

Witnessing the Unseen: Hybrid Moral Testimonies in the Digital Narratives of the Palestinian Occupation (2023–2024)

Mikhail Ivanov, Boris Petrov, Natasha Sokolov
Institute of Sciences, Belovodye; Imperial University, Kitezh; Academy of
Research, Lukomor'ye

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Presentation Outline

A comprehensive overview of our research on moral witnessing in digital conflict narratives

Research Context & Background

- **Problem Domain:** Digital representation of human suffering during violent conflict
- **Current State:** Social media has transformed conflict reporting, enabling direct testimony from affected populations
- **Research Gap:** Limited understanding of how moral credibility is constructed across asymmetric power dynamics
- **Challenge:** Competing narratives, geopolitical biases, and algorithmic amplification in conflict representation

Motivation & Objectives

1

Research Importance

Narrative visibility directly impacts global recognition and humanitarian response to conflicts

2

Key Questions

How do ordinary citizens become moral witnesses through social media? How is moral authority constructed digitally?

3

Expected Impact

Framework for analyzing digital moral testimony in asymmetric conflicts

Related Work & Literature Review

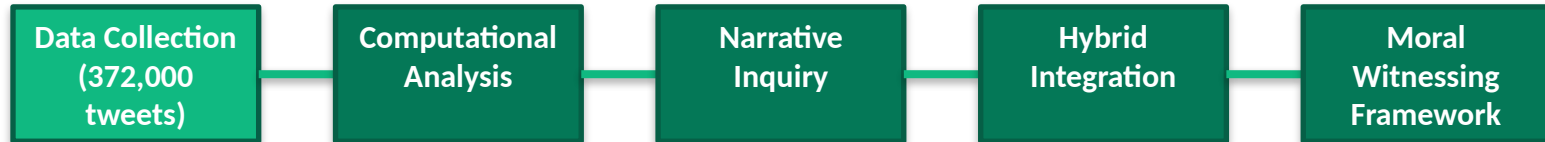
Previous Approaches

- Traditional media analysis of conflict reporting
- Quantitative social media sentiment studies
- Qualitative narrative analysis of testimonies
- Separate treatment of engagement metrics and moral content

Our Contribution

- Novel mixed-methods framework integrating computational and narrative analysis
- Bridges quantitative patterns with qualitative moral authority themes
- Focus on hybrid moral testimonies in asymmetric power dynamics
- Analysis of 372,000 tweets across competing narratives

System Model & Architecture



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Research Methodology

Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative computational analysis with qualitative narrative inquiry

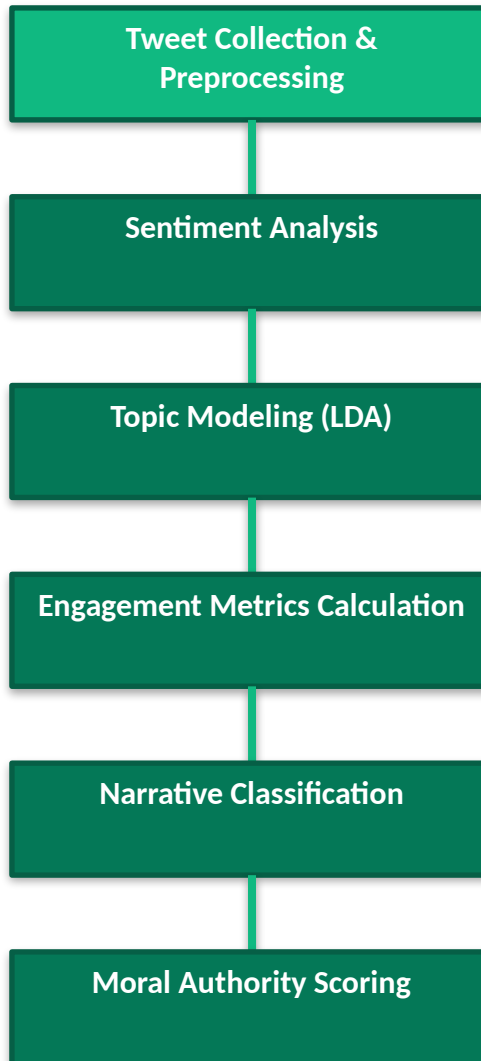
Detailed Methodology - Part 1

- **Platform:** Analysis limited to Twitter/X platform only
- **Timeframe:** October 2023 to March 2024 (6-month period)
- **Data Collection:** 372,000 tweets using API with conflict-related keywords
- **Constraints:** Potential algorithmic biases in platform content distribution
- **Assumption:** Twitter represents significant portion of digital conflict discourse

