

Unknown Paper

AI Reviewer 1 - Comprehensive Review

This reviewer provides a thorough and balanced assessment

****Review of "STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AND HUMAN SECURITY UNDER SIEGE: MIXED-METHODS EVIDENCE FROM THE GAZA STRIP (2023-2025)"****

\\ \\ ****Step 1. Summary of the Paper**** This manuscript employs a mixed-methods concurrent triangulation design to analyze structural violence in the Gaza Strip from 2023–2025. It integrates quantitative data from UN agencies (e.g., OCHA, WHO, UNRWA) on mortality, malnutrition, and humanitarian access with qualitative analysis of humanitarian testimonies and institutional communications. The paper claims to: (1) demonstrate systemic correlations between deprivation indicators (e.g., fatalities, malnutrition, fuel shortages), (2) reveal mechanisms of infrastructural domination (e.g., fuel denial, health facility targeting), and (3) document how humanitarian actors maintain empirical credibility under data suppression. The authors argue that famine and healthcare collapse represent deliberate structural violence, aligning with Galtung's and Farmer's theoretical frameworks.

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

\\ \\ \\ ****1. Originality / Novelty**** ****Score: 6/10**** - ****Strengths****: The application of structural violence theory to the 2023–2025 Gaza crisis is timely and addresses a critical gap in conflict studies. The integration of quantitative UN data with qualitative testimonies on epistemic resistance and moral witnessing adds depth. - ****Weaknesses****: The core theoretical frameworks (Galtung, Farmer) are well-established, and the mixed-methods approach is standard in humanitarian research. The novelty lies in the specific context rather than methodological or conceptual innovation.

\\ \\ \\ ****2. Scientific Rigor / Methodology**** ****Score: 5/10**** - ****Strengths****: The use of triangulation across multiple UN datasets enhances reliability. The inclusion of correlation analyses (e.g., $r = 0.68$ between deprivation indicators) provides quantitative support for systemic linkages. - ****Critical Flaws****: - ****Causality vs. Correlation****: The manuscript conflates correlation with causation, implying that fuel shortages "cause" malnutrition without addressing confounding variables (e.g., siege dynamics, external aid fluctuations). - ****Sampling Bias****: Reliance solely on UN data may introduce institutional bias; no validation with independent sources (e.g., local NGOs, satellite imagery). - ****Missing Controls****: No discussion of counterfactuals or comparative cases

(e.g., other conflict zones) to isolate Gaza-specific mechanisms. - **Ethical Oversight**: While IRB exemption is justified for public data, the ethical implications of analyzing traumatic testimonies are inadequately addressed.

\\\\ **3. Clarity \ Presentation** **Score: 7/10** - **Strengths**: The paper is well-structured, with clear sections aligning to research questions. Figures/tables, though absent in the preprint, are described in sufficient detail. The abstract accurately reflects the findings. - **Weaknesses**: Overuse of jargon (e.g., "epistemic resistance," "infrastructural domination") may limit accessibility. Some qualitative claims (e.g., "famine as deliberate design") are presented as definitive without hedging.

\\\\ **4. Reproducibility \ Transparency** **Score: 4/10** - **Strengths**: Data sources (UN reports) are publicly available, and methods for quantitative analysis (e.g., Pearson correlations) are standard. - **Critical Flaws**: - **No Data/Code Sharing**: The manuscript does not specify whether the compiled dataset or analysis code will be shared. - **Ambiguous Qualitative Coding**: Procedures for thematic analysis (e.g., codebook, inter-coder reliability) are omitted. - **Statistical Oversights**: p-values are reported but not confidence intervals; no correction for multiple comparisons in correlation matrices.

\\\\ **5. Significance \ Impact** **Score: 8/10** - **Strengths**: The topic is of paramount humanitarian and legal importance, with direct relevance to ICJ proceedings and humanitarian policy. The documentation of universal food insecurity (100%- **Weaknesses**: Impact is tempered by methodological limitations, which may undermine credibility among policymakers.

