

With the generous support of the Geschwister Supp Stiftung over the course of four semesters, Hasan Adwan completed a dissertation entitled “Money, Democracy, and the Decline of the Peace Party,” at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies.

Adwan’s dissertation is an interdisciplinary project that focused on the political role of American foreign assistance in shaping American- Palestinian relations, and the impact of aid conditionality on the decision making process within the Palestinian National Authority and consequently, the standing of the Palestinian leadership among Palestinians.

As a history dissertation, Adwan’s research provides a new lens to studying and understanding the evolution of American- Palestinian relations through “aid.” Adwan tracks the development of the American foreign aid establishment since the early years of the republic, paying special attention to the period from 1948 to the present. The dissertation argues that U.S. aid to the Palestinians has been instrumental in shaping the nature of the relationship between the Palestinians and the U.S., as well as the Middle East in general.

As a political science project, the dissertation serves as an evaluation of the U.S.’s use of its foreign aid program as a “technique of statecraft,” or “a tool of a policy,” much like the military and diplomatic corps, as a means of advancing U.S. foreign policy goals and achieving policy objectives in the world as a whole, and the Middle East in particular. The dissertation concludes that using foreign aid has had unintended, even perverse, consequences on the standing of the Palestinian “peace camp,” represented by Fatah and President Mahmoud Abbas. Instead of enforcing his standing by providing aid to the desperate Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, aid conditionality has undermined his leadership and popularity, thereby giving room for parties such as the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas to dominate Palestinian politics.