

The Belfer Center Studies in International Security book series is edited at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and is published by The MIT Press. The series publishes books on contemporary issues in international security policy, as well as their conceptual and historical foundations. Topics of particular interest to the series include the spread of weapons of mass destruction, internal conflict, the international effects of democracy and democratization, and U.S. defense policy.

A complete list of Belfer Center Studies appears at the back of this volume.

# Rethinking Violence

## States and Non-State Actors in Conflict

Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, editors

- Alexander B. Downes and Kathryn McNabb Cochran, "Targeting Civilians to Win? Assessing the Military Effectiveness of Civilian Victimization in Interstate War," pp. 23-56.

Belfer Center Studies in International Security

## Chapter 2

### Targeting Civilians to Win? Assessing the Military Effectiveness of Civilian Victimization in Interstate War

Alexander B. Downes and  
Kathryn McNabb Cochran

War, as Clausewitz argued long ago, is an act of violence in which actors attempt to impose their will on each other. Although Clausewitz depicted war as a duel on a larger scale that is most frequently won when one side or the other captures the enemy's capital or destroys its army in battle, the impact of war is rarely confined to the military sphere. Civilians sometimes suffer in wartime even when combatants do not intend to harm them. Epidemics of typhus and cholera have often followed in the wake of marching armies, and civilians fleeing from the battle area are subject to hunger and privation. Moreover, in many cases munitions meant for enemy combatants hit civilians instead, resulting in what we now euphemistically call "collateral damage." Finally, in certain instances belligerents set their sights on civilians on purpose, targeting them as a means to achieving their military or political goals in the war.

Unfortunately, this third type of violence against noncombatants is not uncommon. Various studies have found that states adopt strategies that target civilians or inflict mass killing on noncombatants (50,000 or more dead) in one-fifth to one-third of all wars.<sup>1</sup> Despite a fruitful literature that has arisen in the last decade to explain the causes of civilian targeting, the effectiveness of civilian victimization for achieving belligerents' war objectives remains an open question. Much of this new literature on the

---

*Earlier versions of this chapter were presented at the International Studies Association annual meeting, San Francisco, Calif., March 26–29, 2008, and the Association for the Study of Nationalities annual meeting, New York, N.Y., April 10–12, 2008. For helpful comments and suggestions, the authors would like to thank Ana Arjona, Charli Carpenter, Erica Chenoweth, Matthew Fuhrmann, Matthew Kocher, Adria Lawrence, and Jason Lyall.*

---

1. Ivan Arreguín-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Summer 2001), pp. 93–128, and Ivan Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare," *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (April 2004), pp. 375–407; and Alexander B. Downes, "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Spring 2006), pp. 152–195.

causes of civilian victimization suggests that war participants implement these strategies because they believe that targeting civilians will help them accomplish their military or political goals.<sup>2</sup> In some wars, for instance, national leaders adopt strategies of civilian victimization because they believe that targeting civilians will terrorize the enemy population into pressuring its government to concede. In other wars, leaders target civilians to enhance the likelihood of military victory by preventing the emergence of fifth columns that could aid their enemy on the battlefield. The logic of civilian victimization is different for each type of war, but each type of logic assumes that belligerents make a strategic choice to target civilians because leaders believe that doing so increases the likelihood that they will achieve their objectives. This begs the question: does killing civilians enable leaders to achieve their wartime goals? Is targeting noncombatants an effective military strategy?

The answer to this question is both policy-relevant and normatively important. Although war is never something to be undertaken lightly, and it has many other ill effects besides killing civilians, the death and destruction visited upon noncombatants is one of the worst consequences of armed conflict. Efforts to minimize the harm inflicted on non-participants in armed conflict have a long (if not always successful) pedigree, dating back to the Peace of God in the tenth century and culminating in today's formal international treaties. Furthermore, modern public opinion—not just in the United States, but in many countries around the world—opposes the targeting of civilians, and agrees that belligerents should go to great lengths to protect noncombatants from harm.<sup>3</sup> If civilian victimization rarely delivers tangible benefits in wartime, then there is not a conflict between strategy and morality because doing the morally correct thing—that is, avoiding harm to noncombatants—is also the strategically wise course of action. The “problem of dirty hands”—in which political leaders engage in immoral activity (such as torture) to prevent an even greater

evil (like a terrorist attack)—assumes that the immoral act can successfully stop the evil from occurring.<sup>4</sup> If it cannot, then the problem of dirty hands washes away because dirtying them serves no purpose. Research that demonstrates the failure of civilian victimization to achieve military or political objectives could possibly persuade leaders who target civilians to forgo this strategy.

If, on the other hand, killing civilians is a war-winning strategy, the situation is far more difficult because morality and efficacy conflict. Even statesmen who would like to do the morally right thing and leave civilians alone will have incentives to target them because doing so increases the likelihood of victory. Killing noncombatants might also further other goals that leaders have, such as reducing their own military losses or making territorial gains. The task for opponents of civilian victimization would similarly be harder: to convince leaders to abandon this strategy despite its military effectiveness. Scholars would need to focus their attention on why civilian victimization has not been even more common historically given its war-winning potential. Manipulating these factors might give policymakers better tools to convince warring states to eschew this strategy even if it is effective militarily.

The goal of this chapter is to explore whether civilian victimization in war helps or hinders the achievement of wartime objectives. We focus specifically on the impact that civilian targeting has on the likelihood of victory. We therefore define effectiveness as achieving a positive outcome in the war.<sup>5</sup> A second goal of the paper is to propose and investigate hypotheses regarding the conditions under which targeting noncombatants might be more or less effective.<sup>6</sup> Effectiveness may vary depending on the type of war in which these strategies are employed. One might expect, for example, that a strategy of targeting civilians would be relatively ineffective in protracted wars of attrition when both sides are fully mobilized, compared to wars intended to conquer and annex a slice of an adversary's territory. Effectiveness may also vary according to target characteristics such as regime type and state size. We use ordinal logit models to estimate the effect of civilian victimization on interstate war outcomes (win, lose, or draw) between 1816 and 2003. We follow up the statistical analysis by examining cases of civilian victimization to determine whether the correlations identified are in fact causal.

Our statistical analysis produces several interesting results. First, in the aggregate, and controlling for other determinants of victory in war,

2. See, for example, Stathis N. Kalyvas, “Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars,” *Rationality and Society*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (August 1999), pp. 243–285; Stathis N. Kalyvas, “The Logic of Terrorism in Civil War,” *Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2004), pp. 98–137; Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004); Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay, “Draining the Sea,” and Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Sarah Croco, “Covenants without the Sword: International Law and the Protection of Civilians in Times of War,” *World Politics*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (April 2006), pp. 339–377; Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Downes, “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures”; Alexander B. Downes, “Restraint or Propellant? Democracy and Civilian Fatalities in Interstate Wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 51, No. 6 (December 2007), pp. 872–904, and Alexander B. Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008).

3. Greenberg Research, *The People on War Report: ICRC Worldwide Consultation on the Rules of War* (Geneva: ICRC, 1999), p. 13, <http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/p0758>.

4. Michael Walzer, “Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Winter 1973), pp. 160–180.

5. Other potential indicators of effectiveness that could be investigated include whether civilian victimization lowers a state's military casualties relative to those of its adversary (its loss-exchange ratio) or its civilian fatalities, or leads to shorter wars.

6. Many of these conditional hypotheses were originally outlined in Alexander B. Downes, “Hypotheses on the Effectiveness of Civilian Victimization in War,” paper presented at the International Studies Association annual meeting, March 22–25, 2006, San Diego, Calif.

such as initiation, regime type, and relative capabilities, states that inflict civilian victimization on their opponents are significantly more likely to win the wars they fight. This positive correlation persists in both wars of attrition and wars of territorial annexation. Second, civilian victimization appears to have become much less effective as time has passed. In the more distant past, targeting civilians may have produced results, but in more recent times civilian victimization has not contributed to victory. Third, smaller states are more vulnerable to civilian victimization, as they are more likely to lose wars when their opponent employs a strategy of civilian targeting. Finally, contrary to expectations, civilian victimization does not work better against democracies.

A preliminary examination of the cases, however, suggests that the effect of civilian victimization on war outcomes is more ambiguous. In wars of territorial annexation, for example, we argue that inferring that civilian victimization is a cause of victory may be problematic because states have to be “winning”—advancing and taking enemy territory—in order to target civilians. In wars of attrition, on the other hand, an examination of the cases strongly suggests that civilian victimization is effective only against small targets in particular campaigns—such as sieges of cities—already facing dire military circumstances. When employed against entire states from the outside-in, the strategy appears to have a poor record. Despite the statistical finding, in other words, case evidence indicates that the relationship between civilian victimization and victory is endogenous (in the case of territorial annexation) or contingent upon the effect of another variable (in wars of attrition).

The chapter unfolds as follows. In the first two sections, we survey the literature on the effect of civilian victimization on war outcomes. Much of the literature posits an unconditional effect: civilian victimization is uniformly effective or ineffective. Some studies, however, suggest that civilian victimization is more effective in some circumstances than others, and thus we also develop hypotheses regarding conditional effects. In the third section, we describe the data, variables, and methods used, while in the fourth section we present the results of the analysis. The fifth section then takes a closer look at the data to investigate the causal effect of civilian victimization on war outcomes. We conclude by summarizing our findings and offering some suggestions for further research.

### *Targeting Civilians to Win or to Lose? Unconditional Arguments*

Few studies attempt to evaluate systematically the effectiveness for winning wars—or otherwise achieving belligerents’ objectives—of military strategies that target and kill noncombatants.<sup>7</sup> Although large-scale violence against civilians occurs frequently, our knowledge about how well it

7. Throughout this paper, we use the terms “civilian” and “noncombatant” interchangeably to indicate individuals who “do not participate in armed conflict by fighting, carrying weapons, serving in the uniformed military or security services, or building weapons.” Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, p. 14.

works tends to be compartmentalized into observations about particular wars or types of military campaigns (strategic bombing, counterinsurgency, etc.). Although military and political leaders have often maintained that civilian victimization works, the scholarly literature almost unanimously argues otherwise.