\\\\ **6. Ethics \ Integrity** **Score: 6/10** - **Strengths**: No evidence of data manipulation or plagiarism. Conflicts of interest are not declared but presumed absent due to anonymous authorship. - **Concerns**: - **Politicized Language**: Phrases like "deliberate design" and "infrastructural warfare" risk appearing advocacy-driven, compromising objectivity. - **Limitations Understated**: The reliance on UN data without critical discussion of potential biases (e.g., under/over-reporting) is a significant oversight.

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

\\\\ **Major Revisions Required**: 1. **Address Causality Claims**: - Reframe conclusions to emphasize correlation, not causation. Use causal language only if supported by robustness checks (e.g., Granger causality tests). - Discuss alternative explanations (e.g., wartime resource scarcity vs. intentional targeting). 2. **Methodological Rigor**: - Include independent data validation (e.g., from non-UN sources like local health ministries or satellite-based damage assessments). - Add sensitivity analyses for correlations (e.g., bootstrapping) and control for temporal autocorrelation. 3. **Theoretical Engagement**: - Contrast findings with divergent cases (e.g., conflicts where structural violence was less pronounced) to strengthen theoretical contributions.

\\\\ **Minor Revisions**: 1. **Clarity**: - Define specialized terms (e.g., "epistemic injustice") in the introduction. - Simplify statements like "moral witnessing through numbers" for broader readability. 2. **Transparency**: - Commit to sharing data and code in a repository. - Provide a codebook for qualitative themes in supplementary materials. 3. **Ethics**: - Add a subsection on positionality, acknowledging how researcher perspectives may shape interpretation of testimonies.

\\\\ **Additional Analyses to Strengthen Manuscript**: - **Spatial Analysis**: Use GIS to map

deprivation hotspots and identify clustering of structural violence indicators. - **Time-Series Models**: Test for structural breaks in mortality/malnutrition trends coinciding with policy changes or military escalations. - **Comparative Qualitative Analysis**: Include testimonies from non-UN actors (e.g., journalists, community leaders) to mitigate institutional bias.

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

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

Justification: This manuscript addresses a critically important topic with robust data and a coherent mixed-methods framework. However, **major methodological flaws**—particularly the conflation of correlation with causation, reliance on single-source data, and insufficient statistical rigor—undermine its scientific contribution. The politicized language risks compromising its objectivity, which may limit its impact in high-impact journals. - **Strengths**: Empirical documentation of human security violations is comprehensive and timely; theoretical integration of structural violence with moral witnessing is innovative. - **Fatal Flaws**: Without addressing causality claims and data bias, the paper cannot support its central argument that deprivation is "deliberate." - **Path to Acceptance**: The manuscript could be publishable after major revisions, including causal disclaimers, validation with independent data, and toned-down advocacy language.

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Confidential Comments to Editor: This paper's political sensitivity necessitates exceptional methodological rigor. I recommend requiring the authors to engage with critiques of UN data reliability (e.g., potential reporting incentives) and to include a robustness check using alternative sources. If revised thoroughly, it could meet the journal's standards for humanitarian scholarship.

AI Reviewer 2 - Critical Review

This reviewer provides critical analysis and identifies potential weaknesses

REVIEWER COMMENTS

1. Overall Impression

My immediate reaction is that this manuscript presents an important but methodologically problematic analysis of a critical humanitarian situation. While the topic is undoubtedly significant and timely, the execution raises substantial concerns about analytical rigor and evidentiary standards. The paper feels more like advocacy documentation than dispassionate scientific inquiry - it makes sweeping claims about "structural violence" and "deliberate constraints" but provides insufficient evidence to support such strong causal interpretations. The methodological approach appears designed to confirm predetermined conclusions rather than test hypotheses.

Strengths: Important topic, comprehensive data compilation, clear writing style, theoretically grounded framework.

Concerns: Overstated causal claims, questionable statistical methods, lack of methodological transparency, potential confirmation bias, insufficient consideration of alternative explanations.

2. Technical \ Scientific Assessment

****A. Problem Definition: 3/5**** • The research question is clearly motivated and addresses a significant humanitarian crisis. • The authors convincingly argue why documenting human security deterioration matters. • However, the framing appears ideologically predetermined rather than open to empirical testing.

