

---

# ПОЛІТИЧНИЙ ТА СОЦІАЛЬНО-ЕКОНОМІЧНИЙ РОЗВИТОК КИТАЮ

---

UDC 327.39(510+73):339.9

DOI <https://doi.org/10.51198/chinesest2025.01.18>

## GEOPOLITICAL IMPERATIVES OF DONOR PRACTICES: COMPARING CHINESE AND U.S. APPROACHES TO FOREIGN AID

*D. Yefremov,*

PhD in Economics,

Associate Professor, Department of International Relations

National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy”

12/4 Voloska Street, Building 7, Kyiv, 04070, Ukraine

In today’s world, where geopolitical competition between major powers is taking on new forms, foreign aid is increasingly functioning not only as a tool for development but also as a means of implementing foreign policy strategies. This issue is particularly relevant in the context of the ongoing transformation of the global aid architecture, marked by the decreasing involvement of the United States and the growing influence of China. The article presents an in-depth comparative analysis of two leading models of foreign aid – the American model (implemented through the United States Agency for International Development, USAID) and the Chinese model (implemented through the China International Development Cooperation Agency, CIDCA). The author views foreign aid as a strategic policy instrument that combines declared humanitarian goals with the pursuit of geoeconomic and geopolitical advantages.

The methodological basis of the research is the Most Different Systems Design (MDSD), which enables the comparison of aid structures under conditions of significant political, economic, and administrative differences between donor states. The study relies on official documents of aid agencies, reports from international organizations, aid databases, and contemporary scholarly literature on development policy, foreign assistance, and strategic donor practices.

The comparison covers four key dimensions. Strategic characteristics include the analysis of core imperatives (security for the U.S. and economic for China), political conditionality, and conceptual understandings of development. Operational characteristics address aid volumes, geographic orientation, the balance between grants and loans, involvement of local actors, and the role of technical assistance. Institutional characteristics involve agency architecture, degree of centralization, inter-agency coordination, transparency, and procedural formalization. Result-based characteristics relate to implementation effectiveness, project speed, cost-efficiency, beneficiary engagement, and aid perception in recipient countries.

The study concludes that both models, despite rhetorical differences, serve national interests and involve implicit forms of influence. The U.S. model features institutional continuity but suffers from political volatility and high costs. The Chinese approach is more cost-efficient and adaptive but is undermined by low transparency, economic dependence, and risks of asymmetric interaction.

**Key words:** foreign aid, strategy, China, USA, donor models, conditionality, CIDCA, USAID, geopolitics, institutional analysis.

---

## ГЕОПОЛІТИЧНІ ІМПЕРАТИВИ ДОНОРСЬКИХ ПРАКТИК: ПОРІВНЯННЯ КИТАЙСЬКОГО ТА АМЕРИКАНСЬКОГО ПІДХОДІВ ДО МІЖНАРОДНОЇ ДОПОМОГИ

*Д. Єфремов*

У сучасному світі, де геополітична конкуренція між провідними державами набуває нових форм, міжнародна допомога дедалі частіше виступає не лише інструментом розвитку, а й засобом реалізації зовнішньополітичних стратегій. Особливої актуальності ця тематика набуває у контексті трансформації глобальної архітектури донорства, що супроводжується скороченням участі США та зростанням впливу Китаю. У статті представлено розгорнутий порівняльний аналіз двох провідних моделей міжнародної допомоги – американської (що реалізовувалася через Агентство США з міжнародного розвитку – USAID) та китайської (втілюваної через Агенцію міжнародного розвитку і співробітництва Китаю – CIDCA). Автор розглядає зовнішню допомогу як інструмент реалізації політичної стратегії, який поєднує заявлені гуманітарні цілі з досягненням геоекономічних і геополітичних переваг.

Методологічною основою дослідження виступає підхід «найбільш відмінних систем» (Most Different Systems Design), що дозволяє порівнювати структури зовнішньої допомоги за умов значних політичних, економічних та управлінських відмінностей між державами-донорами. Інформаційну основу дослідження становлять офіційні документи донорських агенцій, звіти міжнародних організацій, бази даних про допомогу, а також сучасні наукові праці, присвячені політиці розвитку, зовнішній допомозі та стратегічному донорству.

Порівняння охоплює чотири основні виміри. Стратегічні характеристики включають аналіз ключових імперативів (безпековий для США та економічний для КНР), політичної кондиціональності та концептуального розуміння розвитку. Операційні характеристики стосуються обсягів допомоги, географічної спрямованості, співвідношення грантів і кредитів, участі місцевих акторів, а також ролі технічної допомоги. Інституційний вимір охоплює організаційну архітектуру агентств, ступінь централізації, взаємодію з іншими відомствами, рівень прозорості та формалізації процедур. Результативні характеристики пов'язані з ефективністю реалізації програм, швидкістю виконання, витратами, залученням бенефіціарів та сприйняттям допомоги в країнах-реципієнтах.

У підсумку встановлено, що обидві моделі, попри риторичні розбіжності, служать реалізації національних інтересів і супроводжуються прихованими формами впливу. Модель США відзначається інституційною сталістю, але демонструє політичну мінливість і високу вартість. Китайський підхід ефективніший у витратах і адаптивніший до потреб реципієнтів, проте страждає від низької прозорості, економічної залежності та ризиків асиметричної взаємодії.

**Ключові слова:** міжнародна допомога, стратегія, Китай, США, донорські моделі, кондиціональність, CIDCA, USAID, геополітика, інституційний аналіз.

**Introduction.** On January 20, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump announced the freezing of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – a key institution that for over sixty years had implemented U.S. foreign assistance policy. This decision, motivated by political and financial considerations, was justified by the administration as an attempt to reduce spending on projects of questionable effectiveness and to revise U.S. foreign policy priorities [White House 2025]. Another argument in favor of dissolving the agency was the inefficiency in resource allocation among central structures, contractors, and local partners. This political

---

move, which sparked widespread debate [Human Rights Watch 2025], intensified discussions about the effectiveness of international aid mechanisms and cast doubt on the long-term sustainability of the Western development architecture.

In recipient countries, U.S. assistance often played a significant role: its volumes constituted a substantial share of national budgets. For example, in postwar South Sudan it reached 7% of GDP, and in Somalia – up to 9% [Martin, 2025]. Projects financed by USAID contributed simultaneously to infrastructure recovery, stabilization of the socio-economic environment, and the promotion of American values and geopolitical interests. In this way, foreign aid functioned not only as a development instrument but also as a component of U.S. geostrategic positioning, particularly in the context of countering the growing influence of the People’s Republic of China.

While the United States demonstrates renewed tendencies toward isolationism, China is steadily expanding its presence in the field of international assistance, seeking to fill the leadership vacuum left by the U.S. A key component of this transformation is the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), established in 2018 to centralize and streamline China’s aid programs. Its creation marked a shift from a fragmented model, where functions were dispersed among numerous ministries and agencies, to a coordinated architecture with a single decision-making center [Schwarz, Rudyak, 2023]. CIDCA operates in close coordination with other Chinese state bodies and implements projects that combine infrastructure, humanitarian, and political elements.

The Chinese aid model is based on principles that diverge from the Western approach: non-interference in domestic affairs of recipient states, rejection of political conditions, and an emphasis on equal partnership within the South–South cooperation paradigm [SCIO 2021; Regilme, Hodzi, 2021]. These principles are consistently communicated through China’s external rhetoric, which portrays the country as a responsible and reliable donor. Although Western literature frequently criticizes Chinese aid as a tool of economic influence, closer analysis suggests that Western aid often pursues similar strategic objectives.

