Diplomatic lobbying and foreign economic policy: Evidence from the Trump presidency

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Abstract

Governments often try to lobby (influence) other governments with pecuniary transfers. Might seemingly altruistic acts, such as the exchange of diplomatic gifts, also comprise a form of lobbying? I leverage the unique setting of Donald Trump's presidency to study this possibility. Drawing on the universe of diplomatic gifts given to prominent U.S. government officials, I adopt a revealed preferences approach to show that foreign actors (donors) tended to give Donald Trump more highly valued gifts compared to other government officials. During Trump's presidency, the number of gift donors shrank by 75 percent, shifting to countries that tended to be more affluent and less democratic. This reduction in donors may have subsequently weakened the ability of (developing) countries to influence U.S. bilateral aid disbursements during the Trump presidency. These findings suggest Trump's presidency may have distorted lobbying activity by foreign actors.

Keywords: political economy, foreign aid, lobbying, diplomacy, Donald Trump

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Lobbying can often distort a variety of public policies, for example by influencing government regulations, procurement decisions, and foreign policies (e.g., Stigler 1971, Grossman and Helpman 1994, Pevehouse and Vabulas 2019, You 2023, Lee 2024). These lobbying attempts may emanate from a variety of actors, including firms, unions, special interest groups, and wealthy individuals. In some instances, governments may also try to *directly* influence other governments, especially those in developing countries, through for example, disbursements of foreign aid and clandestine operations (e.g., Kuziemko and Werker 2006, Berger et al. 2014). Yet to date, studies probing whether foreign governments can also successfully (directly) influence governments in developed countries remains scant.[1]

In this paper, I introduce a new form of lobbying to study patterns of foreign influence and its possible effects on U.S. foreign economic policies and leverage the Trump presidency as a quasi-natural experiment to draw causal inferences. The Trump presidency offers a unique setting to probe lobbying attempts by foreign governments as a recurring concern during his presidency was whether Donald Trump was unduly swayed by "corrupting foreign influences."[2] This worry stemmed in part from the perception that Donald Trump extended his "transactional" approach from his business career to politics (Bernstein 2020). Furthermore, the nationalist underpinning of his "America First" policies may have led President Trump to view lobbying efforts as a signal of a foreign government's importance for him and/or the United States.[3] These aspects of Trump's presidency prompt two questions. First, if President Trump was perceived to be susceptible to lobbying (at least more so relative to his predecessors), did foreign actors engage differently with him compared to other Presidents? Second, did these lobbying efforts confer any benefits to gift-giving governments?

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[1] Recently, some scholarship has probed how foreign actors (e.g., firms, governments) may use *indirect* attempts (e.g., via intermediaries in the "target" country). For example, in the U.S. context, this could include a foreign government hiring (U.S. based) lobbyists to influence U.S. officials (Pevehouse and Vabulas 2019, You 2023) or multinational corporations funneling their lobbying expenditures through their U.S. subsidiaries (Lee 2024).

[2] The possibility of quid pro quo exchanges prompted various legal challenges on whether Trump violated the (foreign) emoluments clause in the U.S. Constitution (Eisen et al. 2016) and underlay investigations into inappropriate meddling by foreign governments, notably Russia (Mueller 2019).

[3] While the transactional approach is plausibly unique to Donald Trump's character (Bernstein 2020), Trump's nationalist perspective may be applicable to other populist leaders, especially on the political right (Eichengreen 2018, Bolle and Zettelmeyer 2019). Notably, for Donald Trump, the transactional and nationalist perspectives may be mutually reinforcing.

To answer these questions, I employ a revealed preferences approach.[4] I compile an original data set of all diplomatic gifts given to U.S. Presidents and other important U.S. government officials (e.g., Vice Presidents, Secretary of States, Senators) to show that foreign actors ("donors") gave Donald Trump more highly valued gifts compared to other prominent public officials.[5] Controlling for country and year fixed effects, gifts to Donald Trump tended to be around 25 to 50 percent (depending on the specification) more valuable compared to gifts received gifts received by other Presidents and government officials. When the reference group is restricted to other Presidents only, the "Trump effect" declines in magnitude to about 13 percent, but remains statistically significant. Moreover, the Trump effect seems to be specific to Donald Trump. Other prominent officials during the Trump administration, such as Vice President Pence and Secretaries of State Tillerson and Pompeo did not receive more valuable gifts compared to these officials in prior administrations (e.g., Vice President Biden, Secretaries of State Clinton and Shultz).

The Trump effect is robust. It holds across alternate samples, such as those that remove the top and bottom decile of gift valuations and omit gifts from countries with a culture of generosity (e.g., Arab countries – see Bakeer 2023). The Trump effect holds across alternate specifications, including those that control for time trends that vary by the level of per capita income of the gift donor, across each individual donor (i.e., a linear time trend interacted with a fixed effect for each donor country) and its region. Accounting for these time trends allays concerns that the Trump effect may be spurious, possibly proxying for an underlying (upward) trend in gift valuations over time.

Diplomatic gifts, of course, are not given exogenously. A variety of factors can influence the type and value of a gift given by a foreign government (see section 2 for a discussion). I employ

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[4] This approach has been used in other settings. For instance, Fisman and Miguel (2007) use a revealed preferences approach to study corruption among diplomats at the United Nations.