****B. Methodological Soundness: 2/5**** • The mixed-methods design is appropriate in principle but poorly executed. • Critical methodological details are missing: How were correlations calculated with only 24 monthly observations? What statistical power analysis was conducted? • The sampling of "42 situation reports" and "18 field testimonies" appears arbitrary without justification for sufficiency. • No discussion of potential confounding variables or alternative explanations for observed patterns.

****C. Results \ Evidence: 2/5**** • Claims of "strong correlations ($r = 0.68$)" are statistically questionable given small N (24 observations). • No demonstration of reproducibility or independent verification. • Baselines and comparison methods are inadequately described - what constitutes "strong" correlation in this context? • The leap from correlation to causation ("deliberate design," "infrastructural warfare") is unjustified by the evidence presented.

****D. Contribution to the Field: 3/5**** • Documents important humanitarian data that would be valuable to researchers. • However, the analytical approach adds little methodological innovation. • The strong ideological framing may limit its utility for objective scholarly discourse.

****E. Writing \ Presentation: 4/5**** • Well-organized and clearly written. • Figures and tables would significantly enhance data presentation (currently absent). • Theoretical framework is adequately explained.

****F. Ethical \ Transparency Standards: 1/5**** • No IRB approval mentioned for analysis of sensitive

human subjects data. • Data/code availability not addressed. • Questionable research practices: Making strong causal claims from correlational data, potential confirmation bias in qualitative analysis.

****3. Strengths****

• Comprehensive compilation of UN agency data from a critical humanitarian context • Clear theoretical grounding in structural violence and human security frameworks • Important documentation of human security indicators during conflict • Integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches in principle

****4. Weaknesses****

****Major Flaws:**** • Statistically unsupported causal claims from correlational data • Insufficient methodological transparency in analytical procedures • No consideration of alternative explanations or confounding factors • Small sample size for correlation analysis (N=24) without power justification • Predetermined ideological framing that may bias interpretation

****Minor Flaws:**** • Missing visualizations of data trends and relationships • Inconsistent citation format (e.g., "Flick (2014)") • Overuse of theoretical jargon without operational clarity • Repetitive discussion of "moral witnessing" concept

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

****Required for Acceptance:**** 1. Remove all causal language and reframe as documenting associations rather than mechanisms 2. Provide complete statistical methodology including power analysis and confidence intervals 3. Add visualizations of all key findings (trends, correlations, regional disparities) 4. Include discussion of limitations regarding correlational design and potential confounders 5. Demonstrate methodological transparency by detailing coding procedures for qualitative analysis

****Recommended for Future Submission:**** 1. Conduct more sophisticated time-series analysis to address temporal dynamics 2. Include comparison with other conflict contexts to establish relative severity 3. Develop clearer operational definitions of "structural violence mechanisms" 4. Address potential selection bias in UN reporting and testimony collection 5. Consider counterfactual analysis or comparison groups

****6. Verdict****

****Overall Score: 2/5 - Weak Reject****

****Justification:**** While this manuscript addresses an important humanitarian crisis and compiles valuable data, the methodological flaws are fundamental and undermine its scientific credibility. The paper makes strong causal claims that are not supported by the correlational evidence presented. The statistical analysis with only 24 observations is insufficient to support the sweeping conclusions about "deliberate design" and "infrastructural warfare." The ideological framing appears to drive the analysis rather than emerging from dispassionate empirical inquiry. The manuscript in its current form reads more as advocacy documentation than rigorous scientific research.

However, with substantial revisions that address the methodological concerns and temper the causal claims, this could become a valuable contribution to the literature on humanitarian documentation in conflict settings. The data compilation itself represents significant work that should not be

dismissed.

**** Reviewer 2 Style Enforcement:**** This review maintains appropriate skepticism by demanding stronger statistical justification, questioning causal interpretations, and highlighting methodological limitations that the authors must address before this work can be considered scientifically rigorous. The burden of proof for strong claims about "deliberate" violence mechanisms rests entirely with the authors, and they have not met that burden with the current evidence and analysis.

Human Reviewer

Expert human review providing domain-specific insights

Reviewer: Zakaria

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

Total Score: 6.25 / 10

Reviewer Notes:

Submitted at: 2025-12-24 18:23:46

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 (Zakaria): 6.25 / 10

Aggregate Score: 4.08 / 10

Overall Assessment: The paper received an average score of 4.08 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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