

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Developing the knowledge and skills to write effective policy papers for publication in a second language not only requires a very good knowledge of the language itself, but also means that you need to become a member of the public policy community for whom you are writing. The members of the public policy community that this guide targets are policy advisers, i.e., both policy researchers and analysts. For such policy advisers, membership entails clearly understanding the approaches, goals, conventions and language of the community, as well as the communication tools used by the public policy community in the process of policy-making. However, your participation in the community will also be influenced by the specific conditions of your local context.

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*Membership in the public policy community and understanding its conventions and tools is key to policy paper writing*

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Adopting such a social approach,<sup>1</sup> this book provides much information about the public policy community, the policy-making process and the policy paper, but it does not expect that all of the information given will directly apply to your context. Hence, this book can provide maximum support to you in your on-going development as a policy paper writer if you decide how best to apply the information you find in this guide to your own situation. Based on this social perspective, the guide aims to support you in:

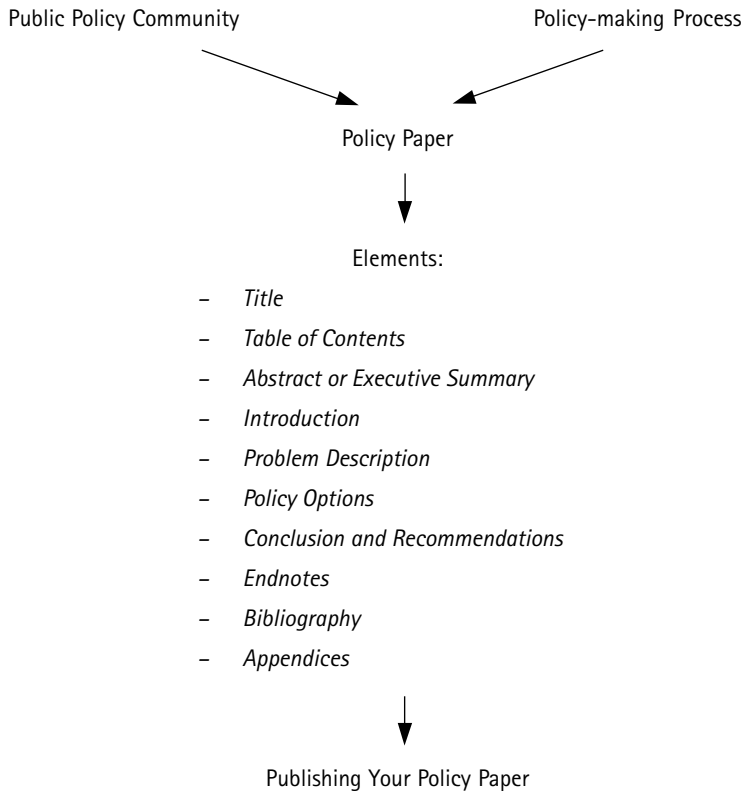
- considering and reflecting on the nature of the public policy community of whom you are a member;
- examining the role of the policy paper as a decision-making tool in the policy-making process;
- advancing your knowledge and skills of the structural and textual elements of the policy paper;
- all stages of the process of writing and publishing your policy paper.

This guide to writing effective policy papers moves from framing the policy paper as a tool used by the public policy community in the policy-making process, to a detailed description of the major elements of the policy paper, to a focus on the process of publishing such papers. The following diagram provides an overview of the guide:

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<sup>1</sup> The social approach adopted in this book was heavily influenced by the works of Berkenkotter and Huckin (1993); Hyland (2000); Johns (1997); Miller (1984); Prior (1998); Russell (1997); and Swales (1990).

Figure 1.1 Overview of the Structure of the Guide



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*The main focus is on policy papers produced in the field of policy study*

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A brief discussion of the focus and approach adopted in developing this guide may help you to use the book most effectively. The specific type of policy paper focused on and described in detail in this guide is that produced in the field of policy study. This choice reflects the need to support the numerous first time studies that are currently being conducted in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) within a policy science framework. While this guide is primarily targeted at policy researchers, policy analysts can also benefit from its use as both the close relationship between the fields of policy study and policy analysis and the types of policy papers produced in the two fields are contrasted in the early sections of the book.

The description of the policy paper provided is based on extensive analysis of published policy studies, interviews with regional policy specialists and selected descriptions of

the genre. Recently published and regionally focused policy papers were chosen as samples for analysis in order to gain insight into the current conventions of such papers and are referred to throughout the guide as samples (i) to (v):

- (i) "Fiscal decentralization: From command to market" (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995);
- (ii) "Open Competition, Transparency, and Impartiality in Local Government Contracting Out of Public Services" (Baar, 2001);
- (iii) "Between Active Appreciation, Passive Approval and Distrustful Withdrawal" (Swianiewicz, 2001);
- (iv) "From the Unitary to the Pluralistic: Fine-tuning Minority Policy in Romania" (Horváth and Scacco, 2001);
- (v) "Linking Competition and Trade Policies in Central and Eastern European Countries" (Hoekman and Mavroidis, 1994).

To maximize your learning from this book, it is highly recommended that you take the opportunity to read the full versions of these samples.<sup>2</sup>

Gaining in-depth insight into the role played by each element of the policy paper, its common structural and textual features, and approaches other writers adopt when writing policy papers will together give you a firm basis to guide your own writing. Towards this end, extracts from the five published policy papers are included for analysis purposes throughout section five in "Analysis of Published Policy Papers" boxes. It is important to note that these samples are used for the purposes of highlighting and examining certain issues, and are not considered "model" policy papers. In fact, taking into account the complexities of the contextual factors surrounding the writing and publication of each individual policy paper, such a universal model cannot possibly exist.

Based on the belief that acquiring knowledge and skills is a developmental and active process of "learning by doing,"<sup>3</sup> a number of planning and writing checklists have

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2 Details on locations for downloading full versions of all five extracted samples from the internet are included in the References section of this book.

3 The ideas of task-based and autonomous learning in an international English context were influenced by the works of Breen (1987); Hutchinson and Waters (1987); Illich (1970); Knowles (1983); Nunan (1988); and Widdowson (1998).

been included throughout the guide. By asking questions, these checklists are designed to support you in all stages of the planning, writing and redrafting of your policy paper.

We hope that this book serves as an effective tool in helping you in the process of writing effective policy papers, and most importantly, that you achieve successful policy outcomes as a result of publishing your papers.

## 2 THE PUBLIC POLICY COMMUNITY

This section of the book provides a brief overview of the community and discipline of those involved in public policy-making. For beginners in the field, it can serve as a very basic introduction; for experienced policy specialists, it provides a chance to reflect on the main concepts governing your work. Ultimately, the reason for this initial focus on the community is for you as a writer to become more aware of the key ideas, ideals, values and contexts that frame and shape the writing of policy papers in this community.

The section begins by reflecting on the broad range of definitions of public policy in the community. Then the range of members and the roles they play in the public policy community are considered. The next sub-section overviews the history of the discipline of policy science; finally, the section concludes by focusing on what makes policy science an applied discipline.

### 2.1 Defining Public Policy

Studies of public policy have offered many definitions of the term, ranging from broad examples such as "whatever governments choose to do or not to do" (Dye, 1992 cited in Anderson, 1994, p.4), to others which provide more specific defining characteristics, e.g., "a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern" (Anderson, p.5). To build a picture of the diversity of opinion represented in the field, it is useful to highlight the range of key concepts included in a wide range of definitions. Based on Anderson, the following is a list of these core elements:

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*Diverse definitions of public policy exist but share core elements*

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Public Policy is:

- *authoritative government action*

Public policy is action implemented by the government body which has the legislative, political and financial authority to do so.

- *a reaction to real world needs or problems*

Public policy seeks to react to the concrete needs or problems of a society or groups within a society, e.g., citizens, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or government bodies.

- *goal-oriented*

Public policy seeks to achieve a particular set of elaborated objectives which represent an attempt to solve or address a particular need in the targeted community.

- *a course of action*

Public policy is usually not a single decision, action or reaction but an elaborated approach or strategy.

- *a decision to do something or a decision to do nothing*

The outlined policy may take action in an attempt to solve a problem or may be based on the belief that the problem will be solved within the current policy framework, and therefore takes no action.

- *carried out by a single actor or a set of actors*

The policy may be implemented by a single government representative or body or by multiple actors.

- *a justification for action*

The outlined policy usually includes a statement of the reasoning behind the policy.

- *a decision made*

Public policy is a decision already made, not an intention or promise.

## 2.2 Members of the Public Policy Community

The making of public policy has direct impact on a society, and therefore the people involved at various levels in the process are generally numerous and diverse. These individuals or groups who have a direct or indirect interest in the outcome of a policy decision, i.e., the stakeholders, can include government agencies, policy advisers and a wide range of non-governmental or community groups and individuals. At the center of this community is the relevant governmental agency or agencies designated to handle the problem or issue in question. In some instances, the policy analyst, policy

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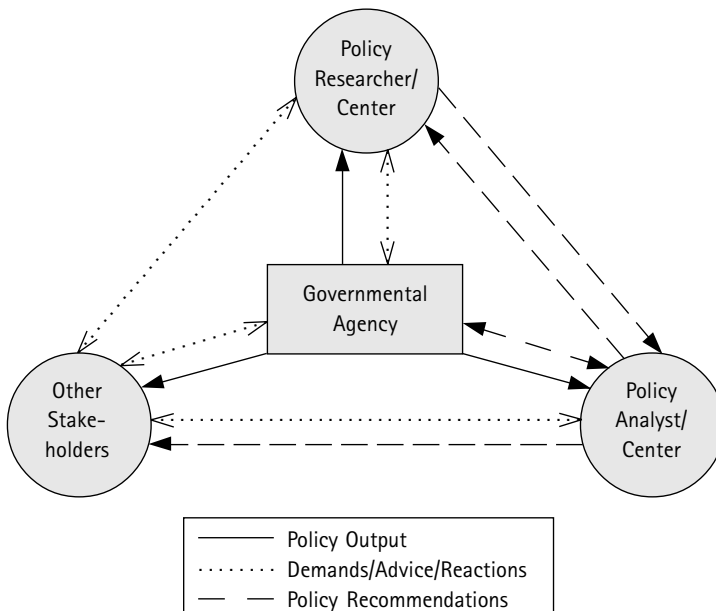
*The public policy community is a diverse group of stakeholders*

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center or think tank may enter into a direct advisory relationship with the government agency as its client. In this case, the governmental agency looks to the policy analyst or center to carry out an in-depth study of the issue and make policy recommendations which will then form the basis of the government's policy. In general, the empirical basis of these in-depth studies is previous research carried out by policy study centers into the issue in question. While this direct relationship between analyst and government does not commonly exist in CEE, nevertheless many policy researchers, analysts and centers aim to influence the policy debate on particular issues. This is achieved through publishing their studies, which they may then also publicize for the broader public policy audience through the media and various other methods.

Needless to say, in any democratic society, all stakeholders will also do their best to advocate for their preferred policy option in whatever means they find the most effective, e.g., with the responsible government agency, with other government/parliamentary representatives or through the media. Such stakeholders can include NGOs, international governmental organizations (IGOs), other policy advisers or centers, local authorities, political parties, community groups, unions or concerned citizens. Figure 2.1 represents the broad community and their relationships from the point of view of the policy adviser.

Figure 2.1 The Public Policy Community from the Policy Adviser's Perspective



## 2.3 From Political Science to Policy Science<sup>4</sup>

Peter De Leon (1994, cited in Howlett and Ramesch, 1994, p.18) points out that "policy studies have a long history and a short past: that is, government policies have been the concern of numerous studies over the past millennia, even though their systematic examination dates back only several decades." In fact, it is only since the end of the Second World War that the evolution of policy science has emerged based on the realization that, in addition to traditional political science, insight into and reflection upon what governments actually do was also needed. The driving ideals of the field are three-fold:

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*Three ideals of policy science: multidisciplinary, problem-solving, normativity*

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- *Multidisciplinarity*

Policy science draws on insights, research and methodology from the social sciences, but has also developed its own approaches with the evolution of the discipline.

- *Problem-solving*

The focus is on solving the real-world problems that exist in a specific society.

- *Normativity*

Although the tendency to prescribe a normative framework has declined recently, many choices that have to be made within policy science are necessarily value-driven.

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*Two fields of policy science: policy study and policy analysis*

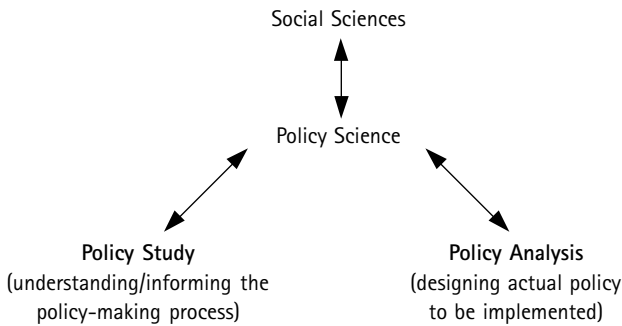
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Over time, the discipline of policy science has split into two distinct camps. The first is policy study which seeks to understand and inform the policy-making process by carrying out primary research into specific policy issues. The field of policy study is usually the interest of groups of policy researchers or academics. The second branch of the discipline is policy analysis. This field is more politically motivated and seeks to have direct influence on actual policy outcomes by designing policies for governmental agencies. Policy analysis is usually conducted by policy analysts or policy centers/ think tanks. The following diagram represents the disciplinary framework of policy science:

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4 This summary is based on Howlett and Ramesch (1995).

Figure 2.2 The Disciplinary Framework



These policy science approaches have only recently been adopted in CEE in the period of transition. Therefore, the discipline is in an early stage of development in this region, and the divisions between who does what, how and for whom are not yet fully defined. In addition, the fact that the rigorous empirical analysis of policy frameworks has really only begun in the region means that much of the work conducted to date has focused more on first-time studies of these frameworks, i.e., the focus is largely on policy study issues. Nevertheless, especially in the early 1990s, many regional think tanks had the traditional policy analyst adviser-client relationship with their governments through which they advocated the policies of their international supporters, e.g., the World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (Krastev, 2001). Indeed, it should be remembered that in the highly politicized world of public policy in any region or context, it is not necessarily based on empirical analysis that policy change occurs. Within the aggressive and dynamic world of politics, it is more commonly purely political motives such as the fulfilling of campaign promises, that are the catalyst for change.

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*Policy science is  
in development  
in CEE*

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#### Planning Checklist

In preparing to write your policy paper, consider the following questions:

- Would you categorize your current policy-related work as policy study or policy analysis?
- Which stakeholders in your public policy community are interested in the policy issue you are working on?
- Who do you want to directly and indirectly communicate with through your policy paper?

## 2.4 Policy Science as an Applied Discipline

In summarizing the ideals and values of the field of policy science, the applied nature of the discipline is central. There are two main factors which differentiate policy science from traditional academia:

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*Problem-solution relationship is key*

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- *Designing solutions for real-world problems*

Unlike traditional academia which focuses on building knowledge within a group of peers, policy science must address real-world problems, and therefore provide recommendations and a framework for their application within the targeted society. For example, it is not enough to analyze the causes and patterns of unemployment in a particular society in order to contribute to its understanding as a social phenomenon; a policy study must apply this knowledge to the real situation on the ground by understanding the causes, showing that it is a problem within the community in question and suggesting a course of action to address the problem. Hence, the problem-solution relationship must be seen at the heart of the discipline, which means that any analysis undertaken must be driven and targeted on the search for a practical, implementable and comprehensive outcome.

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*Present value-driven arguments based on data analysis*

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- *Presenting value-driven arguments*

The search for such a practical outcome not only requires a well-elaborated and comprehensive analysis of all available data, but as the issues under consideration are of a societal nature, the policy researcher or analyst will also have to make some value-driven judgements about the outcome that would best address the specific problem. Hence, proposing specific solutions in the highly politicized environment of public policy and to such a broad audience, means that central to the work of the policy specialist is not just the cold empiricism of data analysis, but probably even more important is the ability to convince your audience of the suitability of your policy recommendations. In other words, the presentation of the outcomes of your data analysis will probably not be enough to make an impact in the policy debate on a particular issue, but through the use of this data as evidence in a comprehensive and coherent argument of your position, you will give your work the best possible chance of having this impact. Majone (1989) sums up this idea excellently:

Like surgery, the making of policy and the giving of policy advice are exercises of skills, and we do not judge skilful performance by the amount of

information stored in the head of the performer or by the amount of formal planning. Rather, we judge it by criteria like good timing and attention to details; by the capacity to recognise the limits of the possible, to use limitations creatively, and to learn from one's mistakes; by the ability not to show what should be done, but to persuade people to do what they know should be done (p. 20).

### 3 THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

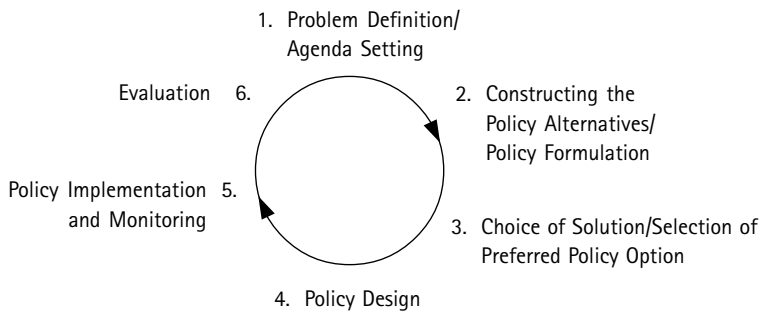
Having briefly looked at the nature of the public policy community in section two, this section focuses on the nature of the policy-making process and the role of the communication tools used in that process. The section begins with an overview of the policy-making process, or policy cycle, as it is commonly known. As the purpose of this guide is not to add to the already numerous and comprehensive studies of disciplinary methodology,<sup>5</sup> this section only gives a brief overview of the policy cycle. This should help you to gain insight into the communication tool normally used to report and record the outcome of this process and which is the main focus of this book, the policy paper.

The second sub-section examines the various purposes the policy paper can play in the policy-making process. The section concludes by outlining a strategic approach you can take in deciding which other communication tools to use to disseminate policy ideas and recommendations to a wider audience. This final element is intended to illustrate the relationship between the policy paper and these other tools.

#### 3.1 The Policy Cycle<sup>6</sup>

While different approaches to the policy-making process exist depending on the context and purpose(s), the textbook model commonly accepted within the field of policy science is called the policy cycle (as seen in figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 The Policy Cycle



5 Such as Anderson (1994); Bardach (1996); Dye (1992); Howlett and Ramesch (1996).

6 This section draws upon Anderson (1994); Bardach (1996); Howlett and Ramesch (1996); Ohio University (1998); Open Society Institute (1999); Pal (2000); Smith (2000).

As with many models, the strength of the policy cycle lies in its power to guide; however, its weakness lies in its lack of flexibility. In other words, while such a model can never prescribe the specific action that the policy specialist should take in every situation, it informs the context within which the policy specialist should act in order to follow best practice. In addition, the true nature of policy-making is that each stage in the proposed six stage process has the potential to inform previous and following steps in the cycle, e.g., weighing your options to select the best policy option can often help to deepen and widen your problem definition. Therefore, as Bardach (1996) suggests, the process should be seen as inherently iterative, i.e., you will recycle through elements of each of the steps until you arrive at an appropriate outcome.

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*The policy cycle is a guide not a prescription; it is iterative and collaborative*

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It is also important to note the inherently collaborative and interactive nature of all stages of this process. Most effective policy research and analysis is carried out in teams and involves different levels of interaction with various stakeholders throughout the process. For example, such interactions can range from discussions with policy researchers in the problem definition stage, to researching the cost-benefit of policy options with the target groups, to meeting with representatives of government to promote your policy recommendations. A brief look at the steps of the process follows to highlight the focus of each.

- *Step 1: Problem definition/Agenda setting*

As a starting point in the policy-making process, a problem is usually identified by a group of people in a particular society. If you as the policy specialist are also interested in finding a solution to this problem, you will attempt to either get it onto the government's political agenda, i.e., turn the problem into an issue, or make it a higher priority issue if it is already on the agenda. In order to do this, it is necessary to convince both the relevant government agency and the broader policy community that a real problem exists which requires government action. In order to achieve this in the politicized world of public policy, you will need to present a suitably persuasive and comprehensive argument which details the causes, effects and extent of the problem based on a wide variety of sources.

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*Show that a problem exists that requires government action*

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- *Step 2: Constructing the policy alternatives/Policy formulation*

Once the nature of the problem is sufficiently detailed and the issue is on the government agenda, the first step in attempting to address the issue is to elaborate the possible ways it can be solved, i.e., determine the policy options. In order to construct appropriate alternatives, you will need to consider what is currently being done, what options

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*Consider all possible solutions*

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others are suggesting as well as your own suggestions. You should try to make the different options mutually exclusive, i.e., avoid options that are simply variations of the same idea. Also, consider that it will be difficult to find the ideal alternative, so you should try to search for the most feasible and realistic policy alternatives for the context.

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*Evaluate each option and choose your preferred one*

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■ *Step 3: Choice of solution/Selection of preferred policy option*

Following the elaboration of the alternatives, a preferred policy option to address the particular problem is then selected based on a set of evaluation criteria. The use of this criteria-based evaluation process not only allows you to choose a suitable alternative, but it will also form the basis on which you can authoritatively argue for the legitimacy of your policy option. Although the issue in question and the context will determine the specifics of the evaluation criteria, commonly used criteria in this process are as follows:

- *Effectiveness*: To what extent will this alternative produce the desired outcomes, i.e., solve the current problem?
- *Efficiency*: Based on a cost-benefit analysis of both money and social impact, how will this option affect the target groups?
- *Equity*: Is there a fair distribution of costs and benefits?
- *Feasibility/Implementability*: Is there a suitable political, administrative and legal framework in place to allow for the effective and efficient implementation of this option?
- *Flexibility/Improvability*: Does this option have the flexibility to be changed to suit other possible situations or allow for improvements?

Bardach (1996) gives some useful advice for this step by suggesting that you should try to quantify (in terms of both monetary and social costs) as many aspects of your option and projections as possible, use causal modelling approaches and try to be realistic rather than optimistic about the possible outcomes of alternatives. When you have evaluated all your alternatives, compared the outcomes and weighed up the differences, you need to decide which is the best outcome.

