



# Organization and Functioning of Economic Diplomacy: Exploring the Impact of Economic Aid as a Tool of Economic Diplomacy

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**Abstract:** Depending on the goals it seeks to accomplish, economic diplomacy in the modern, globalized world has access to a wide range of methods. Even though they are diverse, their nature and traits allow for the primary division of two sizable groups. International relations analysis is made easier by the classification of economic diplomacy instruments, which is more for academic and instructional purposes than for practical use.

This paper aims to study how foreign economic aid is a tool widely used in international relations. Economic aid is institutionalized in the global economy, often to certify "good behavior". Foreign economic aid is a very complex issue in international relations. The case of aid packages to Ukraine during its conflict with Russia highlights their importance but also raises questions about their effectiveness.

Nevertheless, economic aid is considered one of the most important tools of economic diplomacy, primarily when directed towards poor and developing countries to strengthen economic structures, reinforce democratic institutions, consolidate the rule of law, reduce corruption, etc.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

International relations and the economy must work together more than ever in the modern day. Economic and trade interests are being analyzed and applied in foreign policy more and more. Military might rarely have the same political sway as economic might. Globalization processes are unavoidably connected to this. States are considerably more interested in "conquering" markets than they are in capturing land. Nowadays, the main security guarantor is rapidly being replaced by expanding economic dependency, which eclipses military strategies. The fields of international relations, from bilateral to multilateral, include economic diplomacy, economic security, and environmental preservation (Papastamou, 2018, p. 310). It is difficult to say that political power alone suffices in today's environment. Therefore, financial collaboration, enhancing cross-cultural interactions, and raising public awareness of environmental protection-in other words, vision is needed. Economic aid comes from a variety of sources and takes several forms. Fund transfers, loans, supplies, technical support, and specialized expertise are a few examples of what it can contain. Economic and military help are the two main categories into which foreign aid is typically classified. It's not always easy to distinguish between military and economic help because a state may use the former for military objectives.

Undoubtedly, several global crises appear to have little, to nothing, to do with the economy. Upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that an economic component is part of their analysis. Agreements on the non-proliferation or reduction of nuclear weapons are examples of such issues, as are peacekeeping deployments of the United Nations. However, discussing its success necessitates funding, which is strongly related to global economic policies. Appropriate finance is

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at least partially necessary for all of these things to succeed. When no recession or serious crisis affecting the world economy, financing can be beneficial. Successful foreign policies become less financially capable when faced with economic challenges.

Depending on the goal they seek to accomplish, economic diplomacy in today's globalized world can employ a variety of tools. Notwithstanding their diversity, they can be broadly categorized into two sizable groupings according to their traits and nature. There are economic and political instruments in the first group. In the second, there are tools for coercion or sanctions on the one hand and tools for aid on the other. The goal of economic diplomacy is thought to be shared by both, development aid and sanctions. Both are instruments of power. The classification of economic diplomacy tools facilitates the study of international relations and is more didactic than practical. One of the most crucial instruments of economic diplomacy is economic aid, which is mostly given to underdeveloped and impoverished nations in an effort to improve their economic systems, democratic institutions, rule of law, corruption, etc.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In international relations, foreign economic aid is a common tool, despite being a relatively recent development, having surfaced in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The majority of wealthy countries, along with certain developing countries, have substantial programs for economic help through which they facilitate the distribution of aid through financial institutions. Studies have demonstrated that the assistance given for development is highly vague, therefore it is unclear whether or not developing nations will continue to receive economic aid. Nevertheless, the global economy depends heavily on economic aid, which is institutionalized and frequently validates "good behavior" (Wood, 1986, p. 2). In international relations, foreign economic aid is a particularly complicated topic. Both its efficacy and goal are hotly contested topics. There is disagreement among academic research regarding the reasons and circumstances in which states will give their resources to other nations.

Definition and explanation of the notion of economic aid is necessary when evaluating its function and effects. This includes putting it in its historical context and outlining how economic aid evolved into policy. Examining different critiques of economic aid policies is necessary at the same time. Finally, it's important to find new aid policy models.