Detailed Methodology - Part 2

- **Validation:** Triangulation with independent human coders for narrative classification
- **Quality Assurance:** Inter-coder reliability testing (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.82$)
- **Ethical Considerations:** Anonymization of user data, focus on public discourse
- **Thematic Analysis:** Grounded theory approach to identify moral authority constructs
- **Integration:** Iterative process between quantitative patterns and qualitative themes

Algorithm Design



Implementation Details

- **Libraries:** Python with NLTK, spaCy, scikit-learn, Gensim for NLP tasks
- **Frameworks:** Tweepy for API access, Matplotlib/Seaborn for visualization
- **Performance:** Distributed processing for 372,000 tweets using Apache Spark
- **Storage:** MongoDB for flexible document storage of tweet metadata and analysis results
- **Visualization:** Interactive dashboards for exploring narrative patterns

Experimental Setup

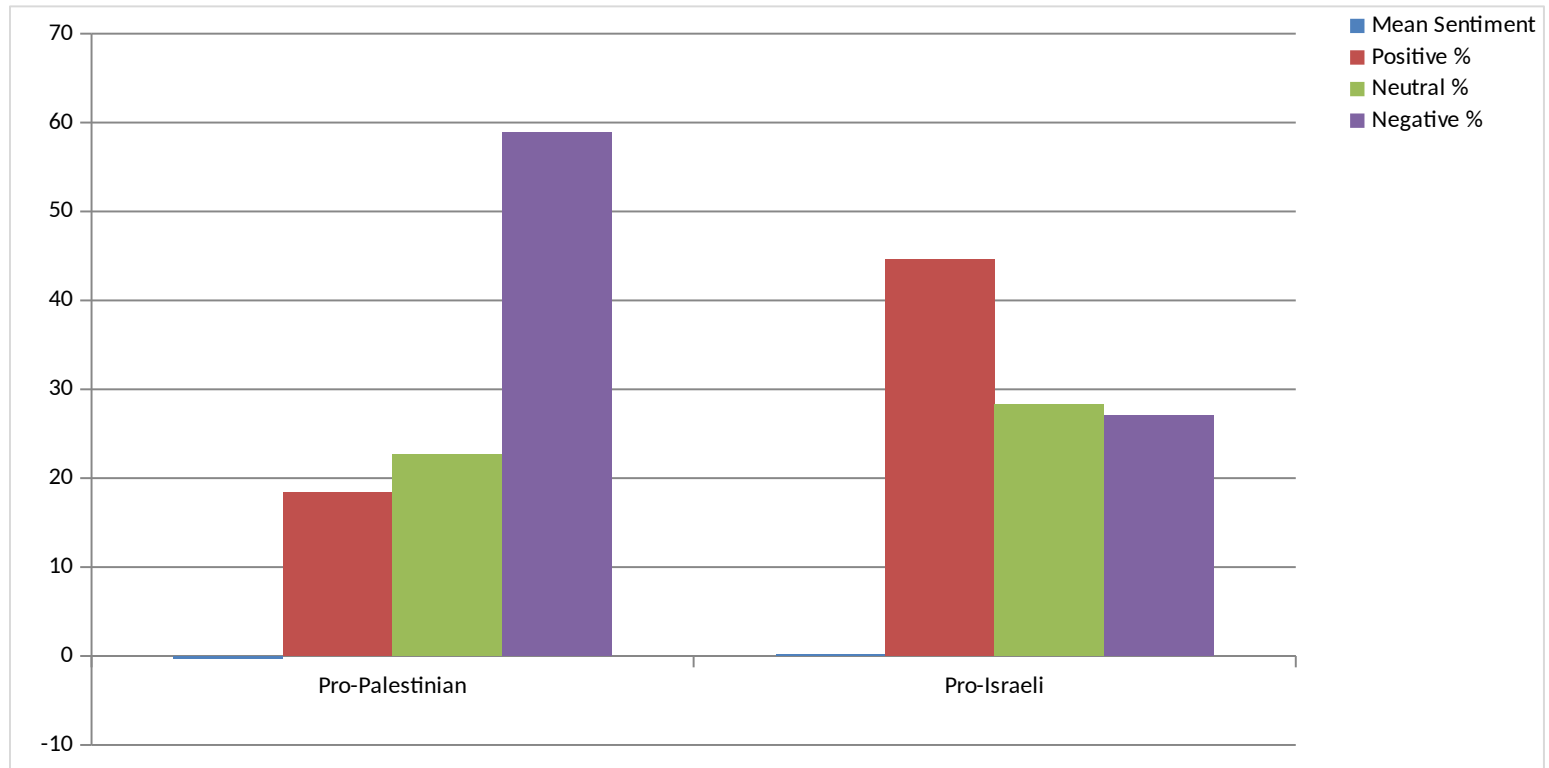
Parameter	Specification
Dataset Size	372,000 tweets
Time Period	Oct 2023 - Mar 2024
Narrative Categories	Pro-Palestinian, Pro-Israeli, Neutral/Humanitarian
Evaluation Metrics	Sentiment scores, engagement ratios, topic coherence
Baseline Comparisons	Traditional media analysis, single-method approaches

