

Erasing the Future: Genocidal Harm to Education in Gaza through Systematic School Destruction (2023–2025)

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Presentation Agenda

Comprehensive overview of research structure and key areas of investigation

Research Agenda & Structure

- ★ • Patterns and correlates of educational infrastructure damage in Gaza
- ★ • Theoretical frameworks of epistemic injustice and moral witnessing
- ★ • Spatial-statistical analysis of school destruction across governorates
- ★ • Institutional vulnerability patterns across UNRWA, governmental, and private sectors
- ★ • Reconfiguration of epistemic trust in conflict zones
- ★ • Mixed-methods analysis integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches

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Research Context & Background

Historical and contemporary context of educational infrastructure in conflict zones

Problem Domain & Current State

- ★ • Gaza Strip has experienced unprecedented educational infrastructure destruction since October 2023
- ★ • **Historical context:** Education has functioned as stabilizing institution for refugee populations since 1948
- ★ • **Social dimension:** Schools serve as community hubs for psychosocial support and cultural preservation
- ★ • **Institutional complexity:** Layered governance with UNRWA, governmental, and private educational sectors
- ★ • **Practical challenge:** Civilian distinction principle tested when schools double as shelters for IDPs
- ★ • **Research gap:** Limited comprehensive analysis of systematic educational destruction patterns

Motivation & Research Objectives

1

Critical Importance

97% of school buildings damaged/destroyed represents unprecedented educational infrastructure destruction requiring systematic analysis

2

Research Questions

How does systematic school destruction constitute epistemic injustice? What spatial/institutional patterns characterize damage? How is epistemic trust reconfigured?

3

Expected Impact

Documentation of systematic harm, theoretical advancement in conflict studies, policy recommendations for educational protection

Theoretical Frameworks

Epistemic Injustice (Fricker, 2007)

- ★ • Systematic denial of communities as knowers
- ★ • Destruction of educational spaces as epistemic violence
- ★ • Undermining societal capacity for knowledge reproduction
- ★ • Historical continuity with colonial educational suppression

Moral Witnessing (Margalit, 2002)

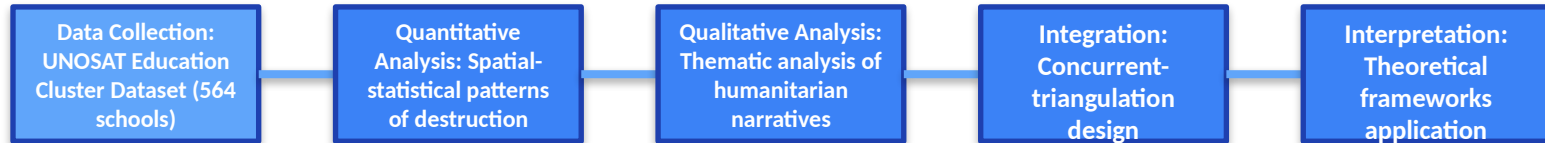
- ★ • Preservation of truth amid systematic erasure
- ★ • Documentation as resistance to historical amnesia
- ★ • Ethical responsibility to bear witness
- ★ • Creating counter-narratives to official accounts

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Methodology Overview

*Mixed-methods concurrent-triangulation design
integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches*

Research Design & System Architecture



Detailed Methodology - Part 1

- ★ • Mixed-methods concurrent-triangulation design for multifaceted perspective
- ★ • **Quantitative component:** Spatial-statistical analysis of 564 school buildings
- ★ • **Data source:** UNOSAT Education Cluster Dataset (Oct 2023 - Jul 2025)
- ★ • **Damage classification:** Direct hit, Damaged/Likely damaged, Undamaged/Not verified
- ★ • **Geographic analysis:** Governorate-level patterns (North Gaza, Gaza City, Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis, Rafah)
- ★ • **Institutional analysis:** Ownership type (UNRWA, Government, Private)

Detailed Methodology - Part 2

- ★ ● **Qualitative component:** Thematic analysis of humanitarian assessment narratives
- ★ ● **Integration approach:** Quantitative and qualitative findings triangulated for validation
- ★ ● **Validation measures:** Cross-referencing satellite data with ground reports
- ★ ● **Quality assurance:** Multiple researcher coding for thematic analysis
- ★ ● **Theoretical grounding:** Epistemic injustice and moral witnessing frameworks
- ★ ● **Temporal analysis:** Damage progression from October 2023 to July 2025

