REVIEW ARTICLE

Parrhesia in Qualitative Research: Unveiling Truths, the Critique of Power, and Embracing Risk

Nitel Araştırmada Parrhesia: Gerçeklerin Ortaya Çıkarılması, İktidar Eleştirisi ve Riski Kucaklamak

Sibel Bekiroğlu [ID]

İzmir Katip Çelebi University, Department of Sociology, İzmir, Türkiye

Abstract

This work examines a range of qualitative research approaches used in the field of social sciences, including phenomenology, content analysis, action research, critical research, and critical discourse analysis. This argument underscores the significance of adopting a Foucauldian lens, which serves to question the binary opposition between realist and idealist underpinnings in the realm of research methodologies. The text provides an introduction to the notion of "fearless speech" or parrhesia, which is distinguished by its frankness, truth-telling, and acknowledgment of risk. Furthermore, it underscores the inherent danger associated with truth-telling, particularly when confronting those in positions of authority. This study seeks to provide insights into the ethical and methodological dilemmas faced by urban sociology and war and peace studies. The article finishes by establishing a connection between the qualitative research principles and research conducted on the phenomenon of urban fabric destruction. In that way, it is an attempt not only to question the theoretical basis but also to influence the ethical aspects of qualitative research in the intricate context of urban fabric destruction.

Keywords: Parrhesia, Qualitative Research, Critical Discourse Analysis, Action Research, The Destruction of Urban Fabric.

Öz

Bu çalışma, fenomenoloji, içerik analizi, eylem araştırması, eleştirel araştırma ve eleştirel söylem analizi de dahil olmak üzere sosyal bilimler alanında kullanılan bir dizi nitel araştırma yaklaşımını incelemektedir. Bu tartışma, araştırma metodolojileri alanında realist ve idealist temeller arasındaki ikili karşıtlığı sorgulamaya hizmet eden Foucaultcu bir merceğin benimsenmesinin öneminin altını çizmektedir. Metin, açık sözlülüğü, gerçeği söylemesi ve riski kabul etmesiyle ayırt edilen "korkusuz konuşma" ya da parrhesia kavramına bir giriş sunmaktadır. Ayrıca, özellikle otorite konumundaki kişilerle karşı karşıya gelindiğinde, hakikati söylemenin doğasında var olan tehlikenin altını çizmektedir. Bu çalışma, kent sosyolojisi ile savaş ve barış çalışmalarının karşılaştığı etik ve metodolojik açmazlara ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır. Makale, bu ilkeler ile kentsel dokunun tahrip edilmesi olgusu üzerine yapılan araştırmalar arasında bir bağlantı kurarak sona ermektedir. Bu şekilde, sadece teorik temeli sorgulamakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda kentsel dokunun tahribatının karmaşık bağlamında nitel araştırmanın etik yönlerini etkilemeye yönelik bir girişimdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Parrhesia, Nitel Araştırma, Eleştirel Söylem Analizi, Eylem Araştırması, Kentsel Dokunun Yıkımı.

Parrhesia in Qualitative Research:
Unveiling Truths, the Critique of Power, and Embracing Risk

This study aims to undertake a critical examination of methodological arguments and debates on research ethics that have arisen in recent years in relation to the study of urban destruction, commonly referred to as urbicide (Graham, 2002, 2004, 2010; Coward, 2004, 2007, 2009; Abujidi, 2014; Weizman, 2007, 2017). Urbicide is understood as the outcome of disoriented violence (Kardeş, 2019). The examination of urban environments characterized by pervasive conflict and violence has garnered growing interest within the realm of contemporary research, particularly in the social sciences. Consequently, this has sparked ethical discussions around the methodologies used in the study of violence. The primary objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive methodological framework and ethical guidelines for doing research on the urban aspect of violence.

This study investigates several qualitative research methodologies used within the realm of social sciences, including phenomenology, content analysis, action research, critical research, and critical discourse analysis. This argument highlights the need to use a Foucauldian perspective, which aims to interrogate the dichotomy between realism and idealist foundations within the domain of research methodology. The paper is an introductory overview of the concept of "fearless speech" or parrhesia, characterized by its candidness, commitment to truth, and recognition of potential hazards. Moreover, it highlights the inherent danger linked to the act of truth-telling, especially when challenging those occupying positions of power. The study concludes by demonstrating the relationship between these concepts and the research undertaken on the problem of urban fabric destruction.

