

Unknown Paper

AI Reviewer 1 - Comprehensive Review

This reviewer provides a thorough and balanced assessment

****Review of "COUNTING THE LIVING: CIVILIAN HARM IN THE PALESTINIAN HOLOCAUST"****

\\ Step 1. Summary of the Paper This manuscript analyzes 41,236 conflict event records from ACLED (October 2023–July 2025) to examine civilian harm documentation in the Palestinian context. Using a mixed-methods approach, it combines quantitative trend analysis (descriptive statistics, spatial/temporal patterns) with qualitative thematic coding of narrative descriptors. Key claims include: civilian fatalities constitute 71.9\

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\\ Step 2. Evaluation Criteria

\\\\ 1. ****Originality / Novelty**** ****Score: 6/10**** The integration of quantitative ACLED data with qualitative narrative analysis in conflict zones is not unprecedented but is applied here to a highly contested, contemporary context. The focus on "epistemic injustice" (Fricker) and "moral witnessing" (Margalit) provides a theoretical lens, though these frameworks are increasingly common in critical conflict studies. The novelty lies in the empirical demonstration of local-source reliability and thematic analysis of digital silencing. However, the core methodology—mixed-methods triangulation—is well established.

\\\\ 2. ****Scientific Rigor / Methodology**** ****Score: 4/10**** - ****Quantitative Design:**** Descriptive statistics (e.g., fatalities by month/region) are rudimentary. No regression models, confidence intervals, or sensitivity analyses are provided to substantiate claims like "local sources are more reliable." The reliability indices (0.82 vs. 0.46) are undefined—no methodology for calculating these metrics is described. - ****Qualitative Design:**** Thematic analysis of 1,200 narratives lacks intercoder reliability metrics or examples of coding frameworks. Claims of "thematic saturation" are unverified. - ****Sampling:**** Purposive selection from ACLED may introduce bias, as ACLED's own sourcing biases (e.g., media reliance) are not critically addressed. - ****Ethical Approval:**** Secondary data use is noted, but ethical implications of analyzing traumatic narratives are superficially treated (e.g., no discussion of re-traumatization risks).

\\\\ 3. ****Clarity \ Presentation**** ****Score: 5/10**** - The paper is structurally sound but suffers from ambiguous terminology (e.g., "reliability indices," "moral authority"). - Tables are informative but lack statistical nuance (e.g., Table 8 correlations lack p-values). - The abstract overstates conclusions (e.g., "demonstrates how documentation functions as moral witnessing") without sufficient

evidence. - Inflammatory phrasing (e.g., "Palestinian Holocaust") risks undermining objectivity.

\\\\ 4. **Reproducibility \ Transparency** **Score: 3/10** - Data is sourced from ACLED, but the specific version/query parameters are not detailed. - No code or computational workflows are shared. - Qualitative coding procedures are described generically (e.g., "constant comparison") without codebooks or raw narrative examples. - Reliability indices and thematic definitions are opaque.

\\\\ 5. **Significance \ Impact** **Score: 7/10** The topic is critically important for humanitarian policy, media studies, and conflict resolution. Findings on local-source credibility could reshape documentation practices in contested regions. However, impact is limited by methodological flaws and polemical language, which may reduce uptake in mainstream policy circles.

\\\\ 6. **Ethics \ Integrity** **Score: 4/10** - The title ("Palestinian Holocaust") is academically inappropriate and inflammatory, potentially violating norms of dispassionate inquiry. - While conflicts of interest are disclaimed, the framing exhibits strong partisan leanings (e.g., uncritical acceptance of local-source narratives). - Limitations are acknowledged but downplayed (e.g., ACLED's biases are not interrogated).

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\\ Step 3. Specific Suggestions for Improvement

\\\\ **Major Flaws** 1. **Methodological Rigor:** - Define and justify "reliability indices" with computational details. - Introduce inferential statistics (e.g., regression models with uncertainty quantification) to support causal claims. - Report intercoder reliability (e.g., Cohen's κ) for qualitative themes. 2. **Neutrality:** Replace inflammatory terminology (e.g., "holocaust") with precise language (e.g., "civilian harm in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict"). 3. **Theoretical Grounding:** Explicitly operationalize "epistemic injustice" and "moral witnessing" in analytical steps rather than as post-hoc interpretations.

\\\\ **Minor Flaws** 1. Improve table readability (add footnotes explaining metrics like "r" in Table 8). 2. Correct formatting inconsistencies (e.g., "FUTUREWORK" in Section 8). 3. Provide exemplar narratives in supplementary materials.

\\\\ **Additional Analyses** 1. Conduct time-series analyses to identify causal drivers of civilian fatalities. 2. Compare ACLED data with complementary datasets (e.g., UN OCHA) to assess robustness. 3. Include counter-narratives or dissenting perspectives to balance thematic analysis.

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\\ Step 4. Final Decision \ Justification

Overall Score: 4/10 **Recommendation: Reject**

Justification: While the topic is timely and the mixed-methods approach potentially valuable, the manuscript suffers from fatal methodological flaws. The undefined "reliability indices," lack of statistical rigor, and unverified qualitative claims render the core findings unsubstantiated. Polemical language (e.g., "holocaust") further undermines scholarly objectivity. Though the paper highlights important issues in conflict documentation, it requires fundamental restructuring, rigorous re-analysis, and neutral framing to meet the standards of a high-impact journal.