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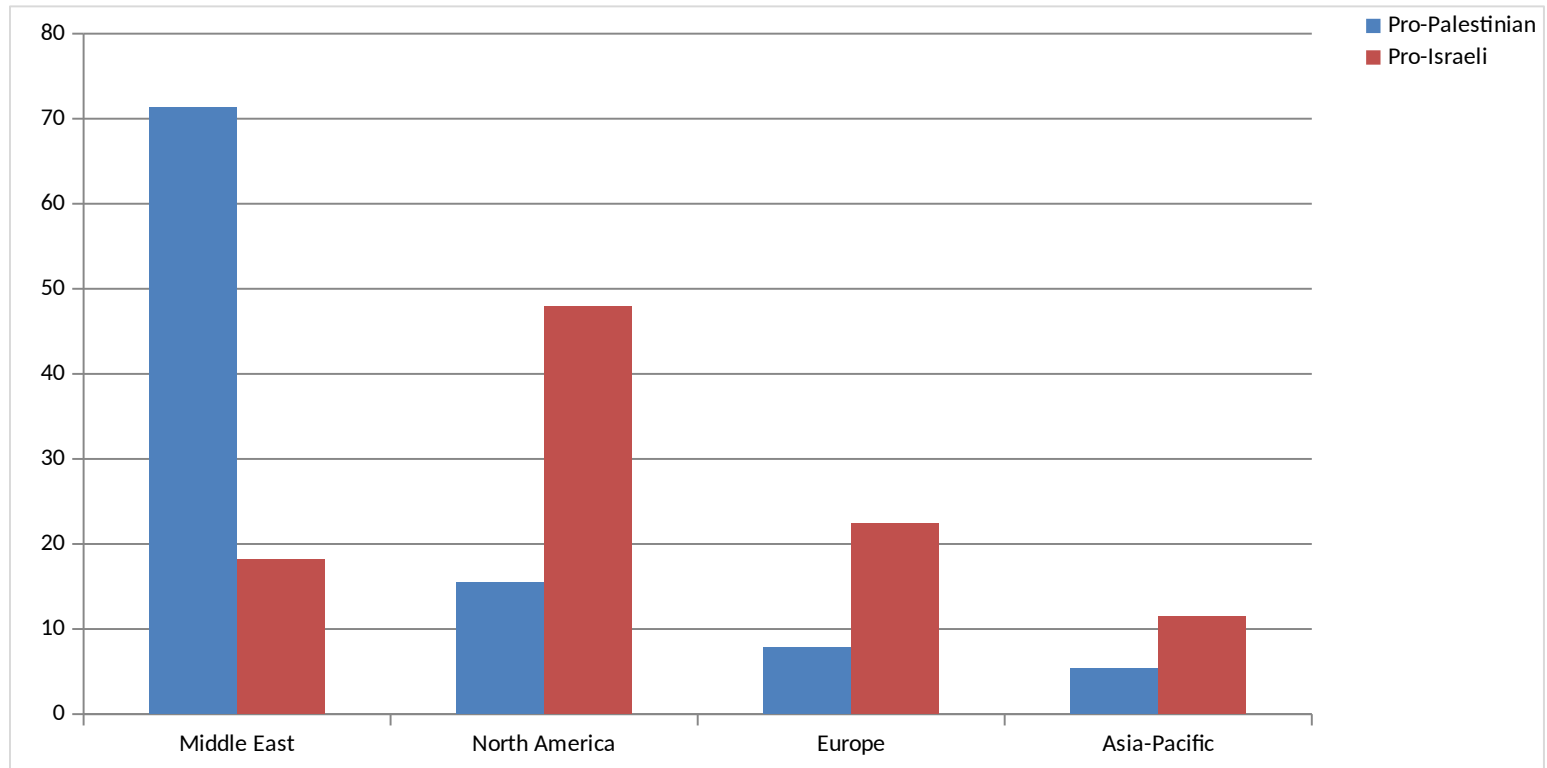
Research Findings

