**Advice for Referees**

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The journal’s editors, readers, and authors are extremely grateful for the time and effort that our referees provide. It is quite unfortunate that the journal cannot offer to fully compensate the many scholars who faithfully carry out this anonymous but critical task. The payment we do provide can only serve as a token of our appreciation. Nothing that follows should be taken to imply in any way that the our referees are not greatly valued or that their opinions are not critical to the journal’s progress. What follows are *my* views regarding how a referee can best aid in the editorial process and some perspective for those times when the editor takes a different course than recommended.

* Try to send in your report within the promised time frame. This may seem obvious but if you look at the journal’s turnaround time statistics you will see many reviewers appear to have problems along this dimension. Before you put off that review for another week, remember how YOU feel when it takes a journal four or more months to return with a decision. Now get that review done!
* If you know that you cannot make the requested deadline please let the editor know *immediately*! Honesty is the best policy. Suppose you have been asked to send back a report by March 1 but believe it will take until April 1. If you let the editor know he can either seek out another reviewer or accept the fact that another month will pass before your report arrives. But, most importantly, your honesty gives the editor the ability to adjust to the situation. An editor will not be upset if you let him know about potential delays. However, he (or at least I) will be really unhappy if you do not.
* Be honest when writing your review. (Honest, however, is not another word for cruel or disrespectful.) The worst reviews are those where the referee believes the paper is simply not interesting but is afraid to say so. Instead the referee makes a list of “flaws” which invite any number of problems. For example, if the list contains *any* errors the author will then believe that the rejection is based upon an erroneous analysis and that a new review should be provided. Alternatively, suppose the list is accurate and the “problems” can addressed with a modest or even not so modest revision. Then the author is likely to think that if he just fixes the listed “problems” the paper will or at least should be published. However, the real problem is that the topic or approach to the topic is just not that interesting and no amount of tinkering with the paper will fix that. Do the editor and the author a favor: if you simply believe the paper is not interesting just say so. The editor asked *you* to review the paper because he wants *your* views; feel free to provide them.
* You are not obliged to make a firm decision. If you are on the fence just say so. Ultimately, the editor is responsible for the paper and will add his views to yours to arrive at a final decision.
* As with any issue, reasonable people can disagree about the best course of action. That does not impugn the intelligence or character of either party. Thus, on occasion you will find that the editor has not taken your advice regarding the ultimate disposition of a paper. This does not, however, mean the editor “ignored” your advice, or thought poorly of your report. Disagreements happen, and the journal’s editors must ultimately bear responsibility for what is or is not published. It may even be that the editor liked the paper and sought out your views because you had expressed reservations about the paper in another context. In this case, the editor may be trying to make sure that the paper’s arguments are as tight as possible. Asking for a report by you (someone highly critical of the paper or line of work) might then be the best way to do so. Note that here your opinion is being sought because the editor puts a particularly high value on it even though the editor expects that in the end there is a very good chance your recommended rejection will not be followed. If you are still troubled by this, just remember how you felt the last time an editor published an article of yours despite a negative referee’s report! The submission-review process is a two way street. Nobody’s view prevails every time