International relations throughout the post-World War II era and the early 1970s disregarded economic considerations. Strange (1970, pp. 304-315) identified three primary causes for this to have happened. First of all, preventing a nuclear exchange between the superpowers of the two main camps was the primary goal during the Cold War. Scholars focused their examination on topics related to ideological rivalry, politics, and the military. Consequently, the economic aspect of the conflict received less emphasis. The economy was confined to the domain of low politics in the formation of classical realist theory. The second justification has to do with the approach. An attempt was made to develop a "science of international relations" during this time. As a result, whether on purpose or accidentally, the economics was ignored in the analysis. Economics and politics are distinguished clearly by Hans Morgenthau (Molloy, 2004, pp. 6-7). He was an advocate of the theory that politics was about power and economics was about riches. Whereas the latter was predicated on homo politicus, the former was predicated on homo economicus. It is related to American hegemony in the third place. International politics and international economics are distinct fields, a point that was further supported by the US hegemonic role in the post-World War II global economy. As the dominant industrial and financial force after the war, the United States was able to establish post-war economic regulations.

This guaranteed economic primacy, especially in light of the necessity for Western Europe to face the Soviet Union. The delusion that international economic relations were unopposed, at least among the Western camp, will result from Europe's incapacity to oppose the US. The 1970s marked the end of this disregard for economics in international affairs.

The transfer of resources from a government and public agencies of one state, or those of a group of states, to the government(s) and public agencies of other states for any reason other than meeting a duty, is referred to as economic aid, according to Economides and Wilson (2001, pp. 3-4). Only if there is no quid pro quo (Economides & Wilson, 2001, p. 123) or element of reciprocity can such a resource transfer be classified as aid. The exchange of public economic resources between governments is known as aid, and it can be broadly classified as either multilateral (from one or more states or international institutions to a state or group of states) or bilateral (from one state to another). However, it is challenging to define economic aid properly and to quantify its effects. According to research conducted by two of the most prominent IMF economists (Raghuram & Subramanian, 2005), there isn't any solid proof that aid has any kind of beneficial or bad influence on development.

Another theory contends that aid serves as a catalyst for the expansion and general development of the global economy and, as such, primarily pursues economic objectives as opposed to political ones. The underlying premise that the intended purposes of help are primarily political remains valid even in the presence of a compelling economic case for aid extensions. After weighing these considerations, it is clear that any analysis of aid policy needs to take into account the intricate relationship between its political, economic, and moral aspects.

Aiming primarily at political objectives rather than humanitarian or economic ones, economic aid serves as an instrument to get to an end. Economic resources are used specifically to accomplish these political objectives by influencing the internal or external actions of other governments. Economic aid, as compared to the other tool, economic sanctions, seeks to influence or alter a state's targeted conduct by offering support as an alternative to applying punishment (Baldwin, 2010, p. 19). Consequently, providing economic assistance has a significant political advantage. Governments attempt to influence other governments both directly and indirectly through the provision of economic assistance.

Asteris Houliaras (Tsardanidis, 2018, p. 207) highlights four changes in the field of development-oriented economic aid over the past 25 years: a) its decrease as a result of bipolarity and the end of the Cold War; b) the motivations behind giving aid; the attainment of economic interests by the aid-providing state took the place of the strategic and ideological motive; c) the introduction of political conditions (political conditionality), mostly by Western states, for giving aid to recipient states in the framework of political liberalization, respect for human rights, modernization of the administration, etc.; and d) the rise in emergency and humanitarian aid as a result of humanitarian crises faced by humanity, such as the war in the former Yugoslavia, the genocide in Rwanda, the war in Syria, and the war in Iraq.

### **3. THE ROLE OF ECONOMIC AID AND ITS OBJECTIVES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.**

Governments, international organizations, private voluntary organizations, and charitable organizations, execute economic aid programs using both public and private resources. Offered financial assistance has more significance when viewed through the lens of international relations. The

emergence of significant international organizations, which have consistently contributed to the upkeep of world peace and balance, matched the growth of the provision of economic help. Thus, in July 1944, forty-four nations, led by the United States, convened at Bretton Woods to deliberate on the post-war global economic structure, while the world was being tested by World War II. The participating states believed that worldwide economic cooperation would ensure world peace.

