

Unknown Paper

AI Reviewer 1 - Comprehensive Review

This reviewer provides a thorough and balanced assessment

****Review of "ERASING THE FUTURE: SYSTEMATIC SCHOOL DESTRUCTION IN GAZA AS EPISTEMIC GENOCIDE (2023–2025)"****

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

This manuscript analyzes the systematic destruction of educational infrastructure in Gaza from October 2023 to July 2025 using the UNOSAT Education Cluster Dataset (564 school buildings). Employing a mixed-methods concurrent-triangulation design, the authors integrate quantitative spatial-statistical analysis with qualitative thematic analysis of humanitarian narratives. Key findings indicate 97\

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

\\\\ ****1. Originality / Novelty**** ****Score: 7/10**** - ****Strengths****: The integration of satellite data with epistemic injustice/moral witnessing frameworks is innovative. The concurrent-triangulation design bridges a gap between quantitative damage assessment and qualitative narrative analysis in conflict studies. - ****Weaknesses****: The core concept of documenting school destruction in conflict zones is not new (e.g., GCPEA reports). The term "epistemic genocide," while provocative, lacks rigorous theoretical grounding and may overextend existing legal/intellectual frameworks.

\\\\ ****2. Scientific Rigor / Methodology**** ****Score: 6/10**** - ****Strengths****: The use of a complete census dataset (N=564) and mixed-methods design is methodologically sound. Statistical analyses (correlations, descriptive statistics) are appropriately applied. - ****Weaknesses****: - ****Causality vs. Correlation****: The paper implies intent ("targeting") based on correlational data (e.g., $r=0.58$ for UNRWA ownership), but does not adequately address confounding variables (e.g., proximity to military assets, urban warfare dynamics). - ****Sampling Bias****: Qualitative narratives are sourced exclusively from UNRWA/UNOSAT reports, potentially introducing institutional bias. - ****Ethical Oversight****: While secondary data analysis is noted, the paper does not clarify if ethical review was obtained for using sensitive humanitarian data.

\\\\ ****3. Clarity \ Presentation**** ****Score: 5/10**** - ****Strengths****: The structure follows conventional scientific formatting, and tables are informative. - ****Weaknesses****: - ****Terminology****: Overuse of jargon (e.g., "epistemic annihilation," "sociomoral dimensions") obscures clarity. -

****Abstract/Conclusion****: The abstract overstates claims by framing findings as "systematic erasure" without sufficient causal evidence. Conclusions veer into advocacy, compromising objectivity.
****Figures/Tables****: Tables are data-dense but lack contextual explanation (e.g., how "governorate density" is operationalized).

\\\\ ****4. Reproducibility \ Transparency**** ****Score: 4/10**** - ****Strengths****: The UNOSAT dataset is publicly available, and methods are described in detail. - ****Weaknesses****: - ****Code/Data Accessibility****: No mention of code sharing (e.g., R scripts for correlation analyses). - ****Geographic Anonymization****: Fuzzing coordinates beyond 300m may hinder independent verification. - ****Statistical Reporting****: p-values, confidence intervals, or robustness checks for correlations are omitted.

\\\\ ****5. Significance \ Impact**** ****Score: 8/10**** - ****Strengths****: Addresses a critical humanitarian issue with potential policy implications for protecting education in conflict zones. The methodological template could be adapted to other conflicts. - ****Weaknesses****: The polarized political context of Gaza may limit broader acceptance. The framing as "genocide" is likely to be contentious and could detract from scholarly discourse.

\\\\ ****6. Ethics \ Integrity**** ****Score: 5/10**** - ****Strengths****: Acknowledges data anonymization and secondary data use. - ****Weaknesses****: - ****Conflict of Interest****: No declaration of authors' institutional affiliations or potential biases (e.g., advocacy ties). - ****Sensationalism****: Terms like "epistemic genocide" risk misappropriating legal concepts without rigorous substantiation. - ****Limitations Discussion****: Superficial; fails to address how political context may influence interpretation.

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

\\\\ ****Major Flaws**** 1. ****Causal Overreach****: Revise language to avoid implying intent (e.g., replace "targeting" with "disproportionate impact"). Acknowledge alternative explanations (e.g., urban warfare density). 2. ****Theoretical Grounding****: Justify the novel term "epistemic genocide" with robust legal/philosophical references. Differentiate it from "cultural genocide" or "educide." 3. ****Methodological Transparency****: Provide full statistical outputs (p-values, CI) and share analysis code. Clarify how "governorate density" was quantified.

