

**ECONOMIC SECURITY & RECONSTRUCTION:
UTILITY, HISTORY AND PRACTICE IN POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS**

by
Brock H. Dickinson

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Department of Political Science
BROCK UNIVERSITY
St. Catharines, Ontario

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Abstract

This paper argues that the historical origins of the modern nation-state structure are based in part on economic processes, which give contemporary nation-states a specifically economic set of features and characteristics. As a result, there is a real but little understood economic security component of international relations that is increasingly recognized by competing schools of academic thought, including the realist school, which has historically been hesitant to acknowledge such issues as a feature of the international system.

The paper further suggests that an understanding of economic security has significant implications for the theory and practice of post-conflict reconstruction in contemporary nation-states. However, current reconstruction practice fails to explicitly acknowledge the reality of the economic security dimension, although it sometimes recognizes the role of economic security in an implicit way, resulting in a disturbing separation of policy and practice that weakens overall reconstruction efforts. A stronger understanding of the economic security paradigm allows the international community to identify and adopt those development and reconstruction practices that are most effective in the field, and thereby offer the greatest opportunities to strengthen and stabilize state security in post-conflict environments. The paper concludes by identifying and endorsing specific reconstruction strategies and practices that, by incorporating an understanding of the economic security paradigm, are best positioned to enhance the security-building process in post-conflict environments.