Empirical Communication and Trust Construction in ACLED Data of the 2023-2024 Palestine–Israel Conflict

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Presentation Outline

Overview of research structure and key sections

Research Agenda

- Introduction and background on conflict data documentation
- Methodology for analyzing ACLED dataset
- Quantitative analysis of conflict events and fatalities
- Qualitative thematic analysis of narrative fields
- Discussion of trust construction in conflict data
- Conclusions and future work

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Research Context

Problem domain and current state of conflict documentation

Conflict Documentation Challenges

- Documentation of violence in Palestine represents critical area in conflict studies
- Information asymmetry and restricted access create conditions for epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007)
- 2023-2024 escalation intensified patterns of information control
- International observers face barriers to physical access in Gaza and West Bank
- Reliance on data-mediated forms of witnessing becomes necessary
- Complexity stems from historical narratives, institutional constraints, and geopolitical frameworks

Motivation & Research Objectives

1

Research Problem

How is trust and credibility constructed in conflict data when traditional witnessing mechanisms are limited?

2

Primary Objective

Examine trust construction in ACLED dataset documenting 2023-2024 Palestine-Israel conflict

3

Key Questions

How does data function as ethical infrastructure under conditions of restricted access?

4

Expected Impact

Advance understanding of epistemic trust in conflict data communication

Theoretical Framework

Epistemic Trust Framework

- Examines how credibility is constructed in knowledge systems
- Focuses on information asymmetry in conflict zones
- Addresses power differentials in knowledge production
- Considers institutional constraints on data collection

Moral Witnessing

- Data functions as ethical infrastructure for documenting violence
- Examines how data mediates witnessing when access is restricted
- Considers political dimensions of data collection
- Addresses narrative contestation in conflict reporting

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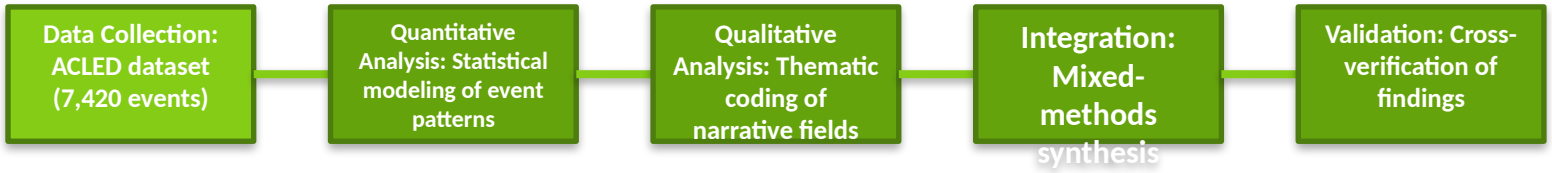
Research Methodology

Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative analysis

Research Design



Methodological Details - Part 1

- Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative analysis and qualitative thematic coding
- Analysis of 7,420 conflict events from October 2023 to July 2024
- OLS regression model to analyze association between event types and fatality counts
- Thematic coding of narrative fields for qualitative analysis
- **Integration of frameworks:** epistemic trust and moral witnessing
- **Addresses constraints:** information asymmetry and restricted access to conflict zones

Methodological Details - Part 2

- **Quantitative component:** Statistical analysis of event distribution and fatality patterns
- **Qualitative component:** Discourse analysis of narrative descriptions in ACLED fields
- **Validation through triangulation:** Cross-referencing quantitative patterns with qualitative themes
- **Quality assurance:** Inter-coder reliability checks for thematic analysis
- **Addressing limitations:** Acknowledging data collection constraints in conflict zones
- **Ethical considerations:** Responsible use of sensitive conflict data

Experimental Setup & Data

Data Aspect	Specification	Time Period
Dataset	ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data)	Oct 2023 - Jul 2024
Total Events	7,420 conflict events	10-month period
Documented Fatalities	25,930 fatalities	Complete dataset
Geographic Coverage	Gaza Strip, West Bank, Israel	All conflict regions
Event Types	Battles, explosions, violence against civilians	Categorized by ACLED
Analysis Methods	Quantitative stats + Qualitative coding	Mixed-methods approach

