

Unknown Paper

AI Reviewer 1 - Comprehensive Review

This reviewer provides a thorough and balanced assessment

****Review of "Epistemic Justice and Civilian Testimony in the Gaza Conflict (2023–2024)"****

\\ \\ **** Step 1. Summary of the Paper**** This manuscript examines testimonial credibility and epistemic injustice in the Gaza conflict (2023–2025) using a mixed-methods approach. It analyzes the ACLED Palestine-Israel Conflict Dataset (32,000 events) to quantify conflict dynamics (e.g., Civilian Targeting Index, Infrastructure Destruction Rate) and qualitatively codes 312 narrative segments to explore themes of moral witnessing and communicative resilience. The paper claims to: (1) develop novel quantitative indicators for conflict analysis, (2) bridge quantitative and qualitative methods to study epistemic injustice, (3) extend epistemic justice theory to digital conflict contexts, and (4) provide empirical evidence of structural barriers to testimonial credibility. Findings include strong correlations between violence intensity and reduced humanitarian access/emotional resonance in testimony, regional disparities in communicative resilience, and adaptive testimonial practices under duress.

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

\\ \\ \\ ****1. Originality / Novelty**** ****Score: 6/10**** - ****Strengths****: The integration of epistemic justice theory with conflict event data is underexplored. The development of quantitative indices (e.g., CTI, ETI) to measure structural epistemic injustice is innovative. - ****Weaknesses****: The core concepts (epistemic injustice, moral witnessing) are well-established, and the application to Gaza, while timely, overlaps with existing critical media studies. The mixed-methods approach is standard in social sciences. - ****Justification****: The paper extends but does not radically transform existing frameworks. Novelty lies in methodological triangulation rather than theoretical breakthroughs.

\\ \\ \\ ****2. Scientific Rigor / Methodology**** ****Score: 4/10**** - ****Strengths****: Explicit methodological protocols (e.g., Creswell \ Creswell, 2018) and triangulation are commendable. - ****Critical Flaws****: - ****Data Validity****: Reliance solely on ACLED data risks selection bias. ACLED depends on public sources, which may underrepresent testimonies from areas with total communication blackouts. - ****Indicator Construction****: Metrics like CTI and ETI lack validation against ground-truth data. For instance, ETI's sentiment analysis is not detailed (e.g., lexicon used, inter-coder reliability). - ****Temporal Scope****: Data extends to July 2025 (future dates), undermining credibility. - ****Missing Controls****: No discussion of confounding variables (e.g., Israeli military

narratives, international media bias) in correlation analyses. - **Ethical Approval**: Use of public data avoids consent issues but does not address power imbalances in data production.

\\\\ **3. Clarity \ Presentation** **Score: 7/10** - **Strengths**: Well-structured abstract, clear research questions, and effective use of tables to summarize trends. - **Weaknesses**: - **Jargon Overuse**: Terms like "epistemic agency" and "communicative resilience" are repeated without consistent operationalization. - **Ambiguous Quotes**: Qualitative excerpts (e.g., "Uploading becomes our ceasefire") are poignant but lack contextual metadata (e.g., speaker demographics, verification). - **Overstated Conclusions**: Claims of "measurable evidence for structural epistemic injustice" are not fully supported by methodological limitations.

\\\\ **4. Reproducibility \ Transparency** **Score: 3/10** - **Critical Issues**: - No access to raw narrative data or code for indicator calculation. - Sentiment analysis methodology for ETI is vague (e.g., tools, coding rules). - Sampling criteria for qualitative segments are described but not replicable without data. - **Strengths**: Detailed correlation matrices and temporal trends are provided.

\\\\ **5. Significance \ Impact** **Score: 8/10** - **Strengths**: Addresses urgent humanitarian concerns and highlights systemic biases in conflict reporting. Findings on infrastructure destruction and testimonial suppression could inform policy on protecting communication channels in war zones. - **Limitations**: Impact is constrained by methodological flaws, which may limit uptake in policy circles.

\\\\ **6. Ethics \ Integrity** **Score: 5/10** - **Strengths**: Commitment to "representational dignity" and use of anonymized data aligns with ethical norms. - **Concerns**: - **Positionality Bias**: The paper explicitly centers Palestinian voices but does not reflect on how this influences interpretation (e.g., no discussion of potential counter-narratives). - **Conflict of Interest**: No declaration of funding or ideological affiliations. - **Data Integrity**: Future-dated data (e.g., 2025) suggests possible fabrication or serious error.

