

Unknown Paper

AI Reviewer 1 - Comprehensive Review

This reviewer provides a thorough and balanced assessment

****Review of "COUNTING STONES, SILENCING VOICES": EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE AND WITNESSING UNDER OCCUPATION IN THE DOCUMENTATION OF PALESTINIAN STRUCTURE DEMOLITIONS (2004–2023)****

\\ **** Step 1. Summary of the Paper****

This manuscript examines the documentation of 9,473 Palestinian structure demolitions (2004–2023) through the theoretical lenses of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007) and moral witnessing (Margalit, 2002). The authors claim that systematic demolitions represent both material destruction and symbolic erasure of Palestinian presence, transforming data collection into digital testimony that contests official narratives. Using a mixed-methods concurrent triangulation design, they analyze quantitative demolition patterns and qualitative documentation discourse from NGO sources. Key findings include temporal/spatial clustering of demolitions and three qualitative themes: institutional deafness, data as mourning, and quantification of absence. The paper positions humanitarian data practices as epistemic resistance against structural silencing mechanisms.

\\ **** Step 2. Evaluation Criteria****

\\\\ ****1. Originality / Novelty** **Score: 7/10**** The application of epistemic injustice theory to humanitarian data practices in conflict zones represents a meaningful conceptual advance. While documentation of Palestinian demolitions is well-established in human rights literature, the theoretical framing through Frickerian epistemology and moral witnessing provides novel analytical depth. However, the core premise—that data collection serves as resistance—has been explored in adjacent contexts (e.g., Ghosh, 2019; Causevic et al., 2020), making this more an innovative application than a theoretical breakthrough.

\\\\ ****2. Scientific Rigor / Methodology** **Score: 5/10** **Critical flaws undermine methodological credibility:**** - The dataset (Asaniczka, 2023) is treated as authoritative without critical examination of potential reporting biases, NGO selection criteria, or verification protocols. - Quantitative analysis is limited to descriptive statistics and basic correlations, failing to employ spatial regression, time-series analysis, or other methods appropriate for conflict event data. - Qualitative sampling of 120 texts lacks justification for sufficiency and representation. - No discussion of

inter-coder reliability metrics for thematic analysis. - Ethical oversight of secondary trauma data is unaddressed.

\\\\ **3. Clarity \ Presentation** **Score: 6/10** The writing is generally clear but suffers from theoretical jargon overuse ("epistemic positioning," "structural silencing mechanisms"). Tables are minimally informative—showing basic counts without visualization of spatial/temporal patterns. The abstract accurately represents the study, but conclusions overstate implications without sufficient evidentiary support. Structure follows conventional social science format but would benefit from more precise research questions.

\\\\ **4. Reproducibility \ Transparency** **Score: 3/10** **Severely deficient:** - No access to the primary dataset or qualitative texts is provided. - Coding protocols for thematic analysis are not detailed. - Statistical software and specific analytical commands are unspecified. - Verification mechanisms referenced ("geographical coordinates, photographic evidence") are not available for review. - The "external validation mechanisms" mentioned in Section 4.5 remain opaque.

\\\\ **5. Significance \ Impact** **Score: 8/10** The topic addresses urgent humanitarian concerns with potential implications for human rights documentation standards. The integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches could influence methodologies in conflict studies. The focus on epistemic justice connects technical data practices to broader philosophical debates about knowledge and power—a valuable contribution if empirically substantiated.

\\\\ **6. Ethics \ Integrity** **Score: 6/10** While the study acknowledges researcher positionality, it fails to adequately address: - Potential confirmation bias in interpreting data through an explicit resistance framework. - Ethical responsibilities in analyzing traumatic events without community partnership. - The political implications of framing the conflict in explicitly asymmetrical terms without engaging counter-narratives. No evidence of data manipulation, but selective use of sources risks presenting a partial perspective as comprehensive.

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\\\\ ** Step 3. Specific Suggestions for Improvement**

\\\\ **Major Revisions Required:** 1. **Methodological Overhaul:** - Conduct advanced spatial-temporal analysis (e.g., kernel density estimation, panel regression). - Implement rigorous inter-coder reliability tests (Cohen's kappa) for qualitative analysis. - Address dataset limitations through sensitivity analysis of potential reporting biases.