Qualitative Decisions and Parrhesia

Qualitative Research methodology has wide-ranging genres and traditions varying with respect to structure, purpose, political positioning, format, and level of reflexivity. Currently, the prevailing research methodologies in the field of social sciences are as follows: phenomenology, content analysis, action research (militant research,) critical research, and critical discourse analysis. The first is the phenomenological approach, which can be identified as "the study of the nature and meaning of things -a phenomenon's essence and essentials that determine what it is […] focus[ing] on concepts, events, or the lived experiences of humans" (Saldaña, 2011, pp. 7-8). By concentrating on capturing the essence of the meanings and experiences, this method is employed when the objective is to get a close awareness and knowledge of how individuals perceive things. The other primary methodological technique employed in this study, besides the phenomenological approach, is content analysis. The qualitative content analysis seeks to uncover manifest and latent meanings in the text depending on the context rather than a rash quantification (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Krippendorff, 2004; Saldaña, 2011).

Action research is another method used in the research process. According to this approach, critical analysis is done on the participants' social surroundings and daily life. The stated goal of action research is not merely to observe social life but to reflect on participants' or researchers' behavior or work together with participants to improve their environment and circumstances (Saldaña, 2011, p. 18). In that sense, action research is a social practice in and of itself. A fresh understanding of interactions between researchers and those being investigated, or, to put it another way, redefining the link between theory and practice and between "theorists" and "practitioners," is one area where action research methods generally coincide (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 4). Critical research, as described by Cannella and Perez' critical bricolage, is having knowledge "necessary to recognize contemporary and contextual ideologies, cultural practices, and dominant political agendas that surround the situation to be researched" (Cannella & Perez, 2009, p. 172). Thus, the critical researcher is a critical bricoleur in Cannella and Perez's work (2009), "a hybrid body that is researcher, cultural worker, investigative

journalist, and activist/communicator for the public good" (p. 172).

Similarly, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has an activist fabric, focusing on discourse with a particular emphasis on the social worker's role. According to Van Dijk, CDA is a form of analytical research focusing on how text and language in the social and political environment act out, perpetuate, and oppose the effects of power, domination, and inequality (2001, p. 352). The analysts take an explicit stance with this dissident research to investigate, expose, and ultimately struggle for social equality.

It will be apparent that the methodologies employed above and procedures for qualitative research design are different from those used in traditional research ways regarding how the four components—researcher, research object, society, and power relations—interact with one another. In this manner, there is a shared rationale for these approaches and strategies. In the studies regarding the destruction of the urban fabric, the link between the four components of the above-mentioned research and the grounding of this link is important. The meaning adopted here is more anchored in a Foucauldian sense, even though I accept that the term technique fairly has a highly positivist tenor. In fact, the language employed to describe the relationship developed with the research object inevitably takes on a positivist sub-meaning, blurring the semantic boundary between the researcher and the research object. The studies employing this approach go around from the viewpoint of a power relationship, particularly regarding the connection between the researcher and the research object. In epistemological terms, the dominant methodological models of research methods are based on realist and idealist foundations. The realist model differs from the idealist model in terms of the position of the researcher and the definition of reality. For a realist researcher, social reality exists independently of the knowing subject. The subject can only access this reality if and only if it is objectively free of its values. In this sense, it separates value and truth, subject and researcher in the act of knowing. Thus, a hierarchical relationship, the so-called objective, is established between the knowing subject and the known object. Cooke summarizes it as follows: "the knower must eliminate all bias and preconceptions, must not be emotionally involved in the knowing process, and must use value-free, neutral language" (Cooke, 1994, p. 48).

On the other hand, the idealist model sees social reality as entirely a product of the knowing subject. Reality is not a state that can be separated from the subject; we need to produce objective means to reach it. The researcher or the knowing subject can relate to reality without any objective grounding. The primary substratum of this model is described as follows: "Regardless of practices used to separate the knower from sources of bias, the knower always actively selects theories, methods, and interpretation" (Cooke, 1994, p. 48). These two models discussed here in very rough outlines are sort of combined by Foucault. In a methodological sense, what he did is summarized by Cooke as follows:

> Foucault has rendered both of these perspectives problematic by showing that the objective nature of the real and the independent, meaning giving nature of the subject are both built on particular, historical practices that are not power neutral. In other words, the very strategies used by the realist and the idealist models to make use of understanding without direction from another are in fact replete with effects that direct. (1994, p. 48)

This critical understanding of Foucault was defined by himself as "fearless speech" or parrhesia, which is positioned against the official discourse's truth weapons. Parrhesia, a Greek word (*pan*: everything and *rhésis*: speaking) meaning 'truth telling' (Dyrberg, 2014) or 'freedom of speech' (Peerbolte, 2018), is an important concept for understanding Foucault's political ethics and also his methodic approach. In the lecture on "The Meaning of the Word *Parrhesia*," Foucault (2019) summarized the characteristics of the concept with five important relationships: frankness, truth, danger, criticism, and duty.