Historically, China has studied the experience of Western donors, particularly USAID, focusing not only on technical implementation but also on creating corresponding informational effects [韩 2014; 宋 & 巩 2021; 赵 & 方 2021]. The decline of U.S. leadership in the donor sphere following the liquidation of USAID opens new opportunities for Beijing to expand its influence in strategically important regions – Asia, Africa, and Latin America – and to propose its own model of post-conflict reconstruction support.

A somewhat illustrative example is Ukraine, where China has already declared its willingness to participate in the reconstruction process “according to the wishes of the parties”. However, estimates of Chinese aid to Ukraine during the war remain modest: according to various sources, it did not exceed USD 2–3 million [Liu 2025]. This raises questions about China’s potential level of involvement in Ukraine’s reconstruction efforts and highlights the need for a comparative assessment of the scale, conditionality, and possible risks associated with the Chinese aid model.

### **Literature Review**

A comparative analysis of the approaches of China and the United States to foreign aid is accompanied by a range of analytical and methodological challenges. The principles of U.S. assistance were formally outlined in USAID’s “White Paper”

---

of 2004 [USAID 2004], which has not been updated since, resulting in a gap between theoretical declarations and the evolution of actual U.S. practices. In contrast, China published an updated version of its own White Paper [SCIO 2021] in 2021 and typically follows this practice once per decade, despite a rapid increase in aid volumes since the early 2010s and a persistent lack of publicly available data. An increasingly competitive international environment, in which new actors – particularly from the European Union [Carbone 2013; Dany 2015] and the Persian Gulf [Elayah, Al-Awami 2024; Ulrichsen 2024] – have begun to play a more active role, also shapes the context in which both aid models operate.

Scholarly interest in the aid strategies of both countries significantly intensified between the 2010s and 2020s, as evidenced by publications from Dreher [Dreher et al. 2022; Dreher et al. 2024; Dreher & Parks 2024], Regilme [Regilme & Hartmann 2018; Regilme & Hodzi 2021; Regilme 2023], other authors [Schwarz & Rudyak 2023], and more. Researchers emphasize the mixed motivations behind foreign assistance, where humanitarian narratives are intertwined with aspirations for geopolitical influence. Both Chinese and American aid models remain opaque or only partially transparent due to the lack of access to systematic evaluations of project effectiveness. In the U.S. case, this deficit is exacerbated by technical limitations of the USAID website, still relevant as of early 2025.

China's model is backed by a rich empirical base, particularly in areas such as food security [Xu et al. 2024], education [Martorano et al. 2020], and healthcare [Micah et al. 2019]. However, concerns remain about the objectivity, contemporary relevance, and analytical rigor of such evaluations. There are still major gaps concerning the impact of aid on corruption, the environment, and institutional sustainability in recipient countries. Research on U.S. assistance similarly fails to provide definitive answers about the balance between strategic interests and norm-promoting goals. Overall, most Western studies focus either on a single donor or adopt a global lens, overlooking regional or dyadic comparisons. Chinese scholarly assessments often lean toward eclecticism and consensus-seeking [韩 2014; 宋 & 巩 2021; Yu, Due 2021; Yang 2024], complicating efforts to form an objective picture.

In sum, the literature review reveals the fragmented nature of much existing research and underscores the need for a broader range of parameters to assess foreign aid models. These include not only short-term effects such as GDP growth or voting alignment at the UN, but also institutional, social, environmental, and politico-cultural dimensions. A promising research direction involves in-depth case studies – such as aid for postwar reconstruction – which provide a valuable lens through which to assess donor strategies under growing geopolitical uncertainty.

### **Research Problem and Objectives**

Against the backdrop of the transformations described above, there is a growing need for a systematic analysis of the strategic characteristics of the new Chinese model of foreign aid, particularly in light of its increasing competition with the American model, which until recently had served as a benchmark for most donors. The objective of this study is to identify the specific structural and functional features of China's post-conflict assistance, with a focus on the elements that distinguish it from the American approach as implemented through USAID. Particular attention is given to the political logic, institutional design, and implementation mechanisms of aid in postwar reconstruction contexts.

---

The central research question is formulated as follows: What structural and strategic variables differentiate China's model of assistance from other major donor systems, and to what extent is it capable of filling the vacuum left by the United States' withdrawal from this domain?

### **Methodology**

Given the high density of donor structures worldwide and the political role of foreign aid as an instrument for advancing the foreign policy and economic influence of major powers, this study compares the Chinese approach – currently undergoing active institutional development – with the American aid model, previously centered around the United States Agency for International Development. In the PRC's aid architecture, the central institutional actor is the China International Development Cooperation Agency, which operates in close coordination with various other governmental bodies and ministries. Until its official dissolution in early 2025, USAID played a leading role in the global aid architecture, establishing a widely recognized standard that had been emulated by many other donor countries. Its elimination by the incoming U.S. administration created opportunities for other actors – primarily China – to fill the resulting void.

China's foreign aid system has undergone a profound transformation: from a fragmented and decentralized structure [Yu, Due 2021] – characterized by overlapping functions, weak coordination, and corruption risks – to a centralized model institutionalized through the creation of CIDCA in 2018. Given these dynamic changes, the temporal scope of the study is limited to the 21st century.

Since both agencies pursue similar functional objectives – exchanging aid for political or economic influence – but operate within fundamentally different political systems, administrative cultures, and institutional frameworks, this study employs the Most Different Systems Design (MDSD) approach. This comparative method allows for the identification of unique structural and functional features that shape divergent trajectories and outcomes in the provision of post-conflict aid [Mills et al. 2010].

The comparison focuses on four groups of characteristics:

1. Strategic: objectives of aid, general approach, unique strengths of each model.
2. Operational: aid volumes and directions, structure of key recipient partners, terms of assistance.
3. Institutional: organizational architecture, functional distribution, interaction with other state institutions.
4. Result-based: international image, evaluation of program effectiveness, achieved outcomes – particularly in postwar reconstruction.

The goal of the analysis is to distinguish between independent and dependent variables that determine the nature of development and post-conflict aid provided by China and the United States.

The study is based on the analysis of secondary sources, including official documents from aid agencies, analytical reports, academic publications, and case studies that illustrate both successful and unsuccessful aid interventions. Geographic scope is not a determining factor; the cases prioritized in the analysis are those in which post-conflict assistance was provided to countries that experienced armed conflict and became recipients of Chinese and/or American support programs.

### **1. Strategic Imperatives of Aid Provision**



---

The concept of “development” is a central element of self-identification for international aid agencies both in the United States and the People’s Republic of China. The very presence of this term in the official names of relevant institutions indicates its conceptual importance and thus serves as a logical starting point for analysis. The discursive framing of aid – that is, how it is explained and justified – plays a decisive role in how recipients perceive and support such aid [Regilme & Hartmann 2018]. Interpretations of development, as well as the logic of applying aid programs created to foster it, reveal substantial differences between the U.S. and Chinese approaches. Comparing how the term “development” is interpreted and functionally employed is therefore appropriate for analyzing their respective reconstruction and foreign aid policies.

In USAID’s conceptual documents [USAID 2004, 5], development is presented as the process of building a country’s internal capacity, enabling it to independently achieve prosperity, ensure national security, and maintain effective governance. This approach rests on the assumption that stable institutions are a prerequisite for “good policy” – that is, policies that foster sustainable development and adhere to liberal-democratic standards, and are thus rewarded by the donor [Dreher et al. 2024]. The American interpretation of development as institutional self-expansion directs aid decisions toward recipients characterized by limited or unstable capacity, and who therefore require external support for institutional reform. The decision to provide aid is determined by the United States’ ability to generate qualitative change in a given country, which in turn serves as a criterion for the legitimacy of such support. At the same time, aid from China is delegitimized by American officials, who describe it as “predatory” and driven solely by the pursuit of the PRC’s self-interest [Regilme & Hartmann 2018].