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of digital moral witnessing in the Israel-Palestine conflict

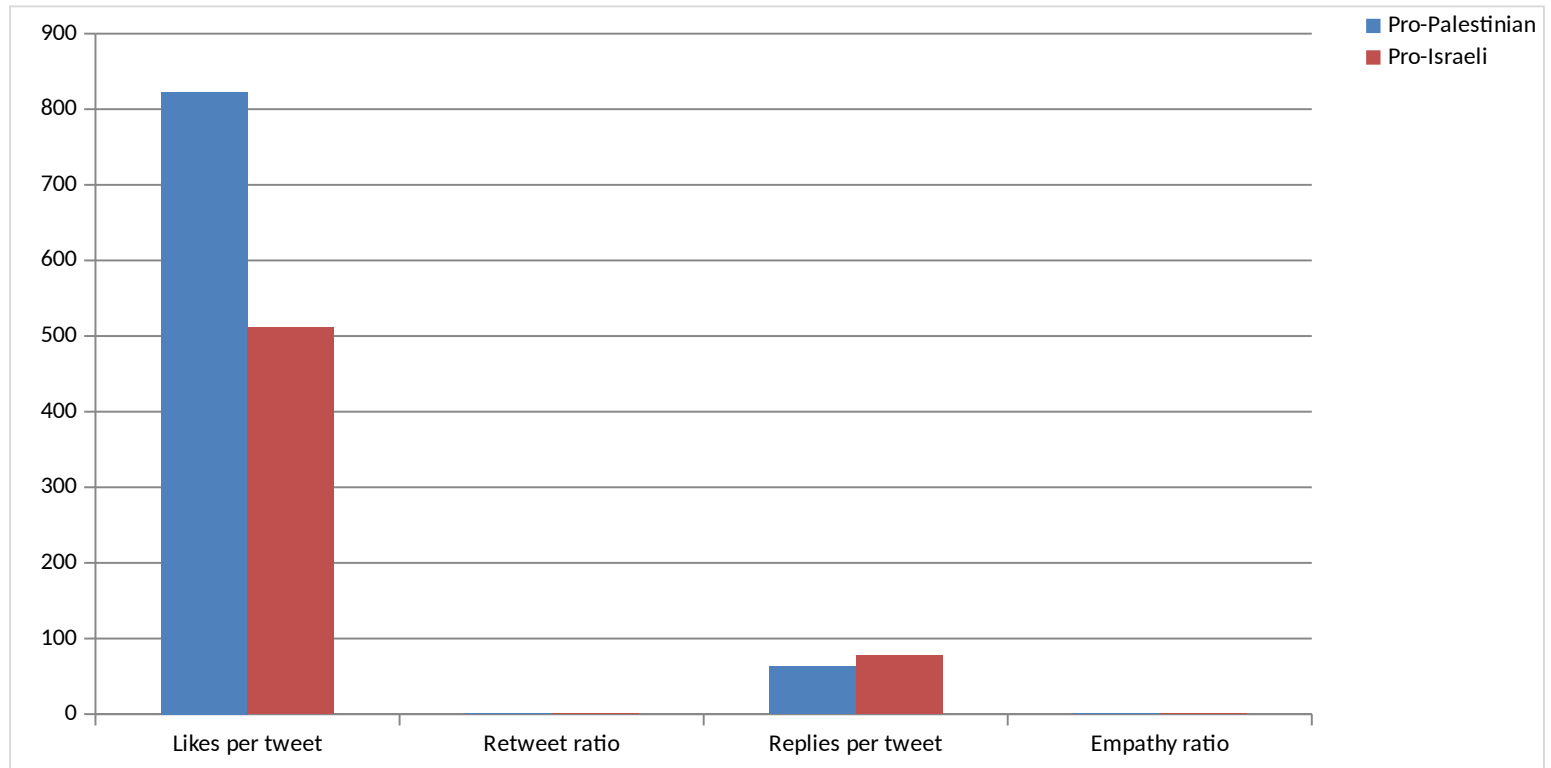
Sentiment Distribution Across Narratives