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*Government chooses a policy instrument and a delivery organization mix*

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■ *Step 4: Policy design*

Once you have selected your preferred policy option and presented it to the relevant government agency, and assuming that they also accepted it fully or modify your proposal, it now becomes public policy (as outlined in section 2.1). The government agencies must now decide how they can most effectively implement the policy. In order

to elaborate an effective policy design, the agency must choose a policy instrument mix (e.g., legal, organizational or network empowerment) and a delivery organization mix (e.g., governmental or non-governmental, public or private) to provide the services or products outlined in the policy.

- *Step 5: Policy implementation and monitoring*

Next, the policy is implemented according to the policy design. A balance between good policy design and effective implementation usually leads to the most effective outcomes. Also, an on-going process of monitoring needs to be conducted which forms the basis of a comprehensive evaluation procedure relying on multiple sources of data. According to both Anderson (1994) and Howlett and Ramesch (1996), many policy specialists have taken a keen interest in implementation strategies as they have a direct effect on the quality of policy outcomes and some choose to publish on these issues.

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*Government implements and monitors policy*

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- *Step 6: Evaluation*

Within the framework of any good policy design and implementation plan, a comprehensive evaluation procedure is essential in determining the effectiveness of the implemented policy and in providing the basis for future decision-making. In designing a policy evaluation plan, government agencies and delivery organizations need to consider how the policy objectives can be accurately and effectively measured and how the evaluation data collected will be used as a basis for decision-making. The evaluation process consists of looking at the particular public policy in practice, both in terms of objectives and means employed. It will probably involve a broad group of people including bureaucrats, politicians as well as non-governmental agencies and other stakeholders.

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*Government and delivery organization evaluate the effectiveness of the policy*

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As can be seen from the circular and iterative nature of the policy cycle, following the evaluation stage any of the following may be reconsidered: the problem, the chosen policy option, the policy design or implementation. This means that the issue may be put back on the agenda, put back to another stage of the process or may continue to be implemented in the same way.

### 3.2 Role of the Policy Paper in the Policy-making Process

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*A policy paper can influence any or all stages of the policy cycle*

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The policy paper is a very powerful tool and can serve multiple purposes in the policy-making process. Within the area of policy study, many policy papers are published targeting other policy experts or think tanks and seek to inform and influence their audience. As mentioned before, many of these types of papers are currently being published in CEE and represent first-time studies adopting a policy science approach. These papers may provide general data and insight that can be used at any stage of the policy-making process, but can also focus on one or more particular stages in the process. For example, such specific papers can range in focus from providing policy alternatives and recommending a policy option, to promoting a particular policy implementation design, to evaluating a chosen policy option. In general, because of the independent nature of the policy researcher’s work, their policy papers tend to be issue-driven.

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*Policy studies are issue-driven, whereas policy analyses are client-driven*

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However, these policy studies are normally quite different from policy papers produced by policy analysts which target decision-makers and design specific policies to be implemented in the target community. These differences mainly arise due to the collaborative nature of the production of these papers: within the client-adviser relationship which normally exists between government agency and policy analyst, the client will heavily influence the nature of the paper and its content. However, there is a direct connection between policy studies and papers from the field of policy analysis in that the former is commonly used as the basis for writing the latter. Also, it should be mentioned that in the current developmental stage of policy science in the region, there is probably much overlap between the types of policy papers being produced.

#### Planning Checklist

In preparing to write your policy paper, consider the policy-making process that you are involved in and research that you (and your colleagues) have done to answer the following questions:

- Which stage(s) in the policy-making process are you trying to influence through your policy paper?
- Which stakeholders have been/are involved at each stage of the policy-making process?
- Have you identified a clear problem to address? Can you summarize it in two sentences?
- Do you have sufficiently comprehensive evidence to support your claim that a problem exists?

- Have you outlined and evaluated the possible policy options that could solve this problem? What evaluation criteria did you use?
- Have you decided on a preferred alternative?
- Do you have sufficient evidence to effectively argue for your chosen policy alternative over the others?

### 3.3 Disseminating Your Policy Ideas

Whether you are writing policy studies or policy analysis, you may need to inform a broad audience of the issues raised in your policy paper, so that your policy ideas can impact strongly on a particular policy debate. In order to achieve this impact, your “policy paper needs not only to be read, but discussed and understood” (Bartle, 2001). However, many within this broad audience do not usually have access to published policy papers. Therefore, you have to give them access to your policy ideas in an easily understandable form, so that they then can fully comprehend and discuss your suggestions. Taking into consideration the messages from your policy paper that you want to convey and having identified your target audience, you need to then decide which of the multiple communication tools available will suit your purpose, e.g., at a public meeting or through the media. Many times, you will choose a method of communication that will target multiple audiences. As such, it makes sense to present a concise message using simple, jargon-free language.

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*Choose a communication strategy that suits your purpose and audience*

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#### Planning Checklist

To design an effective dissemination strategy for your current policy project, consider the following series of questions:

- Who are you targeting (politicians, NGOs, citizens)?
- Why do you want to communicate with them about the policy issue?
- How involved are they in the issue?
- What do they already know about the issue?
- What key elements of your paper do you want to communicate to them?
- What do they need to know about the issue if they are to understand and be convinced by your message?
- What would be the most effective way of communicating your message to the target group (personal briefings, group presentations, press release/conference for the media, roundtable discussions)?

## 4 THE POLICY PAPER: AN OVERVIEW

In sections four and five, the focus turns specifically to the policy paper. This section gives you the opportunity to get an overview of the essential qualities of the policy paper, including its purpose and context. Through continued contrast between the policy papers produced in the fields of policy study and policy analysis, the main type of policy paper focused on, i.e., policy study, is introduced and overviewed. Section five will focus in detail on the common structural and textual elements that go together to form a policy paper produced in the field of policy study. Although these two sections are divided in this guide for the purposes of clarity, they should be seen as two parts comprising a comprehensive description of the policy paper.

In giving an overview of the policy paper, two general points should be addressed:

- *The policy paper as a decision-making tool*

Whether produced in a policy study or policy analysis environment, the policy paper is a problem-oriented and value-driven communication tool. As such, whether targeting other policy specialists or decision-makers, the purpose of the policy paper is:

*to provide a comprehensive and persuasive argument justifying the policy recommendations presented in the paper and therefore, to act as a decision-making tool and a call to action for the target audience.*

In brief, achieving this purpose usually involves the following approach:

- defining and detailing an urgent policy issue within the current policy framework which needs to be addressed;
- outlining the possible ways (policy alternatives) in which this issue can be addressed;
- providing an evaluation of the probable outcomes of these options based on an outlined framework of analysis and the evidence from the current policy framework;
- choosing a preferred alternative (policy recommendation) and providing a strong argument to establish why your choice is the best possible policy option.

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*The policy paper is a decision-making tool*

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- *The policy paper: applied, not academic*

As is evident from the approach and purpose, the policy paper is considerably different from a traditional academic paper, in that the findings of the research must be applied to the issue in question and used to argue for a specific set of recommendations to address the problem. As such, central to the paper is the problem–solution relationship and this is the driving force in producing a policy paper which is clearly targeted and focused on arguing for a particular policy recommendation.

In taking this targeted approach, the writer needs to find a balance between two competing factors:

- the need to provide a comprehensive problem description and discussion of the available policy options within the current policy framework, which may also include the results of the writer’s primary research, so that the outlined position seems credible and allows for informed evaluation;
- and the need to present this in a way that only the relevant knowledge and data necessary as evidence to support the argument is included.

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*The policy paper argues for the application of a particular solution to the policy issue*

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In fact, Bardach (1996) points out that one of the most common errors that policy paper writers make is to try to include all the data and knowledge produced in the research process.

Also, the idea of the policy paper as a value-driven argument rather than a piece of cold objectivity is another major difference between the policy paper and traditional academic papers. In your paper, there is a necessity to recommend practical solutions for real-world problems to a broad and highly politicized audience. While based on rigorous analysis, there is therefore an evident need for you as the policy specialist to take a position on what you feel would produce the best possible outcome to the problem discussed. Hence, the normative aspect of your decision-making and evaluative process is also a key element of the policy paper.

#### **4.1 Different Types of Policy Papers: Policy Study and Policy Analysis**

As discussed in section three, the policy paper is the main communication tool used by policy specialists to disseminate the outcome of their policy investigations to the

*Policy papers written for the fields of policy study and policy analysis are considerably different*

public policy community. For those primarily involved in policy study, the primary target audience for their papers is policy specialists engaged in the field of policy study or policy analysis. There is a direct link between the two fields in that policy analysts base much of the writing of their policy papers on the papers produced by policy researchers. However, the policy papers produced by policy analysts are considerably different because they are targeted directly at decision-makers and heavily influenced by the nature of their close relationship with their clients. The following table illustrates these and other differences:

Areas of Difference	Type of Policy Paper	
	Policy Study	Policy Analysis
<i>Audience</i>	Targets other policy specialists	Targets decision-makers
<i>Focus</i>	Issue-driven: General recommendations and information on policy issues	Client-driven: Designing specific policies to be implemented on the ground
<i>Methodology</i>	Can include much primary research	Rarely includes primary research
<i>Ideas/Language used</i>	Can be quite discipline specific/technical	Must be very clear and simple
<i>Length</i>	Up to 20,000 words	Not usually longer than 5,000 words

Table 4.1 Differences between Policy Papers in the Fields of Policy Study and Policy Analysis

*The policy paper should be of an adequate length to effectively develop the argument*

In addition to differences related to audience, focus and methodology, the issues of length, format and language used are central to over-viewing the policy paper. The policy paper should, of course, be as long as is required to provide a comprehensive and convincing argument. The policy paper produced in the field of policy study is usually considerably longer than that of the field of policy analysis. Taking into consideration the focus of policy study and the need for many researchers to provide extensive supporting documentation, it is not uncommon for such a policy paper to be as long as 20,000 words. Nevertheless, considerable variation exists: the five samples used in this book vary from 9,000 to 25,000 words, with the average word count being approximately 15,000. Also, most publishers have length guidelines which you will need to take into consideration.

Secondly, considering that policy papers are extensive documents and may be read by different readers to get a general overview or to find specific detail, it is not surprising that many policy papers use a report-like format, i.e., a table of contents, an abstract, many sub-divisions and headings within the text, numbered sub-sections, data presented in tables and/or graphs, and bullet-pointed information. These features obviously assist all readers to approach their reading in ways that suit their purposes. In this aspect of policy paper formatting, publishers will normally have clear guidelines for you to follow.

---

*The policy paper commonly has a report-like format*

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Finally, as the primary audience for policy papers written for policy study is other policy specialists, the nature of their papers tends to be more technical than is the case for papers produced for a policy analysis audience. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the possibility of broader audiences for your paper, and maybe even more significantly the fact that the discipline in CEE is in the early stages of development (as noted in 2.2), it is advisable to use simple, jargon-free language.

---

*Use simple, jargon-free language*

---

### Planning Checklist

In preparing to write your policy paper, consider the following questions:

#### *Purpose and audience*

- What is the purpose of your paper?
- What do you/your institution want to achieve through the writing and publishing of this paper?
- Who is the primary audience for your paper?
- Who are the secondary audiences for your paper/policy ideas?

#### *Writing and publishing your paper*

- Are you the only author of the policy paper? If not, have you decided how you are going to approach the writing of the paper with your writing partner(s)?
- Do you and your partner(s) have the same understanding of what a policy paper is?
- Who will be the publisher for your policy paper?
- Do you know what the publisher's expectations for the paper are?

#### *Sum up your idea*

- Finally, imagine that you are talking to a taxi driver, and he/she has just asked you about your current project. Sum it up clearly and concisely in three sentences. Many authors suggest that if you are not able to clearly and briefly sum up your idea in this manner, you need to further clarify your ideas.

## 5 THE POLICY PAPER: STRUCTURAL AND TEXTUAL ELEMENTS

Up to this point in the guide, emphasis has been placed on looking in-depth at the social context of the policy paper within the policy science community. In this section, the focus will shift to provide detailed insight into how the paper is commonly structured and the approaches used to construct the text of the policy paper. The section opens with an overview of the structural elements of the policy paper and a short section on outlining your paper. It continues by taking each element in detail, focusing on both the structural and textual features which together construct that element.

In order to illustrate the nature of the close relationship between policy study and policy analysis, the contrast between the two fields was highlighted in sections two, three and four. However, the exclusive focus in this section will be on policy papers written for the field of policy study and all samples that have been used in the section are from the policy study area.

Through the process of textual analysis of multiple samples and the evaluation of many descriptions of the paper,<sup>7</sup> the following structural elements were identified as common elements of the policy paper:

- Policy paper
- *Title*
  - *Table of contents*
  - *Abstract/Executive summary*
  - *Introduction*
  - *Problem description*
  - *Policy options*
  - *Conclusion and recommendations*
  - *Appendices*
  - *Bibliography*
  - *Endnotes*

---

7 The sources drawn on are Bardach (1996); Bartle (2002); Boston University (2002); Caeti (2002); Ohio University (1998); Pacific Lutheran University (n.d.); Scott and Garrison (1995); The University of Washington (2001).

This presentation of the elements describes the common approach that many writers in the field of policy study take in producing policy papers. It is also the approach that many publishers and readers from the public policy community will expect you to take. Nevertheless, this description should serve as a guide not a prescription, and you do not necessarily have to include all the elements outlined in this order in all policy papers. It's most important to realize that while this type of description can help you to understand what is generally expected in a policy paper, you have to decide what approach will best serve to balance your purposes as a writer, the nature of the topic and your argument, and the expectations of your publisher and audience. To help you find this balance, it is useful to begin by outlining your policy paper.

---

*Choose the approach that best suits your topic, purpose and audience*

---

## 5.1 Outlining Your Paper<sup>8</sup>

Before you begin writing, it is a good idea to start by outlining your paper. The process of outlining will help you to plan the overall focus and logic of your paper. In other words, the process will allow you to decide on the key message of the paper and the most effective approach you can take to arranging the paper to convincingly deliver this message.

---

*Use an outline to plan the focus and logic of your paper*

---

An example approach might be to start by writing a working statement of intent/purpose<sup>9</sup> for your paper. Then you could continue by thinking about how you are going to approach the problem description section of the paper by noting down the key background and policy environment issues that you need to discuss to comprehensively outline the problem. Next, under each of these issues you could note what points you are going to raise and what evidence you are going to use to support these points. Following the problem description, continue in the same manner for the policy options and conclusion sections.

There are many ways to format an outline from very informal to very formal, using a system of numbers and indentation, as can be seen in style manuals such as Gibaldi (1995). You should choose what suits you best, but also consider who else will need to read and use the outline.

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8 This section draws on Bazerman (1985), Gibaldi (1995) and Sigismund Huff (1999).

9 A working statement of intent is one that is a work in progress; one that is a start but that you expect to change and refine in the future.

---

*An outline is a particularly useful tool for collaborative writing*

---

The drafting of an outline would seem to be particularly useful in the policy study environment where the research and writing of policy papers is commonly carried out in teams. In this context, an outline can be used for brainstorming ideas for the paper and the review and redrafting of an outline can serve as the basis for coming to an agreement on a shared vision of the paper. As such, it is the perfect tool to move between the research and writing steps.

The process of outlining will not only help you to organize the logic of your paper, especially in the beginning stages, but it will also show you the places in the paper where you need more evidence. In addition, the process is particularly useful in helping to focus on the paper as an argument by helping you to choose the data to use as evidence in support of your claims, as well as the data you do not need to include.

## 5.2 Title

---

*The title should gain readers' interest*

---

The first element of the policy paper to examine in detail is the title of the paper. The importance of writing effective titles for papers is often underestimated, but it is significant that the title is more than likely the first part of a paper readers see and it begins the process of communicating the message contained in the policy paper. An effective title of a paper should give readers a quick overview of the subject, focus and problem addressed in the policy paper. Also, based on the perceived effectiveness of this first element of the paper, a reader may use this as one criterion in deciding whether to read the paper or not. Hence, giving adequate time and attention to writing an effective title for your policy paper is crucial to attracting and keeping your readers' interest.

As title writing is very subjective, reflecting the individual style of the writer and the purpose of the paper, there are no easy rules to follow which will help you to produce effective titles for every paper. However, considering the importance of the role played by the title of your policy paper, some guidelines to writing titles and a short analysis of sample titles may help you to practice and improve this skill.

---

*Effective titles are descriptive, clear, concise, interesting*

---

An effective title should be a combination of the following:

- descriptive, i.e., define the subject and problem addressed in the paper;
- as clear as possible;
- as concise and succinct as possible;
- interesting for your readers.

### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Look at the titles of four published policy papers below and consider:

- the clarity of the subject of the paper indicated by the title;
- the effectiveness of each title (reading the introduction for each policy paper in Appendix A will help to evaluate effectiveness);
- the different approaches adopted to writing titles.

Sample (i): "Fiscal decentralization: From command to market" (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995)

Sample (ii): "Open Competition, Transparency, and Impartiality in Local Government Contracting Out of Public Services" (Baar, 2001)

Sample (iii): "Between Active Appreciation, Passive Approval and Distrustful Withdrawal" (Swianiewicz, 2001)

Sample (iv): "From the Unitary to the Pluralistic: Fine-tuning Minority Policy in Romania" (Horváth and Scacco, 2001)

Determining the effectiveness of titles is a subjective issue; however, a number of points regarding characteristics, format and approaches to title writing emerge from the analysis of samples:

- *Most titles do not consist of full sentences.*

This helps to grab the readers' attention and also ensures that titles are relatively concise. However, some of the sample titles could be considered quite long, e.g., sample (ii), and this highlights the difficult balance between providing enough information in the title to be descriptive but not so much that readers' immediate attention is lost.

- *Key words are often foregrounded in the title.*

The first words of a title often indicate very clearly the main issues or problems which will be addressed in the paper in order to immediately capture the readers' interest. For example, the writer of sample (ii) chose to place in the beginning of the title the three specific issues which are the focus of the paper with the general focus and problem addressed in the paper following this.

- *Some writers divide the title into two by using a colon.*

Samples (i) and (iv) illustrate this approach to title writing which allows the writer a two-part title, potentially giving the reader more information than a title consisting

of a single clause. Such an approach also serves to ensure the clarity of the title by dividing a potentially longer title. The use of a colon often signals a move from the general focus of the paper to the specific issues covered (sample (i)) or can be used to present the writer’s perspective on the issue in addition to introducing the subject (sample (iv)).

- *Some writers indicate the major findings of the policy paper in the title.*

This approach to writing titles is a means of capturing the curiosity and interest of the reader to find out how the writer arrived at this outcome. The writer of sample (iii) has adopted this approach, in that the reader has no indication of the subject area of the paper but the outcomes are indicated. It should be noted that this sample comes from an edited book and the writer of the paper may consider that the overall title of the book, “Public Perceptions of Local Government: Citizens’ Perception of Local Government Reform and Local Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe,” supports the title of the paper.

- *Capital letters are generally used for all words except conjunctions (e.g., but), prepositions (e.g., from), pronouns (e.g., our).*

This common format allows the reader to clearly see the most significant words in the title. However, if a secondary word comes at the beginning of the title (e.g., sample (iii) and (iv)) or after a colon (e.g., sample (i)), then they are generally given a capital letter. Sample (i) is interesting in that the writer or the publisher has chosen only to capitalize such beginning words.

**Writing Checklist**

The following questions may guide you when writing and redrafting the title for your policy paper:

- Which approach to title writing best suits your purpose?
- Is your title effective (descriptive, clear, concise and interesting)?
- How well does your title match and represent the policy paper?
- Does your publisher require a separate title page?

### 5.3 Table of Contents

As mentioned in the overview of the policy paper, the format of such papers shares many features of reports, and the table of contents is one such structural feature. The table of contents is a skeleton or overview of the structure of the policy paper and consists of a system of headings and sub-headings which shows not only the overall organization of the paper, but also illustrates the main sections and their sub-sections. A numbering system is also commonly used in conjunction with headings as an additional means of illustrating divisions and relationships between sections of the text. The final important feature of a table of contents is the inclusion of page numbers corresponding to the location of specific sections in the main body of the paper.

---

*The table of contents shows the organization of the paper*

---

The inclusion of a table of contents in a policy paper helps readers in a number of ways:

- *The table of contents acts as a guide, leading readers through the whole paper.*

If readers have to work very hard at understanding the structure of the paper, they may be discouraged from reading the whole paper. Hence, the table of contents helps readers to understand the writer's logic in organizing and structuring the paper. This point is especially important in a text of such length and complexity as the policy paper.

- *The table of contents assists different types of reading.*

By indicating major and minor divisions in the paper and including page numbers to locate sections of text, the table of contents directs readers to specific sections containing information that they may be particularly interested in. The table of contents also helps skim reading by providing readers with a quick overview of the focus and major issues addressed in the paper.

The structure, format and layout of a table of contents can vary significantly depending on the requirements of the publisher of your paper. However, some common and key issues will be highlighted through the following analysis of a sample table of contents.

**Analysis of Published Policy Papers**

Read the following table of contents for sample policy paper (ii): "Open Competition, Transparency, and Impartiality in Local Government Contracting Out of Public Services" (Baar, 2001) and consider:

- the effectiveness of the table of contents in showing the writer's organization of the paper;
- the system used to make a distinction between main sections and sub-sections of the paper;
- the effectiveness of headings and sub-headings.

**Table of Contents**

1. Introduction .....	103
2. Laws Requiring Competitive Procedures .....	106
2.1 EU Directives .....	106
2.2 Recent EU Communications .....	107
2.3 Public Procurement Laws in CEE Countries .....	107
3. Public Access to Public Contracts (Transparency) .....	110
3.1 Transparency in Western Countries .....	114
3.2 Transparency and Public Participation in the Drafting of Contracts .....	118
4. Conflict of Interest Laws .....	119
4.1 Conflict of Interest and the Law in CEE Nations .....	119
4.2 Conflict of Interest Laws in the EU and the US .....	121
5. Conclusion .....	124
Appendix A .....	126
Appendix B .....	130

*The table of contents establishes coherence in the paper*

From the sample table of contents, the reader gets a clear indication that the paper is divided according to the three main issues addressed. The focus and points discussed in each main section are also indicated through the titles of the sub-sections. The writer has used a standard format and layout system consistently throughout the table of contents which is crucial in helping readers easily follow the whole paper and see the connections between sections of the paper, i.e., establishing the coherence of the paper. The following two means are commonly used to achieve coherence:

- *A numbering system to distinguish between main and sub-sections in the table of contents*

In the sample analyzed, a single number is used for main sections and a decimal numbering system used for sub-sections, e.g., 2.1. If a third level of sectioning were used by the writer, then such a minor section would be indicated through the use of

a double decimal number, e.g., 2.1.1. This common system is also used throughout this book.