#### TARGETING CIVILIANS: IT WORKS

A glance at a few historical cases reveals that policymakers and military officers have frequently argued that targeting civilians can achieve important wartime objectives. British leaders during the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) certainly subscribed to this view. Lord Frederick Roberts, the British commander, justified his practice of retaliating for insurgent attacks on British lines of communication by burning nearby Boer farms with the comment, “The more difficulty the people experience about food ... the sooner the war will be ended.” Prime Minister Lord Salisbury approved of his military commander’s policy, writing, “You will not conquer these people until you have starved them out.”<sup>8</sup> Early airpower theorists also believed that targeting noncombatants could end wars quickly with less overall suffering. As Giulio Douhet put it in his book *Command of the Air*, “A complete breakdown of the social structure cannot but take place in a country subjected to this kind of merciless pounding from the air. The time would soon come when, to put an end to horror and suffering, the people themselves, driven by the instinct of self-preservation, would rise up and demand an end to the war.”<sup>9</sup> Former British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin argued in 1932 that punishment bombing would be the key to victory in future wars: “the bomber will always get through. The only defense is in offense, which means that you have to kill more women and children more quickly than the enemy if you want to save yourselves.”<sup>10</sup> During World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt viewed the British destruction of Hamburg in July 1943 as “‘an impressive demonstration’ of what America might achieve against Japan,” and believed that firebombing could shorten the war in the Pacific.<sup>11</sup> These statements suggest the following hypothesis:

8. Quoted in S. B. Spies, *Methods of Barbarism? Roberts and Kitchener and Civilians in the Boer Republics, January 1900–May 1902* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1977), pp. 122, 175.

9. Quoted in Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 60.

10. Quoted in Max Hastings, *Bomber Command* (New York: Dial Press, 1979), p. 43.

11. Michael S. Sherry, *The Rise of American Airpower: The Creation of Armageddon* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 102, 156. Some historians have suggested that civilian victimization can contribute to victory indirectly by forcing a target state to transfer scarce resources away from combat to population defense, thereby weakening its overall war effort. One possible case of this phenomenon was the bombing of Germany in World War II. See Richard Overy, *The Air War, 1939–1945* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980), p. 123.

- *Hypothesis 1:* States that employ civilian victimization are more likely to prevail in war.

#### TARGETING CIVILIANS: IT'S FUTILE

Contrary to the beliefs of these political and military officials, most social scientists have found little support for the view that punishing civilians leads to victory.<sup>12</sup> The case against the efficacy of targeting civilians has been made most powerfully and systematically by Robert Pape in his work on strategic bombing.<sup>13</sup> In *Bombing to Win*, Pape argues that modern nation-states hardly ever make significant concessions in response to bombing campaigns directed at noncombatants. According to Pape, the reason that such punishment strategies fail is that “states involved in coercive disputes are often willing to accept high costs” and that making substantial concessions offends the nationalism of a state’s population.<sup>14</sup> Since most coercive disputes that escalate to war are about important issues of national interest, nationalism makes it unlikely that states will forfeit the issue or object being contested. Moreover, Pape contends, “conventional munitions can inflict only limited damage on civilians” and “modern states can minimize their vulnerability to counter-civilian attacks by defense, evacuation of threatened areas, and rapid adjustment to economic dislocations.”<sup>15</sup> In short, modern states are resistant to coercion by punishment owing to nationalism, on the one hand, and because the combination of strong bureaucratic state structures and the size and wealth of states allows them to lower their vulnerability to punishment by building shelters, evacuating cities, rationing food, substituting one good for another, or cultivating more land to increase food production.<sup>16</sup>

Even the use of atomic weapons against Japan in 1945, according to Pape, was not the decisive factor causing Japan’s capitulation; he credits the U.S. naval blockade, which crippled Japanese industry, and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria, which he argues invalidated Japan’s military strategy for defending the home islands.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the severe aerial bludgeoning inflicted upon Germany between 1942 and 1945 by British Bomber Command (with help from the U.S. Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces),

12. Studies aimed at a more popular audience reach similar conclusions. See, for example, Caleb Carr, *The Lessons of Terror: A History of Warfare against Civilians* (New York: Random House, 2002).

13. Ironically, Pape is also one of the few scholars to argue that civilian victimization—in the form of suicide terrorism—can be effective. See Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).

14. Pape, *Bombing to Win*, p. 21.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23.

16. See also Mancur Olson, *The Economics of the Wartime Shortage: A History of British Food Supplies in the Napoleonic War and in World Wars I and II* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1963). Reinforcing the stubbornness of states is the possibility that leaders who make concessions to adversaries could face removal or punishment after the fact by their constituents.

17. Pape, *Bombing to Win*, pp. 108–136.

resulting in about 300,000 fatalities, did not persuade Hitler or the German people to end the war short of utter conquest and devastation. If punishment of this order of magnitude is incapable of convincing state leaders to capitulate, Pape concludes, then punishment has little potential as a tool of coercion in war.<sup>18</sup>

Further support for the failure of civilian victimization may be found in work on asymmetric conflict, counterinsurgency, and terrorism. In Ivan Arreguin-Toft’s study of asymmetric conflict outcomes, for example, he argues that when strong actors use an “indirect” strategy, such as strategic bombing, against a weaker adversary deploying a conventional defense, strong actors are more likely to lose because indirect strategies “tend to backfire, stimulating precisely the sort of resolve they aim to break.” Strategic bombing and blockade also work relatively slowly (to the extent that they work at all) and strategies that take longer to work leave strong actors vulnerable to the growth of domestic opposition to the war.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, William Polk argues in the context of counterinsurgency that state brutality simply provides the rebels with more recruits, making the problem worse instead of better. The reason is that “the more brutal they [government forces] are in suppressing the general population, the more recruits the fighters gain, because in every instance in which a single combatant or even an innocent bystander is arrested, detained, wounded, or killed, a dozen of his relatives and friends are outraged.”<sup>20</sup> Finally, a recent study of the effectiveness of terrorism finds that terrorist organizations that strike civilians hardly ever obtain concessions from target states. The reason is that attacking civilians communicates that groups have unlimited aims, such as the destruction of the dominant group in the state or the state itself, which in turn stiffens governments’ resolve to resist terrorists’ demands.<sup>21</sup> In sum, this literature suggests a competing hypothesis.

- *Hypothesis 2:* States that employ civilian victimization are not more likely—and may be less likely—to prevail in war.

18. Pape’s finding regarding the inefficacy of punishment bombing was confirmed in a later quantitative study. See Michael Horowitz and Dan Reiter, “When Does Aerial Bombing Work? Quantitative Empirical Tests, 1917–1999,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 2001), pp. 147–173. Pape also argues that economic sanctions, another instrument of coercion that can elicit concessions from a target by striking at its civilian population, are similarly ineffective. See Robert A. Pape, “Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work,” *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall 1997), pp. 90–136.

19. Arreguin-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars,” p. 108. In later work, however, he argues that targeting civilians is generally ineffective. Ivan Arreguin-Toft, “The [F]utility of Barbarism: Assessing the Impact of the Systematic Harm of Non-Combatants in War,” paper presented at the American Political Science Association annual meeting, August 28–31, 2003, Philadelphia, Penn.

20. William R. Polk, *Violent Politics: A History of Insurgency, Terrorism and Guerrilla War from the American Revolution to Iraq* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), p. 34.

21. Max Abrahms, “Why Terrorism Does Not Work,” *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 42–78.

### *Targeting Civilians to Win or to Lose? It Depends*

The effectiveness of civilian victimization could vary depending on the circumstances in which it is employed or on attributes of the target state. Potentially most important is the type of war in which civilian victimization is implemented. The interstate wars that we examine in this paper, for example, are almost all conventional in nature: conflicts fought between two or more belligerents, usually with uniformed military personnel, and with clear front lines separating territory controlled by the various parties to the conflict. Upon closer examination, this category encompasses two different types of wars, and the strategies of civilian victimization employed in these conflicts take different forms and are implemented in pursuit of different goals. The first category consists of conventional wars of attrition, conflicts that resemble sieges on a larger scale: the front lines tend to be static or slow to move, fighting is conducted from trenches, and firepower dominates movement. The prototypical example is World War I on the Western Front. Civilian victimization in these wars is used to coerce the adversary to concede the issue in dispute. The second category, by contrast, comprises those cases in which at least one belligerent intends to conquer and annex enemy territory to its own state. States in this situation utilize civilian victimization to secure their grip on the territory, which typically involves violence against civilians sharing the ethnicity or nationality of the enemy. Recent examples include the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>22</sup> Attributes of the target state—such as the size of its population or its regime type—might also matter, as might the historical epoch in which civilian victimization occurs. We develop these conditional hypotheses below.<sup>23</sup>

#### WARS OF ATTRITION VERSUS WARS TO ANNEX TERRITORY

Research on civilian victimization in conventional wars suggests that this strategy may be more effective in certain kinds of conflicts. In costly and protracted wars of attrition, states target an adversary's noncombatants when they become desperate to win or to limit their own battle casualties.<sup>24</sup> In what Pape refers to as a punishment strategy, states attack the enemy's civilian population in the hope that the costs to its society will

22. These two ideal types sometimes overlap, most commonly when annexationist wars bog down into wars of attrition, generating anti-civilian violence to coerce the adversary to surrender. The siege of Leningrad during the German invasion of the Soviet Union in World War II provides one example, as do the Korean and Iran–Iraq wars.

23. Because our data consist of interstate wars, we are unable to test interesting conditional hypotheses regarding the effectiveness of civilian victimization in irregular wars, such as the argument that indiscriminate violence is counterproductive, whereas targeted, selective violence is effective. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*.

24. Downes, “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures”; “Restraint or Propellant?” and *Targeting Civilians in War*. See also Valentino, Huth, and Croco, “Covenants without the Sword.”

induce the enemy regime to renounce its war aims, or alternatively that the suffering meted out to noncombatants will cause them to rise up and demand an end to the war.<sup>25</sup> In wars of attrition, however, both sides are likely to be highly resolved. In these conflicts, states have experienced the initial costs of combat and chosen to continue fighting rather than negotiate a settlement. Civilian victimization thus tends to occur only in the most demanding set of circumstances, when the adversary is most primed to resist. Indeed, studies of coercion consistently find that coercion of any kind rarely succeeds.<sup>26</sup> A major reason for this lack of success is that the process of escalation to war—and then escalation in war—weeds out the unresolved types and leaves only those that care deeply about the outcome, and are willing to suffer significant costs to achieve their aims. This observation suggests our first conditional hypothesis.

- *Hypothesis 3:* States that employ civilian victimization in wars of attrition are not more likely to prevail.

A second circumstance in which states victimize noncombatants is when they intend to seize and annex territory from a neighboring state.<sup>27</sup> These annexation cases are invariably conventional wars, but violence against civilians perpetrated in such conflicts is not usually intended to lower their morale. Rather, states target civilians—namely those who share the ethnicity, nationality, or political sympathies of the adversary—to eliminate them from the territory they wish to seize, thereby removing an actual or potential fifth column and reducing the risk of future resistance to their rule.<sup>28</sup> In the First Balkan War (1912–1913), for example, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece attacked the Ottoman Empire's remaining European territories and cleansed Turkish Muslims to facilitate their annexation of these lands. When the victors then fell to quarreling over the spoils, ethnic Bulgarians were evicted as the Serb and Greek armies defeated the Bulgarian Army and seized tracts of Bulgarian-inhabited land.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, it appears that civilian victimization as a tool of territorial expansion and consolidation has been successful in a good share of cases. The Balkan

25. Pape, *Bombing to Win*, p. 59; and Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, pp. 4, 30, 84–86.

26. Pape, *Bombing to Win*; Pape, “Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work”; Gary Clyde Hufbauer, Jeffrey J. Schott, and Kimberly Ann Elliott, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1990); and Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003).