[5] Valuations of diplomatic gifts are based on objective criteria by a non-partisan, independent organization (National Archives 2007). An alternative strategy could entail studying the spending patterns of foreign officials at Trump businesses. Unfortunately, comprehensive data of this sort is unavailable, even via extensive litigation. For instance, the courts have stymied Congressional efforts of accessing records pertaining to Trump's hotel in Washington DC (Kruzel 2023). While a recent Congressional report documents some evidence of spending by foreign governments on Trump businesses, the account is incomplete (Committee on Oversight and Accountability 2024). In contrast, the approach in this paper uses the full universe of information on official gift-giving by foreign officials to a broad range of public officials in the United States and importantly allows one to draw inferences across Presidential administrations, across different types of government officials, and study possible effects on U.S. policies associated with gift-giving.

two strategies to mitigate these possible concerns. The first approach mimics a treatment on treated staggered difference-in-differences (DID) research design where I identify countries that gave to President Trump (see Table A1 for a list of these "Trump donors") and evaluate how *their* gift giving varies across *different* Presidents (i.e., the "staggered" treatment). Specifically, I interact whether a country is a Trump donor or not (the treated unit) with fixed effect for each President-recipient (the treatment), where the identifying assumption is the election of U.S. Presidents is exogenous to the (time-invariant) sample of Trump donor countries. A plot of these estimates reveal Trump donors gave more valuable gifts to President Trump relative to prior Presidents.

The second strategy complements the first by evaluating whether possible pre-treatment differences between the treatment (Trump donors) and the control group of countries (non-Trump donors) might bias the findings. Using an estimator developed by Arkhangelsky et al. (2021), I construct a synthetic control that reweights units in the control group to closely align (match) patterns of diplomatic gift-giving in the treated group (prior to the treatment, i.e., Trump's presidency) and estimate a DID regression. Reassuringly, the results from this exercise corroborate the paper's main finding.

As to a possible channel, Trump's ascendency to the presidency seemingly augmented the composition of gift giving countries (donors). During the Trump presidency, the number of donors shrank by 75 percent, shifting to gifts from richer and less democratic and politically aligned countries. As I argue in section 3.2, this finding is consistent with models of vote-buying (e.g., Dixit and Londegran 1996). I then probe how this transition to a smaller pool of gift-donors may have affected U.S. foreign policy.

Leveraging the shift in the composition of gift donors to Trump (relative to prior Presidents), I probe the paper's second question: whether gift-giving confers any benefits to gift donors. Inspired by the finding that foreign aid may be associated with policy concessions (e.g., Kuziemko and Werker 2006, Vreeland and Dreher 2014), I study how the allocation of U.S. bilateral aid may have changed to countries that did *not* give gifts to Trump during his presidency ("non-Trump countries"). I examine U.S. aid outlays across all Presidential administrations since 1978 and present two sets of results. I first establish an association between U.S. aid disbursements and foreign gift giving: namely, governments that give more valuable Presidential gifts (at the aggregate level) tend to receive greater amounts of U.S. foreign aid. This association is strongest among the set of foreign governments that did not give any gifts to President Trump (i.e., non-

Trump donors). This suggests that governments from non-Trump countries may not have been able to lobby President Trump for foreign aid (via gift giving).

To evaluate this conjecture with a plausible causal interpretation, I employ a Bartik-style shift-share identification strategy (Goldsmith-Pinkham et al. 2020) to show that that *non-Trump* countries who tended to give more valuable gifts to presidents *prior* to the Trump presidency experienced a statistically significant *decline* in U.S. foreign aid *during* the Trump presidency.[6] These two findings suggest the inability of non-Trump countries to exchange gifts with President Trump may have weakened their ability to influence (lobby for) U.S. aid disbursements during Trump's presidency. I then probe whether this is indicative of gifts serving as a possible bribe or signal from the donor government. Using information on foreign policy alignment, the analysis points to potential signaling.

By providing evidence that foreign actors tended to give President Trump more valuable gifts, this paper contributes to on-going public policy debates, particularly Justice Department and Congressional investigations, into (undue) foreign influence during the Trump presidency (Mueller 2019, Committee on Oversight and Accountability 2024). Notably, this paper provides, to the best of my knowledge, the first econometric study of possible lobbying attempts by a large number of foreign governments that permits comparisons across different U.S. Presidents with an eye to uncovering possible strategic gift giving. In doing so, this paper counters arguments by practitioners that diplomatic gifts reflect diplomatic protocol and signal friendship (Brummell 2021). Rather, the paper's results align with the perspectives of the framers of the U.S. Constitution who recognized that gift giving could influence public officials (Teachout 2014). In other contexts, scholars have documented how diplomatic gifts might influence multilateral negotiations (Gray and Potter 2020) and, more generally, how diplomats may use their station to garner perks (Poulsen and Aisbett 2016). Finally, this paper ties to an expansive literature on the influence of money in U.S. politics (e.g., for an overview see Hrebenar and Morgan 2009, Kim 2017) with recent studies honing on lobbying efforts by foreign actors (e.g., Pevehouse and Vabulas 2019, You 2023, Lee 2024).

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[6] Goldman-Pinkham et al. (2020) describe "how, when, and where" shift-share research designs can be employed to draw causal inferences.

2 Theory

2.1 Diplomatic gifts

For centuries, it has been customary for foreign officials to give gifts when they meet. According to practitioners, gift giving is *not* sought to unduly influence the recipients. Rather, and in the specific case of gifts to U.S. Presidents, Brummell (2021) identifies seven strategies: showing the culture of the gifting country; highlighting the bilateral relationship; praising U.S. culture and values; praising or appealing to the interests of the President; offering a nice gift; impressing through a lavish gift and supporting the luxury exports of the gift country. Several of these strategies (e.g., highlighting the bilateral relationship, praising U.S. values, appealing to the interests of the President) emphasize the potential signaling value of diplomatic gifts (Gray and Potter 2020, Malis and Smith 2021). That is, the act of gift giving and possibly, the gift's (perceived) monetary value expresses how much the donor official/government appreciates either the specific individual recipient and/or recipient government. For the former, as I describe shortly in the specific context of President Trump (see section 2.3), the strength of signal may depend on the (perceived) monetary value of the gift, as well as how the recipient interprets this signal.

