

ROTOPOOL MEMORANDUM

TO: Articles Committee
FROM: <Editor's Name>
DATE: <Date>
RE: Rotopool S-XXXXXX – <Article Title >

I. Synopsis

The synopsis is a brief summary of the Rotopool. Even though it is the first section of a Rotopool, we recommend writing the synopsis last, after you have fully developed your analysis. The synopsis should proceed as follows:

- (1) Article's Thesis/Main Argument
- (2) Your Recommendation/Analysis

* It may be difficult to develop a sense of how strong an article needs to be for you to recommend that it proceed to the next stage, especially in the beginning. Please do not get hung up on the recommendation. We are more interested in your analysis (according to the rubric) of the article's strengths and weaknesses, which you are already capable of doing.

- (3) Brief Explanation of Your Recommendation

II. Summary

The summary of the article plays an important role for Articles Editors when they evaluate an article. It should be approximately 1 – 1.5 pages. Please keep in mind that your summary should function as “neutral reporting” rather than anticipatory advocacy for your analysis. That said, do not artificially provide connections, transitions, or clarifications for the sake of easier summary when the article fails to make them. Each summary should include:

- A brief paragraph devoted to each major section of the article, laying out the basic progression of the author's argument. Your summary should be more comprehensive than merely encapsulating what each Part of the article does, but don't get bogged down in unimportant details or the paragraph-by-paragraph progression of the piece.
- A sentence or two relating to the methodology of the article (for example, whether the argument draws primarily on case analysis, history, law and economics, statistical analysis, or, as is likely, some combination of those and other sources).

A good summary will lay out the piece's argument in more depth than the article's introduction, with particular detail provided for sections of the article where the author makes an original or important point. Feel free to use bullet points if doing so is more efficient for you, but it should not sacrifice the specificity and comprehensiveness of the summary.

III. Analysis

The analysis is the most important component of a Rotopool. Under each category, please provide a few sentences evaluating whether the article falls short of, satisfies, or exceeds the

standard for publication. (Again, if you do not yet have a good sense of what that standard is, please focus on providing your qualitative analysis without worrying about measuring the article against some “threshold”). While it is fine to include a statement communicating your general impression, the comments should be more specific than conclusory assessments (e.g., “The article’s quality of writing is good”; “The author did a mediocre job with researching sources”) and supported by examples from the article when possible, using TAN or PTAN citations.

HLR is committed to promoting diverse, equitable, and inclusive scholarship. Creating a forum for underrepresented groups and marginalized communities is a perennial mission of our journal, and one where we have much to improve on. We conduct a holistic review of each article, taking into consideration both substantive and DEI factors. Some of the categories below are intended to reflect and implement our commitment.

You should not feel obligated to answer every question within a category, although you are expected to make a good faith effort to evaluate the article under each category. You may make cross-references if the same comment applies to multiple categories. For details on what each category means, please refer to **Table 1**.

Substantive Category	Comments
<p>Quality of Writing</p> <p>Please consider the article’s structure, readability, style, overall logic, and coherence of argument.</p>	
<p>Quality of Research</p> <p>Please consider the nature and range of the article’s sources. Are its propositions supported with appropriate sources? Does it display an awareness of relevant literature in the field?</p>	
<p>Breadth of Research</p> <p>Does the article cite sources from diverse voices (e.g., junior scholars, non-T14 schools, underrepresented groups)?</p>	
<p>Methodological Rigor</p> <p>What is the author’s methodology? Does the methodological approach make sense given the article’s overall objective?</p>	
<p>Originality</p>	

<p>Does the article make a novel or interesting claim? Does it address or introduce a new concept?</p>	
<p>Contribution to the Field</p> <p>Does the article add to the existing literature? Would it have any foreseeable impact in the field, either practically, doctrinally, or theoretically? If the article is primarily descriptive, does it nonetheless crystallize or reorganize existing scholarship in a useful way?</p>	
<p>Persuasiveness</p> <p>Is the argument persuasive? Did the article address potential counterarguments? If the article has a prescriptive component, did you find the solution feasible?</p>	
<p>Subject Matter</p> <p>Does it sufficiently address “the law” to have a place in our pages? Is the topic too niche or technical? Could we (potentially with some outside help) assess and edit this piece? Does the author write about a topic area that has traditionally been underrepresented in our pages? Even if the article addresses a common topic, does the author explore underrepresented viewpoints within that area?</p>	
<p>Impact</p> <p>Does the article address an issue or provide a solution that can help promote DEI values?</p>	

IV. Appendix

Table 1: Description of Each Substantive Category

Substantive Category	Factors to Consider
<p>Quality of Writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the structure of the article make logical sense? • Does the piece require substantial reorganization? • Does the author express her argument in a clear, readable, and comprehensible manner? • Are the conclusions consistent with the observations? • Are there logical gaps in the article’s main argument? • Please do not consider choice of diction or grammatical error, unless they impair understanding of the article.
<p>Quality of Research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are key propositions well supported by the appropriate sources? • Does the article contextualize itself by citing to prominent works in the subject matter? • What is the overall quality and breadth of the sources? • Please do not penalize an article for “not having enough footnotes,” unless the lack of support is so conspicuous as to bear on the above questions.
<p>Breadth of Research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please consider whether the article cites sources from diverse voices (e.g., junior scholars, non-T14 schools, underrepresented groups). • There is no need to check every source that has been cited. We recommend doing a quick spot-check.
<p>Methodological Rigor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the article’s methodological approach? (e.g., doctrinal, historical, quantitative-empirical, comparative, critical-theoretical, sociological). • Does the subject matter justify such an approach? • Is the author’s methodology rationally related to the overall objective that the article seeks to achieve? • Does the article omit a crucial component of the topic that should have been explored via an alternative approach?
<p>Originality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the author making a novel and interesting claim? • If the claim is not original, is the methodology innovative? • Does the article produce new and useful knowledge about the subject matter? • Please remember that originality may be measured along various axes. For example, an article may be original in its interpretation and organization of existing schools of thought, even as it does not advance a unique normative claim.

<p>Contribution to the Field</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the intended audience? (e.g., academics, practicing attorneys, regulators, lawmakers, law students, the public). • Does the article add to the existing literature? • Will the article have any foreseeable impact in the field? • Is the author engaging with a lively and relevant debate? If not, is there a legitimate reason for reopening the debate? • If the article is primarily descriptive, does it nonetheless crystallize or reorganize existing scholarship in a useful way?
<p>Persuasiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the main argument complete and convincing? • Do the sub-arguments support and further the main claim? • Does the article anticipate any counterarguments? • Does the author adequately address all issues raised by the article before reaching a conclusion? • Are the proposed solutions, policy recommendations, and prescriptive advice reasonably feasible?
<p>Subject Matter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the article deal with an issue or subject matter that is relevant to the law? • Is the subject matter too technical or niche such that it would fail to reach a meaningfully broad audience? • Can we (potentially with some outside help) assess and edit this piece? • Please consider whether the article addresses a subject matter underrepresented in our pages. For example, we have generally published far more pieces pertaining to public law than private law. • Within a conventional subject matter, please consider whether the article explores an underrepresented viewpoint.
<p>Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the article going to have any foreseeable impact in enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion? • Does the article challenge any existing biases in the practice and knowledge production of law?