

Abstract

This doctoral dissertation delves into fundamental issues pertaining to humanitarian aid and economic support from the United States within the context of post-war European reconstruction. Such extensive and organized economic assistance had no historical precedent and had to confront challenges such as the devastation of European nations and their economic systems due to the six-year-long war and occupation, as well as the extensive refugee problem. The dissertation further focuses on several key aspects:

- 1. Structure and Organization of Economic Assistance: It provides a comprehensive examination of the intricate structure and organization of economic assistance programs.*
- 2. Financial Aspects of Programs: The research investigates the financial aspects of these initiatives, including budgetary allocations, funding sources, and resource distribution for reconstruction projects.*
- 3. The Refugee Question: A significant portion of the work is dedicated to addressing the refugee issue, exploring how humanitarian aid aimed to mitigate the challenges associated with displaced populations.*
- 4. Economic Aid as a Tool of Political Power: The study analyzes the extent to which Western economic assistance served as a tool of political influence, with a focus on its diplomatic and geopolitical implications.*
- 5. Public Opinion: The thesis explores the strategies employed by the creators and advocates of these programs to convince the American population and skeptics of their program's merits, recognizing the pivotal role of public opinion, which could potentially impact subsequent elections.*

As an ideal case study for examining post-war reconstruction, Austria was selected, building upon previous research related to economic aid during the post-war reconstruction of Czechoslovakia. The objective is to gain deeper insights into the complexities of post-war European reconstruction, the role of humanitarian aid, and the interplay between politics, economics, and public sentiment during the early years of the Cold War.