- *An indent function to clearly illustrate a sub-section*

While the writer of the sample table of contents uses this feature in combination with a numbering system, sometimes the use of indentations alone serves to indicate the division between main and sub-sections. If a third level of sectioning were used by the writer, then a double indentation would signal this level of sectioning, e.g.:

- 2. Laws Requiring Competitive Procedures
  - 2.1 EU Directives
    - 2.1.1 German Legislation

As was the case with writing titles for policy papers (discussed in 5.2), writing effective headings and sub-headings contained in your table of contents is not an exact science, but the guidelines offered in the previous section may help. It is especially important that headings are specific and self-explanatory, thereby effectively serving to give readers an overview of the paper.

Some writers compile the table of contents after they have finished a draft of the whole paper, while others develop a draft table of contents while writing the paper as this can help the writer to review the organization of the paper throughout the writing process. In this sense, there is a direct relationship between the table of contents and an outline for your policy paper (discussed in section 5.1). An outline developed in the planning stage is likely to be much more detailed than the table of contents depending on your individual approach to outlining; however, when you take out the levels of detail from the outline to your paper and the headings and sub-headings remain, this reduced form can serve as a draft table of contents.

### **5.3.1 *List of Tables and/or Figures***

The table of contents is usually followed by a reference to the data presented in the policy paper, i.e., a list of tables and/or figures. This list acts as a quick reference and directs readers to the types and sources of data presented in the study. This element may be particularly important in policy studies which generate a lot of new research data as a tool to help those who want to get a quick overview of the study.

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*The list of tables and figures directs readers to data used in the study*

---

While the presentation and discussion of data is extensively discussed in the problem description element (section 5.6.2), the following analysis raises some issues related to format and title writing.

**Analysis of Published Policy Papers**

Review the list of tables and figures from sample policy paper (iii): "Between Active Appreciation, Passive Approval and Distrustful Withdrawal" (Swianiewicz, 2001) and focus on:

- the format (numbering system and layout) of this element of the policy paper;
- the effectiveness of the titles of tables and figures.

**TABLES**

Table 1.1: Size of Municipal Governments in Countries Analyzed .... 20

Table 1.2: Goals of Local Government as Seen by Local Mayors..... 24

Table 1.3: Do You Think Local Governments in Your Town (Village) Actively Represent Interest of: Almost All Citizens, Most Citizens, and Small Part of Citizens or Very Small Groups Only? ..... 25

Table 1.4: Turnout in Local and the Closest Parliament (Lower Chamber) Elections ..... 26

**FIGURES**

Figure 1.1: Model Explaining Variation Between Countries in the Model of Communication Between Local Authorities and Citizens ..... 22

Figure 1.2: Trends in Public Service Management ..... 31

Some aspects of the layout of the list of tables/figures are common to that of the table of contents, e.g., page numbers to locate the specific tables and figures. However, the sample analyzed reveals that the numbering system used for lists of tables and figures is different from that of the table of contents. A two figure decimal numbering system with the word "Table" or "Figure" preceding it is commonly used in edited collections of papers with the first number referring to the chapter and the second to the table or figure within the chapter. In another numbering system commonly used in other types of publications, tables and figures are assigned a single number referring to the order in which they appear in the paper.

## 5.4 Abstract or Executive Summary

The next element of the policy paper consists of either an abstract or an executive summary (also commonly called “summary”). The terms are commonly used interchangeably by publishers but differences exist between abstracts and executive summaries. The analysis of samples below serves to provide a general picture of both and the differences between them.

### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Read the abstract for sample policy paper (iv): “From the Unitary to the Pluralistic: Fine-tuning Minority Policy in Romania” (Horváth and Scacco, 2001) and the executive summary for sample policy paper (v): “Linking Competition and Trade Policies in Central and Eastern European Countries” (Hoekman and Mavroidis, 1994).

Consider the following issues:

- the differences in length between the two samples;
- the type of information contained in both.

#### *Sample (iv):*

##### Abstract

This chapter constructs a typology of the principal minority groups in Romania, incorporating three types—the Hungarian minority, the Roma minority and the ‘smaller’ minority groups (comprised of fewer than 100,000 members). The purpose of this typology is to highlight the fact that the various minority groups in Romania should not simply be ‘lumped together’ in one monolithic category. These three types of minority groups in Romania are highly distinct and are characterised by varying degrees of social, political and economic integration. Furthermore, these three groups have diverse needs and enjoy disparate levels of political mobilisation. The chapter puts forth the argument that Romanian policy-makers and administrators must take into account the plurality of the country’s minority groups when addressing challenges and issues relevant to these three diverse types. This kind of typology can be useful to policy-makers at both the local and central level of government, and can inform those responsible for the management of multi-ethnic communities in Romania. The chapter analyzes and assesses both centrally directed and locally initiated minority policies in Romania since 1989, emphasizing particular problem areas and policy challenges in the fields of legislation relevant to minority communities, minority rights, the institutional framework for minority protection, minority issues in post-1989 public administration reform and minority education. The study concludes by offering a number of policy recommendations for each of these issue areas.

*Sample (v):*

[paragraph numbers in square brackets have been added for later reference]

(Executive) Summary

[1] Six Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries-Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Slovak Republic-have negotiated far-reaching Association Agreements with the European Union (EU), so-called Europe Agreements. These Agreements will result in free trade in goods, and include commitments by the CEE countries to adopt many of the disciplines of the Treaty of Rome. This paper focuses on one aspect of the Europe Agreements: competition policy, and does so from the perspective of the trade policy stance of the CEE countries. It explores possible institutional mechanisms that could be implemented by CEE governments with a view to increasing the sensitivity of competition law enforcement to trade and investment policy.

[2] The objective of competition policy in most jurisdictions tends to be efficient resource allocation, and thereby the maximization of national welfare. Governments pursue trade policies for a variety of reasons, of which efficiency is usually not one. An active trade policy redistributes income between segments of the population by protecting specific industries and the factors of production employed there, and usually does so in an inefficient manner. Trade policy is consequently often inconsistent with the objectives underlying competition policy. The way this inconsistency is frequently put is that competition law aims at protecting *competition* (and thus economic efficiency), while trade policy aims at protecting *competitors* (or factors of production). The issue facing governments is to ensure that competition prevails. This requires the design of institutional mechanisms that allow governments to explicitly consider the competition implications of particular trade or investment policies.

[3] The Europe Agreements require that the CEE countries adopt the basic competition rules of the EU for practices that affect trade between the EU and each Central and East European country. These rules relate to agreements between firms restricting competition, abuse of dominant position, the behavior of public undertakings (state-owned firms) and competition-distorting state aids (Articles 85, 86, 90 and 92 of the EEC Treaty respectively). Thus, competition policy is defined widely to include the behavior of governments as well as of firms. Almost all the CEE countries have passed competition legislation and allocated the responsibility for enforcing their competition rules. There are inconsistencies with EU language and implementation criteria/guidelines, some of them substantial, but the thrust of existing provisions is certainly pro-competitive.

[4] Competition authorities in the CEE countries have been given a relatively broad mandate to identify the costs of government policies and actions that restrict competition. Trade policy is an obvious area that should be given priority in this connection. Competition offices have two ways of 'internalizing' trade policy. The first is to oppose trade policies that excessively harm competition on the domestic market; the second is to countervail the anticompetitive effect of trade policy on an *ex post* basis. The first, 'direct' approach has been actively pursued by a number of the CEE competition offices. In this they compare well to competition offices in OECD countries. By commenting on or opposing suggested or existing trade policies, the competition offices ensure that the economy-wide implications

of sectoral policies/lobbying are recognized and discussed. The main power of competition offices is, however, of an *ex post* nature. Active enforcement, with guidelines that clearly specify that trade policy will be an important consideration in the implementing competition laws, will help bolster the effectiveness of *ex ante* opposition to policy proposals that restrict access to markets.

[5] A number of actions are identified through which competition law enforcement might be strengthened and be made even more sensitive to trade policy. The legislative possibility for antitrust agencies in the CEE countries to act *ex officio* does not appear to have been fully exploited, although this may largely be the result of the process of the transition towards private ownership and a market economy. The development of detailed guidelines would help both reduce uncertainty regarding the priorities given by the competition authorities to types of competition-reducing practices, and clarify what practices will not be pursued. One common denominator in the legislation of all CEE countries is the wide discretion that the agencies entrusted with the enforcement of competition laws enjoy. This can have a negative side, in the sense that a number of desirable *per se* prohibitions simply do not exist. An offsetting, positive counterpart is that if discretion is exercised in a pro-competition way, the “jurisprudence” created in this field could further promote the goals of the competition laws. Incorporation of the trade policy stance pertaining to an industry should explicitly be taken into account when defining the relevant market in the enforcement of antitrust. Guidelines to this effect should also be published. Whenever market shares are defined as a threshold (i.e., in the definition of dominant positions) they should be linked to market contestability considerations—i.e., explicit public recognition that what matters is market power. It would prove very useful for the evolution of the competition philosophy in the CEE countries, and at the same time enhance transparency, if competent agencies were to publish the reasoning underlying their decisions.

[6] Despite their agreement to adopt EU-compatible competition disciplines, and despite the fact that free trade and freedom of investment will be achieved within ten years, there is no provision in the Europe Agreements specifying that antidumping will be phased out. Continued threats of contingent protection on the part of the EU implies that CEEC firms will face different standards than their EU competitors. EU firms will be permitted to engage in price discrimination or sell below cost on the EU market, whereas CEE firms will be constrained in pursuing such a strategy by the existence of EU antidumping procedures. A review of experience that has been obtained with attempts to abolish antidumping in the context of regional integration agreements suggests that there are at least three necessary conditions for the abolition of contingent protection: (1) free trade and freedom of investment; (2) disciplines on the ability of governments to assist firms and industries located on their territory; and (3) the existence and enforcement of competition (antitrust) legislation. Although these conditions will to a very great extent be satisfied for intra EU-CEE flows, the antidumping option was retained.

[7] An avenue that could be further explored during the transition phase towards full implementation of the Europe Agreements is to establish a link between antidumping and antitrust in instances where CEE countries are facing antidumping threats or actions on the part of the EU. The EC Commission could be asked to apply competition policy criteria in antidumping investigations against products originating in CEE countries, ensuring that there is a threat to competition, not

just a threat to an EU competitor. This could be sought on an informal basis during the transitional period. Clearly, the first best strategy for CEE countries is to seek the elimination of antidumping once the Europe Agreements have been fully implemented. If it proves to be impossible to obtain agreement to phase out antidumping, a second-best policy could be to formalize the link between competition law enforcement and antidumping investigations. More generally, since the CEE countries have adopted legislation comparable to that of the EU in the competition field, one can assume that if they enforce their competition laws vigorously, EU-consistent minimum standards will be respected. This may effectively raise the threshold for EU import-competing industries seeking antidumping relief. Vigorous enforcement of competition disciplines in service industries, especially distribution-related, may further help reduce the potential for EU firms to seek contingent protection.

Even with a quick overview of the samples, it is evident that significant differences exist between an abstract and executive summary in terms of length and type of information contained in each, which reflects the different function of each in the policy paper. Two main points illustrate the similarities and differences between the abstract and executive summary in terms of purpose and features:

---

*The abstract is a concise overview*

- *The abstract briefly overviews the paper, while the executive summary provides a detailed synopsis of the whole paper.*

*The executive summary is a synopsis of the whole paper*

---

The abstract or executive summary is included in publications before the introduction section of the policy paper and the fact that they are stand-alone parts (excluded from the numbering of the main body of the paper) reflects the role they play. This part of the paper represents the first opportunity for extensive communication with the reader (following the title and table of contents); however, differences exist in the interests of readers and type of reading each satisfy. As is evident in sample (iv), the abstract aims to gain the interest of readers by providing a concise overview of the main topic and issues addressed in the paper. Thus the abstract supports the paper and the writers of sample (iv) lead readers into the paper by referring directly to the paper throughout the abstract, from the beginning ("This chapter constructs a typology...") to the end ("The study concludes by offering...").

Overlap in this function exists in that the executive summary also aims to interest readers in reading the whole paper. However, the main function of the executive summary is to satisfy the needs of those readers who will not read the entire paper and readers whose main interest is in the outcomes of the study findings and proposed policy recommendations, especially decision-makers. Towards achieving this aim,

the executive summary represents the whole paper by providing a synopsis of all main parts and findings, as is the case in sample (v).

- *Similar features are included, but the focus and scope of features is different in both.*

Analysis of these and other samples reveals that the following four features commonly occur in both the abstract and executive summary, and they correspond to the structure of the main body of the paper:

Abstract/Executive summary	{	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose of the paper</li> <li>- Definition and description of the policy problem</li> <li>- Evaluation of policy alternatives</li> <li>- Conclusion and recommendations</li> </ul>
----------------------------	---	---

However, the extent to which each is contained and emphasized in the abstract or executive summary reveals significant differences, and while both represent shorter versions of the whole policy paper, the different purposes served by each determines the detail and length. The difference in level of detail contained in both is indicated in the samples analyzed: sample (v) shows an executive summary consisting of seven paragraphs and approximately 1,200 words, and sample (iv) an abstract consisting of one paragraph of approximately 220 words in length. The abstract should be concise because a potential reader of the whole paper wants to quickly gain an understanding of the paper before moving on to the main body of the paper. Hence, the features are only briefly touched upon in order to give an overview of the paper without giving any detail. This can clearly be seen in sample (iv), where the purpose, problem and main issues are very briefly introduced. In contrast, the writers of sample (v) include and develop each feature to a greater extent, i.e., background and purpose of the paper (paragraph [1]), detailed discussion of the problem (paragraphs [2], [3] and [4]), policy options (paragraphs [5] and [6]), and conclusions and policy recommendations made (paragraph [7]). This level of detail ensures that adequate information is provided for those readers who may only read this element of the paper.

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*An executive summary contains a far more detailed discussion than an abstract*

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Writers approach the inclusion of the final feature of this element, conclusion and recommendations, in different ways. Some writers prefer to explicitly outline the results of the study and the recommendations they propose, e.g., the final paragraph in sample (v). Considering the purpose of the executive summary, the inclusion of this

feature seems appropriate. However, other writers do not state the actual conclusions and recommendations reached through the study as a means to entice readers to examine the whole paper in order to get the specific results. The final sentence of the abstract in sample (iv) illustrates this approach: "The study concludes by offering a number of policy recommendations for each of these issue areas." In writing this element of your paper, you need to decide which approach would best suit your study and target audiences.

The first step in writing this element of the policy paper is to determine whether the publisher requires an abstract or an executive summary of your paper. As mentioned, the terms abstract and executive summary are commonly used as synonyms; however, you will know from the description of the element and length guidelines provided by the publisher what is required. The following guidelines may help you in the writing of this important element:

- Regularly analyze published abstracts and executive summaries to build a better understanding of what makes them effective, what features they contain and the style in which they are written.
- The abstract or executive summary should be much more than just a cut and paste from your completed policy paper. It is important to write it as a separate element in order to make it fresh, coherent and interesting. Writers often make the mistake of leaving the writing of this element until the last moment and putting very little effort into its production. Considering the very important role this element can play in successfully communicating your message to your target audience, adequate time and effort should be scheduled as part of your writing process.
- In preparing to write this element, re-reading the whole paper, especially the statement of intent, major paragraphs and important arguments will inform the content and focus. Looking over the outline and table of contents for your paper can also guide the writing of the abstract or executive summary.

## 5.5 Introduction

The introduction to a policy paper establishes and defines the main content of what will follow in the body of the paper. Thus, the introduction opens the paper and serves to strengthen readers' interest by presenting the context and nature of the policy problem and providing basic background to the research conducted. This will ensure

that the reader is prepared for the detailed message contained throughout the study, especially in understanding the writer's approach and main issues in the argument built throughout the paper. Providing sufficient background and insight is also crucial considering how readers may approach reading the policy paper: as an initial step before reading the whole body of the paper, many readers first read elements which give an overview of the paper (abstract or executive summary, introduction and conclusion). If such elements of the paper as the introduction are written effectively, the reader will have a clear idea of the direction, focus and main ideas developed throughout the body of the paper.

*The introduction prepares the reader by setting the scene of the context, policy problem and study*

Towards effectively achieving these purposes, a number of structural features are contained in the introduction. The following analysis of sample introductions will begin the process of considering these structural features.

#### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Read the introductions from the following sample policy papers contained in Appendix A:

- (ii) "Open Competition, Transparency and Impartiality in Local Government Contracting Out of Public Services" (Baar, 2001)
- (iv) "From the Unitary to the Pluralistic: Fine-tuning Minority Policy in Romania" (Horváth and Scacco, 2001)

When reading, focus on:

- the type of information included in both introductions;
- the effectiveness of the introductions in preparing you for reading the papers.

It is evident from the analysis that differences in approach to writing this element exist as writers try to achieve a balance between being concise and giving adequate information to prepare the reader for the study. However, extensive analysis of sample introductions revealed the following common structural features:

- |              |   |   |
|--------------|---|---|
| Introduction | } | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Context of the policy problem</li> <li>- Definition of the policy problem</li> <li>- Statement of intent</li> <li>- Methodology and limitations of the study</li> <li>- Road map of the paper</li> </ul> |
|--------------|---|---|

A discussion of each individual feature follows to help you gain more insight into this element of the paper.

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*Provide a brief and targeted description of the context of the policy problem with a strong opening to attract readers' interest*

---

■ *Context of the policy problem*

The introduction generally opens by "setting the scene" of the paper, i.e., locating the problem addressed in the paper within its broader context. This leads readers into the paper and gives them general background so they can understand what follows in the paper. However, it is important to keep this part focused and brief as readers may lose interest if the paper opens with a very general or detailed description of the context. For this reason, many writers quickly narrow down the background information and introduce the issues that are central to the study. In both sample introductions, this is the case. For example, in sample (iv), this feature is approximately one third of the introduction and movement is evident in the opening paragraph between the first sentence introducing the general issue of multi-ethnic communities in Romania and the last sentence which introduces the specific aspect of the issue (analysis of diversity) which is the subject of the paper. The first sentence in the first paragraph: "Romania presents a fascinating case for the study of the management of multi-ethnic communities" is also a very strong opening to the introduction and the prospect of reading a paper which presents "a fascinating case" grabs the attention of the reader. Therefore, an important approach to writing the introduction is the need to open this element strongly.

When writing this part of the introduction, it is important to remember that the focus should not be on the context in general (e.g., country or region) but center on the context of the problem (e.g., minorities in Romania). As is the case throughout the paper, the problem-related context determines the content. It is also worth noting that the practical problem-solution focus and aim of the policy paper means that the introduction is very different from traditional academic papers. Hence, the writer does not necessarily have to provide an overview of literature on the subject or situate the research in relation to that literature, but instead moves quickly to the policy problem as the central concern of the paper.

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*Clearly define the problem to begin the argument*

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■ *Definition of the policy problem*

This part of the introduction represents the move from more contextual information to the specific issue which is the focus of the policy paper. This feature is crucial in convincing your reader to share your viewpoint that an urgent problem exists and that your paper is worth reading because it will offer possible solutions to the problem. It is also important that this feature clearly communicates your position on the problem

so that readers can understand the policy alternatives and recommendations you will propose later in the paper.

The differences in the two sample introductions regarding approaches to writing this feature raise some interesting points. Firstly, some writers establish very close connection between the definition of the problem and the statement of intent. This occurs because the statement of intent often refers to a proposed solution to the problem, and in such a problem-solution paper, they naturally go together. For instance, in sample (iv) these features are interrelated in the second paragraph of the introduction. It is also interesting that the writers of paper (iv) chose to include the definition of the problem after the statement of intent. This illustrates the different approaches and preferences of writers in developing such features.

Secondly, there is a clear difference in the approach taken by the writers of both papers to stating the problem. In sample (iv), the problem is stated very explicitly and strongly in the second and third sentence of the third paragraph, as is evident in the use of words such as "failed" and "inappropriate" to describe the Romanian government's policy towards minority groups. The third paragraph of sample (ii) serves to state the policy problem in a very implicit and indirect manner, where the future impacts of decisions on how to contract out public services are the focus rather than current problems related to this issue.

While there is no correct approach to writing this feature, the problem-solution relationship central to the policy paper highlights the importance of this feature in convincing the reader that an urgent policy problem exists. Hence, the more strongly and clearly a writer defines and communicates the nature and the main aspects of the problem analyzed, the more likely the readers are to be convinced. This feature, therefore, states the basic rationale for the study.

The following questions may be useful in developing this feature:

- What is the problem?
- How does the problem affect society?
- Who are the stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the problem?
- What are the components of the problem?
- What adjectives would you use to describe the problem?
- What are the key questions or controversies associated with the problem?

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*Stating the purpose of the paper is crucial in building an effective argument*

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▪ *Statement of intent*

This feature, also commonly called the statement of purpose, usually consists of one or two sentences stating the purpose of the policy paper. The statement of intent is very important in starting the process of building the argument central to the policy paper. Hence, it often reveals the position of the writer towards the policy problem and is closely connected to the previous feature of problem definition. However, the approaches taken by the writers of the two samples analyzed reveal different perspectives in writing this feature. The statement of intent in sample (iv) is contained in the opening sentence in paragraph [2], i.e., "This chapter advances the argument that, in dealing with minority issues, Romanian policy-makers must recognise the important cultural, political and demographic differences that exist among the various minority groups." The writers clearly and strongly state their position on the issue and the reader can expect that the whole paper will serve to build and support that argument.

In contrast, the statement of intent in paragraph [4] of sample (ii) is quite factual and informs the reader what the paper is about: "The purpose of this chapter is to address basic issues related to the use of competitive bidding processes, transparency, and impartiality in contracting out public services in the CEE and to present a comparative discussion of practices in the EU and other nations." The writer's perspective on the issue is not clarified at this stage and the reader must wait for the process of argumentation to begin. The two samples impact very differently on the reader in terms of interest levels and perceived urgency of the issue. Taking into account the purpose of the statement of intent, the nature of the problem and the strength of feelings about the problem, you must decide which approach to adopt in writing an effective statement of intent.