27. Downes, “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures”; “Restraint or Propellant?” and *Targeting Civilians in War*.

28. This implies that an additional metric for “success” in annexation cases is whether ethnic cleansing in fact leads to lower rates of rebellion or war-recurrence. We intend to pursue this question in future research.

29. International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars, *The Other Balkan Wars* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993).

states' expansion at the expense of the Ottoman Empire in 1912–1913, for instance, was a great success because the Ottomans were weak and no Great Powers were willing to come to their rescue. Other examples include Israel's seizure of Arab land and expulsion of its inhabitants in the War of Independence, which eliminated the main threat to the viability of a Jewish state, and Turkey's intervention in Cyprus in 1974, which carved out a Turkish enclave in the northern part of the island by ejecting 200,000 Greek Cypriots from their homes. This leads to the following hypothesis about the effectiveness of civilian victimization in wars of territorial annexation.

- *Hypothesis 4:* States that employ civilian victimization in wars to seize and annex territory are more likely to prevail.

#### TARGET SIZE

Much of the evidence for the ineffectiveness of civilian victimization in coercive wars stems from the resilience of the modern nation-state. Pape, as noted above, argues that modern states can reduce their vulnerability to punishment by, for example, constructing bomb shelters, evacuating citizens from targeted areas, or providing emergency economic relief to those affected. In addition, these states are willing and able to tolerate high costs to achieve important goals. Targets of coercion, however, have not always been so resilient, and this helps explain why punishment in earlier historical epochs appears to have been more successful than in the age of nation-states.

Coercion by starvation or bombardment in ancient, medieval, and early modern siege warfare, for example, was often effective because the targets were towns or cities, not countries. Cities are simply smaller, more vulnerable, and less resistant targets than states. The inhabitants of cities or towns typically do not raise or produce their own food, but rather rely on the surrounding countryside to provide them with sustenance. Townspeople can easily be cut off from this source of supply by even relatively small armies surrounding their town. Cities may also be separated from their hinterlands by walls of circumvallation, which prevent the inhabitants from sortieing out to forage. Furthermore, an army encamped outside of a town may consume or destroy all the available foodstuffs in the area, making such sorties pointless. Moreover, the small size of cities compared to states enables the whole town to be struck easily by artillery and vulnerable to fire, and thus more susceptible to damage and civilian casualties from bombing. Finally, cities are densely populated, which allows disease to spread quickly with devastating consequences. When belligerents have been able to surround population centers in modern wars, starvation and bombardment have often produced results, as in the Siege of Vicksburg in the U.S. Civil War, and the Siege of Paris in the Franco-Prussian War.

Although we are limited by the temporal span of our data to wars of the last two centuries, the foregoing discussion implies that civilian victimization might be more effective against small states and states with

small populations because they have fewer resources to mitigate the effects of civilian suffering.

- *Hypothesis 5:* The smaller the geographic area or population of the target, the more likely that civilian victimization will contribute to victory.

#### CHANGE OVER TIME

This discussion also implies that civilian victimization may have become less effective in more recent wars. There are several potential arguments to support this hypothesis. As discussed above, the emergence of the modern state and the advent of nationalism have rendered states exceptionally cohesive and relatively resistant to punishment. States are almost always larger and more resilient targets than towns or cities. Sieges are nowadays more likely to be conducted against entire countries rather than individual cities. One might expect, then, that civilian victimization in the era of modern states—roughly after 1648, but even more so after the French Revolution—is less likely to deliver results than in previous eras.

- *Hypothesis 6:* Civilian victimization in war should decrease in effectiveness over time.

#### TARGET REGIME TYPE

Finally, the regime type of the target may also influence the effectiveness of civilian victimization. Because citizens have a say in governance in democracies, and obviously prefer not to be killed by enemy attacks, civilian victimization should be more effective when the target is a democracy than when it is an autocracy. As Pape has written in the context of suicide terrorism, "Domestic critics and international rivals, as well as terrorists, often view democracies as 'soft,' usually on the grounds that their publics have low thresholds of cost tolerance and high ability to affect state policy."<sup>30</sup> Some dictatorial opponents of democracies have held this view, notably Saddam Hussein when he argued before the First Persian Gulf War that the United States could not stomach ten thousand dead in one battle. A variety of commentators have argued that advanced industrial democracies have entered an age of "post-heroic warfare" in which the highest priority of military operations is to minimize casualties among one's troops.<sup>31</sup> If democracies are averse to casualties among their armed forces, it follows that deaths among the civilian population would be even more unpopular. Indeed, some democracies have believed this about themselves. The British Air Staff, for example, argued in 1937 that Britain was at a disadvantage if a war against Nazi Germany devolved into a

30. Pape, "Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," p. 349.

31. Edward N. Luttwak, "Toward Post-Heroic Warfare," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (May/June 1995), pp. 109–122; and Luttwak, "A Post-Heroic Military Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (July/August 1996), pp. 33–44.

counter-city slugging match because “a military dictatorship is likely to be less susceptible to popular outcry than a democratic Government. It is, consequently, unsafe to assume that ... [Britain and France] will be able, by attacking the morale of the German people, to produce an effect in any way comparable with that which would result from German air attack against our own.”<sup>32</sup> This logic leads to our final conditional hypothesis:

- *Hypothesis 7:* If the target state is a democracy, civilian victimization is more likely to contribute to victory.

### *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Civilian Targeting: Data, Variables, and Method*

In this chapter, we propose a simple metric for evaluating the effectiveness of civilian victimization: war outcome. If targeting noncombatants is as ineffective as the majority view in the literature believes, then civilian victimization or large numbers of civilian casualties should be uncorrelated (or negatively correlated) with victory for the state that inflicts these casualties. War outcome is an imperfect measure, of course, and finding a correlation between civilian victimization and winning or losing is not the same as finding that targeting civilians caused the outcome. Statistical analysis is merely the starting point for more in-depth investigation. The basic question of the association between civilian victimization and war outcome is still unknown, and thus discovering the nature of that association is worthwhile. We measure war outcomes using a trichotomous indicator: losses are coded as zero, draws as one, and wins as two. Our analysis includes the war outcomes for the major combatants for all interstate wars between 1816 and 2003.<sup>33</sup>

We employ two types of statistical tests to assess the effectiveness of targeting civilians in war. First, we use simple cross-tabulations to com-

32. Quoted in George H. Quester, *Deterrence before Hiroshima: The Airpower Background of Modern Strategy* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), p. 94.

33. The list of interstate wars is taken from Correlates of War Interstate War Data, 1816–1997, version 3, <http://correlatesofwar.org>. The dataset has been modified to update it through the 2003 Iraq War and several multi-phase wars (World Wars I and II, for example) have been divided into separate conflicts. For detailed descriptions of these and other changes, see Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, *Democracies at War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 38–39; Downes, “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures,” pp. 193–194; and Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, pp. 57–58. COW defines interstate wars as armed conflicts between two or more recognized states that exceeded 1,000 total battle deaths. Data on war outcomes are taken from the Correlates of War Project, supplemented in some cases by Reiter and Stam’s codings from *Democracies at War* as well as our own judgments for some recent conflicts. In several wars, COW includes many states that made only minor contributions to the conflict. Our judgment is that such minor allies rarely possess independent decision-making ability on military strategy. To avoid counting such non-entities as “winners” or “losers” when they hardly participated in the conflict, we drop them from the analysis. Doing so does not affect our core results.

pare war outcomes for combatants that employed strategies of civilian victimization and those that did not. Combatants are considered to have used *civilian targeting* if they adopted a military strategy that targeted civilians on purpose or if they used force so indiscriminately that tens of thousands of civilians died.<sup>34</sup> In order to assess whether the effect of civilian victimization is conditional on the type of war being fought, we created dummy variables for wars of attrition and wars of territorial annexation and compared the cross-tabulations of civilian targeting and war outcome for each type of war. Wars of attrition are defined as “conflicts generally lacking in maneuver or movement, which are instead dominated by linear, static, or trench operations.”<sup>35</sup> Wars of territorial annexation consist of wars in which at least one belligerent went to war intending to annex some or all of an opponent’s territory.

In our second set of statistical tests, we attempt to isolate the effect of civilian victimization while controlling for other determinants of victory using ordered logit analysis with our war outcome variable as the dependent variable of interest. Our key explanatory variable is the *civilian targeting* variable discussed above, although we also look at two other indicators of civilian victimization. *Mass Killing* is a dummy variable coded one when a state killed more than 50,000 noncombatants. The variable *civilian fatalities* consists of the log of the total number of civilians killed by each state during the war.<sup>36</sup> Owing to spotty data availability, analyses using civilian fatalities exclude nineteenth-century wars. In order to assess the conditional hypotheses, we interact civilian targeting with the two war-type dummy variables discussed above, the log of the enemy’s population, a year-counter variable to measure the passing of time, and two measures of the adversary’s regime type: a dichotomous variable indicating whether the enemy was a democracy, and the Polity score of the enemy’s regime.<sup>37</sup> In addition to our explanatory variables and interactive terms, we control for several other factors identified by previous research that influence war outcomes: relative material capabilities, the regime type of the state, whether the state initiated the conflict, an interactive term for

34. This variable is described in detail in Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, pp. 14–21; for a list of cases, see *ibid.*, pp. 45–47. It consists of artillery or aerial bombardment of urban areas, as employed in World War II, for example; starvation blockades and sieges, such as the blockade of the Central Powers in World War I; and counterinsurgency or cleansing campaigns that kill civilians intentionally or treat noncombatants in ways that will foreseeably result in serious mortality among them.

35. Downes, “Restraint or Propellant?” p. 884.

36. On mass killing, see Valentino, *Final Solutions*, and Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay, “‘Draining the Sea’.” On civilian fatalities, see Downes, “Restraint or Propellant?” and *Targeting Civilians in War*. We also use a variable for intentional civilian casualties: the number of civilians killed during a campaign of civilian targeting. This is similar to the measure employed in Valentino, Huth, and Croco, “Covenants without the Sword.”

