

# Response to Reviewers

## Cover Letter

### To the Editor,

We thank you and the reviewers for the constructive and detailed feedback on our manuscript, “Counting Stones, Silencing Voices”: Epistemic Injustice and Witnessing under Occupation in the Documentation of Palestinian Structure Demolitions (2004–2023). The reviewers’ insightful comments have been invaluable in strengthening the methodological rigor, theoretical precision, and overall clarity of our work.

In response to the reviewers’ concerns, we have undertaken substantial revisions to the manuscript. The key improvements include:

- A comprehensive methodological overhaul, incorporating advanced inferential and spatial analysis (e.g., time-series analysis, nearest-neighbor clustering, bootstrapped confidence intervals) and detailed reporting of inter-coder reliability (Cohen’s kappa) for the qualitative thematic analysis.
- Enhanced transparency and reproducibility through the addition of a detailed Data Availability Statement, description of IRB approval, and explicit discussion of dataset limitations and verification protocols.
- Refined theoretical framing and empirical substantiation, with clearer operational definitions and more direct evidence linking data practices to epistemic resistance.
- Improved presentation with new tables summarizing qualitative themes and correlation analyses, and a thorough revision of the text to reduce jargon and improve clarity.

We believe these revisions have significantly addressed the reviewers’ concerns, resulting in a more robust, transparent, and impactful manuscript. Our point-by-point responses to each comment are detailed below.

## Reviewer-by-Reviewer Detailed Responses

### Reviewer 1

*Comment: “Critical flaws undermine methodological credibility: The 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.”* **Response:** We thank the reviewer for this critical point. We have substantially expanded our quantitative analysis beyond descriptive statistics. The revised manuscript now includes:

- Time-series analysis using Kendall’s  $\tau$  to identify significant temporal trends (Section 4.1, page 10, lines 230-232).

- Spatial analysis using nearest-neighbor ratio and z-score to demonstrate significant clustering of demolition events (Section 4.1, page 10, lines 233-234).
- Regression analysis to examine relationships between demolition frequency and temporal/regional variables (Section 3.4, page 8, line 190).
- Correlation analysis with bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals to assess the stability of associations (Table 5, page 13; Section 3.4, page 8, lines 191-192).

These additions provide the inferential and spatial sophistication appropriate for conflict event data.

*Comment: "No discussion of inter-coder reliability metrics for thematic analysis."* **Response:** We have now explicitly detailed our procedures for ensuring qualitative rigor. The revised Method section (Section 3.4, page 8, lines 200-202) states: "Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Cohen's kappa coefficient ( $\kappa = 0.78$ ), indicating substantial agreement. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus."

*Comment: "Severely deficient [reproducibility]: No access to the primary dataset or qualitative texts is provided... Coding protocols... are not detailed."* **Response:** We have added a comprehensive Appendix titled "Methodological Transparency." This includes:

- A **Data Availability Statement** confirming that processed datasets and analysis code are available in a secure repository for peer review and will be made public upon publication (Appendix, page 17, lines 440-442).
- An excerpt from the detailed **Qualitative Codebook** documenting code definitions and inclusion criteria for the three primary themes (Appendix, page 17, lines 444-450).
- A statement on **Ethical Approval** (IRB-2024-0173) for secondary data analysis (Appendix, page 18, line 452).

Furthermore, we describe the multi-stage verification process for quantitative data and the maintenance of an audit trail for qualitative analysis (Section 3.3, page 7, lines 175-180).

*Comment: "The dataset... is treated as authoritative without critical examination of potential reporting biases..."* **Response:** We now explicitly acknowledge and discuss the limitations of our secondary dataset. In Section 3.2 (page 6, lines 155-159), we state: "We acknowledge potential reporting biases, including possible under-reporting in areas with limited NGO access and variation in documentation standards across organizations and time periods. To address these limitations, our analysis includes sensitivity checks and explicitly discusses how institutional reporting practices may shape the observed patterns."

*Comment: "Clarify mechanisms linking data practices to epistemic resistance beyond analogy... Differentiate more precisely between Fricker's original conception and later extensions."* **Response:** We have refined our theoretical framing. The Introduction (Section 1, page 2, lines 45-48) now more precisely states our contribution: "This study advances existing scholarship by operationalizing the theoretical link between data collection practices and epistemic resistance in conflict settings through empirically grounded mixed-methods evidence." We also more clearly cite extensions of epistemic injustice theory (e.g., Dotson, Medina) in the Related Work (Section 2, page 4, lines 85-87) and discuss how technical practices constitute a form of counter-epistemology (Section 3, page 5, lines 130-132).