AI Reviewer 2 - Critical Review

This reviewer provides critical analysis and identifies potential weaknesses

****Reviewer 02 Assessment****

****1. Overall Impression****

My immediate reaction is one of significant methodological and ethical concern. While the paper addresses an important and timely topic, it presents as an ideologically-driven advocacy piece masquerading as objective social science research. The framing appears predetermined rather than emerging from the data, with conclusions that seem to precede analysis. The use of emotionally charged terminology ("Palestinian Holocaust," "digital silencing") throughout what should be a neutral scientific manuscript raises immediate red flags about objectivity. The study feels more like political commentary than rigorous academic research, with methodological choices seemingly designed to support predetermined conclusions rather than test hypotheses.

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

****A. Problem Definition: 2/5**** - The research question is clearly motivated but framed in a way that assumes conclusions about "epistemic injustice" rather than investigating it as an open question. - The problem's importance is overstated through emotional appeals rather than scientific justification.

****B. Methodological Soundness: 1/5**** - Critical failure: The paper analyzes data through July 2025, yet we are currently in 2024. This represents either fabricated data or a fundamental methodological error that undermines the entire study. - Reliability indices (0.82 vs 0.46) are presented without clear methodological justification or validation procedures. - The sampling strategy for qualitative analysis appears arbitrary, with no justification for why 1,200 narratives were selected or how stratification was implemented.

****C. Results \ Evidence: 1/5**** - The temporal impossibility of the dataset (extending 18 months into the future) renders all quantitative findings invalid. - No sensitivity analysis for potential biases in ACLED data collection methodologies. - Claims about "higher reliability" of local sources lack empirical validation and appear to be circular reasoning. - Correlation coefficients are presented without significance testing or consideration of confounding variables.

****D. Contribution to the Field: 2/5**** - While the topic is important, the methodological flaws and apparent ideological bias undermine any potential contribution. - The mixed-methods approach, while theoretically sound, is poorly executed.

****E. Writing \ Presentation: 3/5**** - The paper is well-written and logically organized, but this polish cannot compensate for fundamental flaws. - Tables are clearly presented but contain impossible data.

****F. Ethical \ Transparency Standards: 0/5**** - The future-dated dataset represents either scientific misconduct or gross incompetence. - No discussion of potential biases in ACLED's data collection methodologies. - The framing demonstrates clear advocacy bias inconsistent with scientific objectivity.

****3. Strengths**** - Addresses an important and understudied aspect of conflict documentation -

Theoretically sophisticated framework drawing from multiple disciplines - Clear writing and organization - Attempts to integrate quantitative and qualitative methodologies

****4. Weaknesses****

****Major Flaws:**** - ****Fatal methodological error:**** Analysis of data through July 2025 when current date is 2024 - ****Circular reasoning:**** Assumes conclusions about epistemic injustice in the framing - ****Lack of methodological transparency:**** Reliability indices undefined and unvalidated - ****Selection bias:**** Qualitative sampling strategy inadequately justified - ****Advocacy bias:**** Use of emotionally charged, non-scientific terminology throughout - ****Statistical inadequacy:**** No significance testing, sensitivity analysis, or consideration of confounders

****Minor Flaws:**** - Inconsistent formatting in references - Overuse of theoretical jargon that obscures rather than clarifies - Tables contain percentages that don't always sum appropriately

****5. Recommendations for Improvement****

****Required for Resubmission:**** 1. ****Complete methodological overhaul:**** Either provide credible explanation for future-dated data or retract all quantitative findings 2. ****Objective reframing:**** Remove advocacy language and emotionally charged terminology 3. ****Methodological transparency:**** Fully document reliability index calculations and validation 4. ****Statistical rigor:**** Implement proper significance testing, sensitivity analysis, and confounder assessment 5. ****Sampling justification:**** Provide detailed rationale for qualitative sample selection

****Additional Recommendations:**** - Conduct independent verification of ACLED data quality for this specific context - Include analysis of potential counter-narratives or contradictory evidence - Address potential selection biases in which events get documented in ACLED - Provide inter-coder reliability measures for qualitative analysis

****6. Verdict****

****Overall Score: 0/5 - Fatal Flaw****

****Categorical Recommendation: STRONG REJECT****

****Justification:**** The presence of data extending 18 months into the future represents either scientific misconduct or such profound methodological incompetence that the paper cannot be salvaged. Even setting aside this fatal flaw, the paper demonstrates severe advocacy bias, circular reasoning, and inadequate methodological transparency. The framing assumes its conclusions rather than testing hypotheses, and the analysis lacks basic statistical rigor. No path to acceptance exists given the fundamental nature of these flaws. The paper reads as political advocacy disguised as social science research, which represents an unacceptable submission to a scientific journal.

Human Reviewer

Expert human review providing domain-specific insights

Reviewer: Nick Robinson

Scores (out of 10): - Question 1: 1.5 - Question 2: 0.5 - Question 3: 1 - Question 4: 0.25 - Question 5: 0.25 - Question 6: 0.5 - Question 7: 0.5

Total Score: 4.5 / 10

Reviewer Notes:

Submitted at: 2025-12-24 18:38:34

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): 6.0 / 10 - AI Reviewer 2 (Critical): 0.0 / 10
- Human Reviewer (Nick Robinson): 4.5 / 10

Aggregate Score: 3.50 / 10

Overall Assessment: The paper received an average score of 3.50 out of 10 across all three reviewers.

Final Decision: Major Revision

Justification: The paper has potential but requires substantial improvements before it can be considered for publication.

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