37. The year-counter variable starts in the year of the first war in the dataset (1823) and thus captures the number of years that have passed since that time.



regime type and war initiator, and a dummy variable for conflicts occurring after 1945.<sup>38</sup>

### Statistical Results

#### UNCONDITIONAL HYPOTHESES

We begin by discussing the unconditional effect of civilian targeting on war outcomes. On average, does targeting civilians pay? Table 2.1 shows a bivariate cross-tabulation of civilian targeting in all wars and our trichotomous war outcome variable: win, lose, or draw. The table yields a surprising result: states that employ civilian targeting as a war strategy are significantly more likely to win. According to Table 2.1, states that targeted noncombatants won 62 percent of the wars they fought, compared to 41 percent of states that did not target civilians. In addition, states that targeted civilians were about half as likely to lose as states that left civilians alone, while there is not much difference in the percentage of draws (13 versus 12 percent, respectively). The bivariate evidence thus suggests that targeting civilians increases the likelihood of victory and reduces the probability of defeat.

Table 2.1. Cross Tabulation of Civilian Targeting and Interstate War Outcomes, 1816–2003.

War Outcome	Civilian Targeting		Total
	Yes	No	
Win	33 62.3%	80 41.0%	113 45.6%
Draw	7 13.2%	23 11.8%	30 12.1%
Lose	13 24.5%	92 47.2%	105 42.3%
Total	53 100%	195 100%	248 100%

NOTE: Pearson  $\chi^2(2) = 9.244$   $p = 0.010$

Table 2.2. Ordinal Logit Estimates of Civilian Victimization and Interstate War Outcomes (Lose, Draw, Win): Unconditional Hypotheses.

	1	2	3
Civilian Targeting	0.78*** (0.28)	-	-
Mass Killing	-	0.47 (0.50)	-
Civilian Casualties (Log)	-	-	0.37*** (0.10)
Material Capabilities	1.81*** (0.60)	1.81*** (0.58)	1.53* (0.78)
Democracy (Dummy)	1.19* (0.68)	1.20* (0.71)	1.21* (0.66)
War Initiator	0.64 (0.44)	0.65 (0.43)	0.62 (0.56)
Democracy (Dummy) × Initiator	-0.15 (0.84)	-0.23 (0.85)	-0.16 (0.89)
Post-1945	-0.83*** (0.20)	-0.74*** (0.21)	-0.80*** (0.27)
N	246	253	155
Log Pseudo-LL	-211.42	-222.11	-130.76
Wald $\chi^2$	37.90***	33.01***	33.64***

NOTES: Robust standard errors clustered on each war in parentheses; \* =  $p < 0.10$ ; \*\* =  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < 0.01$ . Civilian Targeting and Mass Killing, 1816–2003; Civilian Casualties, 1900–2003.

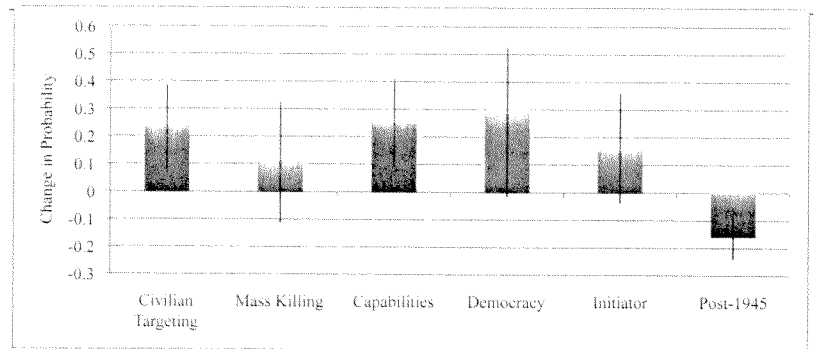
The results of the ordinal logit analysis support this conclusion. As shown in Table 2.2, civilian targeting, mass killing, and the number of civilian fatalities are each positively associated with winning, even after controlling for other determinants of victory. Civilian targeting and the number of civilian fatalities are statistically significant and substantively important. Figure 2.1 shows the changes in states' probability of victory associated with changes in the values of different independent variables.<sup>39</sup>

39. These changes in probability were generated by setting all other dichotomous measures to their modes and continuous measures to their means. Changes are thus calculated from the baseline case of autocratic states that did not initiate wars or target civilians in wars prior to 1945. Changes in probability are calculated by shifting binary variables from zero to one and continuous variables from one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean. Because democracy and initiator are included with an interactive term, assessing their marginal effects is nonsensical. The effect of democracy shown in Figure 2.1 is the change in probability of victory that results from moving from an autocratic non-initiator to a democratic non-initiator; the effect of initiator is that of changing from an autocratic non-initiator to an autocratic initiator. Although these effects are not significant individually, the joint effect of democracy and initiation (i.e., changing from an autocratic non-initiator to a

38. Emphasizing democracy and war initiation are Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*; emphasizing power is Michael C. Desch, *Power and Military Effectiveness: The Fallacy of Democratic Triumphalism* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). On the decline in the number of victories in wars after World War II, see Page Fortna, "Where Have All the Victories Gone: War Outcomes in Historical Perspective," paper presented at the American Political Science Association annual meeting, September 2–5, 2004, Chicago, Ill.

The solid bars indicate change in probability; the lines inside each bar show the 95 percent confidence intervals surrounding the estimates.

Figure 2.1. Effect of Relevant Variables on Probability of Victory.



Substantively, a policy of targeting civilians increases the probability of winning by 23 percent. This is only slightly less than the 25 percent increase that results from increasing a state’s share of total military capabilities from 6 percent to 68 percent (one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean). Mass killing has a smaller substantive impact (an 11 percent increase), but it is not statistically significant. Figure 2.2 shows a belligerent’s probability of winning as a function of the number of civilian fatalities it inflicts. The scale is logarithmic, but it shows a clear trend: the more civilians killed, the higher the probability of winning. This is true whether we include all civilian fatalities or only those inflicted during campaigns of civilian targeting. The data thus provide support for Hypothesis 1 and disconfirm Hypothesis 2: civilian victimization appears to be an effective strategy.

CONDITIONAL EFFECTS

Our second set of hypotheses suggests that the effectiveness of civilian targeting depends on the situations in which it is employed. In order to assess these conditional effects, we compare sets of cross tabs and employ interactive terms in our regression analysis. Table 2.3 breaks down the relationship between civilian victimization and victory by war type. Civilian victimization is positively associated with victory in both types of wars. In wars of attrition and wars of territorial annexation, civilian victimizers are over 50 percent more likely to win than states that do not target civilians.

democratic initiator) is. Since this is not the subject of this chapter we do not present results here, but they are available from the authors upon request.

Figure 2.2. Effect of Number of Civilians Killed on Probability of Victory.

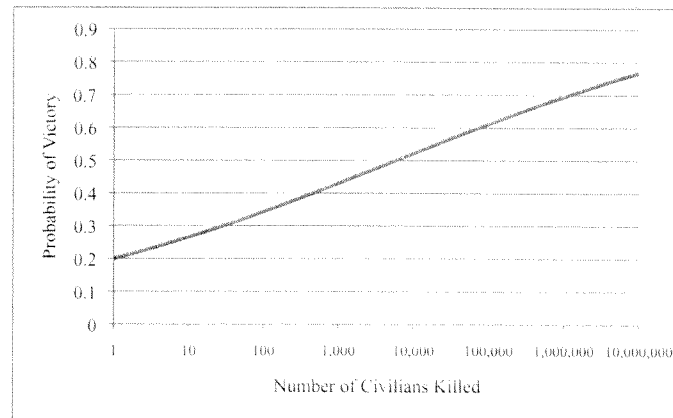


Table 2.3. Cross Tabulation of Civilian Targeting and Interstate War Outcomes in Wars of Attrition and Wars of Territorial Annexation, 1816–2003.

War Outcome	Wars of Attrition			Territorial Annexation		
	Target Civilians	No Targeting	Total	Target Civilians	No Targeting	Total
Win	24	23	47	20	27	47
	63.2%	41.8%	50.5%	58.8%	35.5%	42.7%
Draw	7	5	12	7	7	14
	18.4%	9.1%	12.9%	20.6%	9.2%	12.7%
Lose	7	27	34	7	42	49
	18.4%	49.1%	36.6%	20.6%	55.3%	44.5%
Total	38	55	93	34	76	110
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

NOTE: Pearson Chi²(2) = 9.3233 p = 0.009

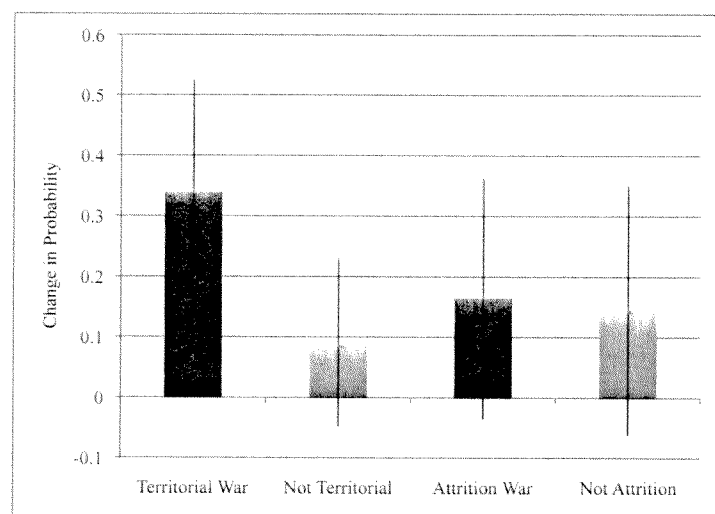
NOTE: Pearson Chi²(2) = 11.7130 p = 0.003

The results from our multivariate regression analyses, which employ interactive terms to isolate the effect of civilian victimization in different scenarios, lend partial support to these hypotheses. Table 2.4 shows the regression output; because the coefficients for the interaction terms are difficult to interpret, we rely primarily on graphs to display the substantive effects and statistical significance of the interactions.<sup>40</sup> Targeting civilians

40. Thomas Brambor, William Roberts Clark, and Matt Golder, “Understanding Interaction Terms: Improving Empirical Analysis,” *Political Analysis*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Winter 2006), pp. 63–82.

increases the probability of winning in both types of wars, and the effect is statistically significant at the 95 percent level of confidence for territorial wars and at 90 percent for wars of attrition. Substantively, as shown in Figure 2.3, the impact is larger for wars of annexation, where targeting civilians increases the probability of winning by 34 percent. In wars of attrition, civilian victimization increases the probability of victory by 17 percent. Thus, the evidence seems to contradict Hypothesis 3 and confirm Hypothesis 4: civilian victimization is an effective strategy in both wars of attrition and territorial annexation, although the larger substantive effect for the latter indicates that targeting civilians is more effective in annexationist than in attrition wars.