In contrast, the Chinese approach to development is grounded in the notion of a “development deficit” in developing countries and the need to overcome it through collective effort. In China’s 2021 White Paper “China’s International Development Cooperation in the New Era” [hereafter – *the Aid White Paper*], development is understood not as internal capacity but as a global task meant to promote the creation of an inclusive and harmonious world order [SCIO 2021, 7]. While the ideological understanding of development remains a starting point, the Chinese approach to aid emphasizes a collective aspiration to build a “community with a shared future for mankind” as the end goal of its aid policy. In this framework, not all countries with fragile institutions are considered eligible recipients – only those of the Global South, as they are the ones lacking development. Consequently, China is able to frame the purpose of aid as reducing global development disparities between the South and the North and achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals [SCIO 2021, 7–8]. Meanwhile, American aid is presented by Chinese officials and scholars as a form of neocolonialism and intrusive interference, and is thus delegitimized in global discourse [Regilme & Hartmann 2018].

A notable difference between the U.S. and Chinese approaches also lies in the motivational underpinnings of their aid policies. For the U.S., the primary driver of support is the safeguarding of American national – and, by extension, global – security. Threats stemming from fragile states – such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and transnational crime – are perceived as direct risks to U.S. security. The trend toward the “securitization of aid” began to

---

intensify following the terrorist attacks of 2001 [Fleck & Kilby 2010; Crawford & Kacarska 2019]. The U.S. actively uses aid as a tool to directly encourage support from its regional allies and leverages its influence within the IMF and World Bank to indirectly incentivize cooperation from less-friendly states [Dreher et al. 2024]. Thus, security becomes the imperative driving the application of U.S. aid instruments. As a result, both unstable and strategically significant stable countries (e.g., Israel, Egypt) are included in aid programs, regardless of their political regimes or level of development [Morgenstern & Brown 2022].

In the Chinese case, the donor's motivation for providing aid is framed as the fulfillment of obligations associated with being a "major power". This includes promoting peace, solidarity, and inclusive development, as well as providing global public goods such as infrastructure, institutional engagement, and financial support. The objective of this process is not only to enhance China's international image but also to foster long-term partnerships. The status-driven concept of a great power pushes Beijing to expand its political, economic, and infrastructural presence in regions that fall within the perimeter of its interests, especially through the Belt and Road Initiative [SCIO 2021, 8].

Both the U.S. and Chinese approaches contain economic elements, but their relative importance and consistency within each country's broader strategic vision differ. Although U.S. aid has historically been linked to economic reconstruction – most notably through the Marshall Plan – today, economic benefits from recipient countries' growth are generally seen as secondary effects. These may, over time, help open new markets for American exports. For China, by contrast, economic considerations are a core component of its aid strategy. Investments, infrastructure projects, and credit arrangements directly contribute to greater connectivity between countries and regions [Regilme 2023]. Aid also facilitates China's access to the recipient country's raw materials and energy resources [Regilme & Hartmann 2018].

In this way, the ideological framing of development, the security imperative, and the pursuit of great power status together shape the variation in aid strategies, geographic focus, and policy instruments. Key outcome variables influenced by these strategic characteristics include the nature and direction of aid programs, the mechanisms used to legitimize them, the forms and channels of delivery, and the expected foreign policy outcomes.

## **2. Operational Characteristics of Aid Provision**

A comparative analysis of the operational characteristics of international aid provided by the United States and the People's Republic of China reveals substantial differences in the scale, structure, and accounting methods of these aid flows.

Until it ceased operations in 2025, the U.S. agency USAID remained the world's largest distributor of resources *in terms of volume* aimed at supporting international development. Of the \$80 billion allocated to foreign aid in 2023 (representing 0.29% of U.S. GDP and 1.25% of the federal budget), approximately \$44 billion was channeled through USAID. Other major fund operators included the Department of State (\$21 billion), the Department of Defense (\$8 billion), and the Department of the Treasury (\$2 billion). Around 80% of the total aid was classified as economic assistance, with the remainder considered military aid. A significant share – \$24.4 billion, or 30% of the total – was directed to Ukraine during this period [ForeignAssistance.gov 2025].

In contrast, estimating the volume of China's international aid is complicated by limited access to official data and by the particularities of its accounting practices. According to China's Aid White Paper, from 2013 to 2018, the PRC provided roughly 270 billion yuan (approximately \$42 billion) in aid [SCIO 2021], which is 6.8 times less than that of the United States. In relative terms, China spent about 0.061% of its GDP on aid, compared to 0.255% for the U.S., highlighting the much greater intensity of American aid expenditures.

The geographical distribution of aid from both countries (Table 1) shows certain similarities. Both the U.S. and China focus their aid efforts primarily on countries in Asia and Africa, though China places particular emphasis on Africa. Latin America and Europe (prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine) are considerably lower priorities in both cases. In line with its strategic logic, the United States has concentrated substantial aid resources in countries such as Israel, Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Ethiopia, and to a lesser extent, Colombia [ForeignAssistance.gov 2025]. Since 2020, Afghanistan has lost its status as a key recipient, while from 2022 onward, a significant portion of aid has been redirected to support Ukraine. Due to the limited availability of official data, estimates of China's aid flows rely largely on indirect sources. These suggest that China has prioritized aid to countries such as Cuba, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and Sri Lanka [Dreher et al. 2022].

A distinctive feature of U.S. aid is its significant contribution to the financing of international organizations, which received over 20% of the total allocated resources. China, in contrast, participates to a lesser extent in multilateral mechanisms and relies more heavily on bilateral aid formats.

The volume of aid, which is exogenously determined, is linked to such internal parameters as the geographical focus of aid, the types of recipients, the forms of assistance (grants, loans, other financial instruments), and the share of expenditures directed toward multilateral cooperation frameworks. Aid volumes acquire qualitative meaning when accounting for structural factors such as the ratio of aid to GDP, the organizational model of resource distribution, data accessibility, and the methods used to classify aid flows.

It is important to note that estimating the scale of Chinese aid involves additional challenges due to accounting specificities and a limited level of transparency,

Table 1

**The total volume of foreign aid provided by the United States and China during 2013–2018, according to the donors' own estimates**

Region	USA		PRC	
	billions USD*	%	billions USD*	%
Asia and Oceania	118.88	41.7	17.01	40.5
Africa	78.23	27.4	18.77	44.7
Latin America	16.2	5.7	3.07	7.3
Europe and Russia	10.29	3.6	1.39	3.3
International Organizations	61.47	21.6	1.76	4.2
Total	285.07	100.0	42.0	100.0

Source: calculated by the author based on the White Paper on Development and the website <https://foreignassistance.gov/>

\* in current nominal USD



and therefore requires further verification. First, China employs its own aid classification methodology, which complicates cross-border data comparison. Second, there is a lack of public information about specific projects, funding amounts, and aid effectiveness [Regilme 2023]. Some of these limitations can be partially overcome by relying on research initiatives, in particular the *AidData project* carried out by William & Mary's Global Research Institute, which systematizes open data on Chinese aid and categorizes China's financial flows into three groups: those resembling official development assistance (ODA), those resembling other official flows (OOF), and unspecified flows (Vague).

According to AidData's calculations (Table 2), from 2014 to 2021, China provided \$57.7 billion in aid to developing countries, averaging \$7.2 billion per year. This figure is broadly consistent with the data from China's Aid White Paper, once adjustments are made for constant price units and potential clarification of the share of funds categorized by AidData as unspecified. Additionally, China actively provides supplementary financial resources classified as OOF, which on average amount to six times the volume of its grant-based aid.

