# A framework for mobilizing the *relational* approach in a paper or dissertation

Advancing Relational Thinking Lab

| Introduction | Ontological complicity | Problematizing language | *Spatio-temporal conditions* | Beyond analytical dualism | Productive theorizing | Conclusion |
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| Drawing on the work of Pat Thomson, the introduction needs to:<br><br>Locate the work in a broader (and international) dialogue on the topic.<br><br>Focus the paper on a specific topic / area that will be explored at depth.<br><br>Argue for a particular position. This argument should be signposted for the reader.<br><br>This introduction should set up the problem, your argument, the markers of your thinking, and why it is significant / relevant. (This framing is recommended by Raewyn Connell for giving conference papers). | In detail, articulate your relations with the topic (construction of object) and their contribution to the argument (construction of knowledge). | Reiterate the key words, concepts, labels and your relations with these keywords. | Discuss the significance of labels for how we understand the social world. | Discuss common analytical dualisms and the problems and possibilities of them for the topic. | Linking back to earlier, discuss role of existing theorizations and their legitimation and maintenance. | Balanced against the introduction, this section / chapter needs to:<br><br>Reiterate the research problem, and why it is important;<br><br>Explicitly argue for what your approach brings that is new to the field;<br><br>How the work contributes to advancing knowledge claims in the field; and<br><br>As a *relational* contribution, how it fits with other approaches and serves as an invitation to thinking with, through and where necessary against in the interests of advancing the field. |
| | Explicitly link the above with the key language of the topic (further picked up in next chapter/section) and its contribution to the argument. | Problematize the language of the topic. A useful resource is Locke & Golden-Biddle (1997). | Reiterate the contested nature of the topic, its language features and their underlying generative assumptions. | Problematize the analytical dualisms with particular reference to the topic and how they influence parallel monologues and/or productive theorizing. | Problematize the contemporary dialogue and debate and set up the potential for generative contributions for moving the topic forward in relation to others. | |
| | Articulate how relations are constitutive of and emergent from your image of organising (picked up in a later section). | Discuss the key words in relation to *spatio-temporal conditions* (e.g., why the topic now). | Discuss specific empirical examples demonstrating how *spatio-temporal conditions* are constitutive of and emergent from relations. | Use empirical examples of the topic(s) to argue for an approach that goes beyond analytical dualisms. | Use explicit examples from literatures and your own work to show the potential for generative contribution and recasting the topic. | |
| | Balance these claims against the establishment of analytical dualisms (e.g., relativism / realist) and a sense of superiority over alternatives. | Balance the claims against critique of analytical dualism (e.g., leadership v management) | Balance these claims against the critique of the universal / particular argument. | Balance these claims against how a focus on *relations* denies the original existence of dualisms. | Balance these claims against critiques that could be raised, anticipate the critiques and justify your claims. | |
| | Synthesize arguments of the chapter and stress the importance of confronting your ontological complicity with the world as it is and what it means to be an embedded and embodied *auctor*. | Synthesize arguments of the chapter and stress the importance of *spatio-temporal conditions* for language as an *organizing activity* of the social world. | Synthesize arguments of the chapter and stress the importance of not creating analytical dualism to build your knowledge claims. | Synthesize arguments of the chapter and stress the importance of going beyond analytical dualisms to create the conditions necessary for generative theorizing. | Synthesize the arguments of the chapter and how they make a generative contribution to the topic and a fruitful direction for further inquiry. | |