This signaling perspective of diplomatic gift-giving, however, is at odds with those of the framers of the U.S. Constitution who viewed foreign gifts as a potential source of corruption. Cognizant of this concern, the framers wrote the Emoluments Clause of the U.S. Constitution which states that 'no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.' According to Teachout (2014) the clause sought to establish a structure to prevent corruption: in embracing all gifts, it does not require corrupt intent. The clause changed the nature of diplomatic gifts from a personal transaction to a regulated one.

Today, instead of Congress granting consent every time a government official receives a gift they would like to keep from a foreign state, the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act of 1966 and subsequent amendment stipulates how the Emoluments Clause is given effect. This legislation allows officials, including the President, to accept and retain gifts of a 'minimal value' (e.g., the statutory threshold of $375 in 2014). A gift exceeding this minimal value may be accepted by the official if refusal would cause offence or embarrassment, or otherwise harm U.S. foreign relations.[7] In this instance, the gift is accepted on behalf of the US government and deposited with the

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[7] In the data, not a single gift was refused.

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). And upon leaving public office, these gifts typically become part of that President's Library and Museum collection.

2.2 Strategic gift-giving

2.2.1 The gift donor

In writing the Emoluments Clause, the framer's concern raises the possibility (threat) that donors may give gifts strategically, possibly as a means to influence (buy) the recipient's policies.[8] Viewed in this manner, models of vote-buying may be informative (Hicken 2011). For instance, Dixit and Londegran (1996) develop a parsimonious and flexible model in which actors (e.g., politicians, diplomats) with greater financial resources and/or operate in environments with lax constraints regarding bribery are more likely to disburse funds (gifts) to garner support from the recipient (e.g., voter, diplomatic gift recipient). Notably, the model identifies how "affinity" between the donor and recipient can affect the size of the transfer and who receives it: transfers tend to target and be larger in value to recipients who are *less* ideologically aligned with the donor.[9] The model generates important insights. For instance, the marginal utility of vote-buying declines with the income of the voter: all else equal, a politician must offer a greater financial transfer to buy the support of a more affluent voter. The model also predicts that politicians and voters who are more aligned ideologically (e.g., both lean to the political left) permits the politician to offer a lower transfer to buy support relative to a non-aligned voter.

In the foreign policy arena, these predictions offer a lens to study which countries might choose to give gifts.[10] Specifically, more affluent and less democratic countries (where bribery may be more prevalent in their domestic politics) may give more valuable gifts. It is also plausible that a gift's value may vary across a gift giver's affinity with the United States. For example, U.S. military allies may give *less* valuable gifts.[11]

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[8] Foreign leaders may engage in diplomatic exchange (which may include gift exchanges) as a means to buttress their prospects of political survival at home (Malis and Smith 2021). This alternative perspective is not mutually exclusive to the gift-for-policy (vote-buying) argument described below.

[9] In their model, a parameter (θ) captures a recipient's (inherent) disutility for the donor. A higher value of θ implies more disutility, thus requiring a donor to offer a higher valued transfer to "buy" the recipient's support.

[10] For an application in international relations (and specifically, bilateral aid), see Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2009). Their model is similar to Dixit and Londegran (1996).

[11] These conjectures are used to evaluate possible channels in sections 5 and 6.2.

2.2.2 The gift recipient

On the demand side, whether diplomatic gift giving might influence policy is also likely to depend on how receptive the public official is to these lobbying attempts. This could depend on contextual features of the lobbying market, such as the stringency of campaign finance laws and/or the permissiveness of quid pro quo exchanges in day-to-day interactions between public officials and private actors (e.g., firms, co-ethnics). It could also depend on characteristics of the *specific* public official. On this dimension, Donald Trump seemingly embraced quid pro quo exchanges as an important aspect of governing. As a private citizen, Donald Trump viewed bribing public officials as a necessary part of sustaining his real estate business.[12] For instance, during a 2016 Republican primary debate, Donald Trump explained his rationale for giving money to Democratic politicians: "I give to many people … Before this, before two months ago, I was a businessman. I give to everybody. When they call, I give. And do you know what? When I need something from them two years later, three years later, I call them, they are there for me."

Upon his ascendency to the presidency, this transactional view towards politics seemingly guided Donald Trump's governing approach (Bernstein 2020).[13] In foreign affairs, President Trump viewed diplomacy as one possible means to advance his own (personal) agenda, such as his infamous phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymr Zelenky to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter in exchange for U.S. military aid.[14] This attempt at a quid pro quo diplomacy underlay Trump's first impeachment. More generally, Trump's transactional nature in foreign affairs was wholly consistent with his America First agenda which sought a more limited role for the United States abroad, unless other governments – including military allies – were willing to compensate the United States (Siniver and Featherston 2020). For instance, in his interactions with leaders from NATO allies, President Trump publicly raised skepticism for the sustainability of alliance unless other governments increased their defense expenditures.

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[12] The extent of Donald Trump (and his family's corporation) use of quid pro transactions is widely known. Bernstein (2020), for instance, describes that: "Although large corporations have long used donations to sway officials, what distinguished the Trumps was their unusually transaction understanding of contributions as a straight-up fee for service. Multiple high-level New York elected officials told me that they were on the receiving end of both large donations and heated phone calls from Trump, demanding to know why he hadn't yet received a tax abatement, or a zoning change, or another favor."

[13] Foreign leaders recognized this approach. For instance, Bernstein (2020) notes that "with Trump in the White House, there are now numerous direct entry points to the U.S. executive across the globe, and world leaders have acknowledged – boasted, even – that they patronized the president's businesses."