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*Briefly outline the framework of analysis and scope of the study*

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▪ *Methodology and limitations of the study*

In the introduction, writers commonly give a brief overview of the methodology used in the policy study, i.e., the framework of analysis used or the variables evaluated. In addition to preparing the reader for this aspect of the paper, this feature is important in establishing the credibility of the writer as a researcher and helps show that the analysis and arguments developed in the paper are based on good practice. In both sample introductions, the writers provide a brief introduction to the methodology employed. In sample (iv), readers are informed in the final paragraph of the introduction that the study consists of a typology construction and the list of core variables are also introduced. In addition to introducing the methodological framework of the study as a comparative analysis, the writer of sample (ii) also details the geographic scope of the study and research methods employed (in paragraph 4).

Some writers also choose to indicate the scope and limitations of the study in this feature. Your credibility as a researcher is enhanced if you acknowledge that a single study cannot address every aspect of the policy problem focused on, and that limitations may exist related to research methodology, for example, related to the type and amount of data available for analysis in the study. The writer of sample (ii) informs the reader at the end of paragraph 4 of problems related to data collected for the study: "...is subject to the caveats that while somewhat precise information could be obtained about legislation in the CEE, widely divergent views were presented about prevailing practices, and information on actual practices has not been collected on a systematic basis." The inclusion of this limitation illustrates to the reader the complexity of the issue and informs them that policy recommendations proposed as a result of the research should take account of these limitations.

■ *Road map of the paper*

The final feature commonly included in the introduction is a road map, which gives an overview of how the paper is organized. This is important in helping the reader prepare for reading a long and potentially complex policy paper. In the introduction to sample (ii), the writer clearly states the three main issues addressed in the paper in the final paragraph in the introduction, and even numbers the issues to help the reader clearly understand the main focus and components of the problem analyzed. (This also serves as the beginning of the presentation of the framework of analysis, which is discussed in detail in 5.7.1).

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*Present an  
overview of the  
organization  
of the paper*

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### Writing Checklist

When writing this element of the policy paper, the following questions may help enhance effectiveness:

- Have you included all features to construct a coherent introduction (context and definition of the policy problem, statement of intent, methodology and limitations, road map)?
- Is the context brief and focused on the problem?
- Have you clearly communicated the nature and urgency of the policy problem?
- Is the purpose of the paper clearly stated?
- Have you introduced your methodology and limitations in scope of the study?
- Is the organization of your paper clearly presented?

## 5.6 Problem Description

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*The problem description presents an argument that an urgent problem exists*

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Having looked at the introduction, the discussion now moves to the first element of the main body of the text, the problem description. Considering the connection between this element of the policy paper and the problem definition stage of the policy cycle (as discussed in 3.1), the following four points provide an overview of the problem description:

- *The problem description identifies, defines and elaborates the nature of the problem focused on.*

In giving extensive insight and detail into the nature of the problem, the problem description usually includes discussion of multiple perspectives of the problem: actors, conditions, causes, constraints, conflicts, interests and values, roles and responsibilities, outcomes and impact.

- *The problem description needs to convince the reader that the issue in focus requires government action.*

In the politicized world of public policy, many people may not agree that the problem outlined actually exists. Therefore, while the problem description may include much descriptive or factual information, this element must present an undeniably comprehensive and convincing argument for a problem that needs to be addressed with government action.

- *The problem description should focus on outlining the problem within its environment and not on the general environment itself.*

This part of the policy paper needs to focus immediately on a targeted description of the problem within its past and current environments or contexts, rather than starting with a discussion of the environment and then moving on the problem. For instance, a writer who starts the section with the sentence: "The first comprehensive legislation dealing with the issue of racial discrimination was introduced in Moldova in ..." rather than, "The Republic of Moldova was founded in ..." will be more likely to have such a targeted approach. In contrast, the second approach commonly leads to a lack of focus on the problem itself and the inclusion of much unnecessary detail.

- *The problem description needs to build a framework within which the policy options which follow can be comprehensively argued.*

The problem description is the element of the paper that gives detailed insight into the nature of the problem; therefore, it needs to be comprehensive enough to establish a firm foundation on which the policy options that follow can be thoroughly discussed.

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*The problem description presents a problem within its context*

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The two sub-sections that follow examine in detail the structural and textual features that make up an effective problem description. While it is recognized that these go together to constitute a good problem description, they are divided to allow for clear illustration and explanation.

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*The problem description builds the foundation for the policy options element of the paper*

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### **5.6.1 Constructing the Problem Description: Structure and Argumentation**

Knowledge of the common structural features of the problem description is key to building a strong and convincing argument, and the following sample forms the basis of analysis and discussion of these structural features.

#### **Analysis of Published Policy Papers**

Examine the extract below from the problem description section of the sample policy paper (i): "Fiscal decentralization: From command to market" (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995). You should also read the introduction to this paper (in Appendix A) to familiarize yourself with its general area of focus to help you in your analysis.

When reading, focus on:

- ▶ the aspects of the problem discussed in this sample.

[The paragraph numbers in square brackets have been added for later reference]

#### *The macroeconomic context for decentralization*

[1] Transition economies have had to address stabilization and liberalization concerns simultaneously. Intergovernmental fiscal reforms are taking place in a weak macroeconomic context, often coupled with a weak central government fiscal position (table 1.5). In Hungary in 1990, the year the new system of local self-government was introduced, the consolidated deficit of the general government was 4 percent of GDP, with inflation at 32 percent. In 1992 the deficit was 7 percent, and by 1994 it had risen to an estimated 9 percent of GDP, with local and national needs competing in an environment of increased fiscal austerity. In the Russian Federation the fiscal deficit was more than 15 percent of GDP in 1991 and 1992, it remained high at nearly 8 percent of GDP in 1993, and a deficit of more than 10 percent of GDP has been estimated for 1994; inflation also remains high.<sup>11</sup> Bulgaria's deficit in 1993 was almost 10 percent, and Albania's was even higher, at 16 percent. In Romania, although the budget deficit has been small, the high inflation rate reflects an underlying instability, and it seems likely that fiscal accounts understate the deficit.<sup>12</sup> Such pervasive fiscal constraints have had a major impact on the design of intergovernmental fiscal systems.

[2] The move to private entrepreneurship has contributed to a more vital economy, but it has also reduced central government revenues. Many smaller private enterprises elude the tax net, and the burgeoning informal economy presents major challenges to tax compliance and tax administration. State-owned enterprises no longer provide a secure revenue base. Tax reforms are desirable for market efficiency, but it will take time for tax administration to adapt to the radically new environment. Budget balance is also complicated by the fact that the expenditure budget in most countries continues to be burdened by outlays for subsidies, generous cash benefit programs, and new and sometimes large support of enterprise and bank restructuring and recapitalization.

[3] Intergovernmental reforms are taking place in the context of a concentrated effort to reduce the size of government. In Hungary expenditures shrank from about 62 percent of GDP in 1988 to about 57 percent in 1993. In Russia the general budget was more than 60 percent of GDP in the late 1980s and about 40 percent in 1993; the target for 1994 was just 20 percent. In Albania spending fell from 62 percent of GDP in 1991 to 44 percent in 1993 (see table 1.1).<sup>13</sup>

**Table 1.5 Fiscal balance in selected transition economies, 1993**  
(deficit/surplus as a percentage of GDP)

Country	General government	Central government	Subnational government
Albania	-16.0	-16.0	—
Bulgaria	-9.2	-9.2	0.0
Hungary	-6.0	-5.1	-0.3
Poland	-2.5	-2.9	0.0
Romania	-0.4	-1.5	-1.7
Russia	-7.9	-6.7	0.6
Ukraine	-6.2	-6.2	—

— Not available.

*Note:* General government may include budgets of agencies and autonomous entities and is therefore not, in all cases, the sum of central and subnational government shares.

*Source:* World Bank and various country sources: see table notes.

[4] Not surprisingly, stabilization concerns often dominate the national and intergovernmental agenda. Reducing fiscal imbalances, both at the center and at the subnational level, is fundamental to the adjustment programs of most transition countries. The current situation is in sharp contrast to the prereform period, when strict central controls ensured subnational finances had few macroeconomic consequences (Blejer and Szapary 1989; Bahl and Wallich 1992). Under the old system, revenue sharing served only as an administrative device to simplify a system of central resource allocation, and expenditures were guided by planning norms. The result was that the budgets of subnational

governments were always in balance, in an accounting sense at least, with required adjustments made simply by transfers from the central budget.

[5] The new concern for macroeconomic stabilization has led central governments to view fiscal decentralization as an opportunity to reduce central expenditures in two ways. First, “spinning off” expenditure responsibilities to the subnational level reduces the central deficit. Second, reducing fiscal transfers, purportedly to make subnational governments more independent, also reduces central outlays.

[6] *Shifting expenditure responsibilities.* In some countries budgetary responsibility for social expenditures and the social safety net is being transferred to sub-national government. In Hungary, for example, responsibility for welfare expenditures was transferred to the localities in 1993 under the Social Assistance Law. In Ukraine, too, the social safety net is a subnational responsibility. In Russia the central government transferred social expenditures equivalent to some 6 percent of GDP to localities in the 1992 budget, in effect pushing the deficit down. The hope seems to have been that subnational governments would perform the politically painful cutting required, even though the demand for these services is likely to grow with the worsening economic situation. And in 1993, again in Russia, responsibility for key national, interjurisdictional investments (such as in transport) was transferred to the subnational sector.

[7] Even some of the asset transfers to subnational governments that have occurred appear to have been motivated partly by budgetary concerns. Some of the transferred assets—notably housing and some enterprises—are really liabilities given the heavy burden of maintenance and operation of these units and the fact that rental income (adjusted in 1993 in the Russian Federation for the first time since 1928) does not cover even a small part of costs (Alm and Buckley 1994).

It is evident from the sample that the problem description addresses both the past and present of the problem. This element outlines the historical context of the issue in question and the nature of the problem within the current policy environment. For example, in paragraph [1] macroeconomic indicators from the past up to the present (1995 in this case) for countries in the region are outlined. Further discussion of the past and present context is presented in paragraphs [2] to [5]. The discussion of a current policy being implemented to address the problem can be seen in the “Shifting expenditure responsibility” sub-section (paragraphs [6] and [7]). Looking at this sample and considering the element in more general terms, the problem description can be said to include the following two features:

Problem description  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - \textit{Background of the problem} \\ - \textit{Problem within its current policy environment} \end{array} \right.$

---

*The problem description outlines the past and present of the problem*

---

These two features of the problem description can be described as follows:

- *Background of the problem*

This feature commonly covers the history of the problem: its causes; the group(s) of people affected; the legal, political, economic and social past of the problem; the policies that have been implemented in the past to address the problem and their outcomes.

- *Problem within its current policy environment*

This feature commonly covers the current status of problem: the current legal, social, economic, political contexts and impacts of the problem, the current extent of the problem, the group(s) affected, the current policy being implemented to address the problem, the successes and failures of the current approach.

While these general guidelines are helpful, they give little insight into the approaches that different writers take to practically building a comprehensive and targeted problem description in their policy papers. The following analysis will help you to begin the process of considering possible approaches.

**Analysis of Published Policy Papers**

Read through extracts from the table of contents of sample policy papers (i) and (ii). They show the problem description section of each paper. You should also read the introductions to these papers (in Appendix A) to familiarize yourself with their general area of focus to help you in your analysis.

When reading, focus on:

- the range of issues included in each problem description;
- why sample (i) discusses more issues than sample (ii).

Sample (i):

Shortened extract from the table of contents of "Fiscal decentralization: From command to market" (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995).

- Why local finance matters
- Systemic linkages
  - Need for a broader framework
- Recent trends in decentralisation
  - A time for transformation
  - Reorganizing government
  - The structure of government
  - A role for a middle tier?

Is the size of government units efficient?  
 The changing role of government: from ownership to service provision  
 Macroeconomic dimensions of intergovernmental finances  
 Simultaneity of tax reform and intergovernmental reform  
 The Macroeconomic context for decentralisation  
 Improving overall budgetary outcomes  
 Privatisation and subnational governments  
 Expenditure Assignment

*Sample (ii):*

Extract from the table of contents of "Open Competition, Transparency and Impartiality in Local Government Contracting Out of Public Services" (Baar, 2001)

2. Laws requiring competitive procedures
  - 2.1 EU directives
  - 2.2 Recent EU Communications
  - 2.3 Public procurement laws in CEE countries
3. Public access to public contracts (transparency)
  - 3.1 Transparency
  - 3.2 Transparency and public participation in the drafting of contracts
4. Conflict of interest laws
  - 4.1 Conflict of interest laws and the law in CEE nations
  - 4.2 Conflict of interest laws in the EU and the US

It is difficult to generalize about the approaches that writers take to constructing a problem description. However, the following insights emerge from the analysis of samples:

- *The range of issues included to construct a problem description depends on the nature of the problem and the purpose of the paper.*

The two samples analyzed provide a good illustration of this point: in sample (ii), the exclusive focus is on a legislative framework, while in sample (i), a broader problem is addressed and therefore, the description encompasses not only the legislative framework, but also administrative approaches, the economic context and structural organization of local and central governments.

- *Writers take very different approaches in an attempt to convincingly present their problem description.*

It may be suitable in some cases to divide the background of a problem from the description of the problem in its current policy environment and put them in separate subsections of the problem description. However, both writers in these samples have

---

*Organize your problem description to suit your topic, purpose and audience*

---

decided that their papers are more effective if they include both background and current policy discussions in one sub-section for each of the issues in question. In fact, another point worth mentioning is that both writers have chosen in some places not only to include a problem description within these issue-driven sub-sections, but they also include a discussion of their policy options for this issue before moving on. This is illustrated in the following extract from the table of contents of sample (i):

- Macroeconomic dimensions of intergovernmental finances
- Simultaneity of tax reform and intergovernmental reform
- The Macroeconomic context for decentralisation
- Improving overall budgetary outcomes

In discussing the macroeconomic issues of the problem, the writers present the problem description in the first two sub-sections and a discussion of the policy options for this issue in the third sub-section.

As is clear from these samples, in planning and writing your problem description you need to carefully consider what organizational approach will best suit your topic, purpose and audience.

**Writing Checklist**

To help you plan and write your problem description, consider the following questions:

- *Building your problem description*
  - Background of the problem
    - When and how did the problem arise?
    - What were its causes?
    - What has been the historical, legal, political, social and economic context of the problem?
    - How did the problem come to public attention?
    - Who has been affected by the problem?
    - What past policies have been implemented to try to address the problem?
    - What were the outcomes of these policies?
  - Problem within its current policy environment
    - What are the current legal, social, economic, political contexts and impacts of the problem?

- What is the current extent of the problem?
- What current policy is being implemented to try to address the problem?
- What are the differing opinions on the problem and the current approach?
- In what ways is the current policy succeeding/failing?
- What is wrong with the current approach?
- *Organizing your problem description*
  - What aspects of the problem do you need to include in your problem description section in order to present a comprehensive and convincing picture?
  - How are you going to organize the section to make it as understandable and readable as possible?

### 5.6.2 *Constructing the Problem Description: Text and Argumentation*

Building an effective problem description not only requires knowledge of what to include and an approach to logical organization, but also requires an in-depth understanding of the conventions of how text is used in these situations to build convincing arguments. To give you insight into these conventions, this sub-section will concentrate on the following key areas: coherence, constructing effective arguments, paragraphing, and using primary and secondary sources.

The sample analysis and discussion in this sub-section are based on the extract from policy paper (i): "Fiscal decentralization: From command to market" (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995) which appeared on page 43. The paragraphs in this extract have been numbered and these will be used in the sub-section for ease of reference.

- *Building a coherent argument that is both convincing and easy to follow*

One of the most basic features of good argumentation is coherence, which involves providing transparent links between each part of the argument so that a clear picture of the overall argument emerges. The analysis that follows examines the concept of coherence in context.

### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Examine the problem description extract (p.43) and the table of contents extract (p.46) of sample policy paper (i): "Fiscal decentralization: From command to market" (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995).

When reading, focus on:

- how coherence is established in this sample.

If you haven't already done so, you should read the introduction to this paper (in Appendix A) to familiarize yourself with its general area of focus to help you in your analysis.

---

*Make clear links  
between and  
within all  
elements of your  
argument*

---

As is clear from the sample table of contents, the problem description is a long and complex argument made up of many interrelated sections and sub-sections. In order to make the job of the reader easier, you must work hard to connect all these parts into one coherent piece. These sections and sub-sections not only need to be connected with good organization and clear, descriptive section titles and numbering, but also need coherence within the text. For example, in the "Macroeconomic dimensions of intergovernmental finances" sub-section, the writer chooses to include the following introductory paragraph for this sub-section:

Intergovernmental financial reforms are taking place in a constrained fiscal context, at a time when tax reforms and major changes are taking place in national revenue systems. Current stabilisation concerns may in some instances unduly dominate the design of a sound, long-term intergovernmental system.

This introduction basically outlines the focus of the sub-section and explains the connection of the sub-section to the overall argument. In fact, such introductions are common in sub-sections of a policy paper for reasons of coherence.

In addition to making connections from the sub-sections to the overall argument, there is a need for the writer to make clear connections within each sub-section. In the extract from the sample problem description, the opening sentence, "Transition economies have had to address stabilization and liberalization concerns simultaneously," drives the argument in the "Macroeconomic context for decentralisation" sub-section. All other elements of the sub-section develop the theme outlined in this sentence and the sub-section finishes by naming the current policies which are being implemented to address the problem, i.e., "shifting expenditure responsibilities" and "reducing intergovernmental

transfers." This makes a direct link to the two following sub-sections which detail these policies. Making these clear connections at multiple levels of the paper will ensure that your reader will be able to easily follow the path of your argument in your problem description.

- *Coherent and focused development of each element of the argument in the sub-section*

It is useful to use the model of argumentation proposed by the philosopher Stephen Toulmin (cited in Karbach, 1987) to consider the development of each element of the argument. Toulmin states that every argument is made up of three basic elements: the claim, the support and the warrant. These elements can be explained as follows:

- The claim is the statement of your position/argument.
- The support is the evidence you present to back up your claim.
- The warrant explains the connection between the claim and the support. This warrant may not be explicitly stated, as the writer may consider that explanation of the connection is obvious for the audience.

These three elements can clearly be seen in paragraph 6 from sample (i):

<p>[6] <i>Shifting expenditure responsibilities.</i> In some countries budgetary responsibility for social expenditures and the social safety net is being transferred to subnational government. In Hungary, for example, responsibility for welfare expenditures was transferred to the localities in 1993 under the Social Assistance Law. In Ukraine, too, the social safety net is a subnational responsibility. In Russia the central government transferred social expenditures equivalent to some 6 percent of GDP to localities in the 1992 budget, in effect pushing the deficit down. The hope seems to have been that sub-national governments would perform the politically painful cutting required, even though the demand for these services is likely to grow with the worsening economic situation. And in 1993, again in Russia, responsibility for key national, interjurisdictional investments (such as in transport) was transferred to the subnational sector.</p>	<p>Claim</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Warrant</p>
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Considering these basic elements of argumentation is essential in effectively developing the individual arguments which go to make up your problem description, and therefore, in constructing a convincing overall argument.

- *Effective use of paragraphing to help you develop the argument and help the reader to follow it*

The purpose of the paragraph is to indicate both logical and physical breaks in the text. As such, not only does it help you to organize your argument, it also helps the reader to easily follow each element of the argument. Good paragraph divisions also

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*All arguments consist of a claim, support and warrant*

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*Effective paragraphs indicate the logical units of your argument*

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help readers who are skim reading the paper for a general overview, which is a common practice with such long and complex papers.

Each paragraph usually develops one argument as stated in the topic sentence. The topic sentence is the statement of the position argued in the paragraph, i.e., the claim in Toulmin terms (as discussed above). The topic sentence in paragraph 1, "Inter-governmental fiscal reforms are taking place...", illustrates this point. The specific topic sentence in a paragraph may be the beginning of a new argument or the development of a specific point in a broader argument. In addition, the development of one argument per paragraph is key to understanding how paragraphs provide effective logical breaks for both writer and reader. The analysis that follows examines these ideas in more detail.

#### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Examine the "Macroeconomic context for decentralisation" sub-section of sample (i) on page 43.

When reading, focus on:

- the location of the topic sentences in each paragraph.

If you have not already done so, you should complete the opening analysis in this section in order to help you fully understand the context of this argument.

Except for paragraph 1, the topic sentences for all other paragraphs are the opening sentences. This is a common approach to writing detailed and complex arguments in order to make access to the argument as easy as possible for readers.

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*Effective paragraphs are coherently developed*

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A second key issue in effective paragraphing is coherence. On the paragraph level, this entails establishing clear links between the sentences in the paragraph. Common techniques that are used in making such coherent links are:

- the repetition of key words;
- the use of parallel structures, i.e., similar phrases and sentence construction;
- the use of transition phrases, e.g., then, next, for example, in addition, also, however.

Using paragraph [6] from sample (i) as an example, these techniques can be seen:

[6] *Shifting expenditure responsibilities.* In some countries budgetary responsibility for social expenditures and the social safety net is being transferred to subnational

government. In Hungary, for example, responsibility for welfare expenditures was transferred to the localities in 1993 under the Social Assistance Law. In Ukraine, too, the social safety net is a subnational responsibility. In Russia the central government transferred social expenditures equivalent to some 6 percent of GDP to localities in the 1992 budget, in effect pushing the deficit down. The hope seems to have been that subnational governments would perform the politically painful cutting required, even though the demand for these services is likely to grow with the worsening economic situation. And in 1993, again in Russia, responsibility for key national, interjurisdictional investments (such as in transport) was transferred to the subnational sector.

In the second, third and fourth sentences, the writer uses parallel structures by starting each with the phrase: "in (*a country*)" and a similar structure is also used in the final sentence of the paragraph. In addition, further coherence is achieved using the transition phrases, "for example" in sentence two and "too" in sentence three. Thinking about the coherence of your paragraphs and providing both the logical and physical breaks in your problem description will be an essential part of the effective presentation of your argument.

■ *The effective use of sources to build a credible and convincing argument*

Supporting your argument with a wide variety of sources is a key element of building an effective problem description. By including sources in your text, you build the credibility of your argument, help to frame your contribution to the discussion of the particular policy issue in your paper, and inform your readers of the basis on which you have built your argument with effective referencing. The following analysis will highlight relevant issues about the effective use of sources.

