

Conceptual and Historical Foundations of Foreign Aid¹

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Abstract: Foreign aid is a policy instrument of limited budgetary scope that nonetheless generates highly contentious debate. Yet while the contemporary scholarly literature almost exclusively considers aid in the post-World War II era, we argue that also considering aid in earlier periods of history helps to better understand the broader politics of foreign aid. Neglect of this deeper history of foreign aid specifically produces three misconceptions: that foreign aid is a uniquely modern policy instrument, that foreign aid is relatively homogenous in donor intent, and that foreign aid's scope is primarily limited to the contemporary humanitarian interventions upon which the bulk of scholarly analysis is centered. These oversights disincentivize more robust debates about the efficacy of foreign aid from the perspective of donors, which are often limited to simply asking whether donors pursue national interests. We attempt to decompose donor interests by offering a typology that links foreign aid with the international political status quo. We assess this framework through a sampling of historical instances of foreign aid. Specifically, we document historical examples of foreign aid pre-Marshall Plan and define and sub-categorize them in terms of donor intent. We discuss how the relative salience of different types of donor intent has evolved throughout history, which helps explain and contextualize the current state of the foreign aid debate in the scholarly and policy communities.

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1) Introduction

“Of the seeming and real innovations which the modern age has introduced into the practice of foreign policy, none has proven more baffling to both understanding and action than foreign aid.” --Hans Morgenthau, 1962

Morgenthau (1962)’s treatment of foreign aid as a new phenomenon in international relations, while written over 50 years ago, reflects the persistent absence of historical context in contemporary academic and policy debates about aid. The Marshall Plan put in place by the U.S. following World War II is typically perceived as the birthplace of foreign aid as an instrument of foreign policy. In particular, the fields of economics and political science, perhaps the largest and most influential areas of contemporary foreign aid research, tend to neglect pre-20th century foreign aid as an important subject of mainstream inquiry (Edwards 2015).⁵

Empirically, however, the historical roots of foreign aid predate the Marshall plan by centuries, even millennia. Pre- and early modern history contain innumerable examples of how decision makers from diverse political systems and geographic regions employed foreign aid as a strategic tool in world politics. Indeed, throughout history foreign aid has been deployed as an important foreign policy instrument.

We argue that, throughout history, foreign aid allocation has often been closely linked to the status quo in international politics. Accounting for a wide sample of foreign aid in history, we argue that analyzing aid allocation with regard to its orientation to a regional or international

⁵ There are notable exceptions. For instance, scholars have suggested that contemporary foreign aid has its origins in 19th century outward assistance policies pursued by the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US), and that while premodern antecedents of aid existed, these were typically elite transfers rather than donor attempts to benefit recipient societies at large (Hjertholm and White 2000). Others emphasize the colonial origins of foreign aid, such as the UK’s 1929 Colonial Development Act, which set a precedent for European governments funding development projects in their colonies (Eyben 2014). Some consider pre-Marshall Plan U.S. foreign aid in their analysis but remain focused on how to deliver aid more effectively (Picard and Buss 2009). As others point out, Post-War beliefs about development and how to engage with the developing world were socially constructed ideas contingent on specific experiences prior and during that period, in particular those conditioned on the American liberal experience (Packenham 1973). In general, however, most see the period immediately after World War II as a “convenient starting point” for the history of foreign aid (Easterly 2002).

status quo helps enrich our understanding aid donor motivations. This approach enables comparisons of aid allocation behavior across distinct time periods, and helps avoid the omissions of historical foreign aid that characterize much extant research. As we will describe in detail, European and non-European powers deployed foreign aid to restore, maintain or revise the geopolitical status quo throughout different periods of history prior to the 20th century. We document cases of status quo restoration in Greek city states and post-Westphalian Europe. We also describe various instances of status quo maintenance in China, Rome, and elsewhere. Aid to upset the status quo cases include French and British aid to America during the revolutionary period as well as World War I-Germany. To demonstrate how our simple typology of donor interests stretches across different time periods to the current day, we then provide modern analogs for each of these categories.

Do these previously omitted cases of historical foreign aid matter for contemporary research on the subject? We strongly believe so. Specifically, in this paper we attempt to show how accounting for historical cases can enrich our understanding of the broad palette of strategic donor interests that have motivated aid provision in world history. This is an important point because, in addition to circumscribing the study of aid to 20th-century cases, extant research on foreign aid theoretically and empirically often discounts the interests of donors.⁶ Donor self-interest, while widely accepted as an important explanatory factor in aid allocation, is poorly conceptualized relative to other outcomes in the international development literature such as growth, civil conflict, and other recipient-side outcomes. A greater appreciation for pre-contemporary foreign aid in international politics can improve our understanding of how donors deploy aid flows to pursue a variety of strategic objectives in international politics.

