

Guide for Referees

1) General Remarks

Middle East – Topics & Arguments encourages authors to write concise and focused articles stating clear assumptions. We particularly invite pieces on recent research, including the reasoning of arguments and points of contention within a current debate and contributions to theoretical or methodological issues. To critically address the research topic authors should reevaluate established scholarly traditions and think beyond entrenched disciplinary boundaries. Beyond the respective topic of each issue shorter pieces on a discussion of a particular crucial aspect of work in progress or on a current debate are welcome as well.

We understand the geographical space in a broad sense, i.e. North Africa, the Levant, the Arabic Peninsula, the Gulf region, Turkey as well as Iran. Neighboring countries as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan or Ethiopia are also possible areas of research. Submissions should provide a link between disciplines and strengthen transregional comparability. To this end, we additionally invite scholars working on-topic in other geographical areas to contribute to our journal.

High quality and timely referee reports are essential to the performance of any journal. We wish to thank you in advance for the thought, time and energy that will be going into the report that you are about to prepare.

2) Instructions and Advice for the Referee Report

a) Referee Report

If you have followed the instructions and advice below please write your referee report along the following categories:

- 1) Title of manuscript
- 2) Name of reviewer
- 3) Summary
- 4) Evaluation (twelve questions)

b) Summary

Write a brief summary of the paper at most 1 page. Your summary of the paper has to be without evaluation, i.e. write neutrally as you might if you were recording information for yourself. You write this summary to answer the question “what did the author of this paper view herself as doing”?

Your summary of the paper may be the place that the editor starts her review process, thus you are providing an alternative introduction to the paper. Your summary also establishes credibility with the author, as he can be sure you really read the paper carefully. Especially if you are later going to be critical of the work a good summary can help avoid hard feelings. You also provide the author with an alternative summary to his own work.

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c) Evaluation

In evaluating the paper, the main question that should be answered is “has this manuscript made an important contribution to its chosen area”? In addition, for *Middle East – Topics & Arguments* it is of high importance that the author considers theoretical, methodological and analytical approaches.

Problems that you see with the manuscript should be stated clearly. The information you provide the author is an important feedback. The author benefits from your work that you have put into reviewing the paper. Reports on smaller issues should be organized by page. Do not include a recommendation about the decision category or discuss whether the manuscript is appropriate. Please evaluate the manuscript by considering the following questions:

- 1) Does the manuscript have a principal thesis and is this thesis presented clearly?
- 2) Is the scholarship sound, accurate, well balanced and thorough?
- 3) Are results of the research question integrated into a wider context?
- 4) Are concepts and terms that are specific for the discipline explained?
- 5) Is the language correct and appropriate, and does the manuscript adhere to the formal standards?
- 6) Is the manuscript a contribution to our present knowledge of the subject or field?

- 7) Does the author rely on appropriate sources? (key scholars in the field should be cited)
- 8) Should any portion be rewritten? If so, why?
- 9) Would the manuscript benefit from additional research, expansion, condensation, or omission?
- 10) As a reader interested in this subject, would you consider the manuscript important enough to recommend to your colleagues?
- 11) What do you conceive as the audience for the manuscript?
- 12) Do you have any additional comments or reflections that have not been covered by the above questions?

d) Your Recommended Decision

You will choose your recommended decision on the manuscript along the following categories in our online submissions webpage:

i) Accept submission

This paper makes a significant original contribution, reads well, is well-organized, and makes its main point(s) clearly and succinctly.

ii) Revisions required:

This paper has the potential to make a significant original contribution. However, it needs some fine-tuning regarding theory / data / exposition / brevity (please specify in the report).

iii) Resubmit for review:

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This paper has the potential to make a significant original contribution. However, it needs serious work to overcome its current flaws regarding theory / data / exposition (please specify in the report).

iv) *Decline submission:*

The contribution of this paper failed to meet basic criteria and standards and is not sufficient to warrant publication in this journal.

v) *Resubmit elsewhere:*

This paper has the potential to make a significant original contribution. However, META is not the appropriate placement of the paper.

Your recommendation should be based on the fact that the ‘Revisions required’ decision category is appropriate for smaller revisions that the author can and will almost certainly execute on the next revision. ‘Resubmit for review’ is a decision category that is appropriate for larger revisions that the author is likely to be able to execute successfully, with a high probability of moving to Accept/Revise in a second round.

e) **Submitting Your Report**

All articles in this journal must be submitted using our online submissions process. The same is necessary for the reviews. When you login, on our website as reviewer upload your referee report in .doc format and/or copy and paste your report into the pop-up window “review form”. Additionally you can upload the reviewed article as .doc format. Finally, you choose your recommended decision.

For a guide on how to use the OJS see the “Reviewers Guide to Open Journal Systems”.

3) **Declaration of Competing Interests for Referees¹**

We ask you to disclose both 'Non-Financial' and 'Financial' Competing Interests that might lead a reasonable person to question whether your interpretation of the data or of the article may have been influenced by your personal or financial relationship with other people or organizations. For every referee report submission, you must state whether you have any competing interests, and if you disclose that you do have some, you must provide details. Unless specified otherwise, we will proceed with an **open review²**.

All competing interests that are declared will be displayed against your referee report. If no competing interests are provided, the line: ‘No competing interests were disclosed’ will be added to your report. If you are unsure whether you have a competing interest, please contact our team at [mail\(at\)meta-journal.net](mailto:mail(at)meta-journal.net) or check this [link](#).

¹ F1000 Research. “Declaration of Competing Interests for Referees.” *F1000*, <https://f1000.com/resources/F1000Research-Referee-Competing-Interests.pdf>. Accessed 16 May 2018.

² In general, META supports open peer-review, i.e. the names of authors and referees are disclosed. As referee, you have to specify at this point if you do not want to disclose your name to the author.