

Rebecca Andreassen
Counting Civilian Casualties
VIGRE Semester Report

During the Spring 2009 semester, I aided Professor Nicholas Jewell with research regarding civilian casualty counts during times of war. The goal of the project was to determine the variation in civilian casualty counts in multiple conflicts, and determine if there is a range, and if so, why there is a range, and what the attempts to count casualties indicates about the attitudes of the militaries and governments involved. We wanted to see what types of statistical techniques were used, which were successful, and which were the most unbiased. Over the semester, I examined the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, The Vietnam war, and the American Civil War.

I started with a focus on the current Iraq war, concentrating on historical attitudes toward civilians as well as statistical methods used to estimate death tolls. Using multiple article databases listed on the lib.berkeley.edu cite such as *America: History and Life*, *LexisNexis Academic*, and *Archive of Americana*, as well as our library service of Interlibrary Loans, I gathered materials from many academic journals and libraries across the nation that detail statistical studies and commentaries on the casualty counts at war.

Once I gathered a significant amount of information on the Iraqi civilian situation, I expanded my research to the Vietnam War and the American Civil War. Civilian casualty records were much more difficult to find for these wars since little focus was given to death tolls besides those accumulated by the militaries involved. For the Civil War, I have thus far found rough estimates of civilian casualties within larger volumes describing military losses. For the Vietnam War, estimates have been produced using statistical analysis of census data and survey responses.

I plan to continue research on this topic through the summer, expanding to examine military publications on civilian casualties, and views toward casualties in times of war.