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*An effective problem description is an argument based on a wide variety of sources*

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### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Examine the use of sources in the "Macroeconomic context for decentralisation" sub-section of the sample on page 43.

When reading, focus on:

- the types of sources that have been included in the sub-section. The relevant extracts from the endnotes and bibliography are included below.

*Endnote extract:*

[Endnote 11 and 12 contain no references]

Endnote 13: Sources for the national budget expenditures are the ministries of Hungary, Russia and Albania

*Bibliography extract:*

Alm, James, and Robert M. Buckley. 1994. "Decentralization, Privatization, and Solvency of Local Governments in Reforming Economies: The Case of Budapest." *Environment and Planning, C: Government and Policy* 12(3): 337-47.

Bahl, Roy, and Christine I. Wallich. 1992. "Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations in China." PRE Working Paper 863. World Bank, Policy Research Department, Washington, D.C.

Blejer, Mario I., and Gyorgy Szapary. 1989. "The Evolving Role of Fiscal Policy in Centrally Planned Economies under Reform: The Case of China." IMF (International Monetary Fund) Working Paper WP/89/26. Washington, D.C.

- the purpose the sources serve in the sub-section. Think about the purpose they serve in terms of claim, support and warrant.
- the reasons some sources used in the extract are referenced/cited and some are not.

If you have not already done so, you should complete the opening analysis in this section in order to help you fully understand the context of this argument.

The six points that follow discuss in detail the issues highlighted in this analysis.

– *Effectively choosing the type of sources to include as evidence*

To convince the reader that your argument is credible, it is necessary to present evidence from many authoritative primary and secondary sources.<sup>10</sup> This will demonstrate the depth of your understanding of the topic and the nature of the research you have carried out. As public policy involves stakeholders at all levels of the community, it is not unusual that the types of sources included in a policy paper are very varied, e.g., government legislation and policy statements, government reports, NGO or IGO reports, other policy studies, academic journals, conference papers and newspapers. In addition, your study may include data or results from your own primary research. The analyzed sample does not actually contain any primary research, and it is not surprising in a paper that has such a broad subject and a regional focus that the most credible sources available are the actual governments of the region and

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*Include a wide variety of authoritative primary and secondary sources*

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<sup>10</sup> Primary data or information results from your own research, e.g., through questionnaires, interviews or data modelling. Secondary data or information comes from the research and writing of other authors in your field.

intergovernmental organizations active in the region such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Obviously, these considerations of topic, geographical focus, type of data available and audience should also drive your choice of sources included.

– *Effectively incorporating sources into your argument*

Another important point about using sources is considering the role they play in building an argument. From the analysis of the sample, it is clear that the sources are used as evidence to support the author's claims, evident, for example, in paragraph 3 where all the data is used in this manner. In fact, this is also the approach that you should take in constructing your arguments. A common mistake that writers make is to allow the sources to dominate, so that their own positions are not as prominent in the argument as they need to be. This is something to be aware of as it can also commonly lead to a loss of focus in the argument. In a community that is very interested in the targeted opinion of the author, this can be especially damaging to your paper.

– *Deciding when secondary sources included in your argument need to be referenced/cited*

When using data or information from secondary sources in a policy paper, usually you need to include a reference/citation, e.g., (Crilly, 1997), but sometimes it may not be necessary. In general, unless something is considered to be common knowledge within the public policy community, it will require a citation or reference. As can be seen in this example, data for current budget deficit in terms of GDP in paragraph 1 was considered common knowledge, whereas data on government expenditure in terms of GDP in paragraph 3 received a full citation. All references to tables are clear links to sources as outlined in the table notes. Also, fully referenced published sources are included in situations where it is understood that the information will not be commonly known, for example, in paragraph 4 about the former communist system and paragraph 7 about a specific example of a policy in a specific country.

It is not always clear what is considered common knowledge and what is not. If you include something without citation that comes from a source not considered common knowledge, you could be accused of plagiarism. Remember, this does not only mean the unreferenced inclusion of another author's words, it also includes their ideas and approaches. This is something that you need to discuss with your colleagues and others involved in the public policy community and also become aware of through your reading. However, if you're in doubt, include a citation.

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*Use the sources as evidence to support your arguments*

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*Include a reference for all sources unless the data is considered common knowledge*

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*Find out and follow the citation conventions of your publisher*

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– *Following the referencing/citation conventions of your discipline/publisher*

In general, different disciplines adopt citation conventions that suit their own purposes, which ensures that everyone in the discipline becomes comfortable using that convention. In the field of policy study, an author-date style, e.g., (Doyle, 1994), is generally used. This is the style used throughout the sample focused on in this subsection and also throughout this guide. However, style conventions prescribe much more than just how to reference authors in the text; they also inform writers how to construct bibliographical references and which noting convention to follow (see 5.9 and 5.10 for further discussion). These sets of conventions, e.g., American Psychological Association (APA) (2001), Modern Language Association (MLA) (Gibaldi, 1995) and Chicago (University of Chicago, 1993), have become standard tools and both publishers and readers expect you to use these standards. To give you a brief overview of a common style used in policy study, a shortened version of the APA citation guide has been included in Appendix B. This appendix includes guidance on the conventions of how to appropriately include references within the text and how to format your bibliographical references. Finally, although certain discipline conventions exist, your first audience is your publisher and you should find out and follow their preferences in this area.

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*Including sources as paraphrases, summaries or generalizations is common in policy study*

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– *Deciding how to effectively include secondary sources in your problem description*

Writers choose to include secondary sources in their writing in one of four ways: quotation, paraphrasing, summarizing or generalization. Quotation is usually chosen if the writer wants to be faithful to the original, to present vivid and interesting language or to distance themselves from the quotation or author. Writers choose to summarize or paraphrase, i.e., say what a particular author said but in their own words, if they would like to smoothly incorporate the ideas of another author into their own argument. Generalization adopts the same approach but consists of a summary of the ideas of more than one author. The choice of citation strategies is generally considered to be something which is driven by the conventions of the discipline.

As can be seen in the sample, all secondary sources are included either as paraphrases, summaries or generalizations and this reflects the need for writer-driven argumentation in the problem description element.

– *Making references to tables/figures included and commenting on their significance*

Figures, tables or graphs included in the body of the text or in appendices represent a common means of incorporating a large amount of data in the problem description.

These tables can be used to report both primary and secondary data. Look again at the sample to consider how they are used and referenced in the problem description.

### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Examine the "Macroeconomic context for decentralisation" sub-section of the sample on page 43.

When reading, focus on:

- how the tables are referenced in the text;
- the role that these references play in the argument.

If you have not already done so, you should complete the opening analysis in this section in order to help you fully understand the context of this argument.

There are two references to tables in the sample: in paragraph 1 in the second sentence and in paragraph 3 in the last sentence. In both cases, the references are included in parenthesis, e.g., (table 1.5), and in both cases they are included as evidence to support the claims made in the arguments put forward in each paragraph. In both cases, the sentences they are supporting point to the significance of the data in the tables, i.e., they tell us what data in the table is important and why. In fact, in using the data in tables effectively, it is crucial to make a clear reference to the location of the data and state why the data is significant. A mistake that many writers make is to include tables or graphs in their papers and never make any direct reference to them. It should be remembered that it is the responsibility of the writer to explain the inclusion of this data; it is not for the reader to have to guess why it is significant.

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*Make direct reference to tables in your text and point out the significant data included*

---

The two examples in this sample show instances when specific points in an argument are supported by data in a table. However, tables or figures included can also be used to give broader, more general information that may not directly support a particular argument but may add to the readers understanding of the issue. This type of information is often referred to in the text with such phrases as, for example: "for more information see Appendix F." However, you should be careful not to include too much of this type of information as it might make the paper seem a little unfocused on the main argument. It might be worth considering including these types of tables only if the data has a specific point to support in the argument, but can also provide more general support in other areas.

### Writing Checklist

To help you in building an effective argument in your problem description, consider the following questions:

#### *Coherence*

- Have you effectively linked all elements of your problem description?
- Are the links also clear within each sub-section of your problem description?

#### *Argumentation*

- Does each element of your argument include a claim, support and warrant?

#### *Paragraphing*

- Is your problem description adequately divided into paragraphs to provide enough physical breaks in the text for the reader?
- Have you developed each logical unit of your argument in a separate paragraph?
- Are your paragraphs coherently developed?

#### *Use of sources*

- Have you built your problem description on the use of a wide variety of sources?
- Have you included sources that are authoritative enough to support your argument?
- Have you used the sources as evidence to support your own arguments?
- Have you referenced/cited source data that you feel cannot be considered common knowledge?
- Have you followed the citation conventions that your publisher/discipline requires?

## 5.7 Policy Options

Having detailed the background and current policy environment of the problem in your policy paper, the policy options element entails discussing the possible ways in which the problem can be solved. Considering the connection between this element of the policy paper and the policy formulation stage of the policy cycle (discussed in 3.1), the following five points give an overview of the policy options element:

The policy options element:

- *outlines, evaluates and compares the possible policy alternatives*

All possible policy options, whether developed by the writer or others, must be presented to build a comprehensive and convincing case. In outlining each of these options, the element usually focuses on the results of the evaluation of each option in solving the specific problem and how the options compare in this regard.

- *provides a convincing argument for the preferred policy alternative*

In presenting the policy options, it should be the writer's goal to use the results of the evaluation and comparison to clearly demonstrate that the chosen policy alternative will most effectively address the problem, thereby justifying the writer's decision. Of course, this means that the writer should also use the evidence to clearly show why the other policy alternatives have been rejected.

- *focuses on reporting a decision made*

This element of the paper should not be a step by step report on how you carried out the policy formulation stage of the policy cycle; rather it should report the decisions you made about each option and the reasons behind each decision.

- *builds a clear and coherent link to the conclusions and recommendations element of the policy paper*

The argument for your preferred policy option must be the foundation and justification for your final recommendations. Therefore, it must be clearly linked to the recommendations section in the conclusion of the paper.

A detailed discussion of both the structural and textual features of the policy options element follows. While it is recognized that these go together to constitute an effective approach to writing this section of the policy paper, they are divided to allow for clear illustration and explanation.

### **5.7.1 Constructing the Policy Options: Structure and Argumentation**

The focus on the structural features of this element is based on the assumption that the effective policy paper writer needs insight into the common structural and organizational features of the element to build a convincing argument.

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*The policy options element presents an argument for the preferred policy alternative based on the evaluation of all possible alternatives*

---

The policy options element consists of two main structural features:

- Policy options {
- Framework of analysis
  - Evaluation of policy alternatives

---

*The framework of analysis is a statement of the ideals and values which guide evaluation*

---

■ *Framework of analysis*

As discussed, the policy paper is an argument for a position on how to solve the problem detailed in the paper and is based on the rigorous analysis of all available data. The basis for this analysis is a framework of guiding principles that the writer uses in the evaluation process. In other words, this framework is the expression of the ideals and values that guide the writer in taking a certain position in relation to the issues discussed. This framework of analysis directly informs the evaluation of the policy options presented. In order to allow for informed evaluation of the argument, the inclusion of this framework is a key feature. The following analysis highlights approaches to constructing this feature.

**Analysis of Published Policy Papers**

Read through extracts from the framework of analysis sections of sample policy papers (i) and (ii). You should also read the introductions to these papers (in Appendix A) to familiarize yourself with their general area of focus to help you in your analysis.

When reading, focus on:

- ▶ the differences in approach used to constructing and presenting frameworks of analysis.

*Sample (i):*

Extract from "Fiscal decentralization: From command to market" (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995). This extract shows a shortened version of the four page framework of analysis and only includes the opening and closing paragraphs.

*Need for a broader framework*

[opening paragraph] Intergovernmental fiscal relations, far from being purely a local matter, are thus key to reform goals in nearly all the transition economies. Traditional analysis of fiscal federalism examines the fiscal functions of subnational and central governments in terms of their respective (and largely separate) roles and responsibilities for stabilization, income distribution (such as the social safety net), and resource allocation (Oates 1972; Musgrave 1983). This focus is not

broad enough to address important aspects of local and intergovernmental finances in the transition economies for at least two reasons. First, as this literature has developed, this approach neglects the role of subnational governments with respect to stabilization, the social safety net, and privatization. Second, it does not fully address the legacies of a command economy that transition economies share and must address.

\*\*\*

[closing paragraph] In any system fiscal decentralization is invariably an ongoing and dynamic process. Reformers in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, however, face a special challenge in having to distinguish between problems that are structural and those that stem from the transition to a market economy. They must design an intergovernmental framework that is firm enough to serve as a basis for action, for example, regularizing transfers and tax flows, but still flexible enough to coexist with the ongoing structural adjustments in the economy relating to stabilization, redistribution, and privatization.

*Sample (ii):*

Extract from "Open Competition, Transparency and Impartiality in Local Government Contracting Out of Public Services" (Baar, 2001)

The issues that are covered include:

- (a) The applicability of procurement laws and other provisions requiring competitive procedures for the selection of contractors;
- (b) Public access to contracts and information considered in price setting proceedings. (freedom of information);
- (c) Requirements of impartiality and the prevention conflicts of interest in the selection of contractors.

Each of the above may be seen as a basic prerequisite to the conduct of contracting out in a manner that best serves the interests of the public. If conflicts of interest are permitted, bidding is not really competitive. Without competitive bidding for contracts, there is no assurance that the public is obtaining the most favorable terms for the provision of its services. Without transparency, corruption is more likely and public trust in the fairness of selection process is eliminated. Furthermore, without transparency, the general public is excluded from the contracting out process. As a result, the potential benefits of independent public review, criticism, and expertise are lost.

The writers of the two samples take different approaches to developing and presenting the framework of analysis. As is clear in the opening paragraph, the writers of sample (i) first choose to show the theoretical or literature-based position that they are taking, whereas the writer in sample (ii) does not. In addition, differences in extent and

detail exist between the two samples. The extract from sample (ii) is the full framework of analysis for that paper, while the framework of analysis from sample (i) is much more extensive than shown above. In fact, within the sub-section entitled "Need for a broader framework," the writers outline their positions on the following broad range of issues: Revenue systems, Public sector pricing, Expenditures, Transfers, Borrowing and State-owned assets. This difference in extent and detail is clearly a reflection of the broadness of the topics chosen in both papers.

Nevertheless, there are some similarities in the two examples. Both clearly state their positions in relation to the issues:

*Sample (i):* They must design an intergovernmental framework that is firm enough to serve as a basis for action, for example, regularizing transfers and tax flows, but still flexible enough to coexist with the ongoing structural adjustments in the economy relating to stabilization, redistribution, and privatization.

*Sample (ii):* Each of the above may be seen as a basic prerequisite to the conduct of contracting out in a manner that best serves the interests of the public.

In addition, they both attempt to justify these positions taken:

*Sample (i):* Reformers in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, however, face a special challenge in having to distinguish between problems that are structural and those that stem from the transition to a market economy.

*Sample (ii):* Without transparency, corruption is more likely and public trust in the fairness of selection process is eliminated.

In general, the framework of analysis usually includes a clear statement of the ideals and values being adopted and also a justification of these positions based on their relevance to the particular problem, and/or a particular theoretical or normative position taken. The justification will normally also be supported by including a reference to others who have also adopted the same or similar positions.

Another interesting point that arises from the analysis of samples is the location of the framework of analysis in the paper. Although this feature is directly linked with the evaluation of policy alternatives, both writers choose to outline their framework before the main problem description. For the paper to make logical sense, the framework of analysis must come before the discussion of the policy alternatives so that the

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*The framework of analysis provides a clear statement of and justification for the positions taken*

---

evaluation of the options can be easily understood. However in both papers, there is no division between problem description and policy options, i.e., the writers choose to present the problem and policy options for a particular issue together in the same sub-section. This probably explains the particular location of the framework of analysis in both papers. This positioning of the framework of analysis early in the paper can be useful as it helps the reader to more easily understand the positions outlined in the problem description. In planning your policy paper, it would be useful for you to consider whether this approach may also suit the subject focus and purpose of your paper.

### Writing Checklist

To help you plan and write your framework of analysis, consider the following questions:

- What principles, values and ideals will guide you in building a framework of analysis for your paper?
- How do these principles apply to the problem in question?
- What is the theoretical basis for your stated position?
- What are the other reasons for choosing your stated position?
- Is your position widely recognized?
- Where are you going to place your framework of analysis in the paper?

#### ▪ *Evaluation of policy alternatives*

Having outlined the framework of analysis, the next feature of this element is the discussion and evaluation of the policy options. As a means of examining this feature, the following analysis illustrates the evaluation of policy alternatives feature in context and raises many important issues.

### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Examine the sample extract below from the policy paper (i): "Fiscal decentralization: From command to market" (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995). It shows the evaluation of policy alternatives for one of the issues dealt with in the paper. The sample used in the main problem description analysis was also taken from this sub-section. Hence, if you have done the analysis in the problem description sub-section, the relationship between the two will be clear and this will help in your reading here. You should also read the introduction to this

paper (in Appendix A) to familiarize yourself with the paper and the particular problem addressed here, and so help you in this analysis.

When reading, focus on:

- the differences in the writers' approach to presenting and discussing the two policy options (Deficit controls and Restricted borrowing);
- identifying a few examples of the guiding values/principles that informed the evaluation of these options, i.e., were part of the framework of analysis.

[The paragraphs numbers in square brackets have been added for later reference]

*Improving overall budgetary outcomes*

[1] While budgetary flexibility is clearly desirable from the central government's short-run perspective, transfers should not be seen as a compressible part of the national budget, as they are in some countries. Many of the services provided by subnational governments are essential to political stability and economic development. Many local governments cannot provide these services at an adequate level from their own resources alone. Even from a short-run stabilization perspective, cutting transfers may be inadvisable. Underfunded subnational governments may cope with budgetary pressure by using such economically undesirable sources of revenue as profits derived from the exploitation of income-earning assets and from direct public ownership of local businesses. At the same time, in some countries subnational governments' open-ended responsibility for social assistance may result in emergency recurrence to the central government for additional funds, the unsustainable accrual of arrears, or undesirable short-term borrowing. Subnational government arrears are currently a major problem in Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine. Budapest is borrowing to finance recurrent expenditures (see chapter 3). Russia's oblasts are sometimes several months behind in paying mandated adjustments to pensions and teachers' salaries. The only way to keep down such presumably undesirable developments in the coming years in most transition countries is likely to be to maintain some form of intergovernmental transfers.

[2] *Deficit controls.* Direct control over subnational deficits is one way for central governments to ensure that subnational governments do not create macroeconomic pressures. Such limits are used in Russia, for example. Provisions of this kind may make sense in a framework of "hard" budget constraints, but the combination of deficit controls and soft budget constraints in the enterprise sector can create perverse outcomes.<sup>14</sup> In response to an apparent surplus in overall subnational budgets in Russia and Bulgaria, for example, the central government transferred expenditure responsibilities to the subnational level, readjusted tax-sharing levels, and minimized transfers. But since Bulgarian subnational governments cannot legally run deficits or borrow, even for liquidity, and since borrowing abilities and authorities in Russia are limited, budgets by definition must contain a surplus sufficient to meet the cash requirements of monthly local outlays.<sup>15</sup> Reducing revenue shares or transfers will not eliminate this surplus; since subnational budgets cannot be in deficit, such measures will lead only to measured expenditures below "normal" levels and increased cumulative arrears. In this environment, a simple requirement for subnational governments to balance their budgets is not sufficient.

[3] *Restricting borrowing.* A good case can be made for permitting local governments to borrow for certain capital investments. A striking feature of the current arrangements for subnational finances in some countries, however, is the virtually unrestricted legal access given to subnational governments for unlimited borrowing including, in some cases, foreign borrowing (table 1.7). In Hungary, for example, the Law on Local Self-Government grants all local governments unrestricted domestic borrowing rights for current and capital expenditures. Local governments in Albania can also borrow without restrictions for capital investment. Most of the other countries impose some limitations, however. In Poland, for example, localities are not allowed to borrow more than 5 percent of current budgeted expenditures.

[4] In the command economy period, subnational governments' borrowing was determined by the overall credit plan, and the central government guaranteed repayment to banks, just as it did for state enterprises. Under current circumstances, however, such generous local access to loan finance seems out of place. Restricted and limited own-source revenues may tempt local governments to overuse debt finance. The precarious macroeconomic situation in many transition economies makes the case for limiting local government's access to borrowing even stronger. Borrowing for recurrent costs, and free access to credit through such routes as local government ownership of banks, seem wholly undesirable. Few of the new subnational governments have experience with investment financing, and most are not yet capable of preparing complete and meaningful projects. In most countries, intergovernmental fiscal flows are still in flux, and subnational governments have limited autonomy to set

**Table 1.7 Subnational government borrowing,  
selected transition economies**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Local borrowing authority</i>	<i>Local borrowing activity</i>
Albania	Unlimited borrowing authority for investment purposes only	No information
Bulgaria	Limited borrowing authority but governments accumulate arrears	From Ministry of Finance
Hungary	Unlimited borrowing authority	Some municipalities have past debt. Minimal new borrowing
Poland	Limited borrowing authority	Debt service not to exceed 15 percent of revenue
Romania	No borrowing authority but governments accumulate arrears	Virtually no activity
Russia	Limited borrowing authority, limited by decree in 1993	Minimal new borrowing (for liquidity purposes)
Ukraine	Limited borrowing authority from domestic sources	Minimal new borrowing (for liquidity purposes)

*Note:* For Indicated footnotes, see table notes.

*Source:* World Bank estimates.

user fees and little experience (or room) to tax on their own. It is thus difficult to judge their creditworthiness. Most financial institutions in transition economies are not yet capable of evaluating long-term risks or handling long-term financial instruments. All these factors argue for caution in allowing local governments to borrow. Nevertheless, to the extent that benefits from some projects are enjoyed in the future, borrowing for local infrastructure projects has a sound theoretical base. Financing capital expenditures from current revenues would unnecessarily limit the pace and efficiency of subnational investments. The challenge is to define appropriate financing mechanisms that do not threaten macroeconomic stability.<sup>16</sup> In most countries, however, this task, while important, must wait on the more immediate challenge of developing a sound structure for financing subnational current expenditures.

In this sample, each policy option is outlined and an argument for or against it is presented based on the outlined framework of analysis. This is a common approach to structuring this feature. Although it is difficult to pick out the specifics of the framework of analysis applied, throughout sample (i) there is a focus on building a stable and sustainable system of fiscal interaction between central and subnational government entities. In fact, this is a clear reflection of the position taken in the framework of analysis which was used as a sample on page 60:

They must design an intergovernmental framework that is firm enough to serve as a basis for action, for example, regularizing transfers and tax flows, but still flexible enough to coexist with the ongoing structural adjustments in the economy relating to stabilization, redistribution, and privatization.