Thus, the analysis and operationalization of the scale of distributed aid (Tables 1 and 2) confirm that, until 2025, the United States remained the global leader in terms of the volume of official development assistance provided in the form of grants. At the same time, China's contribution is substantial and shows a steady upward trend, despite differences in accounting approaches and levels of data transparency. A distinguishing feature of Chinese aid is the accompanying flow of additional resources in the form of Other Official Flows (OOF), which, on average, outpaces grant-based assistance at a ratio of approximately 1:6.

A comparative analysis of the aid employed by the U.S. and China *in the terms of form* reveals differences shaped by their respective strategic orientations, which influence the practical delivery of aid. The United States favors grants over concessional loans, citing the aim to avoid creating debt burdens for developing countries [USAID 2004], whereas China reports an almost equal ratio of grants to concessional loans in its aid structure [SCIO 2021], a reflection of its focus on infrastructure financing. Both donors apply a project-based model of aid delivery. However, the U.S. tends to involve local contractors from recipient countries, while China

Table 2

**Total volume of foreign aid provided by the United States and China in 2014–2021 according to estimates by the “About AidData” project**

	USA		PRC	
	billions USD *	%	billions USD*	%
Flows Resembling Official Development Assistance (ODA)	265.1	83.1	57.7	8.5
Funds Resembling Other Official Flows (OOF)	53.9	16.9	577	84.8
Unspecified Flows (Vague)	—	—	45.3	6.7
Total	319.0	100.0	680.0	100.0

*Source: calculated by the author based on [Parks et al. 2023, 11]*

*\* in constant 2021 USD*

primarily offers “turnkey” projects, implemented by Chinese firms, with local actors typically limited to roles in oversight, design, or project management.

There are also material differences in the composition of aid. The United States primarily supplies food, weapons, and electrical equipment, whereas China focuses on mechanical, transport, and medical equipment. For both donors, human capital development remains a key area. The U.S. largely targets educators, technical specialists, military personnel, and public sector workers with its training programs. China, by contrast, focuses on training personnel in agriculture, healthcare, energy, education, and public administration. Both countries also show a tendency to include expenditures on their own personnel in aid statistics: the U.S. accounts for advisory programs staffed by American-hired personnel, while China includes overseas volunteers – mainly Chinese language teachers abroad – as part of its aid volume [Morgenstern & Brown 2022; SCIO 2021].

Certain differences in the forms of aid (Table 3) stem from the distinct priorities emphasized by each donor. Infrastructure project support dominates the Chinese aid model, whereas the United States prefers to create conditions conducive to private sector investment in infrastructure, viewing this as a mechanism to enhance efficiency. When necessary, the U.S. may support large-scale projects through credit mechanisms, although this is not a common practice. In contrast, due to the high share of concessional loans in its aid structure, China periodically announces debt relief or cancellation initiatives for the poorest countries. The United States, for its part, resorts to direct budget support only in exceptional cases – such as during wartime or in exchange for the implementation of reforms or alignment with U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Table 3

**Comparison of priority forms of aid: China vs. the United States**

Forms	United States	China
Grants	Primary form of aid delivery	Common form, especially for social projects
Commercial Loans	Rarely used	Widespread; offered in three forms: – interest-free loans – concessional interest loans – commercial interest loans
Technical Assistance	Key component, especially through USAID	Widespread, with a focus on training and consulting
Medical Team Aid	Provided via disease control centers or the Department of Defense	Extremely common practice
Infrastructure Construction	Occasionally practiced, mainly through the Millennium Challenge Corporation	Core component of aid programs
Emergency Assistance	Widespread; focuses on food support and refugee assistance	Regularly practiced, including epidemic response
Cultural Influence and Soft Power	Exchange programs and education grants	Scholarships, volunteer teachers; Confucius Institutes
Debt Relief or Forgiveness	Selective, for humanitarian or political reasons	Periodic, primarily for least developed countries

*Compiled by the author based on: [Morgenstern & Brown 2022; SCIO 2021]*

---

A comparison of U.S. and Chinese approaches to aid *in the terms of conditionality* reveals clear differences in their normative orientations and practical foreign policy priorities. In the U.S. case, strategic visions of development play a central role, including expectations that recipients adhere to democratic governance, the rule of law, and human rights [Morgenstern & Brown 2022, 4], along with the imperative to invest in human capital and ensure U.S. national security. Accordingly, key features of the American approach include the alignment of aid projects with these goals and the presence of political conditionality accompanying the allocation of resources [Crawford & Kacarska 2019]. It is important to note that the argument of U.S. national security is often interpreted broadly, encompassing not only military threats but also the economic well-being of American citizens [Morgenstern & Brown 2022]. As a result, U.S. aid conditionality tends to be selective and inconsistent [Crawford & Kacarska, 2019].

China's approach to aid conditionality is officially described by the donor as pragmatic and non-ideological. However, in practice, aid is accompanied by expectations for "enhanced policy coordination" with China [SCIO 2021, 17], which implicitly includes mutual political trust and alignment of interests – a tendency confirmed by empirical research [Dreher et al. 2024]. This often manifests in the recipient's non-recognition of Taiwan as a sovereign state and coordinated voting with China at the UN General Assembly [Crawford & Kacarska 2019]. Despite China's official commitment to non-interference, win-win cooperation, and mutual respect [Carmody et al. 2022], these practices effectively create mechanisms of implicit conditionality.

The intensity of aid flows, the structure of aid (the ratio of grants to loans, the use of selected suppliers), and the duration or consistency of assistance are directly influenced by the recipient country's willingness to engage politically with China. Particular importance is attached to the terms of concessional loans: unlike international financial institutions such as the IMF or World Bank, which require structural reforms and improved governance transparency, Chinese loan agreements often include provisions favoring Chinese entities in the case of cross-defaults, confidentiality clauses, exclusion from the Paris Club, and the mandatory involvement of Chinese contractors and equipment [Gelpern et al. 2023].

Thus, in both donors' practices, the political behavior of recipients determines the volume, forms, and duration of the aid they receive. The operational dimensions of U.S. and Chinese aid reflect fundamentally different strategic approaches: the U.S. aims to foster recipient self-sufficiency aligned with its liberal standards, implying a degree of mentorship, while China pursues mercantile cooperation that seeks a balance between recipient needs and the advancement of its own national interests.

### **3. Institutional Parameters of Aid Provision**

A comparison of the institutional mechanisms for allocating international aid by the United States and the People's Republic of China reveals not only structural and functional differences in the distribution of resources but also contrasts in how donor political orientations are embedded into the operational practice of supporting recipient countries.

In the American aid model, the central institution is the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which implements the majority of bilateral aid

---

programs and focuses on long-term development goals [USAID 2004]. As of 2024, USAID maintained its leadership among U.S. aid-administrating bodies, with access to both dedicated budget lines and specialized funds such as the Economic Support Fund, AEECA, and the Democracy Fund. Most USAID projects are implemented through an extensive network of contractors, including NGOs, private firms, and international institutions. Up to two-thirds of USAID's staff are stationed abroad. When security-related issues become the focus of aid projects, management responsibilities shift to the U.S. Department of State, which coordinates USAID's activities, and in some cases, the Department of Defense takes over. In total, around thirty U.S. federal agencies are involved in aid distribution, and a specialized coordination office – the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources – was established within the State Department to ensure coherence among them.