[14] https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/25/politics/donald-trump-ukraine-transcript-call/index.html

As a right-leaning populist agenda, the ideological underpinnings of Trump's America First agenda may have reinforced the potential signaling and/or bribery perspectives of diplomatic gift-giving. Research points to a strong association between economic nationalism (e.g., trade protection, promotion of national champions, etc.) and political nationalism (Eatwell and Goodwin 2018, Eichengreen 2018). For instance, using party manifestos as a measure of revealed policy preference, Bolle and Zettelmeyer (2019) show that right-leaning populist governments – such as that of Donald Trump – are more likely be economically nationalist whereby "open" foreign economic policies are viewed as zero-sum and more valuable in quid pro quo exchanges between governments.

3 Empirical strategy

The discussion in the previous section suggests that foreign officials may give diplomatic gifts strategically and that President Trump may have been especially susceptible to these lobbying attempts. Below, I describe the data and empirical strategy to probe these conjectures.

3.1 Data

Following the passage of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, information on gifts received by U.S. government officials – including the President – has been reported annually in the Federal Register. This includes a brief description of the gift and its valuation in U.S. dollars, the date of the exchange, and the gift's donor and recipient. Importantly, archivists at U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) are non-partisan (career) bureaucrats whose appraisal of gifts are based on well-defined and objective criteria (National Archives 2007). Using every Federal Register from 1979 to 2019, I compile information on gifts given to the President, his family members, senior administration officials, and U.S. senators.[15]

In total, there are 6081 gifts to these individuals, with 2571 gifts (or 42.3 percent of the total sample) received by the President. U.S. Presidents typically receive gifts from foreign dignitaries (e.g., Prime Ministers, Presidents, Monarchs and their families, the Pope) during "working visits", on the sidelines of multilateral summits (e.g., G-8 or G-20 meetings), and during

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[15] Table A2 lists the number of gifts received by every individual in the data. Unfortunately, data on gifts received during Trump's final year in office (2020) is unavailable as his administration did not report this information ("*Trump Failed to Follow Law on Foreign Gifts, House Democrats Say",* New York Times, March 17, 2023).

more formal "state visits." In a very few instances, a U.S. President receives gifts from private citizens or an organization.[16]

Presidential gifts can vary significantly both in their value and type. These gifts range from a $4 (in 2015 dollars) for jar of fishing bait given by King of Morocco to President George W. Bush to a 26″x 22″ hand-made bronze sculpture valued at $522972 gifted by King of Saudi Arabia to President Obama. For the sample of Presidential gifts, the average value is $2456, with significant variation (standard deviation = $12184). Gifts received by President Trump ranged in value from $408 (a vase from Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc) to $13924 (a detailed piece of calligraphy from China's Xi Jinping), with an average value of $1850 (standard deviation = $2251).

I combine the data on diplomatic gifts with characteristics of the corresponding gift giving country (donor), such as its per capita GDP and its quality of democracy.[17] In the appendix, Table A1 reports the sample of donors and identifies those that gave gifts to Trump during this Presidency ("Trump donors") and those that gave gifts to other Presidents but *not* President ("non-Trump donors").[18] Table A2 lists all gift recipients and the number of received gifts. Table A3 reports relevant summary statistics.

Figure 1 summarizes the value of Presidential gifts along three dimensions: valuations across each President (Figure 1a), by year (Figure 1b), and cumulative gift amounts from each country (Figure 1c). The box plot in Figure 1a reveals a more compact distribution of gift valuations for President Trump compared to other Presidents (i.e., the interquartile range is comparatively smaller). Over time, Figure 1b shows the median value of gifts to be relatively stable from 1979 to 1999, with a slight decline in the 2000s and then a upward shift starting in 2009. At the donor country level, Figure 1c shows significant geographic variation where the most generous countries (shaded in orange and red) are from Europe, the Middle East, and also include several geopolitically important countries (e.g., Brazil, China, India, Russia). European countries

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[16] For instance, for the latter, the ASEAN organizing committee gifted President Barack Obama a basket of gifts including a leather brief case, black tea, paper hand fan.

[17] Economic data is from the World Development Indicators. "Democracy" is the polyarchy index from the V-DEM data set. This variable ranges from 0 (least democratic) to 1 (most democratic).

[18] Most donors are officials from countries. A few are officials from international organizations (e.g., NATO, European Commission), non-governmental organizations (e.g., Syrian-Orthodox Church of Turkey), or "special" individuals (e.g., Dalai Lama).

tend to be high income and advanced democracies while those in the Middle East are frequently natural resource rich dictatorships
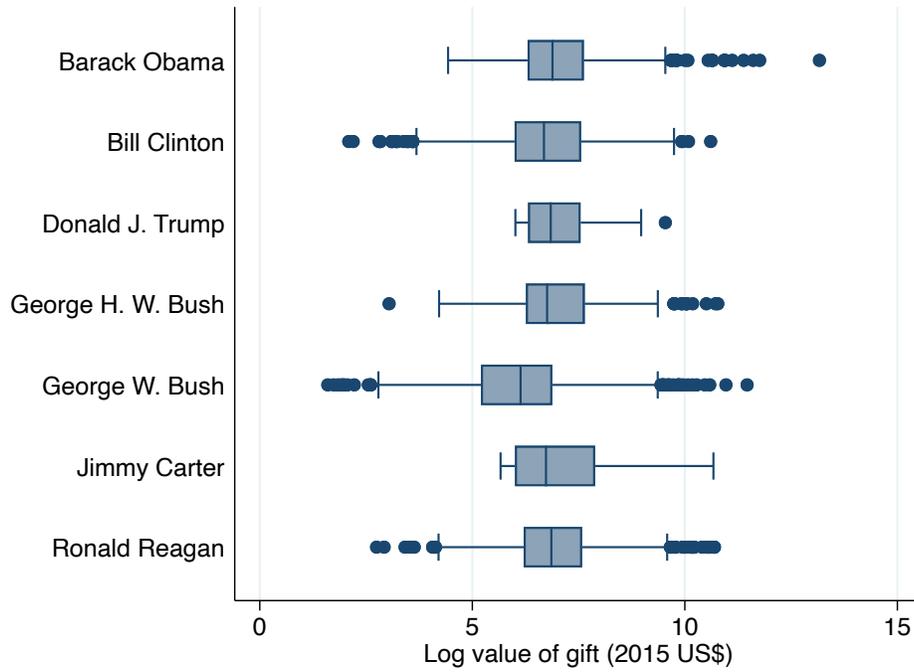
Figure 1a: *Box plot of gift valuations, by President*

