**The structure of a theoretically driven empirical paper, BA/MA Thesis, research work, Exposé**

1) Title
2) Abstract (about 150 words) that includes the main research question, expectations, data used, main results and short conclusions
3) Introduction: The gap leading to the research question, why it is important to do it, that it has not been done in this context/with these variables/using this theory/after these events etc. How it would be addressed (which data and method), and a summary of what comes next
4) Theory: Discussing the theory underlying the research question – but only the elements of the theory which are relevant for the study, skipping other ones. Connecting theories if necessary, providing the mechanisms leading to the hypotheses, listing the hypotheses.
   So far about one third of the study.
5) Data: Which data is used, N, documentation, a link to the data where it could be downloaded, reference to other documentation of it.
6) Variables: The operationalization of the constructs to be included in the empirical model to test the hypotheses. A table listing the constructs, which questions are used to measure them, question formulation, response categories, mean, standard deviation, % missing values, min answer, max answer. Begin with the core variables and finalize with the control variables. In the text only a short explanation is needed as to why certain control variables are included (something like: Previous studies (references) have shown that older, less educated people with a lower income living in East Germany display more negative attitudes toward immigrants…).
7) If the method is sophisticated, explain it shortly with references (and possibly some more technical explanation in a technical appendix). Indicate which software package will be used for the analysis.
8) Descriptive results: Means, bivariate correlations, use figures if necessary to show patterns if relevant.
9) Multivariate analysis: Here the method is not explained, only the results. Use tables to present the effects, present both unstandardized coefficients with their standard errors, significance levels and standardized effects. If factor models are involved, report shortly the range of loadings and display in an appendix the unstandardized and standardized factor loadings. Indicate shortly for each hypothesis if it was supported by the data or not.
10) Summary and conclusions: Repeat the main question and goals of the study presented in the abstract and how they were addressed. Summarize the main findings. Discuss their implications. List the limitations. Finalize with a paragraph indicating that in spite of the limitations this is the first study that… / the analysis provides important findings as to… / policy relevance if there is / a finalizing sentence.
11) References (whatever style you choose, keep it consistent)
12) Appendix (technical appendix, tables and figures that had no space in the body of the text, explanations that go beyond what can be included in the body of the text, data or var-cov matrices if required by the journal or supervisor, syntax if required, etc.).