Our analysis also helps shed light on where the current state of foreign aid stands relative to other historical periods. Only since World War II has foreign aid allocation and research on aid evolved into a humanitarian exercise focused on development and the interests of aid-recipients. We are hopeful that our analysis will help spur new research that enriches the study of aid donor strategic motivations, particularly as emerging donors are widely perceived as

⁶ While the empirical study of foreign aid most often begins in the post-war period, international relations scholars have abundant historical records that pre-date the 20th century for the study of interstate conflict and other key variables of interest.

challenging an incumbent, status quo aid regime dominated by Western states (Manning 2006; Walz and Ramachandran 2011).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. First we document the neglect of historical cases and donor interests in contemporary, mainstream foreign aid research. Second, we build our theoretical framework using a broad definition of foreign aid that facilitates linking contemporary and historical cases for our analysis. We introduce a theoretical framework for donor intent that connects aid allocation with the international political status quo. This produces a simple typology of three categories of donor intent: status quo restoration, status quo maintenance, and status quo disruption. We survey historical and contemporary cases of aid allocation that fall into each of the three categories to demonstrate how our theory of donor intent is generalizable to historical and modern aid. Finally, we explain how the salience of each of these types of aid has evolved throughout history. We also discuss the limitations of our study and suggest ways to further enrich contemporary aid debates using historical cases.

2) Literature

While Morgenthau (1962)'s seminal article quoted above ignores the historical roots of foreign aid, it posits that nearly all aid is political. Since then, however, the foreign aid literature as a whole has increasingly moved away from donor interests. Researchers have long noted an “intellectual vacuum” of donor motivations in the aid literature (Schaefer, Hook and Taylor 1998). On the one hand, researchers almost universally perceive donor interests as crucial to understanding the post-World War II foreign aid regime.⁷ For example, scholars have provided abundant empirical evidence that donor strategic interests drive foreign aid allocation (Alesina and Dollar 2000; Kuziemko and Werker 2006; Dreher et al. 2009).⁸ Others have analyzed the

⁷ Though some scholars argue that the role of moral norms among donors has been underappreciated (Lumsdaine 1993)

⁸ Across diverse donors, concessional types of aid such as official development assistance (ODA) are typically found to be more directly linked to foreign policy interests, such as voting alignment between countries, than less concessional forms of development finance (Alesina and Dollar 2000; Dreher et al. Forthcoming).

conditions under which donors are successful in securing policy concessions from recipient governments (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2007; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2009).

On the other hand, while donor self-interest is recognized as an important source of aid allocation, the specific donor motivations driving aid flows are under-conceptualized. The literature instead has focused on macro-level trends in the salience of donor interests, treating donor interests as rather monolithic rather than decomposing them. For instance, the end of the Cold War has often been perceived as an important discontinuity for aid donor motivations. Meernik, Krueger, & Poe (1998) find that security-driven objectives have become less prominent in post-Cold War U.S. foreign aid allocation, which has shifted more heavily towards domestic ideological goals such as democracy promotion.⁹ Another “cutpoint” for the evolution of donor aid motivations in contemporary history is the War on Terror beginning in 2001.¹⁰ Recent analyses find that U.S. aid allocation since 2001 has focused less on recipient economic or humanitarian need and more on a specific type of national security interest: anti-terrorism (Fleck and Kilby 2010, Milner and Tingley 2013, Milner and Tingley 2015).¹¹ In general, however, extant research collectively takes only preliminary steps in conceptualizing donor interests.

What explains the rudimentary nature of discourse on donor interests? One reason is opportunity cost: donor interests have been heavily discounted in contemporary aid research, which prioritizes recipient-side outcomes. Overwhelmingly, the most well known and oft-cited publications on foreign aid have tended to discuss the extent to which aid benefits recipient societies (Boone 1996; Alesina and Weder 1999; Easterly 2003; Moyo 2009). Debates about

⁹ Dunning (2004) suggests that aid conditionality imposed by pro-democracy Western donors became more credible after the Cold War. Without U.S.-U.S.S.R. great power rivalry overshadowing aid allocation, donors could more credibly focus on democracy promotion, making it less likely that aid would create moral hazard where dictators simply use aid to control their societies. An important qualification of this research agenda is that use of different econometric models by scholars have produced significantly different findings on what factors are most important for explaining donor motivations (Lai 2003).

¹⁰ Analysts pondered whether fighting terrorism would realign the foreign policies of Western countries, including overseas development programs, towards a more security-centric orientation (Buzan 2006).

¹¹ Even controlling for periods when U.S. leadership was Republican, which is typically associated with smaller foreign aid budgets, American foreign aid increased significantly at the onset of the War on Terror, but disproportionately for higher income recipients. Other related work includes contributions to Milner and Tingley 2013 and Milner and Tingley 2015.

whether aid “works” typically pivot on whether recipients are benefitting from foreign aid. Donor interests are often scantily considered or assumed to be in line with humanitarian or developmental goals. We examined aggregate trends in publications on foreign aid in Google Scholar and found that the most influential articles in the field overwhelmingly focus on recipient outcomes at the expense of donor interests.

