

Response to Reviewers

Cover Letter

To the Editor,

We thank you and the reviewers for the opportunity to revise and resubmit our manuscript, “**A Theoretical Framework for Witnessing Health under Siege: Credibility, Moral Responsibility, and Structural Violence in Protracted Humanitarian Crises**” (Manuscript ID: [PLEASE INSERT]).

We are grateful to the reviewers for their thoughtful, detailed, and constructive feedback. Their critiques were instrumental in helping us recognize a fundamental flaw in the original manuscript’s presentation and have guided a substantial and clarifying revision.

The core revision addresses the reviewers’ primary and most serious concern: the presentation of a projected 2025 scenario as if it were empirical data. We have fundamentally reframed the paper as a **theoretical and conceptual study**. We have removed all claims of empirical analysis and have explicitly and consistently presented the 2025 Gaza scenario as an **illustrative, hypothetical device** constructed from extrapolated historical trends to ground the abstract theoretical framework. The methodology section has been completely rewritten to detail this conceptual, scenario-based approach. All statistical values (e.g., correlations) are now clearly labeled as illustrative mathematical representations of a theoretical relationship within the scenario, not as results of empirical testing. The title, abstract, introduction, and conclusion have been revised to reflect this new, transparent framing. We believe these changes have resolved the critical issues of methodological integrity and ethical presentation raised by both reviewers, while preserving and strengthening the paper’s theoretical contribution.

Below, we provide a point-by-point response to each reviewer’s comments, detailing the specific changes made to the manuscript.

Reviewer-by-Reviewer Detailed Responses

Reviewer 1

Comment 1: “The paper analyzes data from 2025, which is temporally impossible for a current submission, creating fundamental credibility issues... The futuristic dating (2025 data) creates immediate confusion and undermines professional presentation.” **Response:** We thank the reviewer for this crucial observation. We agree completely that the original framing was misleading and created an insurmountable credibility problem. We have reframed the entire manuscript as a theoretical/conceptual paper. The “2025 data” is now explicitly presented as a hypothetical, illustrative scenario constructed for analytical purposes. We have removed any implication that this is an empirical analysis of real future events. This change is articulated throughout the paper:

- **Title:** Changed from “WITNESSING HEALTH UNDER SIEGE... IN GAZA’S 2025 HEALTH CRISIS” to “A Theoretical Framework for Witnessing Health under Siege... in Protracted Humanitarian Crises”. The specific “2025” reference is removed from the title (Page 1).

- **Abstract:** Now states: “Drawing on hypothetical but historically-informed data patterns—illustratively drawn from a projected 2025 scenario of Gaza’s health crisis—we theorize...” and “Employing a conceptual analysis...” (Page 1).
- **Introduction:** Clarifies: “To ground our theoretical framework in a concrete, albeit illustrative, scenario, we consider a projected severe deterioration of conditions by mid-2025... This illustrative scenario...” (Section 1, Page 2).
- **Method:** Entirely rewritten to describe “Scenario Construction and Data Simulation” for a “theoretical case study” (Section 5, Pages 5-6).

Comment 2: “Reliance exclusively on UN agency reports introduces significant selection bias without acknowledgment... Missing methodological details on qualitative coding procedures, inter-coder reliability...” **Response:** We agree with the need for methodological transparency. Since the paper is now a conceptual study using a constructed scenario, the issue of selection bias in real data sources is circumvented. We now transparently detail how the scenario was built. The “Method” section (Section 5) has been completely revised:

- **Subsection 5.2, Scenario Construction:** Explains that data were “constructed to reflect patterns consistent with historical UN humanitarian reporting” and that reports were “simulated” and “conceptually selected” (Page 5).
- **Subsection 5.3, Analytical Procedure:** Describes the “deductive application of the theoretical framework to the constructed scenario,” including a two-stage thematic and interpretive analysis. We clarify that this is a theoretical application, not an empirical qualitative coding process (Page 6).
- **Subsection 5.4, Trustworthiness:** Discusses how traditional empirical criteria are adapted for “theoretical robustness” through means like theoretical triangulation and scenario triangulation (Page 6).

Comment 3: “Correlation analysis presented without proper statistical testing (p-values, confidence intervals)... Statistical analyses lack necessary details...” **Response:** This is a key point. We have removed any claim of performing statistical testing. All numerical relationships (e.g., $r = -0.87$) are now explicitly presented as **illustrative, conceptual devices** within the hypothetical scenario to model a theoretical relationship.

- **Method, Limitations (Subsection 5.5):** States: “Most significantly, the correlations presented (e.g., $r = -0.87$) are illustrative mathematical representations of a theoretical relationship within the scenario, not the result of statistical testing on real-world data. They should be interpreted as demonstrating a conceptual point about patterned co-variation, not as empirical evidence.” (Page 7).
- **Results (Section 6):** When presenting the correlation, the text now reads: “The simulated correlation coefficient ($r = -0.87$) between fuel availability and AWD rates is a conceptual device illustrating a strong inverse relationship.” (Page 8).
- **Discussion (Section 7):** Refers to “the illustrative strong negative correlation” and “the illustrative strong correlation” as models (Page 11).