The Chinese model, in contrast, was characterized until 2018 by a high degree of decentralization and weak coordination among the institutions involved [Esteban & Olivie 2022]. Only after the creation of the China International Development Cooperation Agency did signs of partial centralization begin to emerge. Reporting directly to the State Council of the PRC, CIDCA is responsible for strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation. However, it does not manage finances or implement projects directly [Schwarz & Rudyak 2023]. Project initiation typically involves Chinese enterprises or diplomatic missions, while technical design is handled by relevant ministries, and implementation is overseen through China's network of embassies.

The key economic coordinator of China's aid remains the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), which, through its relevant departments, selects implementing companies, manages the transfer of equipment, conducts educational programs, and cooperates with international donors. Economic counselor offices at Chinese embassies, operating under MOFCOM's oversight, also play a vital role. The growing influence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in project verification processes [Schwarz & Rudyak 2023] reflects China's effort to synchronize development programs with its broader foreign policy objectives.

Both models demonstrate the involvement of sector-specific ministries in specialized aid projects: in the United States, for example, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture; in China, institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Health Commission are engaged. However, in the Chinese case, so-called “policy banks” play a particularly important role – most notably, the Export-Import Bank of China (Eximbank) and the China Development Bank (CDB), which provide concessional or commodity loans, often supported by the People's Bank of China or major state-owned commercial banks. The company Sinosure acts as an investment insurance guarantor for foreign projects.

The analysis shows that donor countries differ in the degree of institutional centralization within their aid allocation systems: high in the U.S. versus partial and multi-tiered in China. This distinction affects the autonomy of implementing agencies, the clarity of the functional division among institutions, the formalization of procedures, and the extent of external oversight in the resource allocation process. Aid effectiveness parameters are closely linked to the transparency of institutional governance, the alignment between foreign policy goals and development

---

programs, the decision-making speed within institutions, and the level of coordination among actors. The choice between a centralized and decentralized model is critical, as it determines not only the technical quality of aid allocation but also the capacity to integrate aid into the strategic objectives of the donor state's foreign policy.

In practical terms, the distribution of responsibilities among the three key actors in the U.S. model (USAID, the State Department, and the Department of Defense) tends toward greater specialization and a clearer hierarchy of accountability. In contrast, China's system – comprising CIDCA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce – is characterized by multi-level coordination among centers of influence. This enables pragmatic flexibility but also complicates oversight and accountability. In both cases, the respective foreign ministry plays a critical role in verifying whether aid aligns with national policy and strategic interests.

#### **4. Outcome Characteristics of Aid Provision**

A comparison of U.S. and Chinese aid practices in terms of outcomes reveals that the American aid model tends to emphasize transparency, large-scale institutionalization of oversight, and standardization of procedures, whereas the Chinese model prioritizes swift implementation, cost-efficiency, and flexible adaptation to recipient needs. Studies show that donor motivations significantly affect aid effectiveness [Dreher et al. 2024]. The strategic orientations of donors shape the organizational features of aid design and management. For the U.S., these are built around transparency, inclusiveness, and cost-effectiveness. For China, they emphasize pragmatism, low implementation costs, and responsiveness to recipient demands. Consequently, variations emerge across cases in terms of sectoral coverage, project implementation speed, unit infrastructure costs, engagement of local actors, and alignment of aid with recipient country needs.

The U.S. aid model is marked by several *outcome advantages*, including the global reach of its programs, their standardized nature, and well-established delivery mechanisms. By the end of 2024, the United States remained the world's largest donor by aid volume, with project management carried out through a network of contractors – particularly NGOs, private implementers, and international organizations [赵 & 方 2021]. Efforts to strengthen internal performance evaluation were evident through the creation of the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) and the Office of Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER), as well as the launch of Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) – initiatives that have even been acknowledged by Chinese scholars studying USAID [赵 & 方 2021]. The agency actively applied independent project monitoring, often outsourcing these functions to third parties in hard-to-access regions, and implemented high accountability standards in line with the Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act (2010) and the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (2016).

In practice, USAID employed non-traditional project tracking methods such as randomized controlled trials and real-time monitoring via geospatial and satellite data. Spending effectiveness was measured through “impact per dollar” indicators, supported by collaboration with expert communities such as the Costing Community of Practice at the University of California, Berkeley [USAID, 2025].

The Chinese aid model, by contrast, is characterized by a strong focus on the development of transport infrastructure—a sector that traditionally remains



---

outside the core priorities of Western donors [宋 & 巩 2021]. Some studies indicate that Chinese infrastructure aid achieves better development outcomes than aid provided by international donors [Chai & Tang 2023]. This “production-oriented” form of assistance helps recipient countries enhance trade intensity with China and integrate local industries into global value chains. Since aid allows recipients to better exploit their comparative advantages in trade, they tend to shift toward the production of goods that match China’s import needs, resulting in increased commodity complementarity [Chai & Tang 2023]. However, these comparative advantages often lie in the extractive sector, reinforcing a narrow specialization and deepening trade dependence on China [Regilme 2023].

One notable feature of the Chinese approach is the initiation of projects based on proposals often lobbied by Chinese entrepreneurs. According to observers, this helps better tailor aid to local needs and minimizes the paternalistic tendencies typical of Western aid programs. Another advantage of Chinese aid lies in its relatively lower costs, which stem from state subsidies for goods and services, low transaction costs, and flexible terms and volumes of delivery. Empirical data show that the average cost of constructing one kilometer of road by Chinese contractors is approximately USD 0.4 million, compared to USD 0.8 million for similar projects by Japan’s JICA and USD 1.3 million for those funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) [Sato et al. 2011].

The institutional vulnerabilities inherent in the organizational design of each aid model serve as a starting point for identifying their respective *outcome shortcomings*.

In the case of the United States, contract management remains politicized and is often adjusted in line with U.S. strategic interests [Regilme 2023; 赵 & 方 2021]. Despite the formal inclusiveness of the contract system, its actual effectiveness is limited by administrative capacity, the short-term nature of contracts, and the dominance of large NGOs, which restricts access to resources for smaller local organizations. An excessive reliance on civil society and the promotion of specific values may lead to interference in the domestic political processes of recipient countries. In some cases – such as Myanmar – this has resulted in destabilization rather than the anticipated strengthening of institutions [宋 & 巩 2021]. The situation is further complicated by the political inconsistency of the U.S. foreign aid system, which has demonstrated an inability to formulate a coherent and reliable strategy under administrations espousing overtly isolationist approaches [Regilme 2023].

One of the side effects of USAID assistance is “capacity substitution” [Sato et al. 2011], where a significant share of resources is spent not on aid delivery itself, but on supporting USAID missions or contractors who administer the allocated funds. Another manifestation of capacity substitution is the recruitment of government-sector specialists in the recipient country by the agency or its contractors – offering higher salaries – which creates a skills’ drain from the recipient’s public sector. Moreover, some assessments suggest that U.S. aid has no measurable effect on the recipient’s foreign trade indicators, and therefore fails to ensure long-term economic resilience [Shao et al. 2025].

The Chinese aid model, by contrast, exhibits a different set of vulnerabilities. One is economic conditionality in the selection of contractors: aid flows are often tied to the procurement of goods and services from Chinese companies [Bräutigam 2009;

Regilme & Hartmann, 2018], which can limit the local economic impact in terms of employment or technology transfer. Weak communication with local beneficiaries, reliance on intergovernmental channels, and limited involvement of civil society contribute to political favoritism, leading CIDCA to select projects with weak social impact and limited sustainability – contrasting with the practices of USAID and other Western or multilateral donors (see Table 4).

As a result, the Chinese approach may lead to the allocation of aid resources to politically significant but economically unviable regions, which in turn reduces overall project effectiveness.