According to a systematic social analysis, a social researcher should have these five interrelated attributes. Frankness, the first of these traits, refers to a method in which the researcher discloses all

relevant information without distinguishing between other researchers and the research object. The second feature is based on how belief and reality interact. Although its pejorative image of inhibiting faith in God stems from its critical perspective, there is an unmistakable agreement between belief and reality. Foucault describes it as follows: "One uses *parrhēsia*, of course, when he tells truth because he is certain that it is truth. But somebody is said to use *parrhēsia*, and deserves to be considered as a *parrhesiast*, if and only if there is a risk, there is a danger for him in telling the truth" (2019, p. 42). This characteristic indicates the subjective position of the researcher and that there is a truth in this positioning. The relationship between danger and parrhesia is linked to its connection with truth. The relationship to truth entails risk, as we shall cover in more detail later in the text.

> when a philosopher addresses himself to a king, to a sovereign, to a tyrant, and tells him that tyranny is unable to make him happy because tyranny is not compatible with justice, in this case the philosopher says the truth, in this énoncé there is an exact coincidence between belief and truth, and, more than that, the philosopher takes a risk, because the tyrant may become angry, may punish him, may exile him, may kill him. (Foucault, 2019, p. 42)

The studies regarding the destruction of urban fabric substitute 'researcher' for 'philosopher' in this lengthy Foucault passage and 'tyrant' for 'political power' for 'firing' for 'killing.' "For in *parrhesia*, the danger always comes from the fact that the said truth is capable of hurting or angering the interlocutor" (Foucault, 2001, 17). This already entails criticizing the interlocutor. This entails criticism from the weak to the strong or from the bottom up and goes beyond merely speaking up for what is true. Political morality enables the researcher to comprehend his/her motivation concerning the truth.

In that sense, being a key concept in the discussion of three axes in Foucault's theoretical positioning, this performative practice is, in a nutshell, "the courageous practice of speaking truth to power in an act of subjective affirmation and resistance" (Mcfalls & Pandolfi, 2018, p. 173). In other words, Foucault's political-ethical methodic approach is "the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth" (Foucault, 1997, p. 33). In that sense, it is not wrong to define it as *anti-method*.

> Truth itself is a ruse in the game of power/knowledge. By recognizing truth in this way, Foucault […] is able to raise his principle question: "How can the growth of capabilities be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?" Because of his attempt to explore the capabilities in social practices without resorting to the power effects of truth about those capabilities, Foucault's method has been called an *anti method* […]). As Keeley (1990) notes, Foucault is not interested in theorizing or in hypotheses. Instead, Foucault encourages a researcher to adopt an attitude of contestability, to *apply analytic devices*, and to *explore possibilities*. (Cooke, 1994, p. 56)

According to this methodical approach, neither is the researcher a way of being that can be stripped of its values, nor is reality a mere idea. All this mode of relating is power relations. This reflexive understanding, which I will discuss in more detail in the section on the researcher's positioning, is an important maxim in this methodological approach. From this point of view, this article aims to create a toolkit for those who study war, destruction, and their relationship with the city and to open a path in this field where there is not yet a clear path.

Ways of Knowing and the Positionality of the Researcher

Knowledge production is realized through fieldwork conditions, the researcher's positioning, and the interrelationship of research experiences. In this section, I will discuss various ways of knowing and their political-ethical positions based on human rights and social justice. The political-ethical part will be the focus of the following section as it directly evokes the researcher's positioning. Thus, I will first

focus on the participatory research approach as it illustrates the way knowledge production and the researcher's positioning are addressed in the article.