Figure 2.3. Effect of Civilian Targeting on Probability of Victory for Different War Types.



The evidence we have on the conditioning effects of the size of the enemy population is mixed, but generally supportive of Hypothesis 5. Figure 2.4 shows the change in probability of winning for states that target civilians for different sizes of the enemy's population. The solid line charts the change in probability; the dotted lines track the 95 percent confidence intervals. Variables are statistically significant when this interval does not straddle zero. The downward trend is evident. States that use civilian victimization against very small populations—less than 500,000—increase their probability of winning by more than 25 percent. States that target very large populations, on the other hand—more than 500 million—increase their chance of winning by less than 13 percent. This effect is statistically significant (at the .05 level) for enemy populations between 5

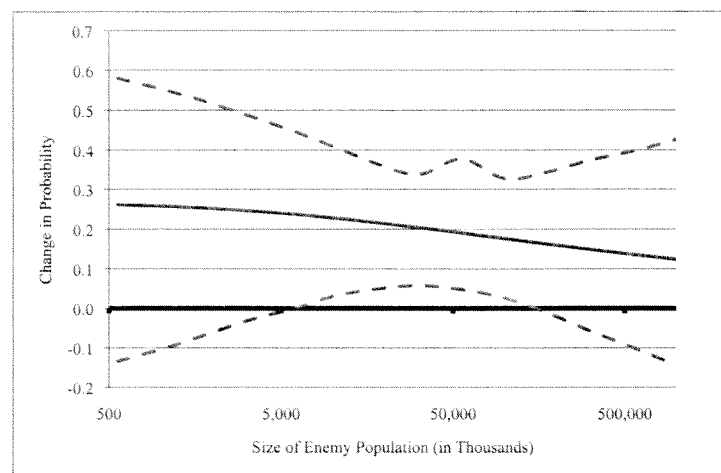
Table 2.4. Ordinal Logit Estimates of Civilian Victimization and Interstate War Outcomes (Lose, Draw, Win): Conditional Hypotheses.

	1 Attrition	2 Annexation	3 Enemy Population	4 Enemy Democracy (Dummy)	5 Enemy Polity Score	6 Time
Civilian Targeting	0.63 (0.46)	0.36 (0.31)	1.90 (2.18)	1.02** (0.45)	0.72 (0.69)	3.86*** (1.06)
War of Attrition	0.26 (0.32)	-	-	-	-	-
Civilian Targeting × War of Attrition	0.05 (0.64)	-	-	-	-	-
War of Annexation	-	-0.46** (0.21)	-	-	-	-
Civilian Targeting × War of Annexation	-	1.08** (0.48)	-	-	-	-
Enemy Population (Log)	-	-	-0.18 (0.19)	-	-	-
Civilian Targeting × Enemy Population (Log)	-	-	-0.23 (0.46)	-	-	-
Enemy Democracy (Dummy)	-	-	-	-1.27*** (0.47)	-	-
Civilian Targeting × Enemy Democracy (Dummy)	-	-	-	-0.78 (1.17)	-	-
Enemy Polity Score	-	-	-	-	-0.06* (0.03)	-
Civilian Targeting × Enemy Polity Score	-	-	-	-	0.01 (0.06)	-
Year Counter	-	-	-	-	-	-0.009** (0.003)
Civilian Targeting × Year Counter	-	-	-	-	-	-0.03*** (0.01)
Material Capabilities	1.88*** (0.61)	1.83*** (0.61)	1.66*** (0.60)	1.47** (0.64)	1.72*** (0.63)	1.93*** (0.60)
Democracy (Dummy)	1.16* (0.66)	1.11 (0.71)	1.29* (0.70)	0.82 (0.64)	1.05 (0.71)	1.25* (0.64)
War Initiator	0.59 (0.45)	0.57 (0.45)	0.66 (0.45)	0.72 (0.44)	0.71 (0.44)	0.62 (0.45)
Democracy (Dummy) × Initiator	-0.05 (0.84)	0.08 (0.87)	-0.16 (0.85)	-0.11 (0.82)	-0.18 (0.86)	-0.22 (0.83)
Post-1945	-0.83*** (0.20)	-0.77*** (0.21)	-0.86*** (0.23)	-0.45*** (0.16)	-0.65*** (0.18)	-
N	244	246	245	246	243	246
Log Pseudo-LL	-209.56	-209.47	-210.22	-203.97	-204.71	-207.22
Wald Chi <sup>2</sup>	41.07***	38.46***	37.77***	43.54***	42.64***	58.51***

NOTE: Robust standard errors clustered on each war in parentheses; \* =  $p < 0.10$ ; \*\* =

million and 175 million, which comprise the majority of the observations.<sup>41</sup> Thus, it appears that targeting civilians increases the probability of winning regardless of the size of the enemy population, although it becomes less effective as the enemy population gets larger.

**Figure 2.4. Effect of Civilian Targeting on Probability of Victory by Size of Enemy Population.**



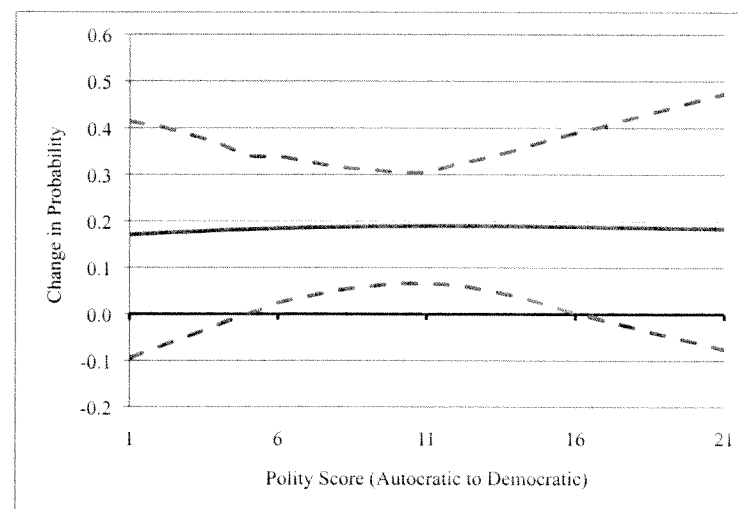
Our results regarding whether civilian victimization is a function of the regime type of the enemy are also mixed. Ordinal logit analysis using an interaction between civilian targeting and a dummy variable for adversary democracy suggests that contrary to Hypothesis 7, civilian victimization is effective against non-democracies but not against democratic regimes. Targeting the civilians of a non-democracy, for example, increases the probability of winning by a statistically significant 24 percent. When democracies are targeted, by contrast, the impact of civilian victimization increases the probability of winning by a mere 5 percent and the effect is not statistically significant.

This pattern does not hold when we use a continuous measure of democracy, however. Figure 2.5 shows the impact of civilian targeting on the probability of winning as a function of the enemy regime's Polity score, with 1 representing the most autocratic and 21 representing the most democratic states. The effect of civilian targeting is always positive, causing roughly a 20 percent increase in the probability of winning. This effect does not vary by Polity score. Given the differential effects found

41. For large populations, statistical insignificance is probably driven by a scarcity of data: fewer than 10 percent of the states in the dataset face opponents that have populations larger than 175 million. Data scarcity cannot explain insignificance at the lower end of the range, given that we have more observations and a larger substantive effect for this part of the range.

when a dichotomous indicator was used, this is a surprising result. It is possible that the relationship between the two variables is not linear: civilian targeting could be more effective against anocracies or mixed regimes because of the fragility of those regime types than against either democracies or autocracies, which tend to be more consolidated.<sup>42</sup> If the increased efficacy of civilian targeting in non-democracies is driven by its effectiveness against anocracies rather than its effectiveness against autocracies, there would not necessarily be evidence of a linear relationship—which our ordinal logit analysis assumes—between civilian targeting and the Polity score of the enemy regime. We tested this hypothesis in two ways: creating a trichotomous indicator of regime type (autocracy, anocracy, and democracy); and generating a squared term of states' scores on the Polity index. Each was interacted with civilian targeting. The results mirror those in Figure 2.5: targeting noncombatants of any regime type increases the probability of victory by about 18 percent but is statistically significant only for anocracies, providing little support for the non-linear hypothesis. Although further investigation is warranted, we tentatively conclude that contrary to Hypothesis 7, the regime type of the target state does not strongly condition the effect of civilian victimization on the probability of victory.

**Figure 2.5. Effect of Civilian Targeting on Probability of Victory by Enemy Regime Type.**



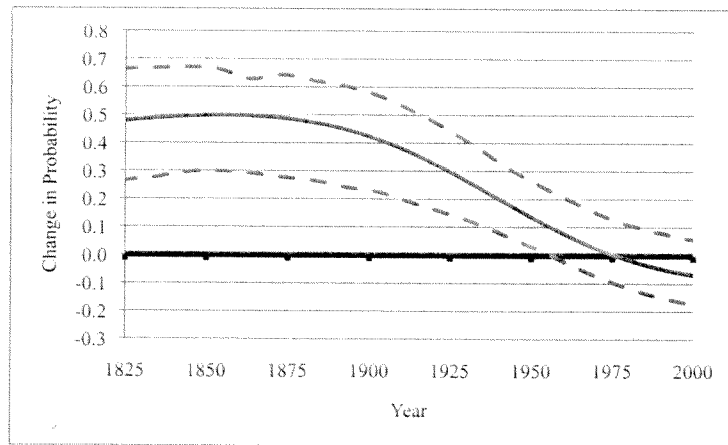
One of the most striking findings of our analysis is the decrease in the efficacy of civilian targeting over time. Figure 2.6 plots how the probability of winning changes when a state targets civilians as a function of time.

42. See H. E. Goemans, *War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination and the First World War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

The figure demonstrates a clear decrease in the effectiveness of this strategy over time. Civilian victimization increased the probability of victory by a statistically significant (but ever dwindling) amount prior to 1950; after about 1975, however, targeting civilians began to decrease the probability of winning, although the effect is not statistically significant.

In addition to decreasing the likelihood of victory, civilian victimization has also influenced the probability of draws and losses over time. In the nineteenth century, for example, civilian victimization increased the probability of winning and lowered the likelihood of both losing and ending up in a draw (see Figures 2.7 and 2.8). As time has passed, civilian victimization has become a less important driver of all three outcomes. After roughly 1975, the strategy does not have a statistically significant impact on the probability of winning, losing, or tying. However, the trend lines suggest that civilian victimization may become counterproductive in the future by decreasing the probability of victory and increasing the probability of losing. The trend line for the probability of a draw is less clear.

Figure 2.6. Effect of Civilian Targeting on Probability of Victory over Time.