Table 4

**USAID and CIDCA in the *Aid Transparency Index* by Publish What You Fund**

Indicator	Maximum Score	USAID	CIDCA
Organizational Planning and Commitments	15	14	2
Finance and Budgets	25	15	0
Project Attributes	20	14	0
Joining-Up Development Data	20	17	0
Performance	20	6	0

*Source: Publish What You Fund website*

In addition, high corruption risks in the implementation of aid projects in countries with weak institutions are further exacerbated by insufficient oversight from Chinese donors. According to observations by Isaksson & Kotsadam [Isaksson & Kotsadam, 2021], this can lead to changes in local social norms, legitimizing corrupt practices. Chinese donors themselves show a lack of sensitivity to corruption threats that may arise during the implementation of aid-funded projects [Dreher & Parks, 2024].

A symptomatic feature of the Chinese aid system is its informational opacity [Regilme 2023]. China’s CIDCA consistently ranks last in the *Aid Transparency Index* compiled by the initiative *Publish What You Fund* [Publish What You Fund 2025]. According to the Index’s methodology – which covers aspects of planning, finance, project-level attributes, development data integration, and performance assessment –CIDCA’s activities are evaluated as almost completely non-transparent. This restrictive information policy is driven by the desire to minimize risks of external pressure or reputational damage from other states, as well as to avoid domestic resentment, particularly in a context where a significant portion of China’s population still lives near the poverty line or in socially vulnerable conditions [Regilme & Hodzi 2021]. This hinders the possibility of independent evaluations of China’s aid effectiveness. As a result, China’s narrative on foreign aid is insufficiently communicated to the international community [Yu & Due, 2021], leading to misunderstandings and deepening mistrust toward its aid practices.

A comparative analysis of the results published by *Publish What You Fund* shows that while the evaluation of CIDCA is constrained by limited data access, the ranking also reveals problematic areas within USAID’s operations – for example, low program performance in certain regions and difficulties in ensuring stable aid budgeting. This indicates that neither model is free from internal limitations; however, the nature of their vulnerabilities differs substantially based on the foundational principles guiding their aid systems.

---

**Conclusions.** Development assistance provided by the United States and the People's Republic of China serves as a tool for advancing their respective national interests. In this context, the dominant imperative and the nature of political conditionality emerge as the key independent variables shaping each donor's approach. For the United States, these variables are the security imperative and the promotion of effective democratic institutions. For China, they are the economic imperative and a focus on policy coordination.

In the U.S. case, building quality political institutions in recipient countries is viewed as a mechanism to ensure long-term stability, continuity, and alignment of political relations through value convergence. This institutional template includes democratic governance, a liberal economic model, and adherence to human rights. Ensuring the voluntary adoption of this template by recipient elites without offering non-repayable financial support is virtually impossible, which is why U.S. assistance is predominantly grant-based. Given the limited volume of available grant resources, aid is primarily directed toward countries of strategic importance to U.S. foreign policy. In cases of institutional backsliding, recipients may face sanctions in the form of suspended U.S. assistance programs – though such sanctions are often applied selectively.

In the Chinese case, policy coordination and the economic imperative aim to foster the economic convergence of developing countries with advanced economies levels. This strategy reflects China's political interest in positioning itself as a leader of the Global South, vying for influence and legitimacy as a responsible major power, while simultaneously strengthening its international standing.

However, China's aid delivery in the form of debt obligations – especially tied commercial and concessional loans – runs counter to the declared goals of development assistance. By offering loans rather than grants, China undermines its image as a “major power” willing to provide global public goods or financial support to the needy. On the contrary, this practice reinforces perceptions of China as a utilitarian actor driven by self-interest. The intent to gain economic benefit while imposing debt burdens on recipients' conflicts with China's stated goal of promoting economic convergence.

Grant-based aid from the U.S. not only facilitates the creation of necessary institutions in recipient countries but also allows for a rapid response to pressing needs, particularly by addressing resource or service deficits. To identify such deficits effectively, assess needs, and monitor project outcomes, the designated U.S. aid agency operates with local operational autonomy. Its main focus is on working with local civil society organizations rather than government structures, enabling it to better address U.S. strategic security interests and achieve more efficient use of limited financial resources.

Engagement with local grassroots groups and the provision of financial flexibility contribute to the inclusivity and effectiveness of the American aid model. The agency's decision-making autonomy is protected by transparency and accountability requirements but does not involve direct donor interference in project selection. Despite these strengths, the model carries certain vulnerabilities: capacity substitution and a lack of coordination between strategic (e.g., security-related) objectives and actual project outcomes (such as support for DEI initiatives). This disconnect contributed to the eventual shutdown of the agency.

---

China's use of tied loans as an aid mechanism requires close cooperation with recipient governments, as they are the ones who approve Chinese companies' market access and authorize incoming financial flows. This intergovernmental approach allows China to remain flexible in responding to partner countries' needs and priorities, thereby strengthening its position in negotiations. At the same time, this dependence on state institutions for resource allocation limits the operational independence of China's aid agency.

Despite this vulnerability, the Chinese model enables lower project delivery costs, minimal transaction expenses, and avoidance of capacity substitution – an issue more typical of the U.S. model. Consistent with its economic imperative and the declared goal of fostering economic convergence in the Global South, Chinese aid programs are primarily focused on infrastructure development. This focus often better aligns with the actual needs of recipient countries, where infrastructure shortages – rather than deficiencies in diversity, equity, and inclusion – pose critical barriers to development.

The Chinese model is characterized by a pragmatic approach with dominant mercantile motivations: mutual benefit based on shared membership in the Global South, rather than one-sided support or value-based alignment. As a result, China's aid is directed toward achieving specific economic outcomes and is therefore inherently instrumental in nature.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bräutigam D. *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2009. 416 p.

Carbone M. Between EU actorness and aid effectiveness: The logics of EU aid to Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Relations*. 2013. Vol. 27, No. 3. P. 341–355. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117813497300>.

Carmody P., Zajontz T., Reboredo R. From 'debt diplomacy' to donorship? China's changing role in global development. *Global Political Economy*. 2022. Vol. 1, No. 2. P. 198–217. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1332/UZHW7185>.

Chai Q., Tang Z. *The World Bank and China: Comparing the Impacts of Their Development Projects in Africa*. Boston University, 10 October 2023. 38 p., available at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4598476> (accessed: 05 May 2025).

Crawford G., Kacarska S. Aid sanctions and political conditionality: continuity and change. *Journal of International Relations and Development*. 2019. Vol. 22, No. 1. P. 184–214. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-017-0099-8>.

Dany C. Politicization of humanitarian aid in the European Union. *European Foreign Affairs Review*. 2015. Vol. 20, No. 3. P. 419–437.

Dreher A., Fuchs A., Parks B., Strange A., Tierney M.J. *Banking on Beijing: The Aims and Impacts of China's Overseas Development Program*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2022. 418 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108564496>.

Dreher A., Lang V., Reinsberg B. Aid effectiveness and donor motives. *World Development*. 2024. Vol. 176. Art. No. 106501. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106501>.

Dreher A., Parks B.C. China's overseas development program. In: *Handbook of Aid and Development* / eds. R.M. Desai, S. Devarajan, J.L. Tobin. Cheltenham, UK : Edward Elgar Publishing, 2024. P. 243–263. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800886810.00023>.

---

Elayah M., Al-Awami H. Exploring the preference for bilateral aid: Gulf oil states' aid to Yemen. *Third World Quarterly*. 2024. Vol. 45, No. 15–16. P. 2266–2286. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2024.2327451>.

