| Research Question(s) What is the overall question(s) you seek to answer? Why would answering it make a significant contribution to knowledge? | | | | |
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| **Gap in Knowledge**  What is known about your topic?  What do we need to know about your topic that we don’t know now?  Why is it important to learn this? | **Theory**  What theory/ies are guiding your study?  What are the core tenets within this theory/ies?  Are you applying theory in a new context, uncovering a boundary condition to theory, contrasting competing theories, or introducing something new to a theory? | **Hypotheses**  What specific relationships are you testing?  How does your theory/ies justify your predictions?  What is the unifying theme behind your hypotheses? In other words, why these hypotheses and not others? | **Sample**  From what organizations or sources will you draw data?  What actors (e.g., people, companies) will you investigate and over what time period?  Why did you choose this sample and how does it compare to what others have done in related studies? | **Measures**  What control variables will you include and why?  How will you measure your independent dependent and control variables?  Via what data collection technique(s)  Will these measures be obtained? |
| **Boundary**  **Conditions**  What assumptions are you making about values, time and space?  Where does your theorizing apply and not apply?  What are the top alternative explanations and how do you control for them? | **Data**  **Analysis**  What techniques will you use to test your hypotheses?  Why are these the best choices?  What supplementary analyses could you include for robustness and endogeneity checks? | **Limitations**  What are the inherent weaknesses of your research design?  To what extent do these limitations undermine confidence in your findings?  What other theories could future research apply to your topic? | **Key**  **Partners**  Who will guide you through the research process?  What does this person(s) bring to the project that you lack?  What responsibilities do you expect of co-authors (e.g., drafting, editing, revising, data collection, analysis, grunt-work) |
| **Target Journal**  Why is the journal a good fit for your study?  What article that has appeared in this journal can serve as a template for your paper? | | | |