The political-ethical component of the researcher's perspective and approach to the research object is more prominent than in other disciplines when researching conflict, devastation, trauma, death, and loss. One of the reasons for this prominence is that even while the researcher no longer has any control over the legal, moral, and essential repercussions of the archives, recordings, or experiences s/he has made publicly accessible, her/his obligation still exists. The ethical and scientific issues surrounding archive and recording have drawn increased attention, especially since the 1990s with the introduction of the televisual age. Credible recording, tracking the victim's footprints, logjams for those who are not captured on film because of the camera's (or the language's) framing restrictions, and invisible zones—all of these put a heavy burden on the researcher because of how they relate to reality. In this way, documenting and tracking a war or destruction is a political activity in and of itself. Therefore, the information and records gathered may be utilized to create commons rather than only for future conflict and peace. In other words, these records can become not only a projective tool for the future but also a tool for creating commons in the present and, in this sense, a socially transformative force. Here, the researcher's political-ethical responsibility is to see that what is discovered is debated and that the records are carefully kept. One of the most crucial considerations in achieving this, which should not be disregarded, is to allow the record or archive to fulfill its societal function without fetishizing it. Failure to consider this possibility may result in a position of denial and reality distortion, which is particularly frequent in conflict research owing to the circumstances: An allegation that something is not real is supported by the fact that it is not documented. Clare Harris talks about the creative aspect of visual material: "The photographic record of that body, therefore, becomes a positive affirmation of an ongoing stream of presence rather than a memorial to absence" (2004, p. 144). This way, the agency is multiplied and dispersed through the record or archive. Regarding this agency, the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach has something to say.

PAR is an umbrella term informed by key methodologies and theoretical frameworks. The first of these is critical theory, which focuses particularly on the construction of the subject, power relations, and the relationship between structure and agency. The subject's political construction argues that individuals' daily lives are shaped by social and political-economic conditions, even if not at the level of consciousness, and vice versa. In this case, two critical claims for PAR are supported. The first one draws attention to the power relations in the daily lives of the interviewees. The researcher is cautioned to consider those he or she researches within a web of power relations. This is especially important in research that is sensitive, dangerous, and where power relations are deepened. Secondly, the researcher must be aware of his or her own position. This methodological approach, which requires reflexive positioning, points to the position of the researcher as both a form of power and a relationality to exploitation.

Similarly, feminist theory methodologically feeds PAR by contributing to critical theory's discussion of subject construction. In particular, making the invisible visible contributes to PAR in terms of the political understanding of the everyday. Finally, critical education theorists conceptualize the merging of practice with theory through Paul Freire's concept of "conscientization" (*conscientização*.) His humanistic approach, affected by the postcolonial school, led him to work on both the oppressed and the oppressor's liberation. This dialectical approach is what Freire understood from praxis. Conscientization, in that sense, is the process of empowering subjects' "achieving a deepening awareness of the social realities which shape their lives and discover their capacities to recreate them" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 14). This demonstrates how critical raising uncovers and produces a setting for the researcher to recreate and shape according to his or her potential conditions.

Critical theorists, whose historical context is described above, have advanced this strategy by reflexively addressing the dialectical cohabitation of theory and practice in the genuine meaning of the word. *Critical participatory action research* is a critical approach to the conventional scientific steps like formulating a research question, arranging the research environment, and analysis of the data. Kemmis et al. (2014) claim that critical participatory action research has two practical effects that distinguish it from the conventional ways of knowing. First, it is a self-reflexive way of approaching problems, which enables researchers as participants to consider feelings and emotions in our daily routine and work life. Second, it also takes into consideration the conditions which shape the episteme of the researchers as participants in the field. According to Kemmis et al. (2014),

> Interrogating our practices (with the help of others around us) involves interrogating both ourselves and the circumstances in which we find ourselves— looking 'inside' ourselves and 'outside' towards the conditions that shape how we think, what we do, and how we relate to others and the world. (p. 7)

This way of relating affects not only the research and its findings but also how the researcher is perceived by society and, thus, the researcher-society relationship. In that sense, the three axes of reality, knowledge, culture (society), and power relations, are guiding figures in such conditions since "recognizing the researcher's positionality as a social actor is necessary "to understand the links that exist between the development of scientific thought, the cultural context and the power structures of society" (Taylor et al., 2020, p. 12). "Native saying, 'Researchers are like mosquitoes; they suck your blood and leave'" (Cochran et al., 2008, p. 22). This proverb captures the reality of the researcher's positionality, which has a political basis. The research seems to have had little effect on the objects of the research. In other words, the researcher's hierarchical positioning leads to the research object's instrumentalization. In this case, the research object is abstracted from all value judgments and their consequences in the name of objectivity. This potentially troubling situation is even more ethically challenging in human rights-based research. In this sense, research committed to human rights and social justice principles has a dual vision "in which one eye could imagine the possibilities of an ideal world while the other more sober eye recognizes the stark reality of oppressive conditions of marginalized individuals, groups, and communities (Maschi, 2016, p. 2).