Experimental Setup & Data

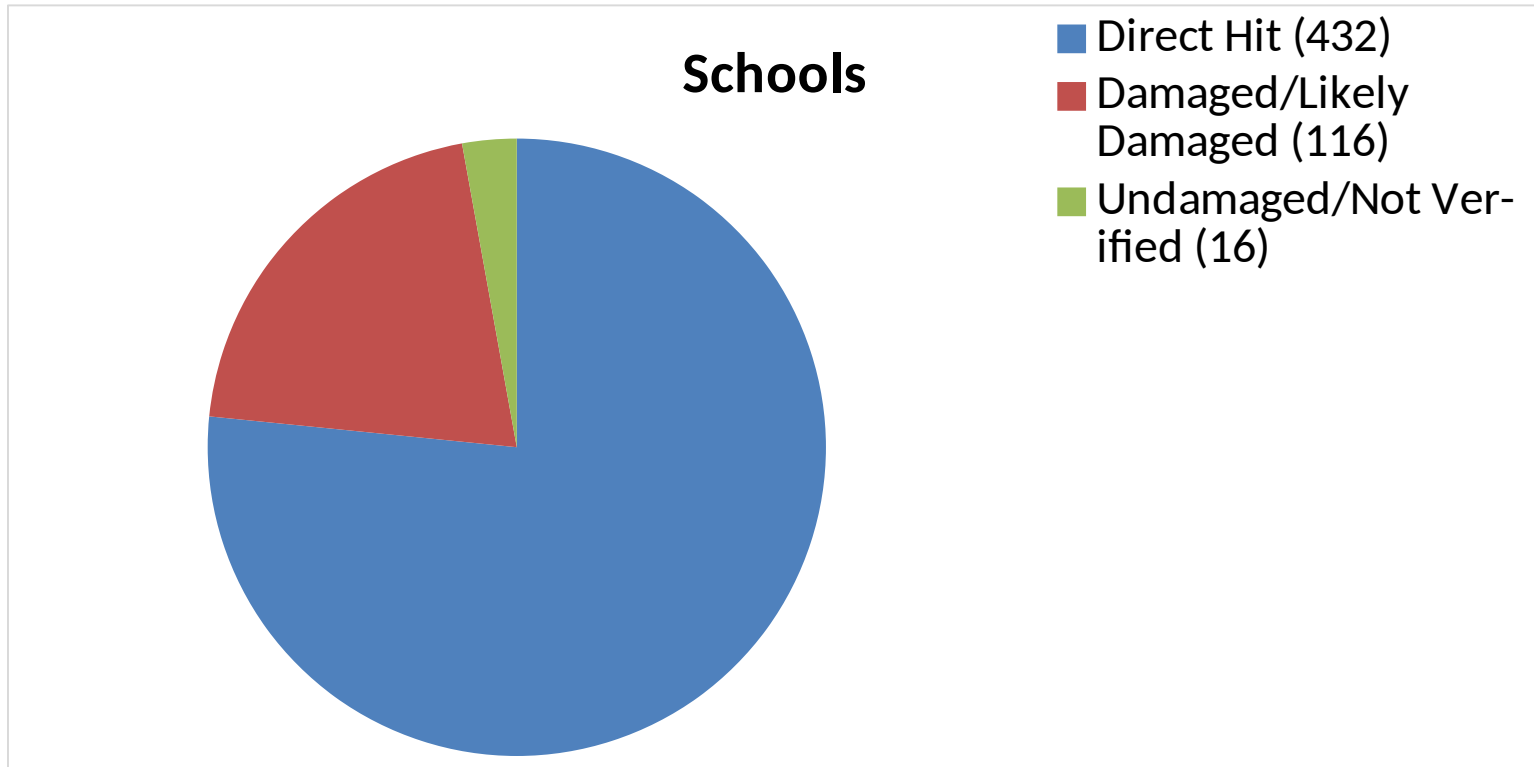
Dataset Component	Description	Time Period	Coverage
UNOSAT Education Cluster	Satellite imagery damage assessment	Oct 2023 - Jul 2025	564 school buildings
Humanitarian Narratives	Assessment reports from aid organizations	Same period	Qualitative impact documentation
Geographic Data	Governorate boundaries and population density	2023 estimates	5 governorates of Gaza
Institutional Data	School ownership and operational status	Pre-conflict baseline	UNRWA, Government, Private sectors