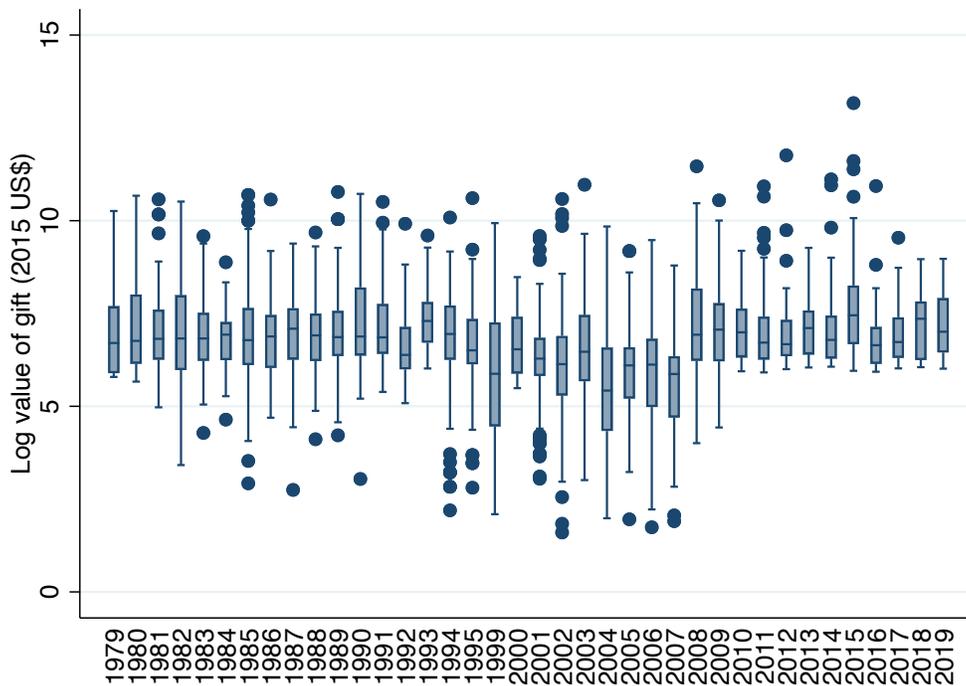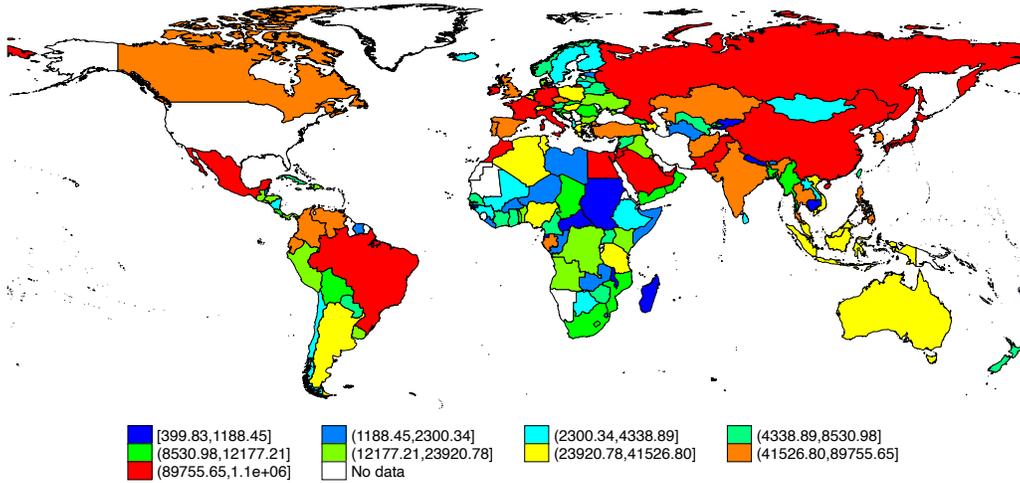**Figure 1b:** *Box plot of gifts values to Presidents, by year*

Figure 1c: *Cumulative value of gifts given to Presidents (2015 US$) from 1979-2019, by country*

▣ [399.83,1188.45]	▣ (1188.45,2300.34] ▣ (2300.34,4338.89] ▣ (4338.89,8530.98]
▣ (8530.98,12177.21]	▣ (12177.21,23920.78] ▣ (23920.78,41526.80] ▣ (41526.80,89755.65]
▣ (89755.65,1.1e+06]	☐ No data

3.2 Specification

To evaluate whether foreign officials gave President Trump more valuable gifts, I estimate variations of the following regression:

$$GIFT_{crt} = \alpha + \beta * TRUMP_{crt} + X_{ct}\theta + \eta_c + \eta_t + \varepsilon_{crt} \qquad (1)$$

where $GIFT_{crt}$ is the inflation adjusted value of a gift (in log units) given by an official from country c to recipient r in year t. $TRUMP_{crt}$ is equal to 1 if a gift is given to President Trump and zero otherwise. X_{ct} is a vector of time-varying characteristics for each donor country c, such as its log GDP per capita and quality of democracy. For instance, officials from richer countries are likely to have greater financial resources to give more valuable gifts. In contrast, officials from less democratic countries where financial exchanges between public officials are commonplace may give more valuable gifts.