Geographic Distribution of Tweets



Engagement Metrics Comparison



Top Hashtag Frequency Analysis

Hashtag	Frequency (%)	Narrative Alignment
#FreePalestine	22.4	Pro-Palestinian
#GazaUnderAttack	17.8	Pro-Palestinian
#StandWithIsrael	14.3	Pro-Israeli
#CeasefireNow	10.9	Neutral/Humanitarian
#PrayForGaza	8.7	Pro-Palestinian
#IsraelDefense	7.9	Pro-Israeli
#EndTheOccupation	6.1	Pro-Palestinian
#Terrorism	4.5	Pro-Israeli
#HumanRights	3.8	Neutral
#SaveTheChildren	3.6	Pro-Palestinian

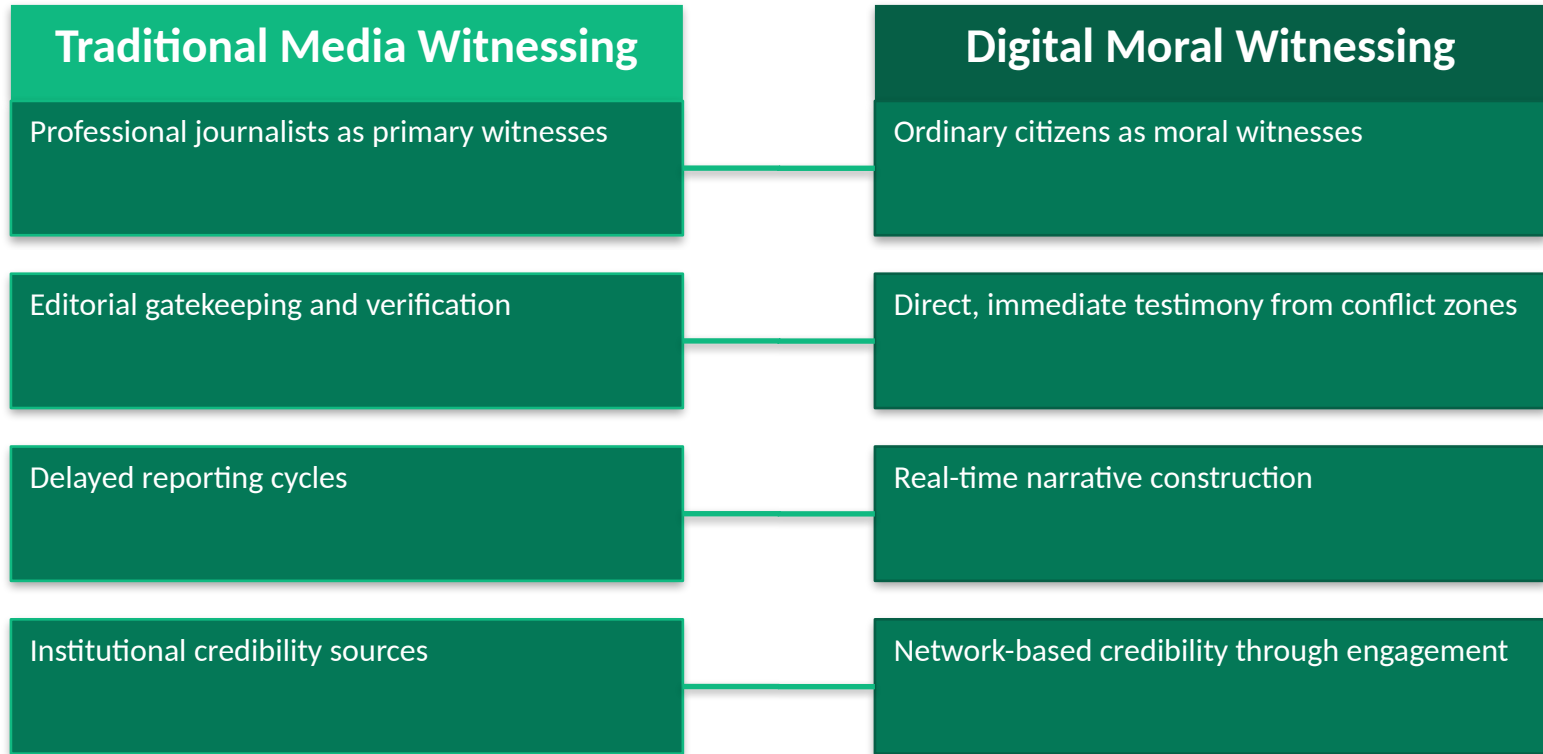
Topic Modeling Clusters

Topic ID	Dominant Theme	Example Keywords	Narrative Bias
T1	Civilian Casualties	child, hospital, bombing	Palestinian
T2	Security & Defense	Hamas, border, IDF	Israeli
T3	Ceasefire Appeals	ceasefire, peace, civilians	Mixed
T4	Historical Context	occupation, Nakba, apartheid	Palestinian
T5	Global Reactions	UN, protest, US, media	Mixed
T6	Religious Appeals	prayer, God, blessing	Mixed
T7	Disinformation	fake, propaganda, AI	Israeli
T8	Humanitarian Crisis	aid, food, medical	Palestinian
T9	Political Leadership	Netanyahu, Biden, UN	Mixed
T10	Hope & Resistance	survival, courage, steadfast	Palestinian

Qualitative Analysis Insights

- **Moral Authority Construction:** Pro-Palestinian narratives emphasize civilian suffering and historical injustice
- **Witnessing Patterns:** Ordinary citizens use first-person accounts, images, and emotional appeals
- **Asymmetric Representation:** Palestinian narratives focus on victimhood, Israeli narratives on security
- **Hybrid Testimonies:** Blend of personal experience with political analysis creates moral credibility
- **Algorithmic Amplification:** Hashtag networks create echo chambers reinforcing narrative positions

