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A NEW AGE

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The articles in this special issue of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* are drawn from the first round of a research project on civil war initiated by the World Bank.¹ Civil war is pertinent to the World Bank because it occurs disproportionately in low-income countries and, evidently, further reduces income. Hence, it is of concern for an organization whose mission is poverty reduction. Because the World Bank is a financial institution, the instruments over which it has influence are primarily economic. One focus of the project has therefore been to investigate the extent to which civil war might have economic causes, as well as the more evident economic consequences. However, the project’s objective is wider than to help guide the Bank’s own activities. To date, in the international community, many policies toward conflict have been guided by little more than rules of thumb derived by practitioners from their experience. Policy has not rested on a solid foundation of research-derived knowledge. The ultimate goal of our research project is to stimulate the research community to provide these foundations.²

If conflict has a substantial economic dimension, economists can make a positive contribution to conflict analysis. Most contributors to this volume are economists, but this does not presuppose that economics is more important—or even as important—as political science in generating better research foundations for policy. Rather, it is an effort to rectify what we perceive to be the relative neglect of economics in the study of

conflict and, correspondingly, the integration of conflict in the study of economics.

Conflict policy and analysis can be divided into three areas: prevention, settlement, and postconflict recovery. The articles in this collection discuss questions of relevance

1. Most of these articles were first presented at a March 2000 conference on the "Economics of Civil Wars," cosponsored by the World Bank Research Department and Princeton University's Center for International Studies. Authors were invited to submit revised drafts for this issue. All articles were reviewed by two anonymous referees and the special issue editors. A subset of submitted papers was accepted for publication.

2. The project covers civil violence and crime broadly defined but has focused on civil war as the most destructive form of violent civil conflict. For information on the project and related publications, see <http://www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/index.htm>. The data files used in papers in this volume can be downloaded at www.worldbank.org/3/research/conflict/data/index.htm and www.yale.edu/unsy/civilwars/data.htm.

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