



Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

Decision on Your Submission WD-11098

Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 14, 2019 at 3:32 PM

To: World Development <WorldDevelopment@elsevier.com>

Dear Professor Agrawal,

Thank you for the decision and the referee reports.

I am a bit disappointed that two referee reports which sound very much like an 'Accept with minor revisions' are overruled by one 50-word report that offers as basis for rejection "scholarly contributions are not clear if not minimal."

That statement in itself is illogical: Either the contributions are not clear, in which case they cannot be minimal (since they are not clear), or they are clear and they are minimal.

If the contributions are minimal and this is the one and only reason to reject the paper, I expect a serious reviewer to state why s/he finds the contributions to be minimal. I would expect the reviewer to place my contributions within the field and the literature to provide evidence that the contributions are minimal, rather than giving the impression of having haphazardly thrown together 50 words.

If the contributions are not clear: Neither Reviewer 1 nor Reviewer 3 had any problems discerning the contributions. -- Nor did they evaluate the contributions as insufficient for publication. Reviewer 1 explicitly notes that the paper debunks some popular myths, while Reviewer 3 notes that the paper deals with an interesting and policy-relevant research question. (On World Development's homepage I read "We welcome contributions that offer constructive ideas and analysis, and highlight the lessons to be learned from the experiences of different nations, societies, and economies.")

I am left with as only plausible interpretation of Reviewer 2's comments that s/he says s/he is not familiar with the topic and not qualified to review my paper.

Sincerely,
Carsten Holz

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