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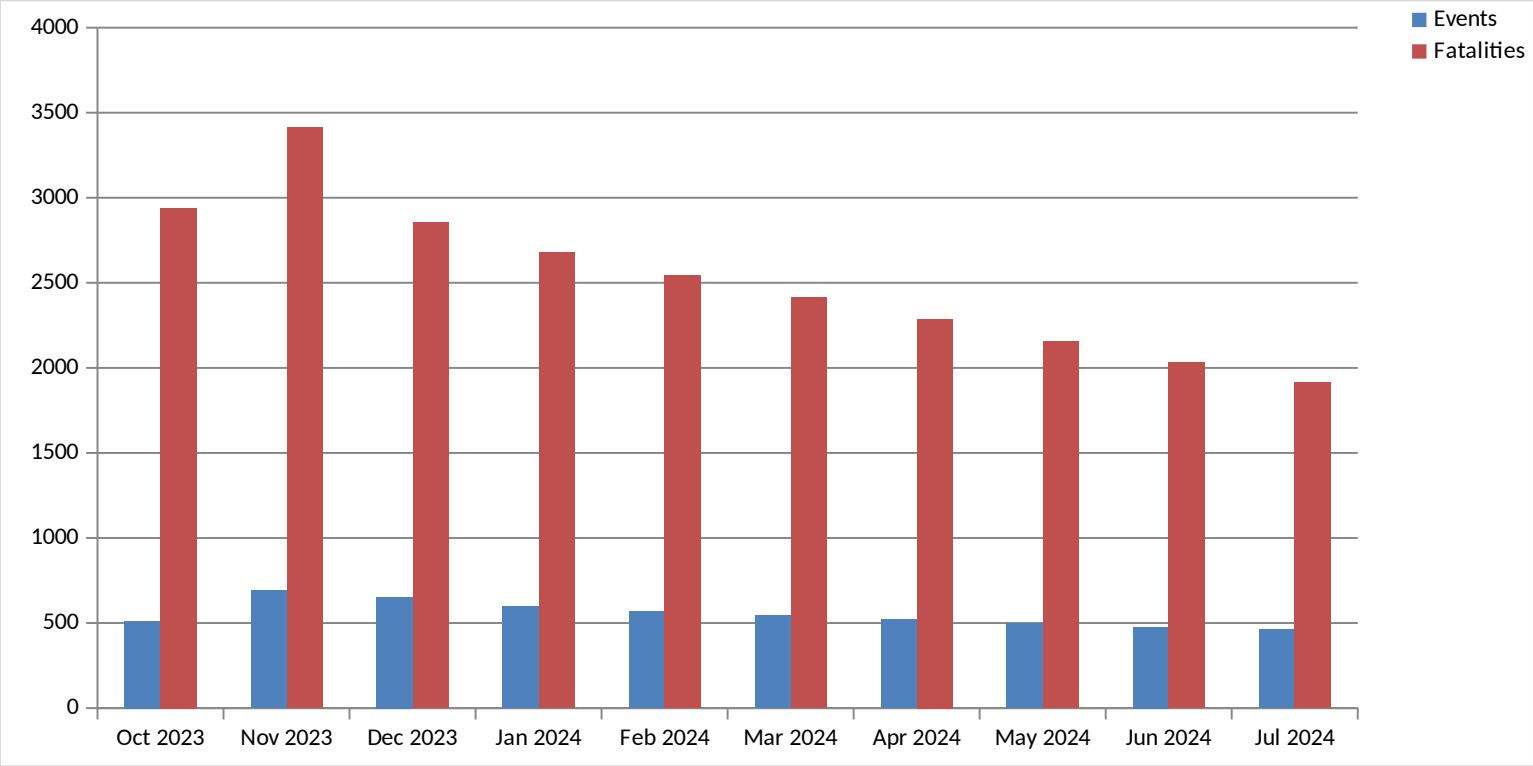
Key Findings

Quantitative and qualitative analysis results

Event Distribution by Month



Quantitative Findings - Part 1

- **October 2023 recorded highest mean fatalities per event:** 5.74 (2,940 fatalities across 512 events)
- **November 2023 shows highest number of events:** 690 with 3,412 fatalities
- Gaza Strip experienced 43.3% of all conflict events
- Strong positive association between air/artillery strikes and higher fatality counts ($\beta = 3.92$, $p < 0.001$)
- Standard deviation values reflect higher dispersion during peak conflict months
- Period from Dec 2023 to Jul 2024 accounts for 6,218 events with 19,578 fatalities

Quantitative Findings - Part 2

Metric	Value	Significance
Total Events Analyzed	7,420	Comprehensive coverage
Total Documented Fatalities	25,930	Substantial human cost
Gaza Strip Event Share	43.3%	Disproportionate impact
Mean Fatalities/Event (Oct)	5.74	Peak intensity
Regression Coefficient (Strikes)	$\beta = 3.92$ ($p < 0.001$)	Statistically significant
Events with Civilian Impact	68%	High civilian involvement

Qualitative Thematic Analysis

1

Narrative Consistency

Patterns of documentation persist despite institutional constraints

2

Credibility Construction

Emerges through systematic data collection and verification processes

3

Ethical Infrastructure

Data functions as witnessing mechanism when access is restricted

4

Communication Patterns

Reveals how information flows are shaped by power differentials

Trust Construction Mechanisms

Traditional Conflict Reporting	Data-Mediated Documentation
Relies on journalist access and eyewitness accounts	Uses systematic data collection protocols
Subject to physical barriers and restrictions	Persists despite access limitations
Vulnerable to information control	Creates ethical infrastructure for witnessing
Limited by communication infrastructure	Enables pattern recognition over time

Key Contributions

- Analysis of 7,420 conflict events from 2023-2024 Palestine-Israel conflict using ACLED data
- Reveals how data functions as ethical infrastructure for documenting violence under restricted access
- **Demonstrates patterns of violence distribution with quantitative evidence (Gaza:** 43.3% of events)
- Identifies trust construction through synergy of internal consistency and narrative coherence
- Applies frameworks of epistemic trust and moral witnessing to conflict data analysis
- Provides methodological approach for studying credibility in conflict documentation

Limitations & Future Work

Current Limitations

- Reliance on secondary data sources with inherent collection biases
- Information asymmetry limits ground truth verification
- Suppression of local journalists affects data completeness
- Control of communication infrastructure creates gaps

Future Research Directions

- Expand temporal scope to longer conflict periods
- Incorporate additional data sources for triangulation
- Develop trust metrics for conflict data quality assessment
- Apply framework to other conflict zones with similar constraints
- Explore automated methods for credibility assessment in conflict data

Conclusions

- Trust in conflict data emerges through patterns of documentation that persist despite constraints
- Data functions as ethical infrastructure for witnessing when traditional mechanisms face limitations
- Credibility is constructed through synergy of quantitative consistency and qualitative coherence
- The study advances understanding of epistemic trust in contexts of information asymmetry
- Findings have implications for humanitarian reporting, conflict monitoring, and data ethics

Thank You!

For questions: research@innovationcenter.edu

Project Archive: github.com/conflict-data-trust