Esteban M., Olivie I. China and Western aid norms in the Belt and Road: Normative clash or convergence? A case study on Ethiopia. *Journal of Contemporary China*. 2022. Vol. 31, No. 134. P. 267–284.

Fleck R.K., Kilby C. Changing aid regimes? U.S. foreign aid from the Cold War to the War on Terror. *Journal of Development Economics*. 2010. Vol. 91, No. 2. P. 185–197. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdevco.2009.09.011>.

ForeignAssistance.gov. *Fiscal Year 2023, Funding Phase: Disbursements*, available at: <https://foreignassistance.gov/> (accessed: 02 April 2025).

Gelpern A., Horn S., Morris S., Parks B., Trebesch C. How China Lends: A Rare Look into 100 Debt Contracts with Foreign Governments. *Economic Policy*. 2023. Vol. 38, No. 114. P. 345–416. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/epolic/eiac054>.

Human Rights Watch. *Trump Administration Guts Foreign Aid*. 28 February 2025, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/28/us-trump-administration-guts-foreign-aid> (accessed: 15 April 2025).

Isaksson A.-S., Kotsadam A. Chinese aid and local corruption. *Journal of Public Economics*. 2018. Vol. 159. P. 146–159. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2018.01.002>.

Liu Zhen. China seeks a role in Ukraine's post-war reconstruction. *South China Morning Post*. 17 March 2025, available at: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3302742/china-seeks-role-ukraines-post-war-reconstruction> (accessed: 15 April 2025).

Martin P. Trump and Musk's USAID 'Shut Down' Threat Opens Door for China. *Bloomberg*. 3 February 2025, available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-02-03/trump-and-musk-s-usaid-shut-down-threat-opens-door-for-china?srnd=next-china&embedded-checkout=true> (accessed: 15 April 2025).

Martorano B., Metzger L., Sanfilippo M. Chinese development assistance and household welfare in Sub-Saharan Africa. *World Development*. 2020. Vol. 129. Art. No. 104909. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.104909>.

Micah A.E., Zhao Y., Chen C.S., et al. Tracking development assistance for health from China, 2007–2017. *BMJ Global Health*. 2019. Vol. 4. Art. e001513. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2019-001513>.

Mills A.J., Durepos G., Wiebe E. (eds.). Most Different Systems Design. In: *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA : SAGE Publications, 2010, available at: : <https://methods.sagepub.com/ency/edvol/encyc-of-case-study-research/chpt/most-different-systems-design>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n211> (accessed: 05 May 2025).

Morgenstern E.M., Brown N.M. Foreign Assistance: An Introduction to U.S. Programs and Policy. Congressional Research Service. R40213. Updated 10 January 2022, available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R40213> (accessed: 16 May 2025).

Parks B.C., Malik A.A., Escobar B., Zhang S., Fedorochko R., Solomon K., Wang F., Vlasto L., Walsh K., Goodman S. *Belt and Road Reboot: Beijing's Bid to De-Risk Its Global Infrastructure Initiative*. Williamsburg, VA : AidData at William & Mary, 2023. 386 p.



---

Publish What You Fund. *Official website*, available at: <https://www.publish-whatyoufund.org/> (accessed: 05 May 2025).

Regilme S.S.F. Jr., Hartmann H.S. Mutual Delegitimization: American and Chinese Development Assistance in Africa. Preprint version. Leiden University, 2018, available at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3179409> (accessed: 16.05.2025).

Regilme S.S.F. Jr., Hodzi O. Comparing US and Chinese foreign aid in the era of rising powers. *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*. 2021. Vol. 56, No. 2. P. 114–131. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2020.1855904>.

Regilme S.S. Jr. United States foreign aid and multilateralism under the Trump presidency. *New Global Studies*. 2023. Vol. 17, No. 1. P. 45–69. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/ngs-2021-0030>.

Sato J., Shiga H., Kobayashi T., Kondoh H. “Emerging donors” from a recipient perspective: An institutional analysis of foreign aid in Cambodia. *World Development*. 2011. Vol. 39, No. 12. P. 2091–2104. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2011.04.014>.

Schwarz R., Rudyak M. *China’s Development Co-operation*. Paris : OECD, 2023. (OECD Development Co-operation Working Papers). December.

Shao X., Yang Q., Liu Z. China’s aid-giving modalities: Impacts on sustainable growth in China-Africa trade. *China Economic Review*. 2025. Vol. 90. Art. No. 102370. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chieco.2025.102370>.

State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China (SCIO). *China’s International Development Cooperation in the New Era*. Beijing, January 2021, available at: [https://english.scio.gov.cn/whitepapers/2021-01/10/c\\_760588.htm](https://english.scio.gov.cn/whitepapers/2021-01/10/c_760588.htm) (accessed: 05 May 2025).

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). *U.S. Foreign Aid: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century*. Washington, DC : Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, January 2004. 33 p.

U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Inspector General. *Oversight of USAID-Funded Humanitarian Assistance Programming Impacted by Staffing Reductions and Pause on Foreign Assistance*. Advisory Notice. 10 February 2025, available at: <https://oig.usaid.gov/>.

Ulrichsen K.C. The changing role of Gulf-based non-state actors in foreign aid. *Third World Quarterly*. 2024. Vol. 45, No. 15–16. P. 2175–2189. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2024.2307552>.

White House. *Presidential Memorandum on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid*. 20 January 2025, available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/reevaluating-and-realigning-united-states-foreign-aid/> (accessed: 15 April 2025).

Xu Z., Zhang Y., Li D. Chinese aid and nutrition improvement in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Applied Economics*. 2024. Vol. 56, No. 26. P. 3098–3116. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2023.2204216>.

Yang M. Framing of development policies toward Africa: A comparative study of China and the European Union. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. 2024. [Online first, published 2 June 2024]. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2024.2361776>.

Yu J., Due E. Mutual Learning in Development Cooperation: China and the West. *IDS Bulletin*. 2021. Vol. 52, No. 2. P. 19–36. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.19088/1968-2021.118>.

---

宋清润, 巩小豪. 美国国际开发署对缅甸援助研究 (2001–2020 财年). *南洋问题研究*. 2021. № 4 (总第 188 期). 第 1–14 页.

赵剑治, 方恬. 对外援助中的合同式治理 – 美国国际开发署与私人志愿组织关系演变及其援助效果研究. *复旦公共行政评论*. 2021. – 第23辑. – 第178–205页.

韩凝. 美国国际开发署对伊拉克战后重建援助探析. *外交评论*. 2014. 第2期. 第48–82页.

## REFERENCES

Bräutigam D. (2009), *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 416 p.

Carbone M. (2013), “Between EU actorness and aid effectiveness: The logics of EU aid to Sub-Saharan Africa”, *International Relations*, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 341–355, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117813497300>.

Carmody P., Zajontz T., Reboredo R. (2022), “From ‘debt diplomacy’ to donorship? China’s changing role in global development”, *Global Political Economy*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 198–217, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1332/UZHW7185>.

Chai Q., Tang Z. (2023), *The World Bank and China: Comparing the Impacts of Their Development Projects in Africa* [Electronic resource], Boston University, 10 October, 38 p., available at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4598476> (accessed: 5 May 2025).

Crawford G., Kacarska S. (2019), “Aid sanctions and political conditionality: continuity and change”, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 184–214, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-017-0099-8>.

Dany C. (2015), “Politicization of humanitarian aid in the European Union”, *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 419–437.

Dreher A., Fuchs A., Parks B., Strange A., Tierney M.J. (2022), *Banking on Beijing: The Aims and Impacts of China’s Overseas Development Program*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 418 p., doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108564496>.