In this sample, there is an introductory paragraph which sums up the current macroeconomic problems and leads into the discussion of the possible alternatives, i.e., deficit controls and restricted borrowing. The coherence of the section is also enhanced through the use of sub-headings to indicate the different policy options to the reader. Moreover, it is clear that this opening paragraph also establishes links to the previously outlined framework of analysis. As previously mentioned, this shows the need to continually establish links within the sub-section and from the sub-section to the overall paper for the purpose of achieving maximum coherence.

An interesting aspect of this sample is the fact that the writers start the discussion of the policy options by arguing strongly against the first option (deficit controls) and finishing by arguing for the chosen one (restricted borrowing). In fact, throughout

the paper the writers take this approach in arguing against many options and finishing with their preferred one. This approach serves to clearly place the emphasis on the authors chosen option by building a strong comparative basis to justify the chosen alternative. It also illustrates an efficient and targeted way of reporting a decision made, i.e., rather than telling the reader about the process of deciding on each option, it focuses on answering the questions "why no?" or "why yes?" for each. By finishing with the chosen option, this approach also makes a natural link to the recommendations in the final element of the paper. However, this approach will not suit all contexts and you need to decide which best suits your purposes.

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*Present and justify your evaluation of the policy options outlined based on the framework of analysis*

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In general when discussing each policy option, it is common to present and justify your evaluation of the option. The justification should be based on the previously outlined framework of analysis and commonly states both the positives and negatives of each option. Finally, it is usual to state how each option compares to the other alternatives discussed, and thus state whether or not this is your preferred policy option.

The sample raises another point about the manner in which the chosen policy option is presented. Although the writers present "restricted borrowing" as their preferred option for the current conditions, they also present the conditions under which less restricted borrowing, i.e., a policy change, should be implemented:

---

*State the limitations of your chosen option*

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Nevertheless, to the extent that benefits from some projects are enjoyed in the future, borrowing for local infrastructure projects has a sound theoretical base. Financing capital expenditures from current revenues would unnecessarily limit the pace and efficiency of subnational investments. The challenge is to define appropriate financing mechanisms that do not threaten macroeconomic stability.<sup>16</sup> In most countries, however, this task, while important, must wait on the more immediate challenge of developing a sound structure for financing subnational current expenditures.

The writers' decision to include such a qualification to their option is a reflection of the difficulty that all policy specialists face in having to choose a preferred option to address very complicated and ever-changing problems within ever-changing societies. Therefore, this approach to framing your chosen policy option within its limitations should be considered by all policy paper writers.

**Writing Checklist**

To help you plan and write your evaluation of policy alternatives, consider the following questions:

- What policy options are you going to discuss in your paper?
- Which is your chosen policy option?
- What approach are you going to take to argue for your chosen alternative?
- What are the limitations of your chosen policy option?

*For each policy option*

- What is your overall evaluation of the option?
- Why is this your preferred alternative?/ Why is this not your preferred alternative?
- Which criteria from your framework of analysis formed the basis of your decision?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of this option?
- How does this option compare to the others outlined?

**5.7.2 Constructing the Policy Options: Text and Argumentation**

The focus on text and argumentation in this sub-section is based on the assumption that the effective policy paper writer not only needs structural and organizational knowledge of the element, but also needs insight into the textual conventions of argumentation in the policy paper. In the text and argumentation section for the problem description element (5.6.2), this issue was also addressed. Many of the issues discussed in that section are also directly applicable to the writing of this element, i.e., coherence, construction of the elements of the argument and paragraphing. As such, this sub-section will focus exclusively on the differences between the two elements and these lie mainly in the area of using sources. If you have not yet looked at the problem description sub-section (5.6.2), it is highly recommended that you do so in order to fully understand this discussion.

While the sample used in the following analysis only includes an extract of the evaluation of policy alternatives section, the approaches to argumentation discussed are also directly relevant to the framework of analysis feature of this element.

### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Examine the sample extract from the policy options section of sample policy paper (j): "Fiscal decentralization: From command to market" (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995) on page 64. You should also read the introduction to this paper (in Appendix A) and the related problem description (p. 43) to familiarize yourself with the paper and the particular problem addressed here, and so help you in your analysis.

When reading, focus on:

- comparing the role of the writer in this element to that in the problem description element;
- the differences in the way sources are used in this element in comparison to the problem description element.

The analysis of this sample provides insight into the two main differences in the approach to argumentation between the policy options and the problem description elements:

- *A more writer-driven focus in the argument*

A quick overview of the sample policy options extract reveals less factual or descriptive information and more writer-driven argumentation than commonly occurs in the problem description. For example, the argument in paragraph 4 of the extract is based solely on the opinions, reasoning and decisions of the writers:

In the command economy period, subnational governments' borrowing was determined by the overall credit plan, and the central government guaranteed repayment to banks, just as it did for state enterprises. Under current circumstances, however, such generous local access to loan finance seems out of place. Restricted and limited own-source revenues may tempt local governments to overuse debt finance. The precarious macroeconomic situation in many transition economies makes the case for limiting local government's access to borrowing even stronger. Borrowing for recurrent costs, and free access to credit through such routes as local government ownership of banks, seem wholly undesirable. Few of the new subnational governments have experience with investment financing, and most are not yet capable of preparing complete and meaningful projects.

This sample clearly illustrates the writers taking a very strong position in reporting the decisions made about their preferred policy option. Indeed, throughout the sample this writer-dominant approach is evident. Such an approach has a direct effect on how sources are used in this element.

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*In the policy options element, the writer's voice should dominate*

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- *Less prominent use of primary or secondary sources in the argument*

Analysis reveals a less prominent use of sources in this element compared to the problem description. Firstly, because of the dominant writer role in this element, there are significantly fewer primary or secondary sources incorporated as evidence. Secondly, as the reasoning and opinions expressed in this element are very strong and definitive positions, the types of sources that are used to support these positions are opinionated rather than descriptive. Thirdly, although the sources are used in the same manner in both elements, as evidence in support of the writers' claims, the fact that they are included as endnotes rather than cited in the text makes them even less prominent. This is yet another approach to making the writers' own voice more prominent.

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*The writer shows his or her expertise and creativity through option evaluation*

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In the policy options element, the policy adviser needs to show his or her expertise and take the lead in the argument to strongly advocate for his or her chosen option. Remembering that policy science should be problem-oriented and targeted, this is the opportunity for you to prove that yours is a practical solution to the outlined problem, and therefore a valuable contribution to the policy debate and the policy community in general.

### Writing Checklist

To help you in building an effective argument in your policy options element, consider the following questions:

*Coherence*

- Are there clear links between your problem description and policy options elements?
- Have you effectively linked all sub-sections of your policy options element?
- Are the links also clear within each sub-section of your policy options element?

*Argumentation*

- Does each element of your argument include a claim, support and warrant?

*Paragraphing*

- Is your policy options element adequately divided into paragraphs to provide enough physical breaks in the text for the reader?
- Have you developed each logical unit of your argument in a separate paragraph?
- Are your paragraphs coherently developed?

*Writer's voice and use of sources*

- Are your positions and reasoning dominant throughout the policy options element?
- Have you included less sources in this element than in the problem description?
- Have you used the sources as evidence to support your own arguments?
- Have you followed the citation conventions that your publisher/ discipline requires?

## 5.8 Conclusion and Recommendations

This final major element brings the policy paper to an end by synthesizing the major findings of the research and outlining the writer's suggested course of action towards solving the policy problem analyzed throughout the paper. Hence, the purpose of the policy paper as a decision-making tool and call to action is ultimately fulfilled in this element. The fact that the conclusion and recommendations is the final major part of the paper also means that it is responsible for leaving a lasting impression of the paper on the reader. Considering the reading process and main interests of some readers of policy papers reveals a further role played by this element: many readers read this section together with the introduction and abstract or executive summary as an initial stage before reading the detailed main body of the paper. The conclusion and recommendations element, therefore, plays a vital role in helping these readers to get a clear overview of the whole paper. Some readers are also particularly interested in the policy recommendations proposed in the paper and may start their reading by first looking at the recommendations and then at the rest of the paper.

The process of examining the nature of this element in more detail begins with the analysis of two samples.

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*The conclusion fulfills the role of the policy paper as a decision-making tool*

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### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Read the following conclusion and recommendations element from sample policy papers (ii) and (iii). You should also read the introduction to each paper in Appendix A to help you understand the context of the papers.

Consider these issues when reading:

- the structure and content of this element;
- the effectiveness of both samples as decision-making tools.

*Sample (ii):*

Open Competition, Transparency, and Impartiality in Local Government Contracting Out of Public Services (Baar, 2001)

Conclusion

In the CEE nations which were surveyed in this study, public policy and regulation in regards to contracting out public services is marked by severe shortcomings. A substantial portion of contracting out is exempt from competitive procurement requirements, contracts are widely treated as secret, and conflicts of interest are largely unregulated. Under these circumstances, the public has little reason to have faith or respect for the contracting out process and the essential elements of public participation and scrutiny are lost.

Reform in this area should include the following:

1. All contracts for public services (except for very small contracts) should be subject to a competitive bidding process.
2. Sales and leases of public facilities and sales of ownership shares in public facilities should be subject to the same competitive requirements as contracting out of public services.
3. All public contracts with private companies for the provision of public services should be accessible to the public (with very narrow exceptions for specified portions of contracts based on exceptional circumstances).
4. The drafting of public contracts should be an open process subject to public input and review.
5. Information submitted in price setting procedures should be public record.
6. Conflict of Interest Laws should include:
  - a. Broad definitions of conflicts of interest;
  - b. Requirements for disclosure of assets by public officials that are open to the public;
  - c. Prohibitions against representation of private companies by former public officials for specified time periods;
  - d. Protections of ‘whistleblowers’;
  - e. Penalties for violations of the law;

- f. Independent national commissions responsible for enforcing conflict of interest laws.

Badly needed public investments in public service provision may not be undertaken or may be contracted out because otherwise they would be unaffordable. However, the types of reforms proposed here do not require public expenditures, and they provide possibilities for greatly improving the investments in public services which are undertaken.

*Sample (iii):*

Between Active Appreciation, Passive Approval and Distrustful Withdrawal (Swianiewicz , 2001)

Conclusions

As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, individual analyzed countries placed more attention to different values of local democracy when building the local government system. The Czech Republic and Slovakia focused more attention on values related to democratic representation of local communities, while in Polish reform there has been more attention placed at issues of effectiveness in service delivery. This difference and various territorial organizations—with relatively large municipalities in Poland and strong fragmentation in remaining countries—is to some extent reflected in the relationship between local governments and the general public.

As was expected in the model presented at the beginning of this chapter, the average level of trust and the interest in local public affairs measured by the turn-out in local elections are higher in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, while the turnover of mayors is definitely highest in Poland. On the other hand, the Polish local government system may allow for the most effective decentralization of the widest range of services. But this issue exceeds the scope of this chapter. Differences between countries discussed in this paragraph may be perhaps related to the difference of “philosophical assumptions”, and of territorial organization of analyzed countries.

But despite numerous, detail differences identified above, the general picture of local government-citizen relationships is quite similar in all four analyzed countries. At the same time, this picture is by no means very simple. It would be wrong to assume that the very existence of local governments does not matter for public opinion. Most people are more satisfied with local than with central authorities’ activities. They think their municipal administration works quite well. And they think local authorities try to represent interests of whole local communities, not only of small, selected groups.

But it would be equally simplistic to believe in an ideal picture of local government: beloved, trusted by everyone and mobilizing local communities for joint activities for public interest. First, positive opinions quoted in the previous paragraph are not univocal. Numerous citizens decide to stay uninvolved, and they are not able to make their own opinions about local governments’ performance. There is

a quite widespread fear of local corruption, although it should be noted that at least in Hungary (but not in Poland) there is a general conviction that local self-government administration is more fair than the central one. Turnout in local elections is usually considerably lower than in parliamentary ones and—especially—than in presidential elections in Slovakia and Poland. This is just another example of a generally low level of involvement and perception of relatively low importance of local politics.

What is worth stressing is that the overall trend in perception of local governments is not negative. Moreover, on some dimensions—such as levels of trust—it is rather positive and to large extent stable. By contrast, the support for central political institutions (government, parliament, and president) shows considerable fluctuations even over a relatively short time. In some cases, we noted very high expectations towards local governments at the beginning of the transition period, so there was some disappointment shortly afterwards. But then the level of trust, satisfaction and interest in local governments has stabilized at the level which has been perhaps far from desired, but it has been not disastrous either.

Last but not least, the attitudes of individual citizens are highly diversified. The views of some of them may be called “active appreciation”, others “passive approval” and others “distrustful withdrawal” from local public affairs. Each of these three groups is large enough to be noticed and to protect us from easy simplifications.

Practical recommendations

Are there any practical recommendations stemming from the study? They can be summarized in following points:

- *Local governments in analyzed countries are well established and recognized democratic institutions.* This is so in spite of the numerous drawbacks of local democracy reported above. Therefore, the further strengthening of local governments’ positions seems to be a wise method for strengthening the overall democratic system.
- *More information on decentralization reforms is needed.* In most described cases, the majority of the population supported implementation of decentralization reforms. But this support sometimes evaporated over time. And there is evidence suggesting this might be at least partially because of insufficient levels of information on aims and practical consequences of introduced changes.
- *More studies are needed.* We know a lot about the techniques being used for improving communication between local governments and citizens, but there is a lack of systematic information about results of practical implementation and usage of these techniques. Therefore, the first recommendation is that more studies on these issues are required.

Moreover, we know what techniques are in use by local governments. But by operating on the case study level rather than on a level of systematic analysis, we do not know how widespread they are. This definitely requires more investigation.

- *More consultations are required, but these should not work in favor of the most active groups only.* Local governments should definitely be encouraged to

undertake more exercises directed at learning about citizens' preferences, taking these into account while formulating local policies. However, it should be noted that the process of consultation also has its traps, which should be avoided. Because usually there are some relatively small groups which are the most active in expressing their opinions, one needs to be careful that using different techniques of communication with the public does not lead to policies biased towards preferences of these groups.

- *Consider the quality of local services first.* Taking into account the relatively rare willingness of citizens to be directly involved in policy formulation, improving quality of local services might be sometimes the best strategy for improving the level of satisfaction of citizens not only with local government operations, but also, with the quality of local democracy. In many instances, this might be more important than applying various forms of communication and interactive governance. Analysis provided by the Hungarian chapter suggest that citizens in localities providing better services often tend to believe their preferences have been taken into consideration in policy formulation. On the other hand, in localities with poorer services, citizens are inclined to think that their voice has not been heard.

Analysis of these and other samples reveals three structural features which are commonly included in the conclusions and recommendations element:

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Conclusion and recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Synthesis of major findings</i></li> <li>– <i>Set of policy recommendations</i></li> <li>– <i>Concluding remarks</i></li> </ul> |
|--------------------------------|---|

The remainder of this section examines each feature to build insight and provide guidance as you write this element of your policy paper.

- *Concise synthesis of major findings*

The conclusion and recommendations element usually begins with a synthesis of the most important findings from the previous two elements of the study (problem description and policy options). Because a policy study may be long, complex and detailed, drawing conclusions and providing a review and synthesis of main findings is an important step before detailing specific recommendations. However, this feature should consist of more than a summary or repetition of the main findings, i.e., a synthesis which ties together and highlights only the significant outcomes of the analysis and serves the purpose of providing support and justification for the policy recommendations which will follow.

---

*The synthesis highlights main points from the problem description and policy options elements*

---

In both sample conclusion and recommendation elements analyzed above, it is evident that both writers are very confident and definite in synthesizing and drawing conclusions from their research, and this is an important factor in writing this feature effectively. However, there are significant differences between the two samples in terms of length and level of detail included in the synthesis. The synthesis in sample (ii) consists of one short paragraph, whereas this feature in sample (iii) is more than one page in length. It is impossible to give exact length guidelines as the complexity of the study, methodology employed, data used and number of issues analyzed all impact on the length of this feature. When writing this feature for your policy paper, you need to carefully consider which major findings of your research to include and how much detail to provide so that the policy recommendations you propose will follow logically. However, you should keep in mind that the purpose of this feature is to concisely review the most significant findings and move on to the presentation of recommendations as quickly as possible.

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*Outline the measures proposed to solve the policy problem*

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■ *Set of policy recommendations*

This feature outlines the practical steps that need to be taken to implement the chosen policy option argued for in the previous policy options element of the paper. This feature is central to the whole policy paper, as the ultimate aim of the study is not to gather and analyze data about a policy problem, but to develop a set of recommendations on the basis of the research conducted.

In order to persuade the reader that your proposed recommendations represent the best means of solving the policy problem focused on throughout the study, it is crucial that recommendations are clear, practical, persuasive, logical and comprehensive. In writing effective recommendations, focusing on the different approaches of writers may provide some guidance. For example, the writer of sample (iii) labels this section "Practical Recommendations," which clearly indicates to readers that the measures proposed provide a practical solution to the policy problem. This writer also provides a brief and clear overview of each recommendation in one sentence which is followed by further explanation and rationale for each recommendation, e.g.:

- *More information on decentralization reforms is needed.* In most described cases, the majority of the population supported implementation of decentralization reforms. But this support sometimes evaporated over time. And there is evidence suggesting this might be at least partially because of insufficient levels of information on aims and practical consequences of introduced changes.

In contrast, the set of recommendations presented in sample (ii) are very concise and specific and each consists of a single sentence, e.g., "5. Information submitted in price setting procedures should be public record." In deciding on an approach to writing your recommendations, you need to think about which approach best suits the subject area and findings of your study and the types of solutions you propose.

#### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Quickly look over the sample conclusion and recommendations elements contained in the previous analysis box, and focus on:

- the presentation of the set of recommendations in terms of layout and format.

Usually the practical solution to a policy problem is a strategy, and thus no single recommendation will provide a complete solution. Hence, writers usually divide recommendations into separate proposals with each addressing one aspect of the problem and solution, as is evident in the two samples analyzed. For example, sample (ii) presents six different aspects of proposed policy on contracting out of public services. This signals that the recommendations are a practical set of proposals to be implemented and makes the set of proposed recommendations as clear and persuasive as possible. In dividing out and presenting their set of recommendations, writers use different approaches and format to make sure that readers can clearly and immediately see the recommendations. Recommendations can be:

- put in a separate section with a heading which signals their importance (sample (iii));
- numbered and indented in the text (sample (ii));
- separated using bullet points (sample (iii));
- italicized to highlight the key part or main idea (sample (ii)).

When writing your set of recommendations, consider how they can logically be divided into separate proposals, and what approach you can use to make them clearly identifiable.

#### ▪ *Concluding remarks*

Writers sometimes choose to include some brief concluding remarks to close the argument developed throughout the policy paper. This feature also serves to leave the reader with some final thoughts on the subject of the paper. A common approach

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*Divide and present  
the proposed  
solution in  
separate measures*

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*The concluding  
remarks complete  
and close the paper*

---

adopted by writers in this feature is to bring the discussion of the subject full circle, i.e., return the focus of the discussion to the broader context of the problem, which commonly opens the introduction element of the paper. This may give a final sense of completeness and wholeness to the paper and can effectively close the argument by illustrating to the reader that implementing the proposed solutions to the problem will have a wider impact on society. While this feature is not included in either sample analyzed, you should think about whether the inclusion of such a feature is appropriate for the context of your study.

### Writing Checklist

The following questions can serve as a guide when writing this element of your paper:

- Have you synthesized only the major findings of the study?
- Are your recommendations logically divided into separate measures and clearly presented?
- Are all recommendations effectively written?
- Does the conclusion provide a sense of completeness to the paper?

## 5.9 Endnotes

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*Endnotes are more common in policy study than footnotes*

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Published policy papers often include a separate page entitled "Endnotes" or "Notes" after the conclusion and recommendation section. This element consists of a list of numbers with notes corresponding to the same numbers in the body of the paper at specific points. In some publications, preference is given to a footnoting convention, i.e., including such notes in the body of the paper at the bottom of the relevant page. Endnotes or footnotes are used in some disciplines as the method of referencing all sources; however, this is not common in policy study. Within the author-date citation systems commonly used in policy papers, both footnotes or endnotes are permitted and many publishers specify their preferred system. While such noting is permitted in these systems, the writer is encouraged to use notes as little as possible. The following analysis highlights the functions of this element of the policy paper.

### Analysis of Published Policy Papers

Examine the endnotes from sample policy paper (iii): "Between Active Appreciation, Passive Approval and Distrustful Withdrawal" (Swianiewicz, 2001) and consider:

- the functions the six endnotes serve.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For more information on comparison of the decentralisation reform in four analyzed countries see for example, Baldersheim et al. (1996).
- <sup>2</sup> The LDI project was sponsored by the Norwegian government and co-ordinated by Harald Baldersheim from the University of Bergen Norway.
- <sup>3</sup> It is much more difficult to formulate definite conclusions about Hungary, for which we do not have similar information on local politicians' values. Taking territorial fragmentation into account, one may expect Hungary should be more similar to the Czech and the Slovak Republic than to Poland. But after observing Hungarian discussions on local governments over the last decade, one may notice much attention being attached to the decentralisation of services and the efficiency of their delivery.
- <sup>4</sup> The survey was conducted based on a representative sample of local populations in April 2000 by IVVM in the Czech Republic, by TARKI in Hungary, by VILMORUS in Lithuania and by CBOS in Poland. Unfortunately, Slovakia, the fourth country analyzed in this book, was not included in the quoted survey.
- <sup>5</sup> It should be added that some mayors chose political career in higher-tier local governments after the 1988 reform. However, this relatively small number does not change the general picture of high proportion of mayors losing positions as a result of subsequent elections.
- <sup>6</sup> Data on the Czech Republic are missing, but there is no reason to believe the situation differs significantly there from the other three countries.

From the analysis above, it is evident that the functions of endnotes are as follows:

- *to provide additional discussion, explanation or definition of terms*

In this case, the additional information is relevant to and supports the main text, but is not included in the body of the paper because it is not central to supporting the main arguments in the paper and its inclusion would interrupt the flow of the discussion. In sample (iii), the writer uses all endnotes except one for this purpose. Sometimes writers chose to clearly indicate that additional information is provided in the endnote, as is the case in endnote 5 which begins, "It should be added that...."