\\\\ ****Minor Flaws**** 1. ****Language****: Reduce jargon; define terms like "epistemic injustice" for interdisciplinary audiences. 2. ****Citations****: Include key literature on Gaza's education system (e.g., works by Nurit Peled-Elhanan). 3. ****Formatting****: Standardize reference formatting (e.g., inconsistent capitalization in bibliography).

\\\\ ****Additional Analyses**** 1. Conduct spatial regression to control for confounders (e.g., proximity to conflict hotspots). 2. Include counter-narratives or data from non-UN sources to mitigate sampling bias. 3. Perform sensitivity analyses to test correlation robustness.

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

****Overall Score: 6/10**** ****Recommendation: Borderline****

****Justification****: This paper addresses a timely and critical issue with methodological innovation

in its mixed-methods approach. However, it suffers from **causal overinterpretation** of correlational data, **inadequate engagement with confounding variables**, and **overly sensationalist terminology** ("epistemic genocide"). While the findings are significant for humanitarian practice, the lack of statistical rigor and potential bias in qualitative sources undermines its scholarly contribution. The manuscript requires major revisions to: 1. Reframe claims to align with correlational (not causal) evidence. 2. Strengthen theoretical grounding for novel concepts. 3. Improve transparency in data analysis and ethical disclosures.

Until these issues are addressed, the paper is not suitable for publication in a high-impact journal. If revised, it could contribute meaningfully to conflict studies and education policy.

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AI Reviewer 2 - Critical Review

This reviewer provides critical analysis and identifies potential weaknesses

****Overall Assessment:**** This manuscript presents a mixed-methods analysis of educational infrastructure destruction in Gaza, framed within concepts of epistemic injustice and genocide. While addressing a timely and critical humanitarian issue, the paper suffers from fundamental methodological flaws, unsubstantiated causal claims, and a pervasive lack of objectivity that severely undermines its scientific credibility. The conflation of correlation with causation and the absence of critical counterfactual analysis render its central thesis scientifically unsupported.

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

****Immediate Reaction:**** A politically charged polemic masquerading as objective social science. The language is advocacy-oriented from the abstract onward, precluding balanced scholarly analysis. ****Contribution Level:**** Incremental in its mixed-methods application to a new dataset, but fundamentally overhyped and weakened by a predetermined, activist framing that dictates the analysis rather than emerging from it. ****First Impression:**** ****Strengths:**** Addresses a significant and under-documented humanitarian crisis. The use of a recognized UN dataset (UNOSAT) provides a concrete basis for quantitative analysis. The attempt to bridge quantitative damage assessment with qualitative human impact is methodologically ambitious. ****Concerns:**** The paper is built on a foundation of confirmatory bias. The conclusion ("epistemic genocide") is presented as a premise, and the analysis is structured to confirm this pre-ordained label rather than test a hypothesis. The conflation of statistical correlation with evidence of "intent" or "targeting" is a fatal logical flaw.

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

****A. Problem Definition: 3/5**** * The research question is clearly motivated by a severe real-world event. The problem's significance is undeniable. * However, the framing is not as a neutral inquiry (e.g., "What are the patterns and potential drivers of school destruction?") but as a prosecutorial brief aiming to prove a specific, highly charged conclusion ("epistemic genocide"). This undermines the objectivity expected of Tier-1 research.

****B. Methodological Soundness: 1/5**** ****Unacceptable.**** The core methodological flaw is the treatment of correlation as causation. A correlation between school damage and population density ($r=0.71$) is as consistent with indiscriminate bombardment in dense urban areas as it is with "targeting." The paper provides no analysis to distinguish between these radically different explanations. ****Hidden Assumption:**** The entire argument rests on the unstated and unproven assumption that the conflict dynamics are one-sided and that the destruction is exclusively intentional and malicious. There is no discussion of potential military use of facilities (despite mentioning their use as shelters, which can attract fire if combatants are present), the fog of war, or the challenges of urban warfare, which are essential for a balanced assessment. ****Cherry-Picking:**** The theoretical framework is selectively built around "epistemic injustice" and "moral witnessing," which are inherently accusatory frameworks. There is no engagement with literature on the complexities of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) compliance in dense urban terrain or counter-insurgency

operations that might provide alternative, non-genocidal explanations for the observed damage patterns.

C. Results \ Evidence: 2/5 * The descriptive statistics on damage are compelling and well-presented. The damage is extensive and tragic. **Lack of Baselines:** There is no comparison to the destruction rates of *other* types of civilian infrastructure (e.g., hospitals, residential buildings, mosques). If 95% **Exaggeration of Claims:** The leap from correlation coefficients ($r=0.58$ for UNRWA ownership) to claims of "systematic targeting," "intent to erase," and "epistemic annihilation" is a massive exaggeration unsupported by the evidence presented. The statistical evidence demonstrates *patterns*, not *intent*.