The apparent decreasing effectiveness of civilian victimization over time is a remarkable finding. The problem, of course, is that time can be a proxy for a plethora of factors, such as technology, industrialization, nationalism, norms and laws against civilian targeting, and the spread of global media, to name a few. Earlier we suggested that the spread of nationalism has made modern states exceptionally cohesive and difficult to coerce. Another potential explanation for the decreasing effectiveness of civilian victimization over time is that massive depredations against noncombatants have become more likely to spark intervention in wars by third parties, leading to the victimizer's defeat. Beginning in the nineteenth century, states began to negotiate treaties that limited the amount

and type of force they could employ in wartime. Although early iterations of these agreements—the Hague Conventions, as well as attempts to limit the practice of aerial bombing—exerted little effect on the conduct of war, the horrors of World War II spurred further codification of the laws of armed conflict, including the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols, as well as the Genocide Convention. As more states have adhered to these agreements and the norms contained in them have disseminated across the international system, one could argue that the likelihood that states will intervene to put a stop to civilian victimization has increased.

Figure 2.7. Effect of Civilian Targeting on Probability of a Draw over Time.

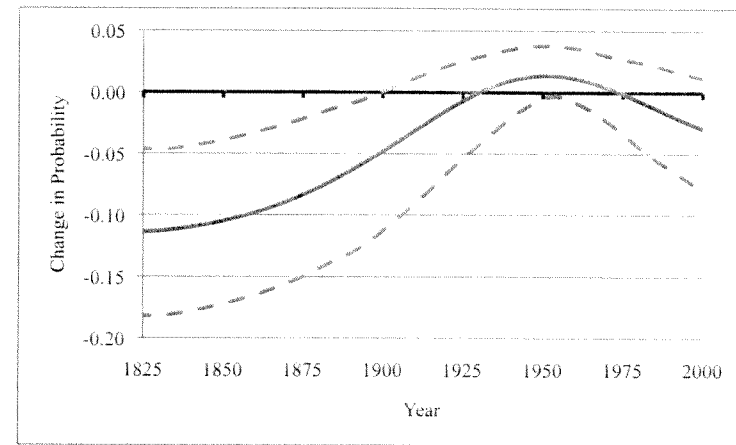
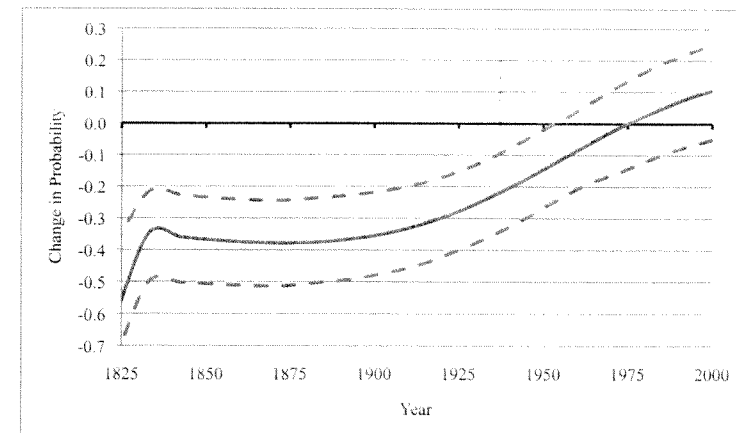


Figure 2.8. Effect of Civilian Targeting on Probability of Defeat over Time.



NATO's air campaign to coerce Slobodan Milošević to stop expelling Kosovo Albanians and accept some form of autonomy for Kosovo—although it took place in the context of an internal conflict rather than a conflict between states—is a possible recent example of third-party intervention to halt civilian victimization. According to this interpretation, Milošević's refusal to grant autonomy to Kosovo and the brutal nature of the Serbian counterinsurgency campaign in the province brought about NATO intervention to end the violence.<sup>43</sup> Civilian victimization was counterproductive in this case because it led to intervention and loss of Serbian control (and now sovereignty) over Kosovo.<sup>44</sup> Another possible example is the massacre of Bosnian Muslims at Srebrenica in July 1995 by the Bosnian Serb Army, which played a key role in bringing about U.S. air strikes and coercive diplomacy to end the war.<sup>45</sup> Such intervention, of course, remains highly variable and inconsistent. NATO intervened in Bosnia and Kosovo, for example, but not in Rwanda or Darfur.<sup>46</sup> Still, one could argue that even with the uneven spatial application of intervention to oppose civilian victimization, it has become more common over time.

A third possible explanation is that any decrease in the effectiveness of civilian victimization could be a function of deterrence. During the Cold War, several conflicts were waged between a superpower and a country supported by the other superpower. In conflicts like these, the infliction of more severe violence on noncombatants may have been restrained by the threat that the other major power would enter the war or retaliate in some fashion. In Vietnam, for example, the Lyndon B. Johnson administration exerted careful control over the bombing of North Vietnam because the president and his close advisers feared that a more aggressive campaign against urban areas (with larger numbers of civilian casualties) would trigger overt Chinese or Soviet intervention in the war.<sup>47</sup> Deterrence, how-

43. This is a separate issue from the question of whether NATO intervention prompted Milošević to employ even greater brutality against the Kosovar Albanians. See Kelly Greenhill, "The Use of Refugees as Political and Military Weapons in the Kosovo Conflict," in Raju G. C. Thomas, ed., *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, and Intervention* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books/Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), pp. 205–242.

44. It is plausible that violence on a smaller scale in this case might have avoided such intervention and succeeded in weakening the Kosovo rebels.

45. This is not to say that U.S. air strikes alone brought the war to a halt. The Croatian and Bosnian government ground offensive in western Bosnia—which significantly reduced the portion of the country under Serb control—probably played an even greater role.

46. A suggestion for future research is thus to examine whether civilian victimization (or genocide) in fact triggers third party intervention; where in the world is such intervention likely to occur; and who intervenes?

47. To give but one example, in August 1967 President Lyndon B. Johnson rejected proposed air strikes on the port of Haiphong and the Red River dikes because he feared they might prompt China or Russia to enter the war. See Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963–1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), p. 369. Many of Johnson's advisers shared this view. See, for instance, Robert McNamara, "Evaluation of the Program of Bombing North Vietnam," July 30,

ever, cannot explain the failure of the relatively unrestrained civilian victimization undertaken against some countries in which the United States or the Soviet Union intervened, such as South Vietnam or Afghanistan.<sup>48</sup> We can only speculate as to the reasons behind the decreasing effectiveness of civilian victimization in recent times. This question is clearly one that begs further investigation.

The statistical results in this section demonstrate that indicators of civilian victimization are positively, and often significantly, correlated with victory in interstate wars. These relationships persist in both wars of attrition and wars of territorial annexation. Notably, however, these findings are contingent on time, as the efficacy of civilian targeting has decreased over the past two hundred years. Consistent with our expectations, victimization of noncombatants seems to work better against states with smaller populations. Contrary to the literature, however, the regime type of the target state does not seem to influence the effectiveness of civilian targeting.

### *Civilian Victimization and War Outcomes: A Closer Look*

States that target civilians appear to win more often than they lose. This is an interesting and provocative finding, but what remains unclear is whether the relationship is causal. This section argues that in fact the correlation between civilian victimization and victory may be only partially causal. Some of the cases of civilian victimization by war winners in interstate wars—for reasons explained below—do not bear on the reasons these states prevailed. In the cases that remain—which must be examined in detail for evidence regarding the causal force of civilian victimization—targeting noncombatants contributed to victory in between one-quarter and one-half of them. This success rate, however, is not much different from the rate at which states that did not target civilians win wars, calling into question the conclusion that civilian victimization significantly increases a state's chances of winning.

#### WARS OF ANNEXATION AND ETHNIC CLEANSING

As we have seen, states that inflict civilian victimization in the midst of wars to seize and annex territory from neighboring states prevail near-

1965, in Senator Mike Gravel, ed., *The Pentagon Papers*, Vol. 3 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), pp. 386–387; and John McNaughton, "Some Observations about the Bombing," January 18, 1966, in *Pentagon Papers*, Vol. 4, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 43.

48. The United States employed bombing with far fewer restraints in South Vietnam than in the North. See Matthew Adam Kocher, Thomas B. Pepinsky, and Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Aerial Bombardment, Indiscriminate Violence, and Territorial Control in Unconventional Wars: Evidence from Vietnam," paper presented at the American Political Science Association annual meeting, Boston, Mass., August 28–31, 2008. The civilian death toll in Afghanistan in the 1980s exceeded one million. Marek Sliwinski, "Afghanistan: The Decimation of a People," *Orbis*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Winter 1989), p. 39.

ly 60 percent of the time. Yet it is unclear what contribution civilian victimization makes to these victories. There is no question that targeting noncombatants in these types of cases possesses some military utility: aggressor states typically view “foreign” civilian populations as actual or potential fifth columns that could assist the enemy. In some cases, actual resistance by members of a population prompts the invader to take action, but in other cases it is simply the potential for resistance and the location of a group in the rear of the battle area that leads groups to be targeted. Moreover, allowing a substantial number of the adversary’s population to remain could prompt a rescue attempt and also form an impediment to achieving cohesive nation-states. For all of these reasons, groups that are not believed to be easily assimilated are often the object of massacres, expulsions, and ethnic cleansing campaigns designed to eliminate them from the conquered territory.