This recipient-centric approach to foreign aid, while important and not surprising in the post-Cold War era, misrepresents the role of aid as a foreign policy tool for donor states. In addition to focusing on a narrow range of aid, foreign aid scholarship has tended to accept as given the oft-expressed theory that foreign aid originated as an instrument of state policy in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Specifically, the most frequently cited foreign aid articles have failed to address historical foreign aid in their abstracts. This lack of historical focus, as well as the paucity of donor focused scholarship is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: History and Donor Interests in the Most-Cited Research on Foreign Aid

Citation	Citations	Significant Discussion of Broader Donor Motivations	Pre-1945 Aid Discussed	Non-Humanitarian/Development Aid Discussed	Categories Addressed
Alesina, A., & Dollar, D. (2000)	2787	1	0	0	1
Boone, P. (1996)	1776	0	0	0	0
Alesina, A., & Weder, B. (1999)	1171	0	0	0	0
Easterly, W. (2003).	1083	0	0	0	0
Riddell, R. C. (2009).	996	0	0	1	1
Dalgaard, C. J., Hansen, H., & Tarp, F. (2004)	837	0	0	0	0
Svensson, J. (2000).	819	0	0	0	0
Bräutigam, D. A., & Knack, S. (2004)	818	0	0	0	0

McKinnon, R. I. (1964)	630	0	0	0	0
Schraeder, P. J., Hook, S. W., & Taylor, B. (1998)	587	1	0	1	2
Morgenthau, H. (1962)	570	1	0	1	2
Kuziemko, I., & Werker, E. (2006)	552	1	0	1	2
Papanek, G. F. (1973)	549	0	0	1	1
Knack, S. (2004)	549	0	0	0	0
Feyzioglu, T., Swaroop, V., & Zhu, M. (1998)	526	0	0	1	1
Easterly, W. (2002)	513	0	0	0	0
Svensson, J. (2000)	466	0	0	0	0
Easterly, W., & Pfutze, T. (2008)	413	0	0	0	0
Dollar, D., & Levin, V. (2006)	373	0	0	0	0
Pack, H., & Pack, J. R. (1993)	357	0	0	0	0
Tavares, J. (2003)	351	0	0	0	0
Meernik, J., Krueger, E. L., & Poe, S. C. (1998)	334	1	0	1	0
Cingranelli, D. L., & Pasquarello, T. E. (1985)	324	1	0	0	1
De Mesquita, B. B., & Smith, A. (2009)	297	1	0	1	1
Dudley, L., & Montmarquette, C. (1976)	295	0	0	0	0
Pallage, S., & Robe,	270	0	0	0	0

M. A. (2001)					
De Mesquita, B, B., & Smith, A. (2007)	269	1	0	1	2
Remmer, K. L. (2004)	263	0	0	0	0
Noël, A., & Thérien, J. P. (1995)	259	1	0	0	1
Radelet, S. (2006)	257	1	0	0	1
Goldsmith, A. A. (2001)	246	0	0	0	0
Pack, H., & Pack, J. R. (1990)	241	0	0	0	0
Woods, N. (2005)	230	1	0	1	2
Raffer, K., & Singer, H. W. (1996)	199	1	0	0	1
Swaroop, V., & Devarajan, S. (1998)	180	0	0	0	0
Milner & Tingley (2010)	156	1	0	1	2
Averages		.34	0	.29	.57

Note: This table was assembled by analysing the most cited papers in Google Scholar under the keyword “foreign aid” as of January 2017. The abstract of each paper was then read to check for significant discussion of non-assumed donor motivations, pre-1945 foreign aid and aid intended for a purpose other than humanitarian assistance or development. If the abstract was vague or unclear the paper itself was analysed for the presence of these topics.

3) An Historical and Categorical Framework for Foreign Aid

Why History?

In contrast to the thesis suggested by the existing scholarly record, foreign aid has long served as a vital and multi-purpose tool of statecraft throughout the world. As we describe in detail below, European imperial powers used the allocation of aid as attempts to restore, maintain or revise geopolitical status quos throughout early modern and medieval history. Similarly, official government aid was an important policy tool of imperial Chinese regimes as early as the Zhou Dynasty (1100-221 B.C.) to impact the status quo both within and beyond the empire. Only since World War II has foreign aid allocation and research on aid evolved into a humanitarian exercise focused on development and the interests of aid-recipients.

Are these historical cases, many of which occurred before the emergence of the Westphalian state system, important for contemporary understandings of foreign aid? Our answer is yes. As argued above, scholarly and policy discourses on aid have been largely ahistorical and, partially as a result, relatively a-strategic from the perspective of donor interests. Accounting for historical uses of foreign aid can help shed light on nuanced donor objectives rooted in international politics. The “development turn” in the study of foreign aid since World War II has disincentivized theoretical and empirical exploration of the effectiveness of foreign aid as a foreign policy tool. This has important consequences. On the one hand, emphasis on recipient development makes it difficult to explain the utility of foreign aid to electorates and other important audiences. On the other hand, the current literature on foreign aid is ill-equipped to answer some of the most pressing research questions on the future of foreign aid, such as how the United States and other “status quo” donors should respond to the rise of new donors throughout the developing world.

Moreover, failure to acknowledge the historical record of foreign aid skews current aid rhetoric. For example, scholars and pundits increasingly argue that the emergence of “new donors” such as China, Russia and other non-Western countries is challenging a status quo of

relatively altruistic, humanitarian aid giving. We demonstrate that the current perceptions of the post-War aid system are far from historically representative, and that aid has been used for centuries to impact the geopolitical status quo. By bringing a wide sampling of historical cases into mainstream discussions about foreign aid, we attempt to further sharpen our understanding of donor interests and strategies in deploying foreign aid that have been consistent across diverse regimes and historical periods.