The goal of the intended cooperation was to establish a worldwide common market where commodities and capital could flow freely, governed by international organizations that would serve as regulators to guarantee stability and the general good of the market. As a result, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the International Trade Organization-which began as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade<sup>2</sup> and eventually evolved into the World Trade Organization-were founded (Peet, 2009, pp. 74-75). The Development Assistance Committee was established as part of the European Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which was established in 1948. For many years, the DAC pushed the OECD to standardize aid and implement best practices in their recipient nations. Other than this, the World Bank and the IMF were the primary organizations that developing nations had to deal with. Allowing international financial institutions to alter their procedures, would be a major alteration to DAC agreements in terms of policies or behaviors. Put more simply, though, DAC emerged as the first among equals by giving development through economic welfare and poverty reduction priority. A committee made up of members from the member nations of the DAC and a secretariat to support the committee make up this auxiliary body of the OECD. The council, which is made up of ministers for international development, is the highest decision-making body (DAC, 1995a). All OECD committees combined have a less autonomous posture than the DAC has historically had. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which was formed by developed nations, saw a rise in aid to developing nations in 2019 and is ongoing<sup>3</sup>.

In the meantime, a major component of UN policy has been and now is the transfer of financial resources from wealthy to developing nations. The Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals through 2015, and the Sustainable Development Goals through 2030 serve as tangible examples of this.

States also created their own systems for delivering aid within this framework. To provide financial assistance to developing nations with goals including advancing the rule of law, reducing conflict, bolstering resilience, combating crime, and getting rid of threats, the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID, was established in 1961 (USAID, 2023). The International Development Agency was founded in Canada with the main goals of promoting human rights, reducing poverty, and assisting with sustainable development (WHO, 2021). European nations similarly established development and aid organizations. Established in Sweden, the Swedish International Development Collaboration Agency has expanded bilateral collaboration to approximately 35 countries in Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa to support groups that fight poverty (SIDA, 2024).

Operationalizing under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway formed the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. The five main goals of NORAD are as follows: first, it offers guidance

<sup>2</sup> GATT, in particular, distinct from the other two organizations (WB and IMF), was created in 1947 through the approval of 23 states in Geneva. During the Uruguay Round in 1994, GATT was transformed into the World Trade Organization.

<sup>3</sup> The total ODA (Official Development Assistance) in 2019 increased by 1.4% in real terms compared to 2018, as bilateral aid for low-income countries. OECD – Paris, 16 April 2020. It should be noted that the European Union is the largest donor for aid, with around 75.2 billion Euros for 2019. See: OECD Report, accessed on 29/01/2021, at 18:21.



and support for development; second, it guarantees the quality of aid; third, it provides funding to academic institutions, businesses, civil society, and scientific research that collaborates with organizations in developing nations; fourth, it disseminates information about Norwegian aid; and fifth, it is in charge of conducting an impartial assessment of activities funded by Norway's development budget (NORAD, 2024).

It should be made clear that development aid, in particular, should not necessarily be regarded as an instrument of economic diplomacy. Nonetheless, the goal of economic diplomacy via the distribution of financial assistance is to (Tsardanidis, 2018, pp. 193-194): a) determine the goals and priorities for distributing financial aid, including the states that are going to get it and in what quantity; b) ascertain the method by which financial assistance is implemented. Depending on what is more important to them, states might decide whether to grant aid bilaterally or multilaterally; c) assess development initiatives for funding; d) engage in active participation in international organizations that provide multilateral help.

There are four main factors that the extension of foreign aid is motivated by. *The first part* is that financial assistance is provided in exchange for strategic and political advantages. To draw other regimes into their respective areas of influence and consolidate ties with preexisting allies, the US and the Soviet Union, for instance, each spent substantial sums of money during the Cold War. If the Marshall Plan was taken into account, this was especially true for their ties with emerging nations, since they were more receptive to financial incentives. Western Europe's economic recovery was greatly aided by the Marshall Plan, which was implemented after World War Two. On the other hand, it made US foreign policy more powerful. A highly effective aid program, the Marshall Plan-officially named the European Recovery Program-distributed more than 13 billion dollars to Western European nations between 1948 and 1952 (The George C. Marshall Foundation, 2024). This aid came mostly in the form of grants. It was believed to be a policy that could be implemented more broadly because it aided in Europe's recovery and progress. As a result, the economic and strategic pillars formed the foundation of the Marshall Plan. To facilitate the development of lucrative economic relations with the US and to secure policies for their investments, it was first designed to rebuild and boost the economies of Western Europe.

Undoubtedly, the assistance sought to use it to counter the perceived Soviet threat, backed by a calculated foreign policy agenda. The Marshall Plan was an aid program that relied on five options: a) trade liberalization; b) military control; c) endorsement of nationalist revolutions, even socialist ones; d) institutional multilateralism; and e) "market regulation".