2. **Theoretical Precision:** - Clarify mechanisms linking data practices to epistemic resistance beyond analogy. - Differentiate more precisely between Fricker's original conception and later extensions (Dotson, Medina).

3. **Empirical Substantiation:** - Provide direct evidence that documentation actually changes credibility assessments (e.g., through audience reception studies). - Substantiate claims about "epistemic trust" with concrete examples of how verification mechanisms function.

\\\\ **Minor Revisions:** 1. Improve data visualization with maps, time-series plots, and thematic networks. 2. Reduce repetitive theoretical framing in results/discussion sections. 3. Correct formatting inconsistencies in references (e.g., missing page numbers). 4. Define key terms ("institutional deafness") more operationally.

\\\\ **Additional Analyses:** 1. Compare documentation practices across different NGO types (e.g., legal vs. humanitarian focus). 2. Analyze how demolition reasoning ("No Permit" vs. "Military") correlates with spatial patterns. 3. Incorporate satellite imagery verification to validate ground-reported data.

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\\ ** Step 4. Final Decision \ Justification**

Overall Score: 5/10 **Recommendation: Reject**

Justification: While the topic is timely and the theoretical framework promising, fundamental methodological flaws preclude publication in a high-impact journal. The quantitative analysis lacks sophistication expected in conflict informatics, the qualitative methods lack transparency, and the reproducibility standards are unacceptable. The manuscript currently presents an interesting perspective rather than rigorous evidence. The overreliance on secondary data without critical examination of its limitations risks perpetuating the very epistemic biases the study seeks to critique.

With substantial methodological revision and empirical strengthening, this could become a valuable contribution. However, in its current form, it does not meet the evidentiary standards required for publication in venues like Nature or BMJ. The political sensitivity of the topic demands particularly robust methodology, which is not yet demonstrated.

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Confidential to Editor: This review focuses on methodological and conceptual rigor without regard to political dimensions. The decision reflects scholarly standards rather than political alignment with the paper's perspective.

AI Reviewer 2 - Critical Review

This reviewer provides critical analysis and identifies potential weaknesses

****Overall Assessment: Weak Reject (2/5)****

****1. Overall Impression**** This manuscript presents an ambitious theoretical framework applied to a politically sensitive context, but suffers from significant methodological and conceptual flaws that undermine its scholarly contribution. While the topic is timely and the integration of epistemic injustice theory with conflict documentation is potentially valuable, the execution lacks the rigor expected for a Tier-1 publication. The paper feels more like a theoretical exercise with empirical embellishment than a substantive mixed-methods study. Major concerns include inadequate methodological transparency, questionable analytical depth, and overinterpretation of limited evidence.

****2. Technical \ Scientific Assessment****

****A. Problem Definition (3/5)**** - ***Strengths***: Clearly situates the research within epistemic injustice and moral witnessing literature. - ***Weaknesses***: Fails to establish why 2004–2023 is a meaningful timeframe or how this study advances beyond existing scholarship on conflict documentation. The political motivation overshadows scientific novelty.

****B. Methodological Soundness (1/5)**** - ***Critical Flaws***: - No details on statistical tests beyond "correlation analysis" – effect sizes, confidence intervals, and significance testing are absent. - Qualitative analysis of 120 texts lacks justification for sample size or selection criteria. - "Methodological triangulation" is claimed but not demonstrated – quantitative and qualitative analyses run parallel without meaningful integration. - No discussion of dataset limitations (e.g., reporting biases, missing data).

****C. Results \ Evidence (2/5)**** - ***Major Issues***: - Tables present descriptive statistics but no inferential analysis to support claims of "systematic patterns." - Qualitative themes ("institutional deafness," "data as mourning") are plausible but inadequately supported by evidence – only 2-3 anonymous quotes provided for each theme. - No comparison with alternative explanations or countervailing evidence. - Claims of "epistemic resistance" are asserted rather than demonstrated through empirical analysis.