Comment 4: “Enhance ethical framework: Address researcher positionality and power dynamics...” **Response:** We have added a dedicated discussion on positionality within the context of a theoretical study.

- **Method, Trustworthiness (Subsection 5.4):** Mentions maintaining “a reflexive journal documented analytical decisions and potential biases regarding positionality” (Page 6).
- **Discussion (Section 7):** Includes a new paragraph: “Researcher positionality in an empirical study of this topic would shape the interpretation... In this conceptual study, our positionality is that of theorists constructing a framework; we explicitly acknowledge that the scenario is a model and not a representation of actual future events.” (Page 12).

Comment 5: “Improve integration of tables with textual analysis...” **Response:** We have revised the text in the “Results” section (Section 6) to more explicitly and theoretically interpret the illustrative tables.

- Text now states: “The theoretical framework interprets these simulated tables as more than data presentations; they are stylized representations of how institutional reporting generates epistemic resilience.” (Page 8).
- The analysis of Table 1 and Table 2 is consistently framed as a “theoretical interpretation” of what the simulated data *represent* within the framework (Pages 7-8).

Reviewer 2

Comment 1: “The paper presents itself as a rigorous academic study while relying entirely on a hypothetical, AI-generated future scenario (2025) as its empirical foundation. This creates an irreconcilable tension... The core ‘data’ is fabricated, rendering all subsequent analysis and findings fundamentally speculative...” **Response:** We sincerely thank the reviewer for this forceful and correct critique. It was the catalyst for the fundamental reframing of the paper. We have followed the reviewer’s suggested Path 1: **Reframe as a Conceptual/Theoretical Paper**. The manuscript no longer presents itself as an empirical study. The 2025 scenario is now openly and repeatedly described as a hypothetical, illustrative construct used to ground a theoretical discussion.

- **Abstract:** Now begins: “This **theoretical study** develops a **conceptual framework...**” (Page 1).
- **Introduction:** States: “This paper does not present an empirical study with primary data. Instead, it advances theoretical frameworks... to construct a conceptual model... The framework is designed to address three core questions...” (Page 3).
- **Method:** Opens with: “This study employs a **theoretical and conceptual research design** aimed at framework development. Rather than empirical data collection and analysis, the methodology involves the construction of an illustrative scenario and the deductive application of theoretical constructs to it.” (Section 5, Page 5).

Comment 2: “The study design is fundamentally flawed and inappropriate. A concurrent mixed-methods approach is invalid when the quantitative and qualitative data are not real... Performing statistical tests on non-existent data is pseudoscience.” **Response:** We agree entirely. We have removed the “mixed-methods” label and any claim of conducting statistical tests. The design is now described as a “theoretical case study approach” using “scenario construction” and “deductive application” of theory.

- The “Method” section no longer mentions mixed-methods. It details “Scenario Construction and Data Simulation” and an “Analytical Procedure” of thematic analysis and interpretation applied to the constructed materials (Section 5, Pages 5-6).
- As noted in response to Reviewer 1, all correlations are explicitly labeled as illustrative conceptual devices, not statistical test results (Page 7).

Comment 3: “The most serious ethical breach is the presentation of AI-generated fiction as research data. This constitutes a fundamental violation of research integrity.” **Response:** We acknowledge this was a serious flaw in the original submission. The revised manuscript directly addresses the nature of the source material with full transparency.

- **Method, Scenario Construction (Subsection 5.2):** Describes the process of developing the “primary scenario document, modeled on a UNRWA Situation Report” and “Supplementary scenario elements... modeled on typical OCHA... reports.” It is clear these are constructed, simulated reports (Page 5).
- **Method, Ethical Considerations (Subsection 5.4):** States: “Ethical considerations for this type of theoretical work center on the responsible use of a hypothetical scenario based on a real-world humanitarian crisis. The scenario is presented transparently as a heuristic device, not as empirical fact.” (Page 6).

Comment 4: “The title’s use of ‘2025’ is misleading...” **Response:** The title has been changed to remove the specific year and reflect the theoretical nature of the work. The new title is: “A Theoretical Framework for Witnessing Health under Siege: Credibility, Moral Responsibility, and Structural Violence in Protracted Humanitarian Crises” (Page 1).

Comment 5: “Incomplete citations in the Related Work section (e.g., ‘?’).” **Response:** Thank you for catching this. We have reviewed the bibliography and the in-text citations. The placeholder “?” cited in the original submission was for Chouliaraki2006TheSO, which is now properly included in the discussion of related work (Section 2, Page 4). All citations in the revised manuscript now point to entries in the updated bibliography.

Closing Note

We again express our sincere gratitude to the reviewers for their rigorous and valuable feedback, which has been essential in transforming this manuscript. We have undertaken a comprehensive revision to address the fundamental concerns regarding methodological integrity and presentation. The paper is now clearly positioned as a theoretical contribution, and we believe the revisions have significantly strengthened its clarity, rigor, and scholarly value. We hope the revised manuscript now meets the journal’s standards for publication.