Equation (1) also controls for a vector of country (η_c) and year (η_t) fixed effects. The former accounts for time-invariant characteristics of the donor country, such as its distance from the United States and possible cultural attributes of gift-giving; for instance, the royal custom of lavish gift giving in Arab societies (Bakeer 2023). The inclusion of year fixed effects accounts for common global shocks (e.g., economic downturns), possible changing global norms of gift-giving, any underlying trend in the value of gifts over time (e.g., gifts may increase in value over time since), and, importantly, partials out the effect of each year of a Presidential administration. Finally, to account for any arbitrary correlation in the residuals within the same recipient, the standard errors are conservatively clustered at the recipient level.

In equation (1), β is the coefficient of interest: it measures whether President Trump received more (or less) valuable gifts relative to other recipients. If foreign officials tried to buy Trump, I expect β to be positive and statistically significant.

4 Results

4.1 President Trump receives more valuable gifts

Main results. Columns 1 and 2 in Table 1 show that President Trump tended to receive more valuable gifts relative to other recipients. In a sparse specification that only controls for country and year fixed effects, gifts to Trump were 0.48 log points greater in value than those to other recipients (column 1). Evaluated at the mean (log) value of all gifts, this coefficient estimate corresponds to a $443 more valuable gift to Trump.[19] Controlling for time-varying donor characteristics raises the "Trump effect" by about 13 percent to 0.55 log points (column 2). While richer donors are not necessarily associated with more valuable gifts (i.e., the effect is statistically indistinguishable from zero), less democratic donors seem to be. In column 3, the Trump effect remains robust when accounting for each type of recipient (e.g., President, First Lady, Vice President, Secretary of State, U.S. Senator).

To allay concerns that the Trump effect may proxy for an underlying (upward) trend in the valuation of gifts by (richer) donors over time, column 4 controls for a linear year trend interacted with income quartiles (associated with gift donors). The Trump effect holds in this specification, as well as several others that control for country-specific time trends and those that vary by the donor country's geographic region (continent), regime type (democracy or not), and military alliance status with United States (each interacted with a year trend). These results are reported in Table B1.

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[19] At the mean log value of gifts (=6.57), this estimate is based on the following calculation: e^(6.57+0.483))-e^(6.57) = 442.59

Table 1: *President Trump receives more valuable gifts*

	Log value of gifts (2015 US$)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Donald Trump	0.483	0.545	0.275	0.271	0.277
	(0.103)***	(0.110)***	(0.136)**	(0.136)**	(0.136)**
Log GDP per capita		-0.109	-0.105	-0.111	-0.111
		(0.089)	(0.084)	(0.071)	(0.071)
Democracy		-0.707	-0.752	-0.739	-0.749
		(0.221)***	(0.218)***	(0.231)***	(0.232)***
State visit					0.109
					(0.082)
Constant	6.639	8.038	8.012	8.121	8.136
	(0.301)***	(0.836)***	(0.812)***	(0.737)***	(0.742)***
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Recipient type FE			Yes	Yes	Yes
Income quartile FE x Year				Yes	Yes
Number of gifts	6081	5465	5465	5465	5465
R-squared	0.17	0.16	0.2	0.2	0.2

Notes: Estimation via OLS. Robust standard errors, clustered by recipient reported in parentheses. *, **, *** = significant at 10, 5, and 1 percent respectively. President Trump is equal to 1 if Donald Trump is the recipient of a gift and zero for other recipients. Log GDP per capita is measured in 2015 US dollars. Democracy is the "polyarchy" measure from the Varieties of Democracy Dataset and lies on a [0,1] scale. Column 4 includes a fixed effect for the income quartile of a donor country interacted with a linear year trend.

It is also plausible that gift valuations might differ depending on the type of diplomatic exchange (context). For instance, Malis and Smith (2021) argue that diplomatic communications during formal "state visits" may be more valuable to foreign leaders. If this is the case, leaders may give Presidents more valuable gifts during state visits (relative to other types of meetings). Empirically, this suggests that failing to account for these visits in equation (1) may comprise omitted variable bias. To address this concern, I control for whether a gift was given during a state visit (column 5). In this specification, the coefficient on state visits is positive but not statistically significant, while notably the Trump effect remains statistically significant and similar in magnitude to the most conservative estimates in columns 4 and 5.

Robustness. The Trump effect remains robust in specifications that also control for whether the gift is personalized (e.g., gifts that are a portrait or bust of the president) and several measures of donor foreign policy alignment and salience (see Table B2). These specifications reveal that personalized gifts tend to be more valuable relative to non-personalized gifts. Moreover, donors who are not U.S. military allies and whose votes in the United Nations General Assembly are "farther" from the United States tend to give more valuable presidential gifts. The Trump effect is also robust across alternate samples. This includes limiting the analysis to non-personalized gifts, a 90/10 trim which removes the top and bottom decile of gift valuations (to address concerns with possible outliers) and specifications that omit gifts from U.S. allies as well as Middle East countries (where for cultural reasons, foreign officials tend to give very expensive gifts). These results are reported in Table B3.