****D. Contribution to the Field (2/5)**** - The application of epistemic injustice to humanitarian data is conceptually interesting but lacks empirical novelty. - Findings largely confirm existing knowledge about asymmetric documentation in conflict zones. - Unlikely to be widely cited beyond niche audiences due to methodological limitations.

****E. Writing \ Presentation (3/5)**** - Well-structured but overly theoretical – the 20-page length belies thin empirical content. - Figures and tables are descriptive rather than analytical. - Overuse of jargon ("epistemic trust," "structural silencing") without operational clarity.

****F. Ethical \ Transparency Standards (1/5)**** - ***Critical Omissions***: - No IRB approval mentioned for analysis of sensitive human rights data. - No data/code availability statement – contradicts claims of "verification mechanisms." - Potential confirmation bias in interpreting data through explicitly political theoretical lenses.

****3. Strengths**** - Novel theoretical integration of epistemic injustice with conflict documenta-

tion. - Comprehensive dataset (9,473 records) with temporal breadth. - Important topic with humanitarian relevance.

****4. Weaknesses**** ***Major Flaws*:** - Inadequate statistical analysis – no modeling, hypothesis testing, or spatial analysis despite claims. - Qualitative analysis lacks rigor: no inter-coder reliability, codebook, or thick description. - Overstated conclusions unsupported by evidence (e.g., "digital mourning," "epistemic resistance"). - Failure to address positionality and potential advocacy bias.

***Minor Flaws*:** - Inconsistent citation style (e.g., "Dotson (2011; 2012)"). - Vague methodological descriptions (e.g., "standard software packages"). - Tables missing essential context (e.g., total Ns, time periods for correlations).

****5. Recommendations for Improvement**** ***Required for Resubmission*:** 1. Conduct proper statistical analysis: spatial regression, time-series modeling, and robustness checks. 2. Deepen qualitative analysis: double sample size, provide intercoder reliability metrics, and include direct quotes from multiple sources. 3. Demonstrate triangulation: show exactly how quantitative and qualitative findings inform each other. 4. Address ethical rigor: obtain IRB approval, publish data/code, and discuss researcher positionality. 5. Temper theoretical claims with empirical limitations.

***Aspirational Improvements*:** - Compare documentation practices across different institutional actors. - Incorporate inter-rater reliability for qualitative coding. - Add counterfactual analysis or comparison cases.

****6. Verdict: Weak Reject (2/5)**** This paper raises important questions about epistemic justice in conflict documentation but fails to meet the methodological standards required for a Tier-1 publication. The current evidence does not substantiate its theoretical claims, and the analysis lacks the rigor needed to support its political conclusions. While the topic merits study, this submission requires substantial additional empirical work and methodological transparency before it could be considered for publication. The authors should either conduct proper mixed-methods analysis or reframe this as a theoretical contribution with more modest empirical illustrations.

****Justification**:** The methodological flaws are too fundamental to support the paper's claims, and the political nature of the topic demands especially rigorous evidence. Without significant additional analysis and transparency, the work remains an interesting but unsubstantiated argument rather than a scientific contribution.

Human Reviewer

Expert human review providing domain-specific insights

Reviewer: Tom Cage

Scores (out of 10): - Question 1: 0 - Question 2: 0.5 - Question 3: 0 - Question 4: 0.25 - Question 5: 0.75 - Question 6: 0 - Question 7: 0

Total Score: 1.5 / 10

Reviewer Notes:

Submitted at: 2025-12-25 01:23:06

Aggregate Review

Combined assessment from all reviewers

Aggregate Review Report

This report combines the assessments from all three reviewers:

Individual Scores: - AI Reviewer 1 (Comprehensive): 7.0 / 10 - AI Reviewer 2 (Critical): 0.0 / 10
- Human Reviewer (Tom Cage): 1.5 / 10

Aggregate Score: 2.83 / 10

Overall Assessment: The paper received an average score of 2.83 out of 10 across all three reviewers.

Final Decision: Reject

Justification: The paper does not currently meet the minimum standards for publication.

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