Economic aid started a new phase with the events that transpired in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the United States. After the events of September 11, it has been seen through a fresh lens on the strategic role of US foreign policy with regard to aid, and has been utilized as a tool for avoiding terrorism. For a considerable amount of time following the terrorist assault, security concerns took precedence over economic ones on the political agenda. However, given that economic diplomacy takes a practical approach to understanding the causes of modern threats-terrorism in particular-it remained crucial. Fighting the two main sources of insecurity-economic deprivation and poverty-especially about the latter, is crucial to overcoming it.

For instance, the attitudes of US foreign policy, along with the dearth of progress and widespread corruption in the Afghan administrations of Hamid Karzai and his successor Ashraf Ghani, were significant contributors to the resurgence of the extreme Taliban. People may choose radical

alternatives when they lose faith in the system due to poverty and corruption. The conflict in Ukraine has highlighted the importance of aid programs and the application of sanctions as tools for conducting global diplomacy. The US leads the G7 and G8, among other Western-controlled organizations that oversee the world, along with the IMF, World Bank, WTO, and OSCE. According to American policy, there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the current global capitalist system and no need for significant adjustments. America's economic, military, and political might serve as justifications for this position. In essence, we may argue that since 9/11, the world changed into a safer place for the "American world" (Peet, 2009, p. 119).

Nonetheless, it should be highlighted that US foreign policy has indicated a shift away from conflict areas throughout three administrations, beginning with President Obama's second term and continuing with President Trump and President Biden's decision to completely withdraw American forces from Afghanistan. One may argue that the conflict in Ukraine, which was perceived as military and economic assistance rather than actual military engagement, marked a turning point in this situation.

*The second component*, states that aid is being used to enhance global economic growth. Aid was provided to encourage more states to join the free international trading order following World War II. Increased involvement in the free trade framework would result in higher trade volumes. The rationale behind states' intervention in the global trade of goods and services is attributed to market inadequacy, given that the majority of nations function within a market-based economic framework nowadays. To supply commodities and services that the market is unable to supply, governments must therefore step in. Nearly all of the aid provided by states comes in the form of concessions, either directly (via bilateral agreements) or indirectly (through multilateral organizations like the World Bank). On the other hand, some argue that aid ought to be directed toward the country's domestic growth. States provide this assistance on a bilateral and international basis. The United Nations development plan has traditionally placed a high priority on eradicating poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, and advancing gender equality through financial assistance. His Holiness Pope Paul VI, who spoke at the Assembly on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1965, defending the impoverished and hungry around the world, stated that "his duty was to ensure that there is enough bread on humanity's table" and so backed the goal of development to reduce hunger. The World Food Program was continuously extended by the Assembly in that same year [resolution 2095 (XX)] (UN, 2024), which also established a 275 million dollars voluntary contribution target for the 1966-1968 period. Additionally, the Executive Director of FAO was asked to investigate and recommend strategies and plans for broad international action to effectively combat hunger [resolution 2096 (XX)] (Dollar & Svensson, 2000, pp. 894-917). It is important to note that development assistance works best when it is backed by political will and internal commitment.

Giving aid for moral and humanitarian reasons makes up *the third element*. Emergency relief efforts following natural and humanitarian disasters are one way that aid is provided. It's important to note that this is the only kind of assistance that is typically selected only for the acquisition of particular goods or participation in particular initiatives. Economic assistance packages have long been utilized by former colonial powers like France and Great Britain to facilitate the integration of former colonies into the international system and ease their transition. The huge divide between newly underdeveloped states and advanced Western states, however, became a fresh threat to global balances when the first attempts at the independence of colonial countries surfaced. Additionally, it was at this time in the 1960s and 1970s that the first UN development programs-UNCTAD, UNDP, etc. -with more precise aims and objectives started to be established. To support elections,

demobilization, and reconciliation efforts in addition to human rights, for instance, the UNDP works with the security sector. In terms of humanitarian assistance, the organization provides strategies for national reintegration, rebuilding, and recovery as well as support for catastrophe prevention, mitigation, and readiness. It also helps with the reintegration of refugees and internally displaced people. To help communities coping with catastrophic events like earthquakes and violent conflicts become more resilient, UNICEF implemented specific actions and strategies since 2011 (UNICEF, 2011).

Nevertheless, post-colonial states perceived their economic situation as a result of previous colonial policies and current power politics, which created an uneven economic playing field. This contrasted with the Bretton Woods institutions, which were founded on the idea that the economy and economic development could be broadly separated from politics.