4.2 Specific administration officials

4.2.1 Presidents

The Trump effect remains robust in specifications that limit the sample to presidential gifts, which arguably represents a more "apples to apples" comparison (results reported in Table 2, columns 1 and 2). For this sample of presidential gifts, the Trump effect is quite robust: holding across specifications with additional controls (e.g., whether the gift is personalized), alternate samples (e.g. a 90/10, trims of outliers, exclude allies and Middle Eastern countries), and controlling for a variety of time trends (e.g., country fixed effects interacted with a linear time trend). These results are reported in Tables B4-B6.

I further distinguish the Trump effect in relation to each prior president by controlling for a fixed effect for a gift given to each president (Table 2, column 2). The coefficients for these fixed effects are informative.[20] First, several of these fixed effects are statistically significant, suggesting that donors may give gifts strategically across U.S. presidents. Second, these effects are smaller in magnitude relative to the Trump effect, which increases in magnitude relative to the estimates in Table 1 (by 70 percent to 0.39) and remains robust, although less precisely estimated.

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[20] The estimated effects are relative to those in the Reagan administration (the omitted fixed effect).

Table 2: *The Trump effect in comparison to other government officials*

	Log value of gift (2015 US$) to …				
Sample of gift recipients:	President	President	Vice Pres.	Sec. of State	Senators
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Trump administration	0.228	0.392	-0.103	-0.235	0.497
	(0.052)***	(0.172)*	(0.270)	(0.070)***	(0.501)
Obama administration		0.163			
		(0.137)			
GW Bush administration		0.322			
		(0.126)**			
Clinton administration		-0.111			
		(0.064)			
GHW Bush administration		-0.174			
		(0.065)**			
Carter administration		0.022			
		(0.119)			
Log GDP per capita	-0.047	-0.047	0.251	0.129	-0.31
	(0.188)	(0.188)	(0.163)	(0.221)	(0.239)
Democracy	-0.762	-0.762	-0.945	-0.596	-1
	(0.321)*	(0.321)*	(0.722)	(0.320)*	(1.249)
Constant	7.836	7.672	5.513	6.016	8.511
	(1.814)***	(1.683)***	(1.673)**	(2.042)**	(2.118)***
Number of gifts	2277	2277	491	855	533
Number of recipients	7	7	7	13	139
R-squared	0.24	0.24	0.36	0.4	0.42

Notes: Estimation via OLS. Robust standard errors, clustered by recipient reported in parentheses. *, **, *** = significant at 10, 5, and 1 percent respectively. Each specification includes country and year fixed effects. Log GDP per capita is measured in 2015 US dollars. Democracy is the "polyarchy" measure from the Varieties of Democracy Dataset and lies on a [0,1] scale. Trump administration is equal to 1 if the recipient is a member of the Trump administration and zero otherwise. In columns 1 and 2, Trump administration is equal to 1 if the recipient is President Trump and zero for other Presidents. In column 3, Trump administration is equal to 1 if the recipient is Vice President Mike Pence and zero for other Vice Presidents. In column 4, Trump administration is equal to 1 if the recipient is Secretary State Rex Tillerson or Mike Pompeo. In column 5, Trump administration is equal to 1 if the recipient was a US Senator during the Trump presidency. In column 2, the Reagan administration is the omitted fixed effect.

4.2.2 Other prominent government officials

If foreign officials sought to influence Trump during his presidency with expensive gifts, it is plausible that gifts to other key officials in his administration might be greater in value relative to these officials in prior presidential administrations. To evaluate this conjecture, I re-estimate

equation (1) across samples of gifts given to each Vice President (e.g., Dan Quayle, Al Gore, Mike Pence) and Secretary of State (e.g., George Schulz, Hillary Clinton, Rex Tillerson, Mike Pompeo). The results in columns 3 and 4 suggest that gifts given to these officials during the Trump administration were *not* more valuable relative to gifts given to these officials in prior administrations. For gifts given to vice presidents (column 3), the effect is statistically indistinguishable from zero.

Interestingly, the coefficient in column 4 suggests that gifts to President Trump's Secretaries of States were less valuable relative to prior ones. Moreover, the negative coefficient suggests possible *substitutability*: that is, foreign officials may have perceived Trump's Secretary of States to be less influential and, instead substituted by offering more valuable gifts to President Trump. This interpretation corroborates anecdotal accounts of the reduced importance of the Secretary of State during the Trump presidency (Jervis 2017). Finally, other important foreign policy makers, such as U.S. Senators on the Foreign Relations Committee did not receive more valuable gifts during the Trump administration (column 5). Together, the non-positive/null effects in columns 3-5 also suggest that during Trump's presidency, foreign officials sought to *only* lobby President Trump (relative to equivalent U.S. government officials from prior years).

4.3 Endogenous selection

4.3.1 Treatment-on-treated specification

The possibility of strategic gift-giving (endogenous selection) may bias the estimated Trump effect in Tables 1 and 2. In particular, the group of countries that gave gifts to President Trump ("Trump donors") may be systematically different from those that do not ("non-Trump donors").[21] A strategy to mitigate this selection problem is to study the gift-giving behavior of Trump donor countries by tracing the value of their gifts across *different* Presidential administrations. Such an approach can be estimated by interacting a dummy variable equal to 1 for a Trump donor (and zero for a non-Trump donor) with a fixed effect for each President recipient. This empirical strategy mimics a treatment on treated difference-in-differences research design and may be interpreted causally (Angrist and Pischke 2009). Specifically, Trump donor countries are the treated units and a (plausibly exogenous) fixed effect for each President is the treatment. The identifying assumption is the election of US Presidents is exogenous to the (time-

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[21] Table A1 identifies Trump and non-Trump countries.