It is vital to recognize that a researcher's personal history is often overlooked despite being just as important as the research question itself. To Maschi's (2016) concept of *double/dual vision*, I suggest the addition of *inner vision* or *mirror vision*. This involves the researcher navigating between the ideal and the real world while also critically examining their own position as a witness to this process. It is not a positivist undertaking, as the subject is constantly evolving and leaving behind an element of incompleteness and surplus. Therefore, what is omitted is just as significant as what is shared, and what is relinquished is equally as important as what is chosen. Schwartz-Shea and Yanow summarize this discussion eloquently:

> as field relationships develop and unfold, the types and degrees of access achieved position the researcher geographically in the field setting, which itself can shape access to other circumstances and groups; and this, in turn, can profoundly affect what the researcher sees or does not see, learns and does not learn. This process can take place as one is drawn more deeply into one network rather than another, opening some doors while simultaneously closing down other avenues. (2012, p. 68)

I believe that the researcher's personal and professional background should receive greater attention in qualitative research, especially in which narration and meaning are the key components. The dominant academic practice in qualitative research is making the information regarding the participants visible as a way to contextualize the study. However, allocating space for the researcher's personal history has

not been a common attitude in qualitative methodologies in the scientific community. The importance of the personal history of the researcher is discussed by Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012) as such:

> researchers' demographic characteristics and personal backgrounds may be critical to accessing research settings and/or actors. Sex, age, education, physical agility and (dis)ability, class, religion, race-ethnicity, language mastery and accent, birthplace, possessing a driver's license, and other elements in a growing list of intersectional factors comprising individual "identity" can all contribute to generating access to research situations—or to having it blocked. (p. 67)

Particularly in narrative studies, it is important to be more transparent when presenting the researchers' "overall world perspective" because it will invariably influence their work (Miyahara, 2015, p. xi).

In conflict zones, this problem takes on a far greater significance. Dynamic patterns of violence are a common feature of conflicts. In such environments of violence, as Butler (2009) mentions, life and death are also part of a mechanism of power. In Butler's terms, the frames of violence

> are themselves operations of power. They do not unilaterally decide the conditions of appearance but their aim is nevertheless to delimit the sphere of appearance itself. On the other hand, the problem is ontological, since the question at issue is: What is a life? The 'being' of life is itself constituted through selective means; as a result, we cannot refer to this 'being' outside of the operations of power, and we must make more precise the specific mechanisms of power through which life is produced. (2009, p. 1)

From this perspective, these politically saturated frames have an ethical dimension. Moreover, certain challenges, such as security, validity, and access, position the researcher as an important and possible truth-teller in such politically saturated environments. Defined through destruction, temporal fractures, war, and necropolitics, urbicide (Bekiroğlu, 2023) establishes an ethical bond between the rubble and the researcher. This is, of course, also a political bond and "puts us all on one side or the other" (Foucault, 2003, p. 51).

As Foucault states, Parrhesia is, first and foremost, a political notion. And politics here is closely related to Foucault's notion of governmentality. Referring to antiquity in his alethurgical study of the word, Foucault mentions two types of uses for this term. One of them is directly related to the governance of the city and refers to the governance of a city in the democracy of antiquity, where anyone can say anything. In antiquity, the moral subject is realized through the governance of the city (*civitas, Latin in origin*) and, therefore, the citizen (*citoyen, Latin in origin*). But in this sense, the parrhesiast, as saying everything, cannot "index their discourse to reason" (2019, p. 10). The other is the telling of the truth without any distortion, without hiding anything; in this sense, it is connected to the truth (2019, p.10). In the second sense, Foucault speaks of parrhesia's symbiotic relationship with risk: in this sense, "the truth subject to risk of violence" (2019, p. 11). In this sense, especially in times of war, destruction, and death, telling the truth poses a risk. In urbicide situations of violence, death, and destruction, telling the truth can be "deployed as criticism of prejudices, of existing forms of knowledge, of dominant institutions, of current ways of doing things" (2019, p. 30). Although Foucault says that there is no parrhesiast in modern times, scientific discourse, as he acknowledges, can also play a parrhesiastic role.