Dreher A., Lang V., Reinsberg B. (2024), “Aid effectiveness and donor motives”, *World Development*, Vol. 176, Article No. 106501, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106501>.

Dreher A., Parks B.C. (2024), “China’s overseas development program”, in: Desai R.M., Devarajan S., Tobin J.L. (Eds.), *Handbook of Aid and Development*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 243–263, doi: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800886810.00023>.

Elayah M., Al-Awami H. (2024), “Exploring the preference for bilateral aid: Gulf oil states’ aid to Yemen”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 15–16, pp. 2266–2286, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2024.2327451>.

Esteban M., Olivie I. (2022), “China and Western aid norms in the Belt and Road: Normative clash or convergence? A case study on Ethiopia”, *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 31, No. 134, pp. 267–284.

Fleck R.K., Kilby C. (2010), “Changing aid regimes? U.S. foreign aid from the Cold War to the War on Terror”, *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 91, No. 2, pp. 185–197, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2009.09.011>.

ForeignAssistance.gov (2025), *Fiscal Year 2023, Funding Phase: Disbursements* [Electronic resource], available at: <https://foreignassistance.gov/> (accessed: 2 April 2025).

---

Gelpern A., Horn S., Morris S., Parks B., Trebesch C. (2023), “How China Lends: A Rare Look into 100 Debt Contracts with Foreign Governments”, *Economic Policy*, Vol. 38, No. 114, pp. 345–416, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/epolic/eiac054>.

Human Rights Watch (2025), *US: Trump Administration Guts Foreign Aid* [Electronic resource], 28 February, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/28/us-trump-administration-guts-foreign-aid> (accessed: 15 April 2025).

Isaksson A.-S., Kotsadam A. (2018), “Chinese aid and local corruption”, *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 159, pp. 146–159, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2018.01.002>.

Liu Zhen (2025), “China seeks a role in Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction”, *South China Morning Post* [Electronic resource], 17 March, available at: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3302742/china-seeks-role-ukraines-post-war-reconstruction> (accessed: 15 April 2025).

Martin P. (2025), “Trump and Musk’s USAID ‘Shut Down’ Threat Opens Door for China”, *Bloomberg* [Electronic resource], 3 February, available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-02-03/trump-and-musk-s-usaid-shut-down-threat-opens-door-for-china?srnd=next-china&embedded-checkout=true> (accessed: 15 April 2025).

Martorano B., Metzger L., Sanfilippo M. (2020), “Chinese development assistance and household welfare in Sub-Saharan Africa”, *World Development*, Vol. 129, Article No. 104909, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.104909>.

Micah A. E., Zhao Y., Chen C. S., et al. (2019), “Tracking development assistance for health from China, 2007–2017”, *BMJ Global Health*, Vol. 4, e001513, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2019-001513>.

Mills A.J., Durepos G., Wiebe E. (eds.) (2010), “Most Different Systems Design”, in: Mills A.J., Durepos G., Wiebe E. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications [Electronic resource], available at: <https://methods.sagepub.com/ency/edvol/encyc-of-case-study-research/chpt/most-different-systems-design> (accessed: 5 May 2025), doi: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n211>.

Morgenstern E.M., Brown N.M. (2022), *Foreign Assistance: An Introduction to U.S. Programs and Policy* [Electronic resource], Congressional Research Service, R40213, updated 10 January, available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R40213> (accessed: 16 May 2025).

Parks B.C., Malik A.A., Escobar B., Zhang S., Fedorochko R., Solomon K., Wang F., Vlasto L., Walsh K., Goodman S. (2023), *Belt and Road Reboot: Beijing’s Bid to De-Risk Its Global Infrastructure Initiative*, Williamsburg, VA: AidData at William & Mary, 386 p.

Publish What You Fund (2025), *Official website* [Electronic resource], available at: <https://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/> (accessed: 5 May 2025).

Regilme S.S.F. Jr., Hartmann H.S. (2018), *Mutual Delegitimization: American and Chinese Development Assistance in Africa* [Electronic resource], Preprint version, Leiden University, available at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3179409> (accessed: 16 May 2025).

Regilme S.S.F. Jr., Hodzi O. (2021), “Comparing US and Chinese foreign aid in the era of rising powers”, *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 2, pp. 114–131, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2020.1855904>.

---

Regilme S.S.F. Jr. (2023), “United States foreign aid and multilateralism under the Trump presidency”, *New Global Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 45–69, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/ngs-2021-0030>.

Sato J., Shiga H., Kobayashi T., Kondoh H. (2011), ““Emerging donors’ from a recipient perspective: An institutional analysis of foreign aid in Cambodia”, *World Development*, Vol. 39, No. 12, pp. 2091–2104, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2011.04.014>.

Schwarz R., Rudyak M. (2023), *China’s Development Co-operation*, Paris: OECD, (OECD Development Co-operation Working Papers), December.

Shao X., Yang Q., Liu Z. (2025), “China’s aid-giving modalities: Impacts on sustainable growth in China-Africa trade”, *China Economic Review*, Vol. 90, Article No. 102370, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chieco.2025.102370>.

State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China (SCIO) (2021), *China’s International Development Cooperation in the New Era* [Electronic resource], Beijing, January, available at: [https://english.scio.gov.cn/whitepapers/2021-01/10/c\\_760588.htm](https://english.scio.gov.cn/whitepapers/2021-01/10/c_760588.htm) (accessed: 5 May 2025).

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) (2004), *U.S. Foreign Aid: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century*, Washington, DC: Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, January, 33 p.

U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Inspector General (2025), *Oversight of USAID-Funded Humanitarian Assistance Programming Impacted by Staffing Reductions and Pause on Foreign Assistance* [Electronic resource], Advisory Notice, 10 February, available at: <https://oig.usaid.gov/> (accessed: 15 April 2025).

Ulrichsen K.C. (2024), “The changing role of Gulf-based non-state actors in foreign aid”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 15–16, pp. 2175–2189, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2024.2307552>.

White House (2025), *Presidential Memorandum on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid* [Electronic resource], 20 January, available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/reevaluating-and-realigning-united-states-foreign-aid/> (accessed: 15 April 2025).

Xu Z., Zhang Y., Li D. (2024), “Chinese aid and nutrition improvement in Sub-Saharan Africa”, *Applied Economics*, Vol. 56, No. 26, pp. 3098–3116, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2023.2204216>.

Yang M. (2024), “Framing of development policies toward Africa: A comparative study of China and the European Union”, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, [Online first, published 2 June], doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2024.2361776>.

Yu J., Due E. (2021), “Mutual Learning in Development Cooperation: China and the West”, *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 52, No. 2, pp. 19–36, doi: <https://doi.org/10.19088/1968-2021.118>.

Song Qingrun, Gong Xiaohao (2021), “Meiguo Guoji Kaifa Shu dui Miandian Yuanzhu Yanjiu (2001–2020 Cai Nian)”, *Nanyang Wenti Yanjiu*, No. 4 (Total No. 188), pp. 1–14. (In Chinese).

Zhao Jianzhi, Fang Tian (2021), “Duiwai Yuanzhu zhong de Hetongshi Zhili—Meiguo Guoji Kaifa Shu yu Siren Zhiyuan Zuzhi Guanxi Yanbian ji qi Yuanzhu Xiaoguo Yanjiu”, *Fudan Gonggong Xingzheng Pinglun*, No. 23, pp. 178–205. (In Chinese).

Han Ning (2014), “Meiguo Guoji Kaifa Shu dui Yilake Zhanhou Chongjian Yuanzhu Tanxi”, *Waijiao Pinglun*, No. 2, pp. 48–82. (In Chinese).