The post-Cold War era, in which aid is utilized as a tool to pursue a wide range of other objectives, mostly in Eastern Bloc nations, *is included in the fourth component*. Defending human rights, advancing “good governance”, combating corruption, and establishing democratic norms and institutions are all included in this. Shared accountability and duty are based on the Monterrey Consensus (UN, 2023), which was ratified at the International Conference on Financing for Development in March 2002. In exchange for bigger support from donor nations, aid-receiving nations should invest more to increase the efficient use of resources by taking steps like battling corruption and bolstering institutions. Reducing poverty, safeguarding the environment, fighting corruption, combating terrorism, defending human rights, and other universal challenges are being addressed in one way or another by all of the major international organizations. The challenge facing international organizations is the widening disparity between the efforts of world leaders to shape policy and their capacity to turn novel issues into concrete outcomes, particularly in cases where accountability frameworks are inadequate and conceptual alignment with institutional execution is lacking.

Two more controversial forms of economic aid have evolved in the post-Cold War era. Proposed by global financial organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the first one concerns structural adjustment programs. The ideals and values of Western liberal democracies and their economic systems were progressively mirrored in several policy areas covered by structural adjustment initiatives. Through structural adjustment, the World Bank took a strong stand against government intervention. The process of changing the worldwide economic system and the economic positions of some governments that occurred as a result of increases in oil prices during the years 1973–1974 and 1979–1980 as a result of the OPEC embargo is what structural adjustment would be called in the spirit of these changes (Giles Mohan et al., 2013, p. 4). A combination of supply and demand policies... in the direction of changing the structures of an economy, in response to significant imbalances and improving microeconomic efficiency was the fundamental tenet of the theory behind structural adjustment (Stern & Common, 1997, pp. 523–609). As a result, the structural adjustment component generally consisted of two main directions: (a) altering the incentives so as to focus them on profit, enhancing the role of markets relative to the state, and fortifying personal property rights; (b) reorganizing the structure of particular economic sectors to produce tradable (and particularly exportable) products. Large financial amounts that pique the interest of borrowing countries’ policymakers are made available through directly collected loans within the framework of the World Bank’s structural adjustment program, which accounted for one-half of all loans. In exchange, borrowers are required to pledge to promote significant changes to either the overall economy or a particular sector of it. The initiative involved

fifty governments, mostly in Latin America and Africa, and at the end of the 1990s, at the height of structural adjustment, the World Bank lent money to each state, averaging 100 million dollars annually (Kapur et al., 1997, p. 520). Aid from OECD countries is now routinely conditional on adopting different anti-inflation policies, privatizing state firms, liberalizing trade policy, shrinking the public sector, and tightening oversight over public finances.

The former Soviet Union and the United States both decreased economic help to countries inside their sphere of influence when their conventional goals shifted due to a loss of geopolitical interest. Following the Cold War, political concerns that required attention were the main focus of the second type of aid. Promoting human rights, democratizing the nation, and fostering good governance were the three primary goals. Notably, though, financial assistance also underwent alteration when the Soviet Union collapsed and the world's bipolarity ended.

The link between aid and other forms of capital flows, particularly foreign investments and private loans, makes assessing its impact even more difficult. The availability of foreign private capital and the safety of foreign capital investments already made are typically adversely correlated with access to help. The way that developing nations receive external financing varies greatly. Multilateral institutions have multiplied, the number of bilateral donors has expanded dramatically, and the types of major flows have multiplied. The system does not have a formal broad coordinating mechanism. Bilateral aid programs and the multilateral organizations that are formally affiliated with it, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, are essentially unaffected by the United Nations.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Depending on the goal that one wishes to accomplish, economic diplomacy in today's globalized world has access to a wide range of methods. It is estimated that both development aid and sanctions have the same goal when utilized as instruments of economic diplomacy. Both are instruments of power. Economic aid has been one strategy we have used to advance. A ubiquitous aspect of global society is economic aid as a tool for pursuing foreign policy goals. The pragmatic explanation is that since the end of the Cold War, economic aid has increased dramatically without a comparable rise in policy analysis.

Economic aid is a middle ground between diplomacy and using force to accomplish foreign policy goals. Economic aid has a long history and are still a crucial tool for making decisions in the modern world. However, it can also be used as a weapon to punish rival governments that violate internationally recognized norms, show disapproval, and placate the public at home. This also applies to the economic aid that the international community of the West is providing to Ukraine following the assault from the Russian Federation (beginning in 2014 and 2022).

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