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*Endnotes give additional information and identify further sources*

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- *to direct interested readers to sources where further or background information can be found on the issues discussed in the main body of the paper*

Obviously, a writer cannot include a detailed discussion of every aspect of all issues in the paper; hence, endnotes can lead interested readers to further sources used to inform the study. The first endnote in sample (iii) serves this purpose, as is clearly indicated in the opening of the sentence, "For more information on...."

## 5.10 Bibliography

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*The bibliography allows readers access to the foundation of your argument*

---

A bibliography or list of referenced sources is a key element of a policy paper as it allows your readers easy access to the foundation of your argument. By including a list of works cited, you allow the reader to judge the basis on which you built your argument and also provide them with a comprehensive guide to the currently available sources on the topic and region in question, which they can then use in their own work. In fact, the inclusion of a bibliography may have special importance for policy study specialists who would like to influence the opinions of policy analysts. This sub-section looks at two main issues of importance with regard to the bibliography.

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*Policy study usually follows author-date citation conventions*

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- *Following the citation conventions of your discipline/publisher*

In order to build a common understanding of how sources should be included and referenced in texts, most disciplines adopt a set of citation conventions that suit their purposes. Within the field of policy study, the convention is an author-date style, e.g., (Hackett, 2001). As mentioned in Section 5.6.2, many different sets of well established author-date style citation conventions exist, e.g., APA and Chicago. While such citation conventions are generally categorized according to the method of referencing sources within the text, e.g., author-date or noting, they also detail how reference lists/bibliographies should be constructed. The following example shows a bibliographical reference within the APA author-date system:

Dornbusch, Rudiger and Stanley Fisher (1987) *Macroeconomics*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Appendix B is included to give you an overview of APA author-date citation conventions and includes guides on how to insert a reference in the text as well as how to construct a reference for such sources as books, journal articles, newspaper/magazines and government publications in your bibliography. The APA author-date citation conventions

have also been followed throughout this publication, and hence, an examination of the references section shows a full sample of a bibliography in APA style.

Although citation systems such as APA or Chicago are well established, not all publishers follow these systems. Therefore, it is important to find out what citation style your publisher wants you to adopt and consistently follow it. In fact, if you are lucky, some may have put together writing guidelines which include citation conventions that they want you to follow. Others may just tell you that an author–date style is acceptable. In this case, just choose one style and follow it. Remember that although it may seem like hard work at the start, following these procedures will allow easy access to your work for your readers, add to your credibility as a policy specialist and also help you develop good research practice because extensive recording of detail is required.

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*Find out what  
citation  
convention your  
publisher wants  
you to follow*

---

- *Specifics for policy study*

There are many specifics for particular situations elaborated within well established citation conventions, two of which are worth mentioning for policy specialists from CEE. Firstly, because of the nature of certain topics in policy study, you may need to include a wide variety of sources including books, journals, reports, newspapers, magazines, legislation, government documents and interviews. Because of this diversity of sources, rather than just listing your references alphabetically by author, you may be required to divide your bibliography into sub-sections for each type of source. Secondly, in writing your policy paper, you may need to include sources which were not published in English. In referring to them in your bibliography, it is recommended that you translate key parts of the citation into English to allow maximum insight for your international audience. The following example illustrates a common approach:

Office of National and Ethnic Minorities (1999). *Kisebbségek Magyarországon*  
(Minorities in Hungary). Budapest: Author.

## 5.11 Appendices

Following the main body of the policy paper, writers commonly decide to include additional information in appendices. This sub-section discusses four issues to build insight into this element of the policy paper.

- *Appendices support and supplement the main arguments developed throughout the paper.*

---

*Appendices support the main arguments of the paper*

---

The support function of appendices serves the needs of those readers who would like to gain a further understanding of issues discussed in the paper. This is achieved through allowing readers access to supplementary information to that contained in the body of the paper. In sample (ii), "Open Competition, Transparency, and Impartiality in Local Government Contracting Out of Public Services" (Baar, 2001), the writer has included two appendices: "Appendix A: Text of Constitutional Provisions and Legislation Covering Freedom of Information, and Exceptions to Freedom of Information Requirements (Including Commercial Secrets Legislation) in Central and East European Nations" and "Appendix B: Decision by Hungarian Ombudsman – Public Access to Highway Concession Contract." These appendices provide very detailed information of a legal nature to support the main focus of the paper, contracting out of public services. For instance, Appendix A contains excerpts from the constitutions of thirteen CEE countries. If some readers are particularly interested in such legislative or contractual issues, then they can choose to examine such legal detail.

To effectively serve this support function, appendices should be explicitly used, i.e., the writer should refer to each appendix at appropriate points in the body of the paper. In sample (ii), the writer refers directly to the second appendix in the discussion of the issue of transparency and the use of Hungary as an example: "Appendix B contains the complete text of the Ombudsman's decision." In this way, readers clearly understand the relevance of the appendix and which part of the paper it supports, and do not have to try to figure out the writer's motivation in including additional information.

- *Appendices are optional and should not be included unless necessary.*

Many sample policy papers analyzed in developing this guide did not contain appendices. Hence, writers must evaluate the benefits and contributions of including additional information in appendices. Answering the questions included in the writing checklist below will help in the decision-making process and in justifying the inclusion of proposed appendices.

- *Common criteria used in deciding what to place in appendices are the type, length and level of detail of information.*

It is impossible to prescribe what should be included in the appendices as every policy study differs in terms of policy problem and issues addressed, and employs different research methodology and data sources. In deciding what to include, it is important to evaluate what type of information may support the discussion. In sample (ii), the writer focuses mainly on legal issues throughout the paper, and therefore

relevant sections of regulations and laws for thirteen countries are included in Appendix A as relevant supporting information. Including such detailed information in the main body of the paper would interrupt the flow of the discussion and is therefore more suited to an appendix. Considering methodology and data used in your study will also help you make decisions about supporting information. For example, if primary research has been conducted for the study, then copies of research instruments or detailed data analysis could be included in appendices to inform the reader.

- *Appendices are usually divided and identified through the use of letters and titles.* In sample (ii), the two appendices are assigned the letters A and B as a means of identification. The order in which appendices appear corresponds to the order in which they are referred to in the body of the paper. It is also important to write descriptive titles for appendices to inform the reader of the focus and content. The titles of appendices can also be included in the table of contents to act as an easy reference for readers.

#### Writing Checklist

Use the following questions to evaluate whether appendices are required to support your policy paper:

- Is the inclusion of the supplementary information in an appendix necessary or would it be sufficient to refer in the text (or footnote/endnote) to the original source containing the information?
- Is the information contained in the appendices crucial to supporting specific sections of your argumentation?

## 5.12 Index

The inclusion of an index is a common component of publications, especially edited publications consisting of a number of policy papers. Common titles for this component are "Index of Terms" or "Subject Index" and it acts as a research tool, providing quick access to issues covered in the publication. Busy readers want to quickly locate issues of interest to them and the first thing they may consult to help them to locate parts of a book and specific papers that address certain issues is the alphabetically organized index. Thus, the index acts as an overview of key words contained in book, and it is important that it represent the book well and be user-friendly. To gain insight into compiling an index, it is useful to examine a sample.

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*The index is a useful research tool to locate specific issues*

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**Analysis of Published Policy Papers**

Look at the extract below from a sample index of an edited publication entitled "Decentralization of the Socialist State: Intergovernmental Finance in Transition Economies " (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995).

Consider the following issues:

- the type of terms included in the index;
- the format and layout of the index.

Enhanced subnational taxes, 367–68

Enterprise profit taxes, 160, 162, 300, 304–5

Enterprises: expenditure responsibilities of, 36, 62, n20; municipal ownership of, 167, 198, 217–18, 288; natural resource exploitation by, 392, 396; ownership confusion over Romanian, 232–33; potential local misuse of, 9, 42; and privatization resistance, x, 5, 296–97, 311, 318 n8; proceeds from sale of, 31, 62 n18, 106, 133–34; public and social services delivery by, 12, 198–99, 287, 288–89, 291, 318 n5, 352–53; subnational government ownership of, 19, 27–28, 198, 217–18, 232–33, 274, 288; subnational sale of, 30–31, 62 n18, 103, 106, 133–34, 351; subnational taxation of, 42–43, 304–5

Entrepreneurialism: of subnational governments, 28–30, 62 n17, 106, 274, 351–52

Environmental taxes, 163, 392

Environmental fund (Poland), 163

Equalization: block grants and, 161; formula-based sharing and, 47, 363–64, 365; grant formulas and, 53, 89, 96, 99, 101, 102, 161, 215; intergovernmental transfers and, 51, 273–74, 313, 360–61; as intra- and interblast revenue issue, 369–71, 387–88; measurement of Russian system of, 358–61; property taxes and, 268; regulating revenues and, 298; revenue mobilization and, 370; revenue sharing and, 270–71; targeted grants and, 108; tax assignment and, 212; tax sharing and, 270–71, 358–61

Equity: expenditure assignment and, 28, 29; natural resource revenues and, 396, 400; and natural resource taxation, 45; normative grants and, 92; revenue assignment and, 212

Ethnic minorities: autonomy demands by, 380, 381, 384–85, 403; geographic concentration of, 325

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 179

*European Charter of Local Self-Government* (Council of Europe), 156

European Union, 41, 304

As is evident from the sample, the index consists of a combination of broad terms as headings which represent the main organization principle, and more detailed and descriptive terms under each broad term. The detailed terms are indented in the text to show hierarchy, and multiple page number references to relevant locations in the text are listed.

## 6 PUBLISHING YOUR POLICY PAPER

Publishing a policy paper is the main method of disseminating the ideas and policy recommendations which emerge from a policy study. Through publishing, the function of the policy paper as a call to action can be fulfilled if a wide range of stakeholders have an opportunity to read the paper and act upon its recommendations. The publication of policy papers also plays an important role in broadening the policy debate on specific issues and in furthering the public policy community in CEE.

In the process of publishing a policy paper, a writer enters a partnership with a publisher. The nature of such a relationship is mutually beneficial because publishers of policy papers are also usually members of the public policy community, and hence have a certain mission they would like to achieve through publishing on certain policy issues. As a result, they select policy papers for publication which they feel help to achieve their goals. There are a number of ways in which the partnership can be built: writers can take the initiative and approach a publisher; many publishers release calls for papers; or writers are members of or affiliated to institutions which are publishers in the public policy community and publishing is thus part of their job. Whatever the nature of the relationship, when selecting a publisher or when approached by a publisher, writers should ensure that the goals which both parties wish to achieve through the publication are compatible.

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*Publishing is a partnership between writer and publisher*

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The process of publishing a policy paper can be lengthy and complex, and this section aims to give you insight and advice about this process. Although interrelated, each step in the process is examined separately in four sub-sections.

### 6.1 Targeting Your Writing to a Specific Publisher

Based on the relationship between writer and publisher mentioned above, the writer must take into account that while the wider public policy community represents the main audience for their policy paper, the first audience is the selected publisher. Each publisher has a different concept of the structural, format and citation conventions of a policy paper, and you should be very clear about these to ensure that the policy paper you produce and submit satisfies these requirements.

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*Follow publishers' guidelines for writing policy papers*

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Many publishers assist writers in the process of targeting their writing to their requirements by producing guidelines. Such guidelines can often be found on the publisher’s website or contained in previous publications. Two examples of guidelines are the “Call for Papers” of the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee)<sup>11</sup> and the “Instructions for Contributions” for the Journal of Social Policy.<sup>12</sup> The guidelines for papers for NISPAcee are relatively short, while the guidelines for the Journal of Social Policy are significantly more extensive and detailed. The latter is divided into a number of sections: Editorial Statement, Submissions, Manuscript Preparation, Text Preparation, Proofs, and Offprints.

In general, guidelines refer to the expected structure, style, length, format, citation conventions, copyright and policy issues that should be the focus of policy studies, as well as the editing and review process. It is crucial to carefully read submission guidelines in the planning stage before writing your policy paper because this will direct the organization of your paper and the writing process. It is also important to follow the specified guidelines, as otherwise your paper may be rejected by the publisher. If guidelines are not made public by the publisher or if you have further questions that need clarification before you begin the writing process, writers should contact the editor of the publication for directions and clarification. It is also useful to examine recent and previous publications from the publisher in order to gain an overview of the publisher’s expectations and conventions.

## 6.2 Preparing Your Manuscript for Submission

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*Writers should submit their best possible draft to the publisher*

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Throughout this guide, reference has been made to draft writing based on the belief that a draft policy paper is a working document that is not in a completed state. As such, once you have completed a first draft of all elements of your policy paper, a process of revision is essential to improve the effectiveness of the paper. A key aspect of the partnership between writer and publisher is the shared understanding that the writer will take on the responsibility to revise the draft until it is as complete as possible and ready for submission to the editor. There are a number of negative consequences in submitting a manuscript that is inadequately revised: the editor may reject the manuscript completely; the process of revising the manuscript together

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11 Available on the world wide web at: <http://www.ecn.cz/aic/NEWAIC/publadmi.htm>

12 Available on the world wide web at: <http://uk.cambridge.org/journals/jsp/jspifc.htm>

with the editor will be considerably longer and more complex; the editor will have a negative impression of the writer as a scholar if unfinished and sloppy work is submitted. Hence, this revision process is integral to the entire writing process and it is worth thinking carefully about developing an effective and efficient revision process.

### Planning Checklist

Consider the following questions to help you plan an effective revision process:

- How will you approach the revision process?
- What steps will you go through?
- How long do you plan to spend revising the paper?
- Who else will you involve in the revision process?

Each writer approaches the task of revising a draft paper in a different way, and there is no correct process that should be followed. However, the following example of a six stage revision process<sup>13</sup> may provide guidance in this important step towards publication:

Sample revision process:

- *Re-check the content of each element of the policy paper;*
  - *Review the style of the draft paper;*
  - *Revise the language of the draft paper;*
  - *Consider the tone of the paper;*
  - *Re-read and revise the whole paper a number of times;*
  - *Ask colleagues to review the paper.*
- *Re-check the content of each element of the policy paper.*

As an initial step, it is useful to refer back to the publisher's guidelines and make sure that you have completed all structural elements required. Then, the effectiveness and completeness of each element should be evaluated in terms of structural and textual features and purposes(s) served. A common means of evaluating effectiveness is by using an editing checklist. Developing your own or adapting an existing checklist can guide the editing process and ensure that you do not forget to review some important points. The checklist below has been developed based on the examination of each element of the policy paper in this book.

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*Evaluate the effectiveness of the overall paper and each structural and textual element*

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<sup>13</sup> Adapted from Sigismund Huff (1999).

### Writing Checklist

Use the following checklist to evaluate and review the content of your policy paper. If any question or element is unclear, it may be useful to re-read the appropriate section of the guide to enhance your understanding.

#### *Overall Effectiveness*

- Does your paper effectively achieve its purpose of presenting an effective argument for your preferred policy option?
- Have you presented the argument in your paper in a way that will convince your primary target audience?
- Have you fulfilled the statement of intent, i.e., have you done what you intended to do in the paper?

#### *Effectiveness of the title*

- Is the title interesting, clear, succinct and descriptive?
- Does it contain key words that clearly indicate the focus and problem addressed in the paper?

#### *Effectiveness of the table of contents*

- Does it give a clear overview of the paper?
- Is it clearly divided and formatted?
- Are headings of sections and sub-sections written effectively?

#### *Effectiveness of the abstract or executive summary*

- Is the abstract/executive summary a good representation of the paper?
- Does it contain all necessary features to represent the paper well?
- Does it generate interest in reading the whole paper?

#### *Effectiveness of the introduction*

- Does the introduction convince and prepare the reader to read the whole paper?
- Is the policy problem clearly and convincingly defined?
- Is the statement of intent effective?

#### *Effectiveness of the problem description element*

- Does your problem description convince the readers that an urgent problem exists?
- Have you included a focused description of the background and current policy environment of the problem?
- Are all aspects of the arguments sufficiently and effectively supported and developed?

- Are sources used well to support your arguments?
- Are all the secondary sources cited appropriately and consistently (following the preferred citation conventions of the publisher)?
- Is data clearly presented in tables or figures?

*Effectiveness of the policy options element*

- Does the policy options element demonstrate that your chosen alternative represents the best solution to the policy problem?
- Is the basis on which you evaluated each option, i.e., the framework of analysis, clearly outlined?
- Are all possible policy alternatives presented and evaluated?
- Is your position on each alternative clearly stated and well-supported?
- Are all the secondary sources cited appropriately and consistently (following the preferred citation conventions of the publisher)?

*Effectiveness of the conclusion and recommendations*

- Does this element clearly outline a course of action to solve the policy problem?
- Does this section give a sense of completeness to the paper?
- Are recommendations clearly written and practical in nature?
- Are recommendations easily identifiable in the text?
- If a reader only looked at the introduction and conclusion, would they get a good understanding of the paper?

*Effectiveness of the endnotes*

- Have you followed the preferred noting convention of your publisher, i.e., endnotes or footnotes?
- Do all notes serve the function of supporting the main body of the paper?

*Effectiveness of the bibliography*

- Have you included a bibliographical reference for all sources referenced in your paper?
- Have you consistently followed the preferred citation conventions of your publisher?

*Effectiveness of the appendices*

- Are all appendices relevant and appropriate in supporting the paper?
- Are appendices used well, i.e., is there a direct reference to each appendix in the body of the paper?

*Consider the clarity, coherence and conciseness of your draft*

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- *Review the style of the draft paper.*

This stage involves improving the clarity, coherence and conciseness in communicating your message to readers. The significance of these issues is evident in the fact that even though your paper may contain a very important message, if it is not presented and communicated clearly and succinctly, it will not be clearly understood by readers. As a result, the effectiveness of the policy paper as a decision-making tool will be seriously hindered. In this stage of revision, it is useful to think about the wide range of potential readers of your paper, and actively consider how clear and understandable your arguments and use of concepts and terminology are to them. It is also crucial to ensure that coherence is well established within each element and between the different elements of the policy paper. The final consideration is related to the length of the draft: it is common that a first draft is lengthy, but taking time to make your writing more succinct assists easy communication with the reader and satisfies the length restrictions commonly set by publishers.

**Writing Checklist**

Use the following checklist to guide your analysis in editing for style:

- Do you present arguments in a straightforward and logical manner that is easy to follow and understand by a wide range of readers (specialists and non-specialists)?
- Is the structure of the paper clear and easy to follow?
- Do sections and paragraphs logically follow on from each other?
- Is it easy to locate specific information in the paper?
- Does the system of headings and sub-headings guide readers clearly and effectively through the paper?
- Will all your readers understand the language and terminology you use in your paper?
- Can you find and take out extra words that don't add to the meaning?

*Revise your draft for language errors*

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- *Revise the language of the draft paper.*

When writing a first draft of a policy paper, writers may not explicitly consider the appropriateness of the language they use for the target audience and subject addressed. When focusing on substantive content issues, writers also tend to make careless or habitual language errors that need to be checked. While style manuals or

grammar books can be of assistance to you in this task, they often contain very prescriptive rules (e.g., avoid the passive voice) which are of limited value because they cannot consider the purpose and context within which you use certain language structures, e.g., for the purpose of emphasis.

However, you must carefully check your paper for language usage, keeping in mind the appropriateness for your context. If too many language errors occur in a paper, the effectiveness and clarity in communicating the desired message will be disrupted. There are also negative consequences of submitting a manuscript for publication which contains many language errors, as the editor will consider that the writer has not fulfilled their part of the partnership in adequately preparing their draft for publication. Moreover, when it comes to the review stage with the editor, it is more productive for both editor and writer that the revisions and discussion focus on substantive content issues rather than on basic language errors.

Each writer has their own individual needs regarding language use, and you should consider which language issues you need to pay special attention to when revising your paper. Some of the most common concerns for writers regarding language use are discussed in the language usage editing checklist in Appendix C, and this may provide a useful starting point at this stage of revision. For extensive discussion of language usage, it is useful to consult a good language resource book.<sup>14</sup>

- *Consider the tone of the paper.*

This is an important consideration when editing your manuscript and is closely related to the previous stage. The significance of this issue lies in the fact that your paper represents your voice and aims to engage readers in a dialogue with you about the issues you address in your paper. Therefore, your paper must establish and capture the tone you want to achieve in order to effectively communicate your message. You must decide on the type of tone you want to achieve, e.g., casual, formal or professional.

In addition to appropriateness of tone for the audience and publication, you should also evaluate the consistency of the tone, i.e., the extent to which the same tone is maintained throughout the paper. This is a difficult aspect in the review process, but the following approach and questions may help you.

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*Consider how well your paper establishes and maintains the desired tone*

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<sup>14</sup> For example, Murphy (1994); Swan (1996); Vince (1994).

**Writing Checklist**

- What tone do you want to establish in your paper?
- Which key words describe the desired tone?
- When reading your paper, does the paper sound like you? Can you hear yourself speaking?<sup>15</sup>

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*Re-draft until your paper is ready for submission*

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- *Re-read and revise the whole paper a number of times.*

Having revised elements of the draft for particular issues, many writers engage in multiple drafting of the paper as a whole until they are satisfied that the paper is as finalized as they can achieve. Writers adopt a number of approaches to this stage: some advise leaving the paper for a couple of days and then returning to it with a fresh perspective, which may help to improve some aspects of the paper overlooked in previous re-drafting stages. In order to see the whole paper more clearly, it is a good idea to print out a copy of the whole paper and work with a hard copy rather than on a computer. As well as providing an opportunity to make notes at specific points in the paper, some writers also find that reading aloud from a hard copy helps in seeing some stylistic and language issues that are easily overlooked when reading on a computer screen.

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*Seek constructive criticism from others in the public policy community*

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- *Ask colleagues to review the paper.*

Having completed your own revision of the paper, it can prove very beneficial to get feedback and advice from others as they may raise new issues, make useful suggestions and provide multiple comments on your work. If the policy study was researched and/or written by a team, then other team members should be approached for feedback. If you completed the policy paper alone, then it is crucial to carefully select reviewers, but consider that the policy paper is a long document and reviewing it is time-consuming. If possible, ask a member of the public policy community with publishing experience for advice.