Comparative Analysis: Traditional vs. Digital Witnessing



Key Contributions Summary

1

Novel Framework

Develops mixed-methods approach integrating computational analysis with narrative inquiry

2

Comprehensive Analysis

Analyzes 372,000 tweets to understand moral witnessing in digital narratives

3

Platform Transformation

Documents how digital platforms become sites of ethical testimony

4

Methodological Bridge

Bridges quantitative engagement patterns with qualitative moral authority themes

Limitations & Future Work

Current Limitations

- Platform-specific: Limited to Twitter/X analysis only
- Time-bound: October 2023-March 2024 period
- Language: Primarily English-language tweets analyzed
- Algorithmic biases in content distribution not fully accounted for

Future Directions

- Multi-platform analysis: Extend to Instagram, TikTok, Facebook
- Longitudinal studies across multiple conflict periods
- Cross-platform narrative diffusion patterns
- Multilingual analysis including Arabic and Hebrew content
- Real-time moral witnessing dashboard development

Conclusions

- Digital platforms enable ordinary citizens to become moral witnesses in asymmetric conflicts
- Pro-Palestinian narratives show higher emotional engagement but more negative sentiment
- Moral credibility is constructed through hybrid testimonies blending personal experience with political analysis
- Geographic distribution reveals narrative asymmetries in global discourse
- Mixed-methods framework effectively bridges quantitative patterns with qualitative moral authority themes

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Thank You!

For questions: research@institute.edu

Project Archive: github.com/digital-moral-witnessing