In the remainder of this section we provide a basic definition of foreign aid and introduce a framework for enriching the study of aid donor motivations. The framework is based on how donor aid allocation relate to a regional or international political status quo. While this is by no means the only way in which one could typify donor objectives, we attempt to demonstrate that it is an initial step in the right direction.

Defining Foreign Aid

To facilitate our categorization of aid based on donor intent, we first adopt an expansive definition of foreign aid. We consider aid as any and all resources transferred from one government to another foreign government on concessional terms that attempts to accomplish a foreign policy objective of the aid-granting government. This is a broad definition but one that is generally consistent with those employed by foreign aid dispensing agencies in the US government such as USAID and the State Department more broadly (Nowells and Tarnoff, 2004).

Our definition is intentionally broad across three dimensions. First, we include aid across diverse issue domains and sectors, such as humanitarian and military aid. Second, we consider aid flows transferred through various channels, including direct cash and other material resource transfers such as in-kind aid, but also aid in the form of training and other services delivered by individuals of the donor government. Third, we include a broad palette of actors as potential donors and recipients. While we exclude independent non-state actors as donors we allow for foreign aid provided by private entities closely aligned with the states they represent - including state-owned enterprises. Similarly, we include putative n “would-be states” such as rebel groups and dissident political factions in our aid recipient definition. We justify this decision by drawing

on literature addressing the targeting of aid to specific intra-governmental factions. In the context of assessing past aid, establishing a definition that is sufficiently broad to allow for sub-categorization and to avoid omitting pertinent historic examples is the first step towards assessing the full body of aid-related data.

This flexible definition has multiple advantages for a historically-informed analysis of aid. It enables us to move beyond the predominantly humanitarian focus of aid research discussed above, as we include military and other forms of aid often excluded from these analyses. Excluding military aid from the definition of foreign aid is problematic due to at least two reasons. (a) it assumes a humanitarian motivation for aid where historical evidence is, at best, mixed (Alesina and Dollar, 2000), and (b) it ignores the extent to which foreign aid may be fungible. While fungibility is a topic of some debate about foreign aid scholars, significant evidence exists that in certain circumstances major categories of foreign aid are indeed fungible. Further, we include a broad definition of donors and recipients. This further allows us to avoid contemporary definitional constraints about which flow types and actors should be eligible for scholarly analysis. We think this flexibility is especially valuable given that the future of the “rules of the game” regarding how to measure and report aid---such as the fundamental guidelines of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) - is highly uncertain.

Having established a broad definition of aid, we create three sub-categories that are based on considering the intent of a donor. Analyzing intention can provide insight into foreign aid’s broader purpose, one of the most controversial areas of policy analysis. Broadly, the intentions of aid-granting powers can be described as falling into one of three categories: those that attempt to restore a previously destabilized geopolitical status quo, those that attempt to maintain such a status quo, and those that attempt to upset it.¹² Below we demonstrate the value of decomposing donor interests into these categories as it enriches our understanding of the diverse ways in which donors employ aid as a foreign policy tool.

¹² Alternatively one could classify aid based on method (i.e., the precise instrument that is used). Classifying based upon method is certainly simpler, as it is readily apparent whether a nation has provided aid in the form of military advisors or through financial assistance.

Defining and Applying Aid Categories through History

Each of the following subsections addresses a specific aid sub-category by providing historical examples and modern analogues. This evidence serves to address hitherto under-explored areas of aid scholarship by illuminating pre-Marshall plan aid, addressing non-developmental aid and discussing the broader strategic motivations of donors. For each subcategory we also comment on the evolution of aid and the manner in which such changes have obscured historical aid antecedents.

Aid to Restore the Status Quo

Status quo restoring (SQR) aid is aid offered in the aftermath of a sudden, destabilizing shock. The most common source for such a shock has historically been a catastrophic natural disaster. While in a modern context such assistance is viewed primarily through a humanitarian lens, surveying historical cases reveals a greater focus on donor geo-strategic concerns. Unlike most geopolitical phenomena, earthquakes, cyclones, and tsunamis often occur absent warning and can cause sudden, unexpected shocks. In modern times, states important to regional or international status quos are less severely affected by natural disasters than they would have been centuries ago. They possess the technology and infrastructure (and, often, surplus supplies of food and other necessities) to withstand significant disaster-induced damage. However, in the past natural disasters had substantial geo-political consequences due to the fragility of the societies of the time. As in modern times, historical politics surrounding the acceptance of such aid were complex - with modern concerns surrounding “neo-colonialism” foreshadowed by similar fears of loss of sovereignty.

The Ancient Greek city-states provide several clear examples of SQR aid. These city-states, most famously Athens and Sparta, were historically interdependent. They were members of the so-called “Delian League,” a trade and security alliance. In 464 BC an earthquake, of such magnitude that it was labelled by the historian Plutarch as the greatest yet recorded, devastated Sparta. It inflicted serious damage upon the city-state’s social, political and military infrastructure. The earthquake also provided an opening for rebels serfs (known as Helots) to launch an open revolt against Spartan rule. In response, various members of the Delian

league acted swiftly to send a relief expedition intended to preserve Sparta's political viability. The expedition included both military assistance in suppressing the Helot revolt and aid in rebuilding. (Warner 1954, 101). The parallels to modern foreign aid do not end with the physical aid itself. Also similar was the reluctance of the aid-receiving nation to accept foreign assistance for fears of creeping foreign control (Nelson 2010).