The violent removal of a population perceived to be hostile, however, is not always the key to victory in wars of territorial annexation. In order to be able to expel potentially problematic groups, the aggressor state must advance militarily on the ground. There are a few exceptions to this rule, such as when war breaks out among populations that are closely intermingled, as in Palestine in 1947 or Bosnia in 1992. Still, in many cases cleansing is a consequence of military victory, not the cause of it. This fact is demonstrated by the Greek advance into and retreat from Anatolia between 1919 and 1922. Shortly after Greek troops landed in Smyrna in 1919, they massacred 200–300 Turks.<sup>49</sup> This was only the beginning. According to Justin McCarthy, “More than a million Turkish refugees fled the advancing Greeks. They had good reason to flee: slaughter of Turkish civilians had begun on the day the Greeks landed. Turkish shops and factories were looted of all their goods. More than 700 Turks were killed.”<sup>50</sup> As the Greeks moved inland from the coast, the violence continued and spread: “The mayhem continued wherever the Greeks occupied. In the cities of Aydin, Tire, Menemen, Kasaba, Manisa, Nazilli and others, Ottoman gendarmes (police) were disarmed, their guns given to local Greeks, and the towns pillaged, with attendant murders of civilians. Ottoman officials were singled out for imprisonment and murder. Organized massacres took place in cities and all over the countryside. Greek civilians were given Greek Army weapons and organized as armed bands.”<sup>51</sup>

The Greeks capitalized on the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the wake of World War I to move into western Anatolia and realize the “Megali Idea” of a Greece spanning both sides of the Aegean Sea. The cleansing of ethnic Turks from western Anatolia may have stabilized Greek control over the area, but it did not prevent the Greek Army from being defeated in the summer of 1922 by the resurgent Turks under Mus-

tafa Kemal. The Greeks had advanced almost all the way to Ankara, the new Turkish capital, in 1921, but the war bogged down into a stalemate after the Greeks were repulsed in the Battle of the Sakarya River. The Turkish counter-offensive, which began in August 1922, routed the Greeks and within two weeks led to the evacuation of what remained of the Greek Army from Smyrna. The retreating Greeks left a trail of scorched earth behind them as they torched Turkish towns and villages along their line of retreat, killing thousands in the process. Christian civilians (Greeks and Armenians) fled before the advancing Turks, but thousands died in massacres and the burning of Smyrna. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were evacuated from Smyrna on Greek, British, and U.S. warships, and the remaining Greek population in Turkey—minus the 150,000 or so men who were deported to the Anatolian interior in labor battalions—were exchanged for Turks living in Greece in the Treaty of Lausanne.<sup>52</sup>

This tragic episode highlights the fact that in some wars of territorial annexation, civilian victimization is made possible by conquest, which it may then help to solidify. Civilian victimization in these cases is less a cause of victory than a consequence of it. Furthermore, targeting civilians cannot always prevent defeat later in the war: no matter how homogeneous and peaceful ethnic cleansing renders the conquered territory, if the military cannot defend it against a strengthened adversary, it will be lost. In extreme cases, such as that of Nazi Germany, civilian victimization may be pursued so zealously for non-security reasons that it contributes to the aggressor’s defeat by reducing its military ability to defend the captured territory. In more recent cases, such as Bosnia, repeated atrocities may eventually prompt third-party intervention in the war for humanitarian reasons and lead to the reversal of an aggressor’s gains.

In sum, the Greek case suggests that the positive correlation between civilian victimization and victory in wars of territorial annexation may not be causal. In many of these cases civilian victimization occurs only because military victory has provided states access to territory inhabited by enemy noncombatants. The expulsion or murder of these people solidifies the attacker’s grip on the territory, but this grip only lasts if the state is able to defeat enemy counterattacks and win the war. Victory appears to prompt civilian victimization rather than the other way around. Endogeneity, in other words, may plague the relationship between civilian victimization and victory in wars of annexation. Future research should attempt to address this issue. The case, however, also implies different metrics for measuring success in cases of territorial annexation that should be investigated in future research: does civilian victimization lower the likelihood of future armed rebellion by the targeted group? Does the expulsion of people raise or lower the probability of conflict recurrence between the aggressor state and its victim? And does ethnic cleansing provoke third parties to intervene and defeat the victimizer?

49. Marjorie Housepian, *The Smyrna Affair* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1966), p. 50.

50. Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire* (London: Arnold, 2001), p. 132.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

52. On these events, see Howard M. Sachar, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East: 1914–1924* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), pp. 424–425, 433–436, and 446–448; and Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 44–56.

## WARS OF ATTRITION AND CIVILIAN VICTIMIZATION

Civilian victimization is more likely to be chosen when states become desperate to win or to conserve on casualties. These cases tend to be stalemated wars of attrition. In our data set, battle deaths for belligerents in such conflicts are more than thirty times higher than for other wars. Moreover, wars of attrition last about five times longer than other wars. In conflicts like these—a partial list includes Crimean, Franco-Prussian, Russo-Japanese, World War I, Chaco, Sino-Japanese, World War II, Korean, Vietnam, and Ethiopian-Eritrean—the stakes are likely to be high and both sides highly resolved. We thus tend to observe civilian victimization in cases in which it is least likely to work, and not observe it in easier cases where the adversary might be less determined.

Still, the statistical evidence showed that states which targeted non-combatants or killed more civilians won more often than states that did not. But was civilian victimization responsible for these victories? Table 2.5 divides states that targeted noncombatants in wars of attrition by whether they won, lost, or drew the war. Among the six losses, it seems clear that civilian victimization by two of the losers made things worse and contributed to their defeat. First, Boxer attacks on Western missionaries and their besieging of the foreign legations in the capital prompted Great-Power intervention, against which the Boxers and Chinese soldiers were no match.<sup>53</sup> Second, Germany's U-boat blockade of Britain starting in February 1917 brought the United States into the war against Germany. In three of the other four cases (Germany, World War II West and World War II East; Azerbaijan), civilian targeting simply did not work: the Blitz on Britain (1940–1941) failed to knock the British out of the war; the Wehrmacht's brutal policy of reprisal massacres on the Eastern Front fed the partisan cause and its siege of Leningrad (1941–1943) killed over 600,000 people but the city never fell; and indiscriminate Azerbaijani rocket and artillery barrages on Stepanakert did not break the will of the Karabakh capital's population.<sup>54</sup> The Greco-Turkish case is not relevant because the targeting actually resulted from annexationist motives.<sup>55</sup> Among the draws, it is possible to make judgments regarding particular campaigns of civilian

53. The vast majority of the civilians killed by the Boxers, however, were fellow Chinese. Nat Brandt, *Massacre in Shansi* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1994), pp. xiii, 270.

54. On these cases, see, respectively, Matthew Cooper, *The German Air Force, 1933–1945: An Anatomy of Failure* (London: Jane's, 1981), pp. 165–166, 171, and 173–174; Harrison E. Salisbury, *The 900 Days: The Siege of Leningrad* (London: Pan Books, 2000); Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), p. 78; and Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), p. 175.

55. Nazi Germany's extermination of Soviet Jewry on the Eastern Front and general indifference to the welfare of the occupied population was counterproductive and also resulted in a diversion of resources to killing operations, to the neglect of fighting the Red Army. This killing was largely driven by ideological and annexationist motives, however, rather than coercive ones. The same can be said of Romania's targeting of Jews in the East.

victimization even though the overall war outcome was indecisive. For example, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong assassination campaign in the South should be considered a partial success, as these killings helped Communist forces gain control over large tracts of South Vietnam.<sup>56</sup> Four other cases, however, are clear failures. Japan's terror bombing of Chinese cities and other atrocities failed to cause China to surrender, as did U.S. strategic bombing in Korea.<sup>57</sup> The Rolling Thunder campaign of strategic bombing by the United States against North Vietnam exerted little effect on Hanoi's determination to continue the war; the relatively small amount of bombing of Iraqi cities by Iranian air forces did not cause Saddam Hussein to negotiate peace. We are unable to judge the case of Iraqi bombing of Iran in the 1980s: it is clear that Saddam Hussein tended to launch Scud missiles at Iranian cities when his forces were under severe military pressure at the front; what is less clear is whether these Scud barrages had any effect on the prosecution of Iranian offensives.<sup>58</sup> The final two cases—North and South Korea—consisted of attempts by the two sides to eliminate ideological enemies and thus are not relevant to evaluating the effect of civilian victimization for coercive goals.

The most important cases, however, are the war winners. Did civilian victimization help them achieve victory? Six cases should be dismissed because civilian victimization was not relevant to victory or defeat: the Boxer Rebellion, ethnic cleansing in the First Balkan War, Turkey in World War I, the Greco-Turkish War, the Soviet Union in World War II, and Armenia-Azerbaijan. The reason is that the civilian targeting in these cases occurred after the outcome of the war was already decided by strictly military means or sprang from a source other than coercing the enemy government.<sup>59</sup> Among the coercive cases, the Russo-Finnish War is a clear failure: the Red Air Force bombed Finnish cities to no effect, forcing the Soviet High Command to expend tens of thousands of Russian soldiers to

56. Communist control slipped in the war's later years, however, owing to improved U.S. counterinsurgency techniques that relied at least in part on violence against non-combatants. See, for example, Mark Moyar, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: The CIA's Secret Campaign to Destroy the Viet Cong* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1997); and Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "How 'Free' is Free-Riding in Civil War? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem," *World Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (January 2007), pp. 177–216.

57. The main U.S. bombing campaign of urban areas in North Korea occurred in the winter of 1950–1951, first to deter Chinese entry into the war and later to hinder the Chinese advance down the peninsula. It failed in both instances.

58. Efraim Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War: A Military Analysis* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1987), p. 31; and Efraim Karsh, "Lessons of the Iran-Iraq War," *Orbis*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Spring 1989), p. 217.

59. The Boxer cases consist of reprisal massacres. The Turkish case in World War I is ethnic cleansing of Armenians during the Turkish invasion of the Caucasus in 1918, whereas the Turks in the Greco-Turkish war expelled and massacred Greeks and Armenians in the wake of the defeat of the Greek Army in 1922. The Soviet case is reprisals for German barbarities in Russia as well as calculated ethnic cleansing to drive Germans out of what was to become Poland. Ethnic cleansing in the First Balkan and Armenian-Azerbaijani Wars stemmed from annexationist motives.



wear down the outmanned and outgunned Finns. At most, the bombing of Germany from 1942 to 1945 by Britain and the United States forced the Germans to transfer resources into air defense that were needed elsewhere and put a lid on the expansion of German war production; it certainly did not cause a popular revolt or influence the Nazi leadership to give up the fight. We lack sufficient data to judge whether the Japanese bombing of Shanghai in 1932 contributed to victory in Japan's war with China.

In the other eight cases, however, civilian victimization may have contributed to victory in smaller or larger ways. Our own back-of-the-envelope coding would categorize the sieges of Paris in the Franco-Prussian War, Plevna in the Russo-Turkish War, Adrianople in the First Balkan War, and Beirut in the Lebanon War as possible successes, along with the bombing of Warsaw in 1939 and Israeli expulsions in the Palestine War. Several analysts, for example, conclude that although Prussian bombardment had little impact on Parisian morale, hunger and the prospect of large-scale starvation contributed to the French decision to surrender.<sup>60</sup> Others argue that German air attacks on Warsaw—particularly the massive raids of September 25, 1939—triggered the capitulation of Polish forces in the city.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, the Israeli bombardment of Beirut in 1982 succeeded in obtaining the ouster of the Palestine Liberation Organization from Lebanon. As Benny Morris puts it, “Over the long haul, [Defense Minister Ariel] Sharon’s brutal measures worked: They persuaded Arafat that the PLO no longer had a choice.”<sup>62</sup> In two other cases, civilian victimization arguably played a partial role in causing the loser’s defeat. The Allied starvation blockade of Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I may have contributed to the swift collapse of the Central Powers in 1918, but only after it became clear that the tide on the battlefield had turned.<sup>63</sup> The firebombing of Japan seems like a clear failure—the population did not rise up and the naval blockade had already curtailed the war production that bombing was meant to destroy—but some argue that the

60. On the effect of hunger, see Robert Baldick, *The Siege of Paris* (London: History Book Club, 1964), p. 222; and Melvin Kranzberg, *The Siege of Paris: A Political and Social History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950), p. 164. On the ineffectiveness of bombardment, see Alistair Horne, *The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune 1870–71* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1965), p. 217; and Kranzberg, *Siege of Paris*, p. 133.