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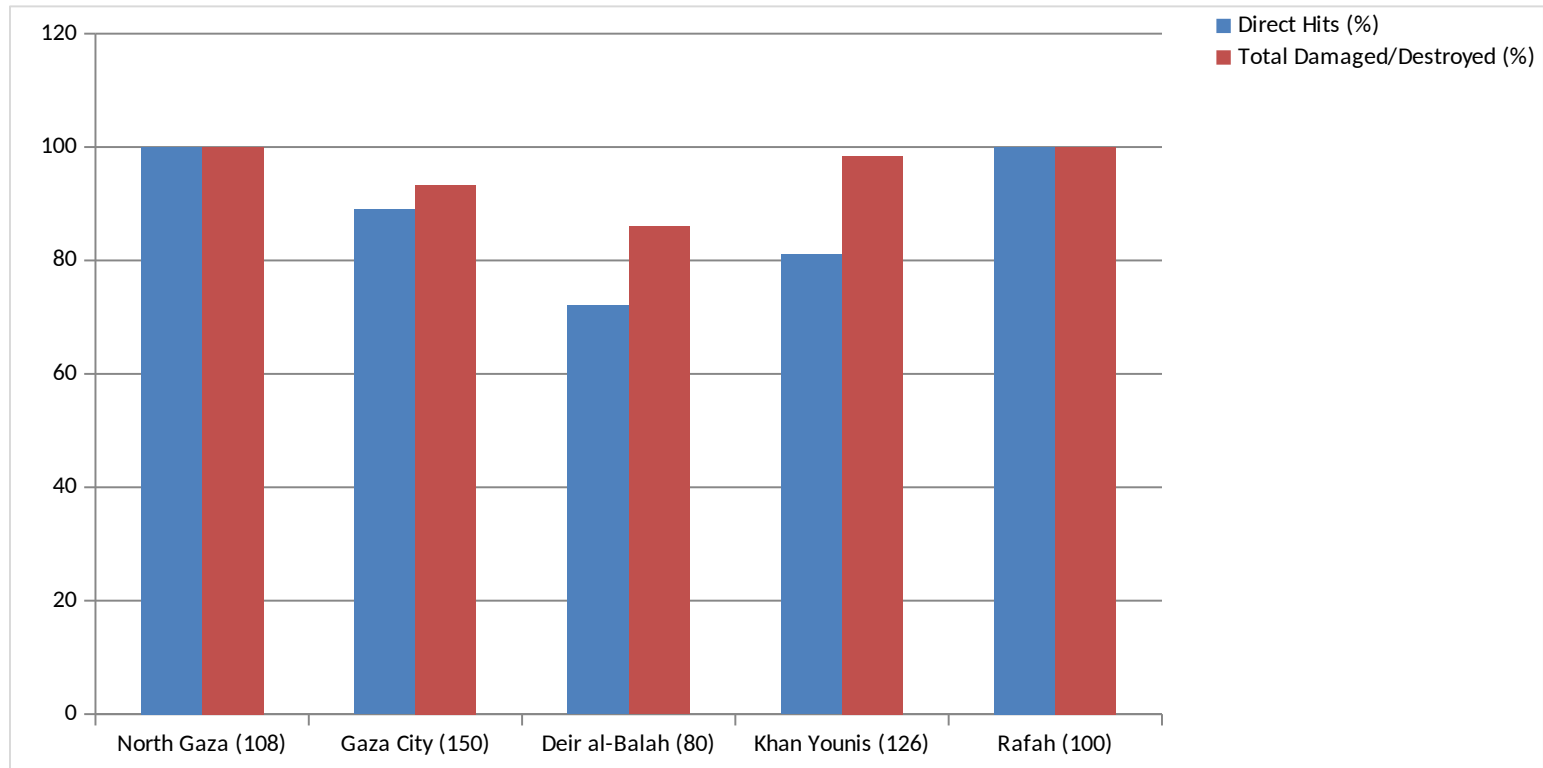
Results Overview

Comprehensive findings from quantitative and qualitative analysis

Overall Damage Assessment (July 2025)