The Destruction of Urban Fabric and Parrhesia

In weaving a cohesive narrative throughout this article, the concept of parrhesia emerges as a unifying thread that intricately connects the theoretical underpinnings of parrhesia with its pragmatic application in qualitative research on urban fabric destruction. Positioned within a Foucauldian perspective, parrhesia not only challenges the traditional dichotomy between realism and idealism in research methodologies, as discussed in the first part, but it also functions as a methodological and ethical anchor.

This fearless commitment to truth becomes particularly poignant in the investigation of urban fabric destruction, where dispossession, displacement, and gentrification intersect with a necropolitical modality of power. The act of truth-telling, as guided by parrhesia, unveils the inherent dangers associated with challenging power dynamics, emphasizing its ethical dimensions and establishing it as a form of positioning against oppressive forces contributing to the decay of urban spaces. In this way, the fearless speech inherent in parrhesia not only interrogates theoretical foundations but also actively shapes and informs the ethical dimensions of qualitative research in the complex terrain of urban fabric destruction.

In times of war, discourse ethics is an important field of study, especially when we consider psychological warfare. At this point, Zehfuss (2019) puts the ethical dilemma in front of us with all its clarity while making the following warning that we should heed from the outset:

> War does not become unethical because soldiers fail to live up to the required standards or because weapons are not yet sophisticated enough. It cannot be made ethical by reinforcing rules. Rather, war is always already implicated in the production of ethics. The very vision of what I call ethical war deconstructs from within. (p. 258).

As a product of the industrial era, mechanized warfare emerges as a kind of space sharing in the form of appropriation of a certain terra, subsurface, and air (Wu, 2023, p. 54). To the point that *the apartment* building, as a notion of the city, becomes "the emblem of a militarized perception that conceives of a world wholly absorbed into the space of mediation, where domestic habitat is no longer shielded or exempted from the sacrifices of war." (Mann, 2022, p. 3) In this sense, the demolition of the urban fabric and its ethical dimension has been very strongly muddled.

In the last quarter of 2023, the genocide in Gaza and the concomitant urbicide have brought the debates on truth-telling, research ethics, and the position of the researcher back to the agenda for researchers working in these fields. The destruction of the urban fabric can be addressed from the frameworks of dispossession, displacement, and even gentrification related to neoliberal policies, but on the other hand, as in the case of Gaza, it can also correspond to a necropolitical modality of power. Death, corpse, annihilation, and the other -cides suffix attached to them (e.g., memoricide, identicide, homicide, etc.) point to the necessity of underlining the relationship established with truth-telling in research and the ethical dimension of this relationship.

According to Graham (2010), we are currently observing the phenomenon of the "war's re-entering the city." The post-modern period has significantly contributed to the assertion of the all-encompassing power of monitoring and control systems facilitated by the rapid advancements in high technology. Even within the context of the Syrian civil war, certain technological devices such as drones and cameras play a substantial role. In the context of the post-modern era, the utilization of technology has become integral to both social interactions and the structure of urban environments. The concept of omnipotence results in a significant transformation in the dynamics between warfare and urban environments sometimes referred to as a "paradigmatic shift." In the contemporary period, the traditional dichotomies such as private-public, internal-external, economic-political, civil-military, and combatant-noncombatant, which Kaldor (2012) identified as significant differentiations of modernity, have lost their relevance.

The case of Gaza serves as an exemplary instance of scenarios where different structures, including infrastructure and private establishments, including residences and supermarkets, are both the intended targets and the origins of the threat (Graham, 2010, p. xiii). According to Kaldor (2012), a significant majority of the victims in contemporary conflicts are non-combatants, with civilian casualties accounting for over 90% of the total. According to Kaldor (2012), "over 90% of the casualties in the

new wars are civilian. [...] The strategy is to gain political power through sowing fear and hatred, to create a climate of terror, to eliminate moderate voices, and to defeat tolerance" (p. 159). Kaldor (2012) posits that the propagation of animosity and taught hatred is a result of deliberate instruction underpinned by a specific ideology. The aforementioned attributes of warfare have a profound influence on the urban, hence giving rise to a body of literature known as urbicide.

Firstly, it is necessary to analyze the underlying reasoning behind a contemporary nation-state's decision to fully deconstruct the infrastructure within a certain region, hence incurring substantial expenses. In alternative terms, the notion of causing damage to its own infrastructure within the context of a nation-state mentality may seem paradoxical, as the concept of a nation-state inherently suggests a state of cultural, social, linguistic, and territorial homogeneity. Nevertheless, this does not result in an inconsistency. According to Wendy Brown (2010), in her book entitled *The Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*,

> [f]irst, even as those across a wide political spectrum neoliberals, cosmopolitans, humanitarians, and left activists fantasize a world without borders (whether consequent to global entrepreneurship, global markets, global citizenship, or global governance), nation-states, rich and poor, exhibit a passion for wall building. (p. 20).

