

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 log-in on our website as reviewer upload your referee report in .doc format. Additionally you choose your recommended decision. For a guide on how to use the OJS see the “Reviewers Guide to Open Journal Systems”.

Reviewers Guide to Open Journal System

The procedure to upload your referee report onto the Website is as follows:

1 - You receive an e-mail from the editor(s) kindly requesting you as reviewer.

You get informed about two important dates:

a) The date, until when you have to login into your account and decide if you are willing to undertake the review, or if you are unable to do a review.

b) The date, until when the referee report is due to submit.

2 - Please click on the submission's URL provided for you in that e-mail.

The URL will link you to META's website.

The structure of the website is as follows:

a) On top of the page you see all relevant information about the submission you are asked to review (title, issue section, abstract, assigned editor(s)). To the editor(s) you can send an e-mail by clicking on the little ENVELOPE icon behind his/her name.

b) In the next section of the site you find a schedule for the review process in four columns: (1) editors request (with the

date), (2) your response (with the date), (3) the date you submitted your review and (4) the date the review is due to submit.

c) In the last section of the site you find an overview of the review process.

3 - Review Process

(1) On the review-process-overview part of the Website proceed to step one. Here you have two options:

a) Will do the review

b) Unable to do the review

Make your decision and click on the short ENVELOPE icon behind it.

Now you reach a dialogue consisting of an automatically generated e-mail. You send this e-mail to the editor(s) to inform him or her about your decision. Just click on SEND on the end of the page.

(2) In step two of the review process, click on the title of the submission to download and review it.

(3) In step three, click on the short BLUE BUBBLE icon. Now a new window appears on the screen. This window is split into two parts:

a) A blank field, intend for remarks for author(s) and editor(s).

b) A blank field, intend for remarks for editor(s) only.

Reviewers Guide to Open Journal System

Please, fill in your remarks and don't forget to click on the blue SAVE icon on the right side.

(4) In step four, you upload your referee report in a doc format. Don't forget to have a look at the 'Guideline for Referees' forwarded to you by the editor(s)!

(5) In step five, you select your recommendation for the editor(s). Your options are:

- a) Accept submission
- b) Revisions required
- c) Resubmit for review
- d) Resubmit elsewhere
- e) Decline submission
- f) See comments

(6) In the sixth and last step, please don't forget to click on the blue icon SUBMIT REVIEW to editor link. Now you reach a dialogue consisting of an automatically generated e-mail. This e-mail you send to the editor(s) to inform him or her that you finished your review. Just click on SEND at the end of the page.

Note: Please make sure, that the referee report you uploaded is send as attachment to the editor(s)!

Thank you for your time and patience!

The editorial team