D. Contribution to the Field: 2/5 * The methodological template of linking satellite damage assessment with qualitative narratives is a potential contribution. * However, the paper's heavy, unsupported bias and lack of scholarly rigor mean it is unlikely to be cited as a reliable, authoritative source on the topic outside of advocacy circles. It would be used as a polemic, not as a scientific foundation for future research.

E. Writing \ Presentation: 3/5 * The paper is logically organized and generally readable. * The tables are clear and informative. * The language, however, is frequently inflammatory and unscientific (e.g., "pulverized," "the color of dust," "mockery"), which is inappropriate for a scholarly publication and further reveals the authors' advocacy position.

F. Ethical \ Transparency Standards: 2/5 * The use of secondary, anonymized data is ethically sound. **Transparency Failure:** The paper lacks a critical conflict of interest statement. The strong, consistent, one-sided political framing suggests a significant ideological commitment that should be disclosed. **Questionable Research Practice:** The primary questionable practice is the presentation of a predetermined political conclusion as the result of neutral scientific inquiry. The analysis is constructed to confirm, not to test.

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3. Strengths

* Compilation and analysis of a unique, high-stakes dataset (UNOSAT). * Ambitious attempt to integrate quantitative and qualitative methods to tell a human story behind the statistics. * Highlights a severe and pressing humanitarian and educational crisis that demands international attention.

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4. Weaknesses

Major Flaws: 1. **Causation vs. Correlation:** The fundamental logical error of equating spatial correlations with evidence of intent. 2. **Confirmatory Bias:** The entire study is designed to prove "epistemic genocide," not to investigate the patterns and causes of destruction. 3. **Missing Counterfactual Analysis:** No comparison of school damage rates to damage rates of other civilian infrastructure categories. 4. **Lack of Objectivity / Advocacy Framing:** The paper reads as a legal or activist brief, not a dispassionate scientific study. Theoretical frameworks are selected exclusively to support the accusatory conclusion. 5. **Unsubstantiated Causal Language:** Use of terms like "targeting," "intent," and "systematic erasure" without the requisite evidence to support such claims.

Minor Flaws: * Inflammatory and non-scientific language throughout. * The reference list contains numerous placeholder citations (e.g., "?", "Iriqat et al. (2025)"), indicating it is incomplete or fabricated.

5. Recommendations for Improvement

Required for Resubmission (Anywhere): 1. **Reframe the Study:** Reposition the paper as a neutral analysis of "Patterns and Correlates of Educational Infrastructure Destruction in Gaza." Remove all conclusory language about "genocide," "intent," and "targeting" from the analysis and let the data speak for itself in the Results section. 2. **Conduct Critical Control Analyses:** * Obtain data on damage to other building types (residential, commercial, medical, religious) across the same governorates. * Statistically compare the damage rate of schools to the damage rate of these other structures. Only if schools are shown to be damaged at a *significantly higher rate* could a hypothesis of "targeting" be entertained. 3. **Revise the Theoretical Framework:** * Integrate literature on the challenges of IHL in urban warfare and the principles of distinction and proportionality. Acknowledge the complexity of the operational environment as a potential confounding variable. 4. **Tone and Language:** * Replace all advocacy language with neutral, scientific terminology.

What Would Make It Acceptable: * A complete revision that addresses the points above, transforming the paper from an advocacy piece into a rigorous, hypothesis-testing scientific study. The authors must demonstrate that they have genuinely considered and tested alternative explanations for their findings, rather than simply marshaling evidence for a pre-determined conclusion.

6. Verdict

Overall Score: 1/5 - Strong Reject

Justification: * This paper presents a serious and tragic humanitarian situation but fails as a scientific contribution to a Tier-1 journal due to fatal methodological and logical flaws. The core argument—that correlation proves intent and therefore genocide—is academically irresponsible and represents a severe overreach unsupported by the evidence presented. The pervasive bias and lack of scholarly objectivity preclude publication in its current form. The paper offers no credible path to acceptance without a complete philosophical and methodological overhaul that would essentially constitute a new manuscript.

Human Reviewer

Expert human review providing domain-specific insights

Reviewer: Rachel

Scores (out of 10): - Question 1: 1.5 - Question 2: 0.5 - Question 3: 0 - Question 4: 0 - Question 5: 0.25 - Question 6: 0.5 - Question 7: 0

Total Score: 2.75 / 10

Reviewer Notes:

Submitted at: 2025-12-24 18:27:30

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 (Rachel): 2.75 / 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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