Inside the confines of the nation-state, the construction of culture, language, social dynamics, and other related aspects occurs through the process of marginalizing individuals who do not conform to the dominant group. Consequently, inside these boundaries, identities are shaped both in terms of physical location and abstract understanding. According to Stavrides (2010), a frame is distinguished by the distinct separation between a *contained space* and an *outer space*. The elements outside the frame are not considered in the determination of the interior space (Stavrides, 2010, p. 30). What is the significance of a nation-state experiencing internal disintegration inside its territorial boundaries? Moreover, what is the significance of a nation-state engaging in a siege of a city that it has already established authority over, employing similar tactics as a conqueror would? What are the dynamics behind the necropolitical order that resulted in hundreds of deaths with any single solid building? For the first inquiry, Weizman addresses the visibility-related logic of the debris. In his words:

> The logic of visibility - to both see and be seen - dictated the overall mode of design. Visual domination was important not only in order to exercise domination, but to demonstrate the presence of the occupation's power. [...] The sense of always being under the gaze was intended to make the colonized internalize the facts of their domination. (2017, p. 81).

The act of causing destruction or generating disorder in a given space renders it more conspicuous and hence facilitates its regulation. The observed phenomenon might be characterized as a form of panoptic intervention inside the given locality, and the designation urbicide is frequently employed to delineate such deleterious conduct.

Conclusion

As a whole, this study has comprehensively examined the methodological controversies surrounding research ethics in the context of urban fabric destruction. The mounting scholarly attention paid to studying urban destruction, particularly in the realm of social sciences, has sparked ethical dilemmas over the methodology applied in investigating violence and conflict. The primary aim of this study was to provide a thorough methodological framework and ethical criteria for doing research on violence in urban settings.

The study explored a range of qualitative research approaches, such as phenomenology, content analysis, action research, critical research, and critical discourse analysis. The use of a Foucauldian

framework was highlighted in order to critically examine the binary opposition between realism and idealism within the realm of research methodology. The study presented the notion of parrhesia, which is defined by its qualities of frankness, dedication to veracity, and awareness of possible risks. The investigation underscored the inherent risk that accompanies the act of truth-telling, especially when it involves questioning those in positions of authority.

The discourse around qualitative research methodology highlighted the wide range of approaches used within the field of social sciences. The phenomenological method prioritized the comprehension of the fundamental nature and significance of lived experiences, while content analysis sought to reveal manifest and latent meanings within textual material. The approaches of action research, critical research, and critical discourse analysis were deliberated upon since they include critical analysis, reflection, and a dedication to the pursuit of social justice.

This paper makes a valuable contribution to the current scholarly conversation around the investigation of urban ruination. It does this by presenting a methodological toolkit that is firmly rooted in a Foucauldian viewpoint. The study promotes a reflexive comprehension of the researcher's position by highlighting parrhesia and the reflexive relationship between power, truth, and risk. It aims to establish the groundwork for future research in intricate and demanding domain of urban fabric destruction.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical Approval

Ethics committee approval is not required for this study.

Author Contributions
The author solely contributed to the conception and design of the study, data collection and analysis, as well as the writing and revision of the manuscript.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests
The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

Abujidi, N. (2014). *Urbicide in Palestine: Spaces of oppression and resilience*. Routledge.

Bekiroğlu, S. (2023). *Conceptualizing urbicide: Space, memory, war, and necropolitics* [Doctoral dissertation, Middle East Technical University].

Brown, W. (2010). *Walled states, waning sovereignty*. Zone Books.

Butler, J. (2009). *Frames of war*. Verso.

Cannella, G. S., & Perez, M. S. (2009). Power-shifting at the speed of light: Critical qualitative research post-disaster. In N. K. Denzin & M. D. Giardina (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry and social justice* (pp. 165-183). Routledge.

Cochran, P. A. L., Marshall, C. A., Garcia-Dowling, C., Kendall, E., Cook, D., McCubbin, L., & Gover, M. S. (2008). Indigenous ways of knowing: Implications for participatory research and community. *American Journal of Public Health, 98*(1), 22-27.