invariant and endogenous) sample of Trump donor countries.[22] Accordingly, I amend equation (1) and estimate:

$$GIFT_{cpt} = \alpha + \kappa_p(TRUMP\ DONOR_c \times PRESIDENT_p) + X_{ct}\theta + \eta_c + \eta_t + \varepsilon_{cpt} \qquad (2)$$

In equation (2), *TRUMP DONOR_c* is equal to 1 for those countries that gave to President Trump and zero otherwise. For example, many West European countries and those in the Persian Gulf are Trump donors, whereas many (small and poor) countries in Africa, South America, and Asia are not Trump donors (see Table A1 for the full list). This variable is interacted with an indicator variable equal to 1 for the President receiving that gift and zero otherwise. Thus, κ_p is a vector of coefficients that evaluates the value of gifts given by Trump donor countries to each individual President (p).[23] If foreign officials sought to buy Trump (in relation to prior Presidents), I expect $\kappa_{TRUMP} > 0$ and $\kappa_{TRUMP} > \kappa_{NOT\ TRUMP}$.

Figure 2 plots the vector of interaction terms, κ_p. There are two substantively important inferences. First, gifts received by President Trump tend to be more valuable relative to those received by other presidents. This effect is statistically significant. Second, while the 95 percent confidence interval associated with Trump donor x Trump overlaps with a few previous presidents (e.g., Obama, GW Bush, and Clinton – see Figure 2 for a visual inspection), a group *F*-test reveals the Trump effect to be statistically significant different the coefficient estimates associated with all previous Presidents (*F*-stat=61.50, p-value<0.00001), including the grouping of Barack Obama, George W. Bush, and Bill Clinton (*F*-stat=31.83, p-value=0.0004).

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[22] This empirical approach can be interpreted causally provided the regression specification controls for the plausibly endogenous component of the interaction term, i.e., whether a country is a Trump donor (Bun and Harrison 2019). In equation (2), the country fixed effect (η_c) accounts for this potentially endogenous component.

[23] In equation (2), country and year fixed effects account for the constituent terms of the interaction term. For instance, since Trump donor varies across countries but is time-invariant, the vector of country fixed effects account for these "main" country effects.

Figure 2: *Value of presidential gifts (2015 US$, log) from Trump donors across Presidents*
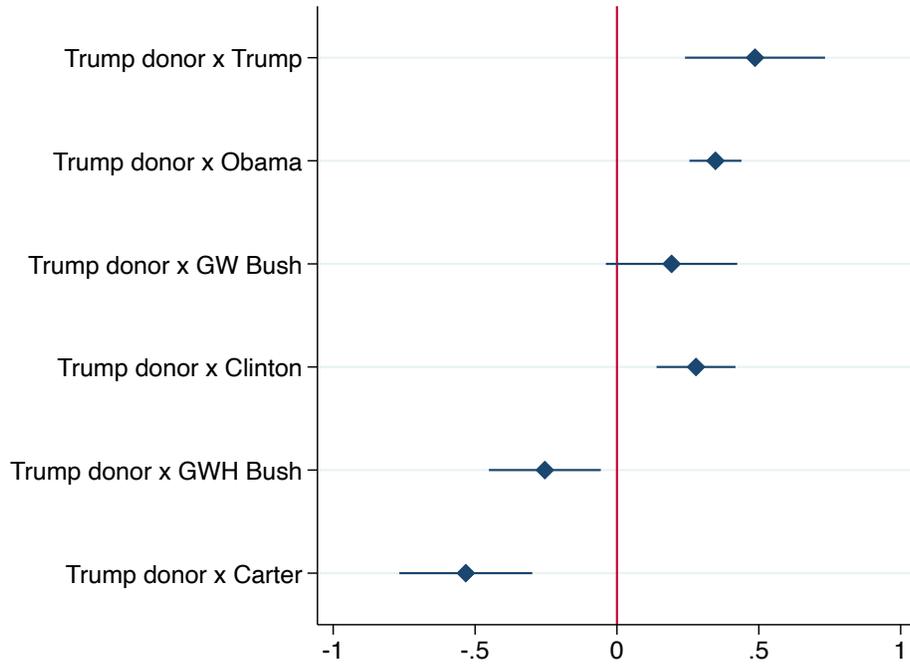
Notes: Robust standard errors, clustered at the president level. Coefficients for per capita GDP and level of democracy of the donor country, country and year fixed effects are not reported. The excluded category is the presidency of Ronald Reagan.

4.3.2 Estimates with synthetic difference-in-differences

Another concern is whether possible pre-treatment differences between the treatment (Trump donors) and the control group of countries (non-Trump donors) might bias the main findings. One strategy to mitigate this concern is to construct a synthetic control that reweights units in the control group to closely align (match) patterns of diplomatic gift-giving in the treated group (prior to the treatment, i.e., Trump's presidency) and estimate a difference-in-differences (DID) regression. To do so, I employ the synthetic difference-in-differences (SDID) estimator developed by Arkhangelsky et al. (2021) with data appropriately aggregated to the donor country-year level.

Accordingly, I modify equation (1) and estimate variations of the following:

$$GIFT_{ct} = \alpha + \beta*(TRUMP\ DONOR_c \times TRUMP\ PRESIDENCY_t) + X_{ct}\theta + \eta_c + \eta_t + \varepsilon_{ct} \qquad (3)$$

where $GIFT_{ct}$ is the aggregate value of all gifts given to a president by representatives from country c every calendar year (t). $TRUMP\ DONOR_c$ is a dummy variable equal to 1 if country c gave a

gift to President Trump and zero otherwise (see Table A1 for list of Trump donor countries). This variable varies across countries but not over time. *TRUMP PRESIDENCY$_t