That these complex interplays of aid and politics occurred among the Greek city-states was no coincidence. Their economic and military co-dependence led to frequent instances of proffered foreign aid and complex politics surrounding its acceptance. One of the principal origins of Spartan aid was the city-state of Athens. Sparta, while allied to Athens, maintained a dramatically different, and profoundly less democratic, social order and worldview. There were resultingly substantial fears among the Spartan ruling class that the acceptance of Athenian aid would lead to the erosion of Spartan cultural and political independence. As in modern times internal fear of foreign "meddling" or some similar complaint, have led to myriad refusals of proffered foreign aid. This instance represents our earliest documented and verifiable example of status-quo restoring foreign aid.

18th century Europe provides another example of SQR aid. In 1755 the Portuguese capital of Lisbon was devastated by an earthquake that is estimated to have approached a 9 on the moment magnitude scale. The damage to the city itself and to the Portuguese economy was instantaneous and catastrophic. The international response was equally forceful. Portugal played a vital role in the European balance of power and the earthquake's immense destruction created a temporary "revolution" in European geopolitics. As a result, several nations, including the main imperial rivals of the time, Britain and France, sent aid to the stricken Portuguese nation. This aid included the provision of advisors, both architectural and political, and of re-building supplies and direct financial assistance (Araújo, 2005).¹³

That this aid came from both sides of a fierce political and religious conflict demonstrates how pivotal a strong Portugal was in avoiding all-out conflict. SQR aid to Portugal also seems to have been highly successful from Lisbon's perspective. While the exact causes of such an

¹³ An interesting path for future exploration would be to consider how much was aid in the Greek/Portugal cases about making sure elites stayed in power versus making sure damaged societies prospered to remain valuable strategic/economic partners.

outcome are of course multifaceted, Portugal experienced an economic renewal in the aftermath of the 1755 earthquake. This phenomenon was explored in depth by Alvaro Pereira in his 2009 article: *the Opportunity of a Disaster*. In this, as in future cases, efforts to restore the often precarious European balance of power led to myriad examples of SQR aid.

In previous millennia, natural disasters decimated political power structures and altered the balance of power. For example, the 1755 Lisbon earthquake is estimated to have led to an initial decrease in Portuguese GDP of between 32 and 48% (Pereira, 2009). However, in today's world the profusion of surplus resources and economic prosperity has and will continue to limit the geo-political utility of SQR aid, as sudden events no longer have the broader geopolitical impact they once did. One result of this phenomenon is that SQR aid has become increasingly divorced from direct national interest. It is difficult to argue that American aid to Haiti (in the aftermath of the devastating 2010 earthquake) or Japanese and Australian aid to Indonesia (in the wake of the 2004 Tsunami) significantly advanced the national interest in the manner of past SQR aid. While functionally parallel, the geopolitical relevance of SQR aid has evolved away from natural disasters.

The modern analog that best demonstrates this historical evolution is the international assistance received by Indonesia following the deadly 2003 tsunami, created by an earthquake in the Indian Ocean, which killed 230,000 people and prompted a massive international response. The United States was one of the largest state contributors, providing almost USD \$1 billion in financial assistance and also employed naval assets in search and rescue operations (Hyndman 2011). These actions combined with offers of technical and medical assistance in what was known as "Operation Unified Assistance" an action that ultimately involved more than 12,000 US military personnel. Critical to the historical context of this aid was Indonesia's relatively insignificant place in the broader balance of power. Not even a reliable ally of the United States, it is unlikely that US foreign policy depended in any significant way on a strong, stable Indonesia.

However, U.S. aid helped to spur a dramatic improvement in Indonesian people's views of the United States (Tomorrow 2006). The SQR aid of ancient times was an often grievously expensive effort to restore balances of power and saved nations from ruin; today's version

accomplishes the far more subtle but still significant task of shifting public opinion and potentially expanding spheres of influence through primarily humanitarian interventions. SQR aid no longer plays a crucial role in world events, but it may save more lives.

Aid to Maintain the Status Quo

Status quo maintaining (SQM) aid is designed to maintain a regional or international geopolitical status quo. SQM aid is by far the narrowest of the three aid categories posited in this paper. Specifically, it refers to aid designed to avoid systemic shocks and maintain a status quo acceptable to the donor state. SQM aid also tends to be subtler than other forms of aid and to possess greater longevity as a policy instrument. Correspondingly, historical SQM aid has been the province of empires or states with stable bureaucracies capable of long-term planning and coordination.

One of the earliest large scale adopters of this technique was the Roman Republic. Rome's peer and near-peer competitors traditionally emerged from the east (including Parthia and Sassanian Persia) and Judea, ruled by King Herod formed a useful buffer, protecting Roman territory from potential incursions. However, Herod was besieged both by internal religious factions, specifically the Pharisees and the Sadducees, (Jacobson 2001, 24) and by external military threats, a situation parallel to the circumstances of modern US client rulers in the same region. Further, the fractured religious and social fabric of Herod's territory made direct conquest difficult (as Rome would discover after the last member of the Herodian dynasty died and Roman troops were forced to fill the resulting power vacuum). As a result, the Roman Republic provided direct military assistance, advisors and financial assistance to Herod. Members of Herod's family were also educated in Rome. On a cultural level, Greek scholars and artists played a role in "Hellenizing Judea". These factors combined to turn Herodian Judaea into a territory more culturally in line with Rome and one that played a vital role in keeping the eastern border of Rome "remarkably free from military strife." (Fowler 1920, 259).