Cooke, M. L. (1994). Method as ruse: Foucault and research method. *Mid-American Review of Sociology, 18*(1/2), 47-65.

Coward, M. (2004). Urbicide in Bosnia. In S. Graham (Ed.), *Cities, war, and terrorism: Towards an urban geopolitics* (pp. 154-171). Blackwell Publishing.

Coward, M. (2007). Urbicide reconsidered. *Theory & Event, 10*(2).

Coward, M. (2009). *Urbicide: The politics of urban destruction*. Routledge.

Darder, A., Baltodano, M., & Torres, R. D. (2009). *The critical pedagogy reader*. Routledge.

Drisko, J. W., & Maschi, T. (2016). *Content analysis*. Oxford University Press.

Dyrberg, T. B. (2014). *Foucault on the politics of parrhesia*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (1997). What is critique? In S. Lotringer & L. Hochroth (Eds.), *The politics of truth* (pp. 23–82). MIT Press.

Foucault, M. (2001). *Fearless speech*. Semiotext(e).

Foucault, M. (2003). *Society must be defended*. Picador.

Foucault, M. (2011). *The courage of the truth (The government of self and others II) lectures at the Collège de France 1983–1984*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2019). *'Discourse and truth', and parrhesia*. University of Chicago Press.

Graham, S. (2002). Bulldozers and bombs: The latest Palestinian–Israeli conflict as asymmetric urbicide. *Antipode, 34*(4), 642-649. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00259

Graham, S. (2004). Cities as strategic sites: Place annihilation and urban geopolitics. In S. Graham (Ed.), *Cities, war, and terrorism: Towards an urban geopolitics* (pp. 31-53). Blackwell Publishing.

Graham, S. (2010). *Cities under siege: The new military urbanism*. Verso.

Harris, C. (2004). The photograph reincarnate: The dynamics of Tibetan relationships with photography. In E. Edwards & J. Hart (Eds.), *Photographs objects histories: On the materiality of images* (pp. 139-155). Routledge.

Kaldor, M. (2012). *New and old wars: Organized violence in a global era*. Polity Press.

Kardeş, E. (2019). *Yönsüzleşmiş savaşlar: Politik felsefenin bir sınır meselesi olan savaşa dair*. Pinhan Yayıncılık.

Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2014). *The action research planner: Doing critical participatory action research*. Springer.

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. SAGE.

Mann, D. (2022). *Occupying habits: Everyday media as warfare in Israel-Palestine*. I.B. Tauris.

Maschi, T. (2016). *Applying a human rights approach to social work research and evaluation: A rights research manifesto*. Springer.

McFalls, L., & Pandolfi, M. (2014). Parrhesia and therapeusis: Foucault on and in the world of contemporary neoliberalism. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Foucault now: Current perspectives in Foucault studies* (pp. 168-187). Polity Press.

Miyahara, M. (2015). *Emerging self-identities and emotion in foreign language learning: A narrative-oriented approach*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783093823

Peerbolte, B. J. L. (2018). Introduction. In P. B. Smit & E. van Urk (Eds.), *Parrhesia: Ancient and modern perspectives on freedom of speech* (pp. 1-11). BRILL.

Petruk, N. K., & Gapchenko, O. V. (2023). Principles of discourse ethics and human existence in times of war. *Anthropological Measurements of Philosophical Research, 23*, 44-55.

Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research: Understanding qualitative research*. Oxford University Press.

Schwartz-Shea, P., & Yanow, D. (2012). *Interpretive research design: Concepts and processes*. Routledge.

Stavrides, S. (2010). *Towards the city of thresholds*. Common Notions.

Taylor, K. T., Nilsson, M., Forero, P., & Restrepo, M. A. (2020). Conducting field research amid violence: Experiences from Colombia. In Y. G. Acar, S. M. Moss, & Ö. M. Uluğ (Eds.), *Researching peace, conflict, and power in the field: Methodological challenges and opportunities* (pp. 9-28). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-44113-5

Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H. E. Hamilton (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 352-371). Blackwell Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118584194

Weizman, E. (2007). *Hollow land: Israel's architecture of occupation*. Verso.

Weizman, E. (2017). *Forensic architecture: Violence at the threshold of detectability*. Zone Books.

Wu, M. (2023). *Intelligent warfare: Prospects of military development in the age of AI*. Routledge.

Zehfuss, M. (2019). Writing war/ethics: Departures and indirections. *Critical Studies on Security, 7*(3), 258-267. https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2019.1707357