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

\\\\ **Major Flaws (Must Address)** 1. **Data Issues**: - Explain or correct references to data beyond 2024. If projected, clarify methodology. - Validate ACLED data with complementary sources (e.g., UN reports, local NGOs) to address selection bias. 2. **Methodological Rigor**: - Provide full details on sentiment analysis (e.g., dictionary, machine learning model) and inter-coder reliability for qualitative coding. - Demonstrate robustness of indices (e.g., CTI) via sensitivity analyses. 3. **Theoretical Balance**: - Acknowledge and engage with counterarguments (e.g., Israeli security narratives) to avoid perceived partisan framing. 4. **Reproducibility**: - Share code/algorithm for indicator calculations and a sample of annotated qualitative data.

\\\\ **Minor Flaws** - Reduce repetitive phrasing (e.g., "structural epistemic injustice" appears 12 times). - Clarify acronyms (e.g., IDR, ETI) upon first use in each section. - Fix formatting inconsistencies in references (e.g., italicization, author lists).

\\\\ **Additional Analyses to Strengthen Manuscript** - Conduct multivariate regression to control for confounders (e.g., international media attention). - Compare ACLED data with other conflict datasets (e.g., UCDP) to assess robustness. - Include interviews with journalists or humanitarian workers to contextualize quantitative trends.

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

\\\\ **Overall Score: 5/10** The paper addresses a critical topic with theoretical ambition and methodological innovation but is marred by fatal flaws in data integrity and reproducibility. The future-dated data alone necessitates major revision. While the mixed-methods approach and emphasis on epistemic justice are valuable, the analysis lacks the rigor expected for a high-impact journal.

\\\\ **Recommendation: Reject** **Justification**: - **Fatal Flaws**: References to data up to July 2025 invalidate the empirical foundation. Without clarification or correction, the study cannot be trusted. - **Methodological Weaknesses**: Unvalidated indices, opaque sentiment analysis, and reliance on a single dataset undermine claims. - **Ethical Concerns**: Positionality is acknowledged but not critically examined, risking perceived advocacy over objectivity. - **Potential for Resubmission**: If the authors address data issues, enhance methodological transparency, and engage more deeply with counter-narratives, this could be a compelling contribution. As presented, it does not meet the bar for publication.

Confidential Note to Editor: This paper tackles a politically sensitive topic with courage, but its academic rigor is compromised. I recommend rejection unless the authors can substantiate the data anomalies and address methodological gaps. If revised, ensure strict blind review to avoid bias.

AI Reviewer 2 - Critical Review

This reviewer provides critical analysis and identifies potential weaknesses

****REVIEWER COMMENTS****

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

My immediate reaction is one of significant methodological and conceptual concern. While the topic of epistemic justice in conflict zones is undoubtedly important, this manuscript presents as an overhyped study that attempts to mask fundamental flaws in research design with sophisticated theoretical framing. The paper feels like an ideological project retrofitted with quantitative indicators rather than a rigorous scientific inquiry.

Strengths include the ambitious theoretical integration and timely subject matter. However, major concerns include: questionable operationalization of key constructs, circular reasoning in methodology, potential confirmation bias in analysis, and the fundamental problem of analyzing "epistemic injustice" using data that by the authors' own admission may reflect systematic silencing.

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

A. ****Problem Definition**** - Score: 3/5 • The research question is clearly motivated from a theoretical perspective but suffers from operational ambiguity. While the authors convincingly argue why epistemic justice matters, they fail to establish how their methodological approach can adequately measure it given their own claims about systematic silencing.

B. ****Methodological Soundness**** - Score: 2/5 • Critical flaws: The operationalization of "Empathic Tone Index" and other indicators appears arbitrary and lacks validation. The claim of "methodological triangulation" is undermined by circular reasoning - using the same ACLED data for both quantitative and qualitative analysis doesn't constitute true triangulation. The statistical analysis is descriptive rather than inferential, with no control for multiple comparisons or temporal autocorrelation.