Perhaps the longest running historical example of SQM aid can be found in the long-term relationship between the Chinese Empire and its so-called "tributary" states. The hierarchical

arrangement reached its height from the 14th to the 19th century but persisted in some form (the exact scope and organization of which is a topic of contention) for over a millennium. These surrounding states, including Japan, Korea and Vietnam sent “tributary” missions to the reigning Chinese Emperor that facilitated trade and cultural exchange. These missions were reciprocated as Chinese envoys travelled to neighboring states. Tributes allowed for the exchange of goods and for a Sino-centric worldview centered around Confucianism to permeate surrounding states, at least in the eyes of Chinese leaders. The Chinese government also made use of its considerable cultural influence to work towards maintaining stable regimes in neighboring states while seldom resorting to outright military intervention (Kang 2010). While many of the commercial and diplomatic activities under the tributary system were not aid transfers, the exchange of aid was nonetheless an integral part of the system.

France’s Long 19th Century provides additional examples. So-called *républiques sœurs* were established by revolutionary France in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These states, which espoused similar principles and ideologies to those of republican and imperial France, were provided significant status quo maintaining aid by the French state. When the French Republic won a series of decisive military victories in the late 1790s and early 1800s, it gained military control over territories it was not even remotely prepared to administer. As a result, the French state established a series of “sister republics” among local sympathizers who at least nominally shared France’s supposedly Republican ideals. These states were provided with ideological and technical support, as well as financial assistance (though they were also taxed by the French government). While such aid is not on apparently comparable to modern aid, it is functionally equivalent. For example, American aid to Iraq following the United States’ invasion and occupation of that country similarly represents the use of foreign aid to buttress a donor-preferred regime in a newly acquired territory.

Similarly, the Ottoman Empire was an entity of such fragility that it was known contemporaneous to its decline as the “sick man of Europe” (Crackman 2002). Yet as a member of the Central Powers alliance, the stability of the Ottoman state was of vital interest to its ally the German Empire. In the first year of and immediate lead-up to the First World War Germany provided significant aid intended to stabilize and reinforce the military and economic position of

the Ottoman Empire. Specifically, German military officers were dispatched to Ottoman territory – crucially, these officers served not principally advisors but also as military leaders in their own right. Several of the most distinguished Ottoman military formations during the war were commanded by German officers. Germany also provided advanced military material including early monoplanes, modern capital ships and artillery batteries. The failure of this broader strategy can be clearly read in the subsequent collapse of the Ottoman Empire but the intent was clear – to preserve a powerful counterweight to Britain and Russia in the Middle East.

Status-quo maintaining aid has evolved little over past two millennia. The basic mechanism of providing resources and support to nations that are favorably inclined towards the donor nation has continued. Related aspects of SQM aid have similarly remained constant, including the tendency to employ aid to support repressive or unstable regimes (consider U.S. aid to former Egyptian President Mubarak, or Chinese aid to North Korea's Kim regime). One long-term lesson of SQM aid is that it often functions as a cost effective replacement for military force when superpowers are unwilling or unable to directly intervene in bordering trouble spots. However, despite such parallels, contemporary SQM aid is not precisely parallel to its ancient antecedents. As a consequence of the global reach and power projection capabilities of modern states, SQM aid has evolved from a regional, geography-constrained policy instrument to a global one.

One of the clearest contemporary examples of SQM aid is assistance rendered from the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the totalitarian government of North Korea. Despite the North Korean regime's erratic, dangerous and oft- murderous behavior, its continued existence is of the utmost importance to the PRC. If the North Korean state were to collapse it would produce two geo-political byproducts that would threaten the regional status quo. Firstly, it would create a flow of potentially millions of starving, unemployed refugees who would flood across China's border putting a serious strain on the Chinese state and economy (Cha 1999). Secondly, the collapse of the North Korean regime would create a power vacuum in the Korean peninsula which would likely be filled by South Korea and the United States, both nations that are potential rivals of China in the region. As a result, China provides enough humanitarian aid to keep the regime relatively stable (which essentially means enough to feed and supply the military) and

“effectively finances” North Korea’s massive trade deficit (Nanto, 2009). This pattern— the support, through SQM aid, of a friendly regime in a turbulent region—is consistently visible in foreign aid history.

Aid to Upset the Status Quo

Status quo-upsetting (SQU) aid is assistance proffered by donor states with the goal of fomenting unrest within, promoting aggression against, or otherwise de-stabilizing an adversary state. Foreign aid is often seen as a non-disruptive and pacific policy instrument. However, such a view is partial and omits a crucial way in which donors have used aid to disrupt status quos throughout history. Given SQU aid’s inherently aggressive posture, it often takes the form of military material or hardware targeted for use in aggressive military action.¹⁴ However, this aid category also includes all assistance rendered with the purpose of facilitating aggressive action on the part of the recipient entity - including a wide range of logistical and financial support. SQU aid differs primarily from other aid types in that it is seen as fundamentally destabilizing. SQU assistance often provokes accusations of aggressive or expansionist designs on behalf of the aid-granting power and frequently involves the violation of an adversary state’s sovereignty.