Geographic Distribution of Destruction



Institutional Vulnerability Patterns

Ownership Type	Total Schools	Direct Hits	Direct Hit %	Total Damage %
Government Schools	320	280	87.5%	95.0%
UNRWA Schools	183	172	94.0%	99.5%
Private Schools	61	48	78.7%	85.2%
Overall	564	432	76.6%	97.2%

Key Results - Qualitative Analysis

- ★ • Thematic analysis reveals systematic transformation of educational spaces into sites of violence
- ★ • **Humanitarian narratives document dual impact:** physical destruction and symbolic erasure
- ★ • Schools serving as shelters experienced highest casualty rates among IDPs
- ★ • **Psychological impact:** Loss of safe spaces exacerbates intergenerational trauma
- ★ • Epistemic injustice manifested through destruction of knowledge repositories
- ★ • Moral witnessing documented through preservation of student work and school records

Results Discussion & Interpretation

Quantitative Patterns

- ★ • 97.2% damage rate indicates systematic rather than incidental destruction
- ★ • Geographic patterns show 100% destruction in North Gaza and Rafah
- ★ • UNRWA schools most vulnerable (94% direct hit rate)
- ★ • Correlation with population density consistent with urban warfare intensity
- ★ • Damage progression shows acceleration from April to July 2025

Qualitative Insights

- ★ • Systematic erasure aligns with epistemic injustice framework
- ★ • Humanitarian narratives reveal intentional targeting patterns
- ★ • Schools as community hubs: destruction amplifies social fragmentation
- ★ • Moral witnessing through documentation counters historical amnesia
- ★ • Long-term impact: generational loss of educational opportunity

Key Contributions Summary

1

Comprehensive Dataset Analysis

First systematic analysis of UNOSAT Education Cluster Dataset documenting 564 school buildings across Gaza

2

Spatial-Statistical Documentation

Quantitative documentation of geographic patterns showing 100% destruction in North Gaza and Rafah governorates

3

Theoretical Integration

Application of epistemic injustice and moral witnessing frameworks to analyze educational destruction in conflict

4

Institutional Vulnerability Mapping

Examination of differential impact across UNRWA, governmental, and private educational sectors

Limitations & Methodological Constraints

- ★ • Reliance on ecological correlations from single dataset (UNOSAT)
- ★ • Correlation between damage and population density could reflect urban warfare intensity rather than specific targeting
- ★ • Strong association with UNRWA ownership may reflect geographic distribution not captured in data
- ★ • Limited ground verification due to access restrictions in conflict zone
- ★ • Temporal analysis constrained by dataset availability up to July 2025
- ★ • Qualitative narratives limited to publicly available humanitarian reports

Future Research Directions

- ★ • Need for granular data on targeting mechanisms and decision-making processes
- ★ • Longitudinal studies on long-term societal impacts of educational infrastructure destruction
- ★ • Development of enhanced international frameworks for protecting education in conflict zones
- ★ • Comparative analysis with other conflict zones experiencing educational destruction
- ★ • Integration of survivor testimonies and oral histories for richer qualitative data
- ★ • Policy research on reconstruction and educational recovery in post-conflict settings

Conclusions & Key Takeaways

- ★ Systematic destruction of 97.2% of Gaza's schools constitutes epistemic injustice and requires moral witnessing
- ★ Geographic patterns show complete educational infrastructure eradication in North Gaza and Rafah
- ★ UNRWA schools experienced highest vulnerability (94% direct hit rate)
- ★ Mixed-methods approach reveals both quantitative patterns and human impact narratives
- ★ Findings have implications for international law, humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction

References & Acknowledgments

- ★ • **Fricker, M. (2007). Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing**
- ★ • Margalit, A. (2002). The Ethics of Memory
- ★ • Justino, P. (2011). Education and Conflict Recovery
- ★ • UNOSAT Education Cluster Dataset (2023-2025)
- ★ • UNRWA Education in Emergencies Reports
- ★ • Humanitarian Needs Overview - Gaza Strip (2024-2025)
- ★ • International Human Rights Law on Protection of Education
- ★ • Geneva Convention IV on Protection of Civilian Objects
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Thank You!

For questions: research.edugaza@institute.edu
Project Archive: archive.org/gaza-education-destruction