61. Robin Neillands, *The Bomber War: The Allied Air Offensive against Nazi Germany* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2001), p. 35; and Cajus Bekker, *The Luftwaffe War Diaries: The German Air Force in World War II*, trans. and ed. Frank Ziegler (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), p. 59.

62. Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–1999* (New York: Knopf, 1999), p. 537. On Plevna and Adrianople, see Rupert Furneaux, *The Siege of Plevna* (London: Anthony Blond, 1958), pp. 186–187; and Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912–1913: Prelude to the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 86–90. On the success of Israeli civilian victimization directed against the Palestinian Arab population in 1948–1949, see Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, chap. 6.

63. As Avner Offer has put it, “The Allied offensive was the hammer, the home front provided the anvil.” Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 72.

Table 2.5. Wins, Losses, and Draws by States that Targeted Civilians in Wars of Attrition.

	WIN	LOSE	DRAW
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Franco-Prussian (1870–1871)</li> <li>• Prussia: Siege of Paris</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boxer (1900)</li> <li>• China: Massacres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sino-Japanese (1937–1945)</li> <li>• Japan: Terror bombing, germ warfare, etc.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russo-Turkish (1877–1878)</li> <li>• Russia: Siege of Plevna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WW1 West (1914–1918)</li> <li>• Germany: Bombing of cities, blockade of UK</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Korea (1950–1953)</li> <li>• DPRK: Massacre of anti-Communists</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boxer (1900)</li> <li>• Russia, UK, France, U.S.: Reprisal massacres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greco-Turkish (1919–1922)</li> <li>• Greece: Massacres, ethnic cleansing of Turks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Korea (1950–1953)</li> <li>• ROK: Massacre of Communist sympathizers</li> <li>• U.S.: Bombing of DPRK</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Balkan (1912–1913)</li> <li>• Bulgaria, Serbia: Siege of Adrianople</li> <li>• Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece: Ethnic cleansing of Turks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WW2 West (1940–1945)</li> <li>• Germany: Blitz of UK</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vietnam (1965–1973)</li> <li>• DRV: Assassinations in RVN</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WW1 West (1914–1918)</li> <li>• UK, France, U.S.: Blockade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WW2 East (1941–1945)</li> <li>• Germany: Anti-partisan war, siege of Leningrad</li> <li>• Romania: Massacres of Jews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vietnam (1965–1973)</li> <li>• U.S.: Rolling Thunder</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WW1 East (1914–1918)</li> <li>• Turkey: Massacres of Armenians in Caucasus, 1918</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armenia-Azerbaijan (1992–1994)</li> <li>• Azerbaijan: Bombing of Stepanakert</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iran-Iraq (1980–1988)</li> <li>• Iraq: Bombing of cities</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greco-Turkish (1919–1922)</li> <li>• Turkey: Cleansing of Greeks and Armenians</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iran-Iraq (1980–1988)</li> <li>• Iran: Bombing of cities</li> </ul>

Table 2.5. *continued*

8	Sino-Japanese (1931–1933) • Japan: Bombing of Shanghai			Partial success: 1 (1 state) Failure: 4 (4 states) Unable to judge: 1 (1 state) Not relevant: 2 (2 states)
9	Germany-Poland (1939) • Germany: Siege of Warsaw			
10	Russo-Finnish (1939–1940) • Russia: Bombing of Finnish cities			
11	WW2 West (1940–1945) • UK, U.S.: Bombing of Germany			
12	WW2 East (1941–1945) • Russia: Cleansing of Germans			
13	Pacific War (1941–1945) • U.S.: Bombing of Japan			
14	Palestine War (1948–1949) • Israel: Expulsion of Palestinians			
15	Lebanon War (1982) • Israel: Siege of Beirut			
16	Armenia-Azerbaijan (1992–1994) • Armenia: Cleansing of Azeris			
	Possible success: 6 (7 states) Partial success: 2 (4 states) Failure: 2 (3 states) Unable to judge: 1 (1 state) Not relevant: 6 (11 states)	Contribute to defeat: 2 (2 states) Simple failure: 3 (3 states) Not relevant: 1 (2 states)		
	WARS: Possible Success Rate: 30% (6/20) Possible + Partial Success Rate: 45% (9/20) STATES: Possible Success Rate: 29% (7/24) Possible + Partial Success Rate: 50% (12/24)			

atomic bombings hastened the Japanese surrender, so this case might be a partial success.<sup>64</sup>

In short, an examination of the relevant cases of civilian targeting by states that won coercive contests suggests that this strategy played some role in defeating the enemy in eight out of the ten wars in which judgment is possible, and played a major role in six out of the ten. A substantial number of cases, however, are false positives: there are six wars (totaling eleven winning states) in which civilian victimization was not relevant to victory or defeat for various reasons. The earlier statistical findings are thus probably inflated by these false positives. Overall, the record of civilian victimization is not quite as successful as a cursory glance at Table 2.5 would suggest. Eleven cases were clear failures, two of which also contributed to the defeat of the state that employed civilian victimization. These failures involved twelve states. Six cases involving seven states were probable successes—civilian victimization played a significant role in defeating the enemy—and three other cases involving five states could be considered partial successes. Civilian victimization was probably an important component of victory in 30 percent of the wars of attrition (29 percent of states) and at least partially contributed to victory in 45 percent of such wars (50 percent of states). This analysis is preliminary and subject to further investigation, but relative to the rates of victory for states or sides that did not target noncombatants in wars of attrition—40 percent—civilian targeting is not radically less (or more) effective than fighting more conventionally.

Three final points are worth noting. First, even in the cases in which civilian victimization arguably affected the outcome, the target's level of military vulnerability was also high. It may therefore be the case that civilian victimization works only in situations when the targeted state would have lost anyway or when it was combined with strategies that target military assets. Second, it is interesting to note that of the six successes for civilian targeting, five of them occurred in sieges when the enemy army was holed up in a city, supporting the argument that civilian victimization is more effective against smaller targets. Finally, with the exception of the siege of Beirut in 1982, each of the successes occurred sixty or more years ago, which supports the view that civilian victimization has decreased in effectiveness over time.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, we set out to determine whether or not civilian victimization helps states win wars. Statistical analysis of civilian targeting, mass killing, and numbers of civilian casualties inflicted showed a positive and in some instances significant correlation between these variables and vic-

64. The relative importance of the atomic bombs and Russia's entry into the war in causing Japan to surrender are hotly debated. See Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, ed., *The End of the Pacific War: Reappraisals* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), for example.

tory in all interstate wars, wars of attrition, and wars of territorial annexation. Civilian victimization also appears to work better against smaller targets. Moreover, the efficacy of civilian victimization has clearly decreased over time, a finding that merits further investigation.

The relatively simple statistical analysis performed in this paper does not yield sufficient information to render a final judgment on the efficacy of civilian victimization, because states choose strategically whether or not to use this method. When states target civilians in wars of territorial annexation, civilian victimization may be a product of victory rather than a cause, and thus these cases are of questionable relevance for judging the effectiveness of the strategy. Further analysis is required to deal with this endogeneity problem.

In costly, protracted wars of attrition, the deck is stacked against civilian victimization because states are highly resolved. More sophisticated statistical analysis may help untangle this selection effect, but in this chapter we have supplemented the statistics with a close look at civilian targeting in wars of attrition. We found several cases that were false positives—civilian victimization that occurred for other reasons or which was unrelated to the war's outcome. Of the relevant cases, civilian victimization arguably played a role in producing the successful outcome a majority of the time. Overall, civilian victimization yielded positive results in 30 to 50 percent of wars of attrition. This is not so different from the rate at which states prevailed when they refrained from targeting civilians. If this finding holds up to further analysis, it would indicate that civilian victimization sometimes succeeds even when the deck is stacked against it, in costly wars of attrition. This result is qualified, though, by the fact that clear successes tend to occur only when the outcome of the war hinges on the siege of a city and when military vulnerability as well as civilian vulnerability is high. Furthermore, most of these successes occurred in the relatively distant past.

This chapter represents a first cut at answering some of the difficult questions surrounding the effectiveness of civilian victimization in war. It points to many interesting questions for further research. Future research should grapple with the problem of selection effects in wars of attrition and the problem of endogeneity in wars of territorial annexation. Careful case studies will also be needed to assess the role that civilian victimization played in contributing to war outcomes that we only sketched out above. It would also be useful to expand the definition of effectiveness in wars to annex territory in order to test the effect of civilian targeting on rebellion, war recurrence, and third-party intervention. More needs to be done to explain why this strategy has become less effective over time. We have posited some potential hypotheses; future research should isolate and test these (and other) hypotheses.

## Chapter 3

### War, Collaboration, and Endogenous Ethnic Polarization: The Path to Ethnic Cleansing

H. Zeynep Bulutgil

To what extent does the depth of ethnic cleavages play a role in the process that leads to ethnic cleansing? The question is important, as the conventional explanation for ethnic cleansing takes deep ethnic cleavages as the main exogenous variable that explains this phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> The idea is that in societies where ethnic cleavages are deep, relations between different ethnic groups are more strained, and issues that have to do with ethnicity dominate over other politically relevant questions. This leads to the emergence of “organic” nationalism, which views ethnic minorities as inherently different and deserving of exclusion, rather than “civic” nationalism, which aims to incorporate ethnic minorities.<sup>2</sup> In contexts where organic nationalism predominates, ethnic cleansing follows whenever events such as state collapse, war, or geopolitical instability eliminate the constraints against this policy.

This chapter argues that relations between ethnic groups and organic nationalism are to a large extent functions of relations between states rather than of deep ethnic cleavages. In particular, interethnic relations deteriorate and ethnic cleavages trump other cleavages when competing sides in an interstate conflict ally themselves with different ethnic groups in a given society. Such a situation typically emerges when states form

---

*I would like to thank Carles Boix, Stathis Kalyvas, and Lisa Wedeen, as well as the editors of this volume, Adria Lawrence and Erica Chenoweth, for their comments on earlier versions of this chapter.*

---

1. The depth of ethnic cleavages refers to the significance of the differences between ethnic groups in a given context. This significance is determined by a combination of the cultural characteristics of the groups (such as whether or not they speak similar languages or whether or not they practice the same religion) and the historical experience that filters these cultural characteristics (such as whether or not the minority group has had access to a separate education system or an autonomous religious organization).

2. See Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).