Consider SQU aid in American history. In 1776, the thirteen American colonies began a War of Independence that would conclude with the creation of the United States of America. This war is known for its somewhat convoluted political motivations and impact on world history. However; it also represents an aggressive and highly effective example of SQU aid.

France provided substantial aid to the American colonies during (and immediately preceding) the American War of Independence against the British Empire. French government officials offered financial support for colonists seeking to purchase arms, directly shipped military material past the Royal Navy and into the rebellious colonies, and dispatched military advisors to train the initially amateurish and undisciplined colonial army, the most illustrious of these being Gilbert Du Motier and the Marquis de Lafayette (Van Tyne 1925, 21). The precise causes of the

¹⁴ This stands in sharp contrast to military SQM aid which is generally intended to serve as a deterrent to state aggression. This is a further example of the failings of method-based aid classification.

eventual American victory are complex (and also include the direct deployment of French military personnel) but French assistance, irrespective of its effectiveness, functionally resembled SQU foreign aid. France employed economic assistance and subtler forms of military assistance (advisors and armaments) to supplement more traditional military involvement.

Further accentuating the parallels to modern aid, the formal treaty between France and the incipient American States, signed in 1778, had a stated purpose of effecting the “liberty, sovereignty and independence absolute and unlimited of said United States” (Hill 1922, 17) - a sharp contrast to the pre-war status quo of a prosperous and strategically vital British colony. This language is eerily similar to that used to justify US aid to insurgents attempting to overturn status quo’s unfavorable to the United States in any number of communist backed states. Of any past example of foreign aid, French SQU aid to the American colonies most closely resembles its modern successors in both its stated purpose and its structure. France encouraged an insurgency hostile to its main geopolitical foe, a circumstance which is perhaps the most common pattern of SQU aid. Not 50 years later, the French target of 1700s SQU aid would itself employ the tactic of furnishing subversive aid to weaken a powerful adversary.

Britain, previously a victim of aggressive, status quo-undermining aid, repeatedly employed the same strategy throughout the late 18th and 19th centuries. There is evidence of British employment of minimal financial SQM and SQR aid as early as the 14th century (CPH, 1931). However, by the time of the Napoleonic conflicts in the late 18th century the British state had dramatically expanded the scope and complexity of its financial aid mechanisms. By the middle stages of the 1790s Great Britain actively and repeatedly employed subsidies as a form of SQU aid intended to undermine the French revolutionary (and later imperial) states. From 1794-1796, £2,500,000 were granted to Frederick William, II, the King of Prussia, in order to facilitate Prussian aggression against France.

Almost 20 years later, during the closing stages of the Napoleonic War Britain continued to employ SQU aid to accomplish its political and military objectives. In March of 1814, Britain concluded treaties with Prussia, Russia and Austria in which it promised to “furnish a Subsidy of £5,000,000” to those powers to facilitate the “salutary purpose of putting an end to the misfortunes of Europe.” British financial foreign aid over the last four years of the Napoleonic

War (including the 100 days campaign) totaled somewhere between 30,000,000 and 50,000,000 pounds, an amount approximately equivalent to 50% of annual public spending (in constant pounds) at the beginning of the conflict (Mitchell, 1971). These aid mechanisms were so successful that British financing became known as “the Golden Cavalry of St. George.” (Calomiris and Haber, 99, 2014).

During the First World War Germany provided military SQU aid to the abortive Irish Easter Rebellion. Long a disaffected British territory, Ireland was ripe for rebellion in the early 20th century. Prominent Irish rebels saw the outbreak of the First World War as an excellent opportunity to instigate an open conflict with Britain. Seeking a means to open a second front against British interest, Germany saw Irish discontent as a prime opportunity. On the 24th of August, 1914 the German Ambassador to the United States met with representatives of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and its American counterpart, Clan Na Gael. There, and at further meetings with German officials both in neutral nations and within Germany itself, plans were made for the provision of “arms and munitions” to Irish republican forces. While many of these war materials were intercepted in route by British forces after the war started, as late as 1913 German weapons were arriving un-impeded in Ireland (Sloan, 2013). Further, German propaganda attempted to stir up anti-British sentiment in Ireland. These efforts culminated in the ultimately unsuccessful Easter Rising of 1916. However, German SQU aid succeeded in that it turned a significant portion of previously peaceful British territory into “a theatre for political warfare.”

As discussed in the section describing status quo maintaining aid, the strategic importance of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War was paramount. This was evident not only to the Germans but to their geo-political adversaries. The Ottoman Empire was a multi-national, multi-ethnic entity riven by internal divisions. One such divide was between the Arab nationalists of modern day Syria and Saudi Arabia and the “Young Turk” nationalists. Both Britain and France provided significant financial and material support to an Arab nationalists rebellion lead by Sharif Husayn, the ruler of the Hejaz in modern Saudi Arabia (this rebellion famously included the involvement of British intelligence officer TE Lawrence). In the framework of foreign aid Lawrence served as an extraordinary effective military advisor to the

forces opposing the Ottoman government. His involvement, combined with more traditional war material, played a vital role in the eventual capture of the strategically vital port of Aqaba (Rogan 2015). Britain employed SQU aid to foment and support rebellion within the sovereign territory of a geopolitical adversary, a phenomenon that is deeply familiar to modern western policymakers.

