guidelines for Authors

Dear authors,

we are very glad that you consider publishing an article in our blog “Resources and Conflict”. Here are some guidelines to help you prepare your contribution.

Language

Although our research network is pretty much German(y)-based, the preferred language for blog contributions is English. Evidently, our research field has a strong international orientation and we hope to also attract an international audience and support transnational collaborations.

Types of articles

Various types of articles can be published in our blog. First of all, the *classic* blog article would be a short piece of academic work in which scholarly or public wisdom is critically reflected (though not necessarily dismissed) based on theoretical reasoning or empirical evidence. This is like a research article in miniature. Indeed, you might also link your blog contribution to a paper or book presenting your findings in greater detail.

Secondly, as research journals do, we publish *review* articles. In these, you summarize but also critically discuss a monograph, edited book, set of journal articles, or an individual article, which in your view deserves appraisal, needs to be criticized, or has to be reflected on further.

Thirdly, we publish *conference reports*. A conference report should not simply repeat what has been presented by the various participants. Instead, as any good conference, it should have an overarching theme, which binds together the presentations. Thus, a conference report should briefly highlight the state-of-the-art of the research field and present possible avenues for further research that became evident.

Fourthly, we would love to publish what we may refer to as *observation-reflection* pieces. Imagine: You are doing interviews, browsing archives, or exploring wherever your research takes you. You stumble upon something that may puzzle, fascinate, or frustrate you. For instance, an open research question, a new observation, or some practical problem of (field) research may strike you. In this case, write an observation-reflection piece!

Fifthly and relatedly, we invite articles that engage in *methodological, ethical, and normative reflection*. For instance, you find that the methodological toolkit of our research field needs to be improved, that common research approaches suffer from normative biases, or that practical problems persist? In this type of article you explore such concerns and, ideally, give ideas on how to overcome them.

Finally, in case that your idea for an article does not correspond to any of these categories, feel free to contact us with a rough sketch of your idea ahead of writing. We are happy to give you feedback and guidance.

Make a point

Like virtually all academic contributions, the one thing that every blog article should make is: right, a point! This could be a key thought, idea, argument, proposition, observation, question, etc. It should be spelled out as clearly as possible and early on in the article (rather than in the concluding paragraph). Thereby, your main assertion can also serve to structure the whole article in order to make it coherent and easy to follow.

Text length

Shorter is better – 1,000 words would be a good length for your article, and indeed, we will try to restrict contributions that exceed this length. This may seem very short at first. But remember: Blog articles differ from full research papers and people’s attention spans are limited (especially on the internet, it seems). Therefore, we ask you to be this brief and concise. Make a clear, short, and compelling case, use precise language, evade repetitions, and stick to very essentially references only. This makes your articles highly readable and attractive to readers.

If 1,000 words seems impossibly short, there are two tricks: You may consider cutting your ideas into two or more blog articles – e.g. by framing it as a serial story. Alternatively, we are happy to link a longer version of your thoughts (e.g. as published in a journal, on a university server, on a private homepage, etc.) for those interested in more details at the end of your article.

Open with a teaser

The first paragraph (which will be visible on the front page of the blog) should be short and teasing. Within around 30-60 words, try to arouse the readers’ interest and desire to learn more about the subject!

You can do this, for example, by pointing out why your topic is relevant, that your thoughts are challenging to conventional wisdoms, or that you have observed something really surprising.

Style of writing

Academic writing is often characterized by long and difficult-to-follow sentences obscured by heavy jargon (especially when it comes to methodological and theoretical issues). While complex academic language may have its justification, all-too-often it impedes readability and it isolates us as scholars from the world out there. This blog is not supposed to be an(other) academic island but a fora and outlet accessible for everybody interested.

Therefore, your article should be written in a style that is easily understandable – for as many readers as possible. When writing, have in mind that your audience is manifold: There are certainly academic peers and students who read your contribution, but journalists, activists, politicians, people from the aid and humanitarian community, and everyone else who visits our blog is also among your target readership. Try to write for all of them!

This requires you to adopt a rather informal style. Replace jargon and overly theoretical or methodological language by synonyms and easier-to-understand ways of expressing yourself. Use active language, images, metaphors, rhetoric questions, and other stylish elements to pimp your writing. Mix long and short sentences; vary punctuation.

If uncertain about (how to do) this, consult “[Stylish Academic Writing](#)” by Helen Sword.

When quoting

Through quotations you can show how your blog article is linked to existing research, to ongoing debates within the academic field, or to issues of public interest. You may cite directly, paraphrase, or simply refer to existing studies, news reports, and other sources. However, there is no need to quote everything that has been written and said about your subject. Instead, use quotations only where necessary to make your point and to locate yourself in the academic and public arena. On how to quote, see also the following.

Formatting and what to include

There are no instructions for how to format your file. Just use any of the common writing editors and hand in your article as Word doc(x), Open Office file, or pdf.

In general, the file should contain the following elements:

- Title (be imaginative, catchy, but short again!)
- Author name(s) (in the order of appearance) and institutional affiliation
- Bold opening paragraph (this could be either an abstract or your introduction, it will appear in bold letters)
- Main text
- Brief bio and contact (What is your institutional position and academic or practical background? How can interested readers contact you? Your bio doesn't have to be overly formal though. You can also let readers know briefly what motivates you to work in this field.)

No bibliography is necessary. Please try to use online sources and journal pages. The quotations should be included directly in the text. To do so, in Word: just-right click and create a hyperlink where it should be placed. Always try to find permalinks (such as DOIs)!

In addition, attach images or graphs (including link if under creative commons license, see the following).

Pictures and graphs

Blogs usually are vivid and images can catch attention and arouse emotion – more than words. Therefore, we recommend to include at least one picture or graph in every article. Also, please send us one sentence per picture or graph for the description. If you include several pictures, we also need to know which one to set on the front page for preview.

For copyright issues, it is important that you have full rights over pictures used in the blog. If you have taken a photo yourself (and if portrayed persons agree to have the image used), you are generally fine. Alternatively, you can also use images that are under creative commons licenses, e.g. as available on flickr.com (set license to “creative commons”). If using images under this license, please also send us the link to the image.

Anything unclear?

Ask us by e-mail! info@resources-and-conflict.org