For this stage of the publication process to be productive, you should not merely seek praise from colleagues. The results will be most beneficial if you ask specifically for constructive criticism and concrete suggestions about how to improve the paper. When receiving feedback, it is important not to take criticism personally but keep in

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<sup>15</sup> Sigismund Huff (1999).

mind that reviewers are providing their opinions on your work and you should seriously consider such opinions and evaluate the impact of suggestions on the effectiveness of your paper and revise your paper accordingly.

The cycle of revising could be continued forever, but it is important to know when to finalize the draft and submit it to the editor. While it is difficult to know exactly when to stop, if you have completed a thorough multi-staged review process and if you are confident that the draft is as finalized as you can make it, then you are ready to submit. Answering the following question may help to evaluate the timing of this decision: Do you think you have adequately fulfilled your role in the partnership towards getting the paper to a finalized state?

### 6.3 Submitting Your Manuscript

When a writer has completed a multi-staged and thorough revision process and is satisfied that their policy paper is finalized, the next stage in the publishing process is the submission of the manuscript to the editor. As was the case for structuring and formatting a policy paper, it is the writer's responsibility to follow the publisher's instructions regarding submission. For example, if the publisher asks that you submit the manuscript electronically in A4 format, then it is crucial to comply to this. This may seem a trivial issue; however, editors work with many manuscripts simultaneously and their editing work is made easier if they work with one standard format.

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*Submit your  
manuscript in the  
manner requested  
by the publisher*

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While each publisher has different requirements for the submission of manuscripts, common requirements include the number of manuscripts requested, method of submission (post or email), name and address of receiver, deadline for submission, format of the document (paper size, spacing, font). If you have not been provided explicit submission guidelines by the publisher, then it is important to contact the editor for advice. While not commonly mentioned in guidelines, it is also a good idea to include a brief cover letter with the submission of the manuscript as this not only supports the manuscript, but also furthers the relationship between writer and publisher.

## 6.4 Working with Your Editor towards Publication

This stage in the publication process occurs if the decision has been made to accept a manuscript for publication. If a manuscript is refused, the writer should ask the editor for an explanation in order to have a clear understanding of the rationale for the decision. In this way, writers can learn from the experience and perhaps revise the manuscript for submission to another publication. It is also important not to take a refusal personally: many factors can lead to the refusal of a manuscript and a working partnership between writer and potential publisher is not always possible.

If a writer's manuscript has been accepted, then the final stage towards publication begins. The following points examine this process from the perspective of both partners.

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*Editing is a collaborative process of negotiation aimed at satisfying both writers and editors*

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- *Editing a manuscript is a collaborative process.*

Submission of the manuscript does not mean that the role of the writer in the publishing process is completed. This stage is a collaborative process of editing a manuscript for publication and typically involves a number of individuals, e.g., editor, copyeditors, proof-readers, reviewers, and of course, the writer. The roles and focus of each individual who reviews your paper is quite different, e.g., reviewers tend to be experts in the field and provide feedback on content issues, whereas the proof-reader usually focuses such issues as language use, style and tone. The editing process may be quite lengthy, depending on such factors as the number of individuals involved, time taken to review the manuscript, perceived quality of the paper, and the extent of discussion and revision needed in order for both editor and writer to be satisfied. The editor has the responsibility to ensure that all papers published by their organization are of the highest possible quality and effectively target their readers. The writer has the responsibility to work with the editor to ensure that they produce a paper that satisfies both the editor's needs and best represents the writer as a contributor to the public policy community.

- *Editing is a process of negotiation.*

After reviews of the manuscript have been conducted by a number of individuals, a process of communication and negotiation follows until the paper is judged to be of a publishable standard. As was the case when seeking feedback from colleagues on a draft policy paper, the writer should perceive the review and editing process as an opportunity for development. The procedure for editing at this stage varies according to publisher, and some may outline the process in guidelines for submissions. If not, the writer should ask for an overview of the procedure. It may happen that editors or

copyeditors make changes to the actual manuscript and/or provide comments and suggestions on all aspects of the paper. Being informed about the procedures will help combat the feeling of loss of control and ownership over their paper that writers sometimes feel. Writers are not under any obligation to make all the suggested changes or to fully take all advice given by editors or reviewers. However, reviewers offer a fresh perspective on your work, are usually knowledgeable on the subject and devote significant time and effort to reviewing a manuscript. With this in mind, it is productive to carefully consider the reasoning behind suggestions made and evaluate whether and how they would improve the effectiveness of the paper. If a writer feels that suggestions are not appropriate, then it is important to communicate and discuss this issue with the editor, and convince them through explanation and sound arguments why their advice has not been taken. The dialogue should continue throughout this stage until both partners are satisfied and the paper goes to press.

## 7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The writing and publishing of a policy paper is a significant achievement. Firstly, if your paper achieves its goal, you will have the satisfaction of having made a significant contribution to solving problems in your local context. Secondly, by actively participating in the public policy community, you not only develop on a personal and professional level, but you also further the community in the region by sharing your work and experience.

Each time you go through the extensive process of writing and publishing a policy paper you are presented with an excellent opportunity for furthering your knowledge and skills in all aspects of the process. Making the most of these learning opportunities will help you develop as a researcher and writer and hopefully, your next publishing experience will be even more effective and efficient.

### Planning Checklist

In planning for your next policy paper writing process, consider your last experience writing and publishing a policy paper:

- Which aspects of the process of researching, writing and publishing your policy paper were most successful?
- What difficulties did you experience in the process?
- Which aspects of the process did you feel most and least confident about?
- What changes would you make next time to enhance the effectiveness of the process of developing the paper?

## APPENDIX A

### Sample Introductions

- *Introduction to Sample (i): "Fiscal Decentralisation: From command to market" (Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995).*

*A change of government is not a change of system, merely one of the pre-conditions for it. The change of system is a historical process that seems likely to require a long period of time.*

Janos Kornai, *The Socialist System*

Dramatic reform is taking place in Central and Eastern Europe. New institutions and economic infrastructure are being created to provide the foundation for a pluralist, democratic society and a well-functioning market economy. The most discussed aspect of this reform is privatization—the move from a command economy to one of liberalized markets and free economic agents. A second aspect, equally critical to the transition to a market economy, is the decentralization of government itself.

Some type of subnational government structure existed in most of the transition economies under the socialist regime. But fiscal systems were highly centralized, with the subnational level acting as an administrative unit or department of the center with no independent fiscal or legislative responsibility. Kornai (1992) sets out the former socialist system in considerable detail. It is revealing that this lengthy study hardly refers to the existence of subnational state administrations, noting only that they are tightly controlled in all respects by the central bureaucracy. Subnational governments were essentially deconcentrated units (or branch offices) of the central government and had little or no financial autonomy. This was true even in countries such as the U.S.S.R. (and Czechoslovakia) that were formally called "federations." Policymaking was controlled and centralized, and local government had virtually no independent tax or expenditure powers—its budget was seen only as the handmaiden of the central plan.

Extensive political and fiscal decentralization is now under way in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Politically, this decentralization represents both a reaction from below to the extensive central control of the past, and an attempt from above by the center to further privatize and to relieve its strained fiscal situation. Economically, decentralization is motivated in part by the recognition that it is imperative to utilize public resources more efficiently than in the past. Overcentralization characterized these countries' public administrations, just as it did the rest of economic activity. Decentralization, if appropriately designed and implemented, may lead to improved public service provision.

Decentralization is thus a key dimension of the national transition from a command to a market economy. Like the broader economic transition, it will require many, often difficult, reforms. Not only must the structure of tax and transfer mechanisms be reconsidered and expenditure responsibilities realigned among different levels of government, but views as

to what governments can and should do must change. The total level of public sector activity must be dramatically reduced, but at the same time the new subnational governments must be allowed to build staff and institutional capacities in a manner that makes them accountable for their fiscal decisions.

These ongoing reforms in subnational and intergovernmental finance are of considerable importance. Intergovernmental reform and the strengthening of subnational (intermediate as well as local) governments are essential to support the evolving public and private sectors. Subnational governments account for a growing share of public sector activity in most of the transition economies as general government activity is scaled back and subnational governments take responsibility for many services formerly provided by the central government. In Russia subnational budget expenditures absorbed 38.6 percent of the consolidated national budget in 1992 and 42.9 percent in 1993. And local government expenditures as a percentage of consolidated government expenditures in Hungary rose from 22.3 percent in 1988 to 30.4 percent in 1993 (table 1.1). The structure of inter-governmental relations is closely related to such critical policy issues as efficient resource mobilization, privatization, the social safety net, and stabilization. Within the fiscal sphere, for example, tax reform, deficit control, and intergovernmental finance are intertwined: if one of these elements is poorly designed, the entire fiscal structure may be compromised. Similarly, if the incentives built into intergovernmental arrangements are perverse, preserving central dominance or undermining the development of private markets, disillusionment with the reform process may set in, threatening both democracy and the market economy.

- *Introduction to Sample (ii): "Open competition, transparency and impartiality in local government contracting out of public services" (Baar, 2001).*

### *Introduction*

The contracting out and privatization of the provision of basic public services, including the operation of district heating, water and sewer services; refuse collection; and park and road maintenance is widespread in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and is steadily increasing in scale. Such privatization of service provision is taking place through short term contracts, long term concession contracts, and/or the sale of public service facilities.

In CEE, local governments are even more dependent on the contracting out and privatization processes than in Western Europe. Whilst governments in Western Europe can generally obtain capital at a lower interest rate than private companies in order to upgrade their systems, in Central and Eastern Europe the reverse is true—local governments are dependent on outside capital in order to undertake any capital improvements. Furthermore, local governments in the CEE are under pressure to upgrade water and sewer services in order to meet EU accession standards. Also, they are under pressure to upgrade district heating systems in order to reduce the substantial financial burdens of their provision.

How the contracting out and privatization of services is conducted will determine the future costs of these basic services, which have a significant impact on household budgets, and it will determine the future ownership and control of substantial public assets.

The purpose of this chapter is to address basic issues related to the use of competitive bidding processes, transparency, and impartiality in contracting out public services in the CEE and to present a comparative discussion of practices in the EU and other nations. This chapter examines the contracting out practices in four CEE nations (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia) and it provides a comparison discussion of practices in Western Europe and the U.S. It is based on a combination of interviews and research and is subject to the caveats that while somewhat precise information could be obtained about legislation in the CEE, widely divergent views were presented about prevailing practices, and information on actual practices has not been collected on a systematic basis.

The issues that are covered include:

- (a) The applicability of procurement laws and other provisions requiring competitive procedures for the selection of contractors;
  - (b) Public access to contracts and information considered in price setting proceedings. (freedom of information);
  - (c) Requirements of impartiality and the prevention conflicts of interest in the selection of contractors.
- *Introduction to Sample (iii): "Between active appreciation, passive approval and distrustful withdrawal" (Swainiewicz, 2001).*

Comparing both citizens' opinions and their involvement in local government reforms in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia seems to be a valid undertaking. This is chiefly because decentralization reforms in all four countries were introduced very close to each other and in a similar atmosphere. In Poland, the new Local Government Act was passed by parliament in March 1990 and was followed by local elections that May. The first democratic local elections in the three other countries were organized not much later—between October and November of 1990.

A decade after political transition, it is worthwhile to analyze how deeply such reforms have changed the socio-political makeup of these countries. Have they been noticed and appreciated by the local population, or have most citizens come to regard new local governments as irrelevant and/or ineffective? Obviously, local government reform in all four countries had many similarities, but also demonstrated numerous differences.<sup>16</sup>

From this book's point of view, two of the most important differences were the methods of political redvisions of territories, and the overall guiding philosophy of local governments to their new statuses related to this division.

In all four countries, traditional small local-government units were amalgamated during the 1960s and 70s. These amalgamations, being a result of the widespread belief in economies of scale in the administration and delivery of services, were introduced by former communist

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16 For more information on comparison of the decentralisation reform in four analysed countries see for example Baldersheim et al. (1996).

regimes without any real consultation with their citizens. Not surprisingly, this was usually seen as something forced and often arbitrary.

After the collapse of the communist system, the trend quickly reversed in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia but not so much in Poland. The latter nation—despite the slight increase in the number of local governments—decided to retain the territorially-consolidated system at the lowest (i.e., municipal) level. In the three other countries, almost every community, regardless of size, decided to declare its own local government. Although there was never an openly-formulated, conscious policy supporting fragmentation, Czech and Hungarian politicians were allowing this spontaneous tendency to develop over time. In Poland, any “bottom-upwards” pressure for splitting-up small municipalities was not so strong. The central government also seemed more determined to not allow territorial fragmentation. The result of these processes is briefly summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
**Size of Municipal Governments in Analyzed Countries.**

	Average population size	Proportion of local governments below 1,000 population
Poland	15,500	0%
Hungary	3,330	55%
Slovakia	1,850	68%
Czech Republic	1,700	80%

Source: T. Horváth (2000), G. Péteri (1991)

One may claim that these directional differences in territorial organization of local governments to a large extent arose from deeper underlying philosophical differences of the role of local government in the modern state. These differences, and the model explaining their impact on the mode of communication between local authorities and citizens, are described below.

- *Introduction to Sample (iv): "From the unitary to the pluralistic: Fine-tuning minority policy in Romania"* (Horváth and Scacco, 2001).

1. Introduction

Romania presents a fascinating case for the study of the management of multi-ethnic communities. Ethnic minorities comprise more than 10% of Romania’s total population. At least sixteen different minority groups can be identified, exhibiting a great variety of cultural, political and demographic profiles. Minority groups in Romania enjoy varying degrees of social, political and economic integration. These distinct groups have also employed different political strategies and have pursued widely divergent policy goals in the post-communist period. An analysis of this diversity can access the particular problems faced by Romania’s minorities as they attempt to reproduce their cultural and ethnic identities.

This chapter advances the argument that, in dealing with minority issues, Romanian policy-makers must recognise the important cultural, political and demographic differences that exist among the various minority groups. In policy and in practice, the central government has thus far failed to do this to a significant degree, and instead has tended to lump together the questions and problems posed by these diverse groups. As this paper will demonstrate, this kind of unitary policy-approach is inappropriate given Romania's ethno-cultural complexity. A more sensitive approach is necessary—one which takes into account the plurality of the needs and demands of Romania's minorities.

We suggest that it can be useful to distinguish at least three separate types of minority groups in Romania based on the following attributes: size, territorial concentration, degree of political mobilisation, political objectives, historical status and socio-economic status. The three types we discern in our analysis are: (1) the Hungarian minority, (2) the 'smaller' minority groups, (comprised of fewer than 100,000 members), including Germans, Ukrainians, Lipovans and others, and (3) the Roma. The construction of this kind of typology, we will argue, can be useful to policy-makers at both the local and central levels of government in dealing with issues related to the multi-ethnic community management in Romania.

## APPENDIX B

### APA Citation Guidelines<sup>17</sup>

#### *Guidelines for parenthetical (in-text) references*

##### *Placement*

You have three options for placing citations in relation to your text.

- *Place the author(s) and date(s) within parentheses at an appropriate place within or at the end of a sentence:*

Example: Researchers have pointed out that the lack of trained staff is a common barrier to providing adequate health education (Fisher, 1999) and services (Weist & Christodulu, 2000).

- *Place only the date within parentheses:*

Example: Fisher (1999) recommended that health education be required for high school graduation in California.

- *Integrate both the author and date into your sentence:*

Example: In 2001, Weist proposed using the Child and Adolescent Planning Schema to analyze and develop community mental health programs for young people.

Place citations within sentences and paragraphs so that it is clear which material has come from which sources.

For more detail on including references in your text in APA style, see

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPA.html>

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17 Adapted from the The University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center Writer's Handbook available at <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPA.html> and APA Style Guide available at <http://www.lib.usm.edu/~instruct/guides/apa.html>

## Sample references list entries

### Journal articles

#### One author

Roy, A. (1982). Suicide in chronic schizophrenia. *British Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 141, 171–177.

#### Two authors

Adkins, A., and Singh, N. N. (2001). Reading level and readability of patient education materials in mental health. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 10, 1–8.

#### Three to six authors

Baldwin, C. M., Bevan, C., and Beshalske, A. (2000). At risk minority populations in a church-based clinic: Communicating basic needs. *Journal of Multicultural Nursing and Health*, 6(2), 26–28.

#### Entire issue

Conover, T. N. (Ed.). (1986). Testing concepts: Measurements of health [Special Issue]. *American Psychologist*, 42(18).

#### Electronic issue of journal based on print source

Hackett, E. J. (Ed.). (1994). Perspectives on scientific misconduct [Special issue, electronic version]. *Journal of Higher Education*, 65(3).

### Books

#### Book with single author

Baxter, C. (1997). *Race equality in health care and education*. Philadelphia: Balliere Tindall.

#### Editors as authors

Stock, G., and Campbell, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Engineering the human genome: An exploration of the science and ethics of altering the genes we pass to our children*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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Unpublished interviews do not need a reference page entry because they are what the Publication Manual of the APA calls “personal communications” and so “do not provide recoverable data.” Here, the in-text reference consists of the first initial and last name of the interviewee, the type of communication, and the date of the interview.

(N. Archer, personal interview, October 11, 1993)

### *Electronic information*

For full details and examples of how to reference a wide variety of electronic sources, visit <http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html>

For further detail on building bibliographical references in APA style, see <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPA.html>

## APPENDIX C

### Language Usage Editing Checklist<sup>18</sup>

The following editing checklist is based on the types of language errors commonly made by advanced level writers. However, this checklist may only cover some of the language usage issues that you need to focus on when editing your draft. Therefore, a good way to start this stage of the editing process is to create your own checklist of the recurring errors that commonly appear in your writing. Then review the items included here to see if they also should be added to your personal language usage checklist.

- *Subject/Verb Agreement*

Does the main verb in every sentence agree in number with the subject?

Subject	Main Verb
The <u>leaders</u> of the postal workers union	<u>have</u> (NOT: has) <u>proposed</u> a wage increase.

- *Noun/Pronoun Agreement*

Do all pronouns (e.g., I, he, they, us, him, it, this) agree in number and person with the noun they are replacing?

Noun	Pronoun
If the current <u>policy</u> continues to be implemented,	<u>it</u> (NOT: they (number) or he (person)) will change the nature of public participation.

- *Noun/Pronoun Reference*

Is it clear what all pronouns are referring to?

NOT CLEAR: The instrument mix in this policy design has proved very costly. This has impacted negatively on the success of the policy. (not clear whether "This" refers to the instrument mix or the cost)

CLEAR: The instrument mix in this policy design has proved very costly. This financial overhead has impacted negatively on the success of the policy.

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18 This editing checklist drew on The PSU Writing Center Online, Three Levels of Revision available at: <http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/resources/revision.html> and; The Purdue University Online Writing Lab, Editing and Proofreading Strategies for Revision at: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl\\_edit.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_edit.html)

- *Tenses*

**Have you used appropriate tenses consistently throughout your text?**

Generally, writers maintain one tense for the main discourse and indicate changes in timeframe by changing tense relative to that primary tense. Within the policy paper there is commonly a clear shift in primary tense usage from the past to the present in the introduction/problem description elements and from the present to the future to in the policy options/conclusion and recommendations elements.

**Have you used the correct perfect tenses in relation to each primary tense used?**

- Past primary narration corresponds to Past Perfect (had + past participle) for earlier timeframes  
By the time the Senator finished (past) his speech, the audience had lost (past perfect) interest.
- Present primary narration corresponds to Present Perfect (has or have + past participle) for earlier timeframes or continuing/repeating action  
By the time the Senator finishes (present: habitual action) his speech, the audience has lost (present perfect) interest.
- Future primary narration corresponds to Future Perfect (will have + past participle) for earlier timeframes  
By the time the Senator finishes (present: suggesting future time) his speech, the audience will have lost (future perfect) interest.

- *Articles*

**Have you used both definite (the) and indefinite (an, or O) articles correctly?**

*Common article usage*<sup>19</sup>

- *A(n)* indicates that the noun is *any* single item, rather than a specific one. *A(n)*, therefore, can *never* be used with plural (e.g., *democracies*) or uncountable nouns (e.g., *life*).
- *A(n)* is typically used with the first mention of a singular countable noun, but not always.
- *The* is used for the second mention (either explicit or implicit) of nouns.

The authority proposed *an alteration to the current policy*. *The alteration* included the expansion of...

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<sup>19</sup> *Common Usage* sections in this checklist only contain the very basics of the language issue in question. For full details consult a good grammar reference.

- *The* is used with *Of*-phrases or other forms of post-modification (but not with first mention of partitive<sup>20</sup> *of*-phrases such as *a molecule of oxygen, a layer of silicon, a piece of information*)

*The behavior of the target group* was studied.

*The results of the investigation* were inconclusive.

*The information that was required* was collected from the community.

- *Prepositions*

**Have you used the correct prepositions that normally follow particular verbs?**

The proposal was submitted to (NOT: for) the local government official.

**Have you used the correct prepositions with phrasal verbs and idioms?**

The social security think tank came up with (=thought of) the idea.

- *Punctuation*

**Have you used commas (,) appropriately?**

*Common comma usage*

- Use commas to separate independent clauses when they are joined by any of these seven coordinating conjunctions: and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet.

The proposed policy option was accepted, yet only in modified form.

- Use commas after introductory a) clauses, b) phrases, or c) words that come before the main clause.

Because of the high unemployment, the cost of social security benefits was a great burden.

Having finished the evaluation, the choice of policy alternative was placed back on the agenda.

However, don't put a comma after the main clause when a dependent (subordinate) clause follows it (except for cases of extreme contrast).

INCORRECT: The process stalled, because they couldn't get a license from the local authority.

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20 A partitive phrase is a construction which denotes part of a whole.

### Have you used semicolons (;) appropriately?

#### *Common semicolon usage*

- Use a semicolon when you link two independent clauses with no connecting words.  
They couldn't enforce the rule of law; there was little in the way of government infrastructure.
- You can also use a semicolon when you join two independent clauses together with one of the following subordinating conjunctions: however, moreover, therefore, consequently, otherwise, nevertheless, thus, etc.  
The process of evaluation was very arduous; however, it was completed on time.

### Have you run two sentences together incorrectly without a period, conjunction or semicolon separating them?

INCORRECT: They couldn't effectively fund the local government, the budget deficit was too large.

CORRECT: They couldn't effectively fund the local government; the budget deficit was too large.

### Does each sentence have a subject, a verb, and form a complete thought?

INCORRECT: Whenever citizens apply to register their vote. (no independent clause, full stop where there should be a comma)

CORRECT: Whenever citizens apply to register their vote, they have to go through a very bureaucratic process.

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