C. ****Results \ Evidence**** - Score: 2/5 • The correlations presented (e.g., $r=0.87$ between CTI and IDR) are tautological rather than revealing - these measures likely capture overlapping aspects of conflict intensity. The qualitative analysis shows clear selection bias toward emotionally resonant narratives. Claims about "systematic patterns" are overstated given the descriptive nature of the analysis.

D. ****Contribution to the Field**** - Score: 2/5 • While the theoretical ambition is notable, the empirical contribution is minimal. The paper repackages existing conflict data with new terminology rather than providing novel insights. The methodological innovations are more apparent than real.

E. ****Writing \ Presentation**** - Score: 4/5 • The paper is well-written and logically organized, with clear theoretical framing. Tables are appropriately presented, though some captions lack sufficient methodological detail.

F. ****Ethical \ Transparency Standards**** - Score: 3/5 • While using publicly available data addresses some ethical concerns, the lack of detailed coding protocols for qualitative analysis and the absence of inter-coder reliability measures undermine transparency. No evidence of misconduct, but methodological choices raise questions about objectivity.

****3. Strengths****

• Ambitious theoretical integration across multiple disciplines • Timely examination of an important humanitarian issue • Clear writing and logical organization • Attempt to bridge quantitative and qualitative approaches

****4. Weaknesses****

****Major Flaws:**** • Circular methodology: Claims to study epistemic injustice using data that may itself reflect that injustice • Unvalidated indicators: No evidence that "Empathic Tone Index" or other constructed measures actually capture intended constructs • Statistical naivete: Treating descriptive correlations as evidence of causal mechanisms • Confirmation bias: Qualitative analysis appears designed to confirm theoretical expectations • Tautological findings: Many "discoveries" simply restate the conflict's obvious dynamics

****Minor Flaws:**** • Inconsistent citation format in references • Some theoretical concepts introduced but not fully integrated • Tables lack sufficient methodological detail for replication

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

****Required for Resubmission:**** 1. ****Validation of measures****: Provide empirical evidence that constructed indicators (ETI, CTI, etc.) actually measure intended constructs through pilot testing or external validation. 2. ****True methodological triangulation****: Incorporate independent data sources beyond ACLED to avoid circularity. 3. ****Robust statistical analysis****: Move beyond descriptive correlations to models that account for confounding factors and temporal dependencies. 4. ****Demonstrate qualitative rigor****: Provide intercoder reliability statistics, detailed coding manuals, and evidence of seeking disconfirming cases. 5. ****Address selection bias****: Systematically examine what types of testimonies are NOT present in the data and how this affects conclusions.

****Would Strengthen Future Submission:**** • Comparative analysis with other conflict zones to establish generalizability • Experimental or survey components to directly test credibility attribution • Network analysis of how testimonies circulate and are validated • Examination of counter-narratives or contradictory evidence

****6. Verdict****

****Overall Score: 2/5 - WEAK REJECT****

****Justification****: This paper addresses an important topic with theoretical sophistication but suffers from fundamental methodological flaws that undermine its scientific contribution. The circular research design, unvalidated measures, and descriptive statistical approach prevent the paper from providing credible evidence for its claims. While the theoretical framework is promising, the empirical execution fails to meet the standards of a Tier-1 venue. The paper requires substantial methodological revision and additional validation before it could be considered for publication. The burden of proof for claims about epistemic injustice requires more rigorous evidence than provided here.

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****Reviewer 2 Style Addendum****: I remain deeply skeptical about the empirical foundations of this study. The authors must demonstrate that their methodological approach can actually test rather than simply illustrate their theoretical commitments. The current design appears engineered to

produce expected results rather than to genuinely investigate the complex dynamics of testimonial credibility.

Human Reviewer

Expert human review providing domain-specific insights

Reviewer: Shah Alam

Scores (out of 10): - Question 1: 1.5 - Question 2: 0.5 - Question 3: 0.5 - Question 4: 0.75 - Question 5: 0 - Question 6: 0.5 - Question 7: 0

Total Score: 3.75 / 10

Reviewer Notes:

Submitted at: 2025-12-24 18:35:37

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 (Shah Alam): 3.75 / 10

Aggregate Score: 3.25 / 10

Overall Assessment: The paper received an average score of 3.25 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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