Nowadays, it seems that investigating peace and conflict is more crucial than before. The recrudescence of armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine reminded scholars that much remains to be done not only to understand determinants and consequences of wars but also to provide policy-makers with workable solutions to build a long-lasting peace. Albeit apparently novel, the importance of investigating peace and war is not a novelty for peace economists and peace scientists. In particular, PEPS also has played and keeps playing a role in this field of research. PEPS has been founded by Walter Isard in 1993 with the aim to create a novel outlet for peace scientists and peace economists. In particular, PEPS was designed to attract contributions from an interdisciplinary community of scholars from a wide variety of disciplines such as economics and political science, as well as regional science, geography and mathematics. Moreover, PEPS was intended to combine both positive and normative studies alongside policy-oriented papers.

As said above, much remains to be done. First, we are not still fully aware of economic determinants of political violence. In this respect, it is still worth citing some lines in the preface of North et al. (2009) […] *The absence of a workable integrated theory of economics and politics reflects the lack of systematic thinking about the central problem of violence in human societies. How societies solve the ubiquitous threat of violence shapes and constraints the forms that human interaction can take […]*. Secondly, we also do not have an adequate knowledge of the wide set of costs emerging in the presence of actual and potential violence. On the one hand, we are now aware that the costs of wars in many cases do constitute a life-long burden for polities, societies and people. In this respect, in the latest years as peace scholars we have departed from the accounting approach to armed conflict to take into consideration a broader approach involving long-term economic and political aspects as well as long-term psychological and societal consequences. Such general considerations are only the backbone of a literature

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which has been evolving for years also in the light of emerging global issues worldwide. For example, at the time this editorial is being written, the number of Internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees worldwide has exceeded 100 million people. It is in fact related to the dynamics of armed conflicts and it is now gaining attention from scholars but it was a neglected issue only a few years ago. This is nothing but a striking example of the challenges that peace science and peace economics are nowadays facing. In fact, now on this topic further research is needed and compelling. For example, the best paper published on PEPS in 2021 was on this topic.\footnote{See Palacios and Pérez-Uribe (2021). It has been awarded the Fifth Walter Isard Annual Award for the best article in Peace Economics Peace Science and Public Policy.}

The attitude of paying attention to emerging issues is essential in the light of the normative character of peace science. Needless to say, peace economics takes the positive study of conflicts as point of departure and eventually aims to be a normative science as emphasized in Isard (1994), Arrow (1995), and Caruso (2011). By emphasizing also normative studies, peace research contributes to the study of both international and national institutions leading to the establishment of peaceful societies. In this respect, the influence of research often works slowly but effectively.

In brief, both positive and normative research on peace and conflict are considered in the PEPS’ approach to peace science and peace economics. Since 1993, PEPS is committed to further develop peace science so contributing to the global scientific debate on peace. Past performance highlights that PEPS has already played this role. In fact, PEPS is now at 28th year of publication and, according to Scopus, it is gaining further attention from scholars worldwide. In 2021 the Citescore metric (alternative to IF) has increased. In particular, it has been steadily increasing since 2017.\footnote{Please check PEPS’ performance at the page https://www.scopus.com/sourceid/22273.} The editorial team of PEPS is committed to proceed on this path so keep contributing to peace science and peace economics.

References