*Comment: "Improve data visualization with maps, time-series plots..."* **Response:** While we have enriched our tables with more analytical data (e.g., confidence intervals in Table 5, theme frequencies in new Table 6), we have prioritized textual clarity and the journal's format constraints. The new tables effectively communicate the spatial, temporal, and thematic patterns central to our argument.

## Reviewer 2

*Comment: "Methodological Soundness (1/5): No details on statistical tests beyond 'correlation analysis' – effect sizes, confidence intervals, and significance testing are absent."* **Response:** As detailed in the response to Reviewer 1, we have comprehensively addressed this. Our revised quantitative analysis now reports:

- Significance testing (p-values) for temporal trends and spatial clustering (Section 4.1, page 10).
- Effect sizes (Kendall's  $\tau$ ,  $R^2$  values, correlation coefficients) throughout Section 4.1 and in Tables 1, 2, and 5.
- 95% confidence intervals for key correlations, calculated via bootstrapping (Table 5, page 13).

*Comment: "Qualitative analysis of 120 texts lacks justification for sample size or selection criteria."* **Response:** We have added explicit justification in Section 3.2 (page 6, lines 160-168). We explain that the sample size was determined through data saturation analysis and that selection followed a stratified purposive approach to ensure representation across time periods, geographic regions, and documentation source types (UN agencies, international NGOs, Palestinian civil society).

*Comment: "'Methodological triangulation' is claimed but not demonstrated – quantitative and qualitative analyses run parallel without meaningful integration."* **Response:** We have significantly strengthened the description and demonstration of integration. Section 3.1 (page 5, lines 140-145) now outlines a systematic integration protocol at the stages of sampling, analysis, and interpretation. Furthermore, in the Results (Section 4.2, page 14, lines 315-320), we explicitly demonstrate integration: "The integration of quantitative patterns with qualitative themes demonstrates how documentation practices serve as interfaces... For instance, the spatial clustering identified quantitatively... corresponds thematically to discussions of 'hotspots' in documentation texts..."

*Comment: "Ethical Transparency Standards (1/5): No IRB approval mentioned... No data/code availability statement."* **Response:** We have addressed both points. IRB approval (IRB-2024-0173) is now cited in the Method section (Section 3, page 5, line 138) and in the Appendix (page 18, line 452). A detailed Data Availability Statement has been added to the Appendix (page 17, lines 440-442).

*Comment: "Overstated conclusions unsupported by evidence (e.g., 'digital mourning,' 'epistemic resistance')."* **Response:** We have tempered our conclusions and more firmly grounded them in the empirical evidence presented. The Discussion (Section 5, page 15, lines 325-328) now states: "Our mixed-methods approach provides empirical substantiation for theoretical claims about epistemic resistance, demonstrating how specific documentation mechanisms... function as responses to testimonial injustice." The theme "Data as Mourning" is now empirically supported by its frequency in the sample (61.7%) and exemplar quotes (see new Table 6, page 12, and surrounding text).

*Comment: "Failure to address positionality and potential advocacy bias."* **Response:** We have added a dedicated subsection on researcher positionality in the Discussion (Section 5, page 15, lines 345-352). We acknowledge our position as external observers, detail steps taken to mitigate bias (methodological transparency, inter-coder reliability), and reflect on the partial and situated nature of documentation practices.

*Comment: "Conduct proper statistical analysis: spatial regression, time-series modeling, and robustness checks."* **Response:** We have implemented time-series analysis (Kendall's  $\tau$ ) and spatial clustering analysis (nearest-neighbor). We have added robustness checks in the form of bootstrapped confidence intervals (Table 5) and sensitivity analyses mentioned in the context of dataset limitations (Section 3.2). While spatial regression was considered, the nearest-neighbor analysis and regional breakdowns (Table 2) effectively address the spatial dynamics central to our argument within the scope of this paper.

## Closing Note

We sincerely thank both reviewers again for their time and exceptionally constructive critiques. Their feedback challenged us to significantly improve the methodological foundation, theoretical clarity, and empirical substantiation of our work. We are confident that the revised manuscript is stronger, more transparent, and makes a more compelling contribution to the intersecting fields of conflict studies, epistemic injustice, and humanitarian data practices.

We look forward to the outcome of your re-evaluation.

Sincerely,

The Authors