The pre-eminent contemporary example of SQU aid has occurred in the past half-decade as one prong of aggressive Russian expansionism. Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russia has become a global pioneer in de-stabilizing aid. The Russian government or its subsidiaries have provided funding, materiel and technical support to a host of pro-Russian political parties, states and insurgencies on a truly global scale. In France, a bank linked to the Russian government has provided in excess of \$10 million to the anti-Atlanticist, Russophilic National Front. In the Ukraine, anti-government rebels have been provided with military hardware (including the surface to air missile that was used to shoot down a Malaysian civilian airliner), technical expertise and financial support. These actions have the common goal of expanding Russian influence and weakening anti-Russian alliances. In a contemporary geo-political climate where open aggression would be far more likely to provoke retaliation or intervention, de-stabilizing aid allows revisionist states to accomplish their objectives by subtlety and subversion. A high ranking Russian army officer described this strategy as follows: “The use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other-non military measures” to transform “thriving” adversaries into a “web(s) of chaos, catastrophe and civil war” (Kirchik 2017, 215).

Status-quo upsetting aid differs from our other aid categories in that it is a fundamentally aggressive policy instrument. Further, it is one that may increase in potency in the years to come. The last two hundred years has seen dramatic innovations in two areas. Firstly, materials of geopolitically relevant military utility, ranging from plans for bombsights to fissile material have become miniaturized and easily transportable. Secondly, the continued progress of globalization has dramatically increased the avenues by which SQU aid can be delivered. French aid to the US colonies had to be smuggled past a British blockade on a month-long shipborne journey across a hostile ocean. Today, military material can shipped through legitimate trade channels, or in the

form of technical information, be transmitted seamlessly through electronic channels. This new reality is reflected in policy making. When, earlier this year, the United States Department of Defense released its new budget priorities for the coming year, it identified countering de-stabilizing aid as a vital national security objective.

4) Conclusion

We have attempted to demonstrate how accounting for the long history of foreign aid can contribute to our contemporary understanding of aid donor motivations. One might dismiss the historical examples provided above as incompatible with contemporary forms of foreign aid. Or they might simply suggest that these cases occurred in distinct historical and geographic settings and thus are of limited value for understanding contemporary aid. However, our objective in this paper has not been to suggest that historical and modern foreign aid are similar in their specific forms. We instead set out to demonstrate that looking a wide, representative set of pre-20th century foreign aid cases can enrich our understanding of variations in donor intent. Our framework of aid provision motivations centered around donor objectives relative to the political status quo is arguably a useful starting point. This framework also helps historically contextualize the current state of foreign aid provision which, relative to earlier periods, is highly development-oriented and institutionalized.

While focused on cases hundreds or thousands of years removed from the present day, our research has implications for the theory and practice of contemporary foreign aid. Misconceptions among publics and even leaders that aid is primarily useful for humanitarian intervention, and less effective for other foreign policy objectives, have distorted the foreign aid debate. This has allowed aid detractors to argue that contemporary American aid is characterized by a unique level of humanitarian naivety. While the historical record is unable to decisively attribute intentions to past aid, it clarifies the decidedly non-unique nature of modern aid. Foreign aid may well be ineffective or poorly distributed but it certainly is not new. This historical continuity is important as, after all, the western nations that drive foreign aid spending are typically democratic societies where foreign aid is often viewed skeptically by the public.

Recent policy analyses indeed reference public education as an overriding objective of the US foreign aid program (Lancaster and Van Dusen 2005).

By sometimes implicitly presenting foreign aid as a charitable endeavor, aid scholarship has narrowed the policy debate around aid. Instead of being viewed purely as an instrument of foreign policy, foreign aid has developed a public reputation as an expression of, at least in part, donor altruism. This a-historical perception of aid poses real dangers to the flexibility of electorally motivated policymakers. In particular, in an age of rising nationalism seemingly altruistic policies may find it increasingly difficult to harness vital public support even if they can potentially deliver important foreign policy gains.

Consider the incumbent president of the United States, who has proposed to cut the State Department's foreign aid budget by nearly 30% in future years, or the American public more generally, which is consistently skeptical of the use of foreign aid and often grossly overestimates America's aid budget. Would certain leaders and publics be as skeptical about the merits of foreign aid as a policy tool if researchers or practitioners had stronger empirical or theoretical grasp of the wide range of objectives for which aid has been deployed? We are not suggesting that the humanitarian, development motivations of foreign aid are not important; they obviously are. But policymakers and publics would arguably be better positioned to make use of this longstanding policy instrument if it was fully contextualized. Political scientists can play a leading role therein. For example, a full accounting of historical aid might help provide a new lens through which to better situate and assess potentially de-stabilizing Russian aid. The implications of these issues extend well beyond academic research. Foreign aid can change the world, but only if enough decision makers and citizens understand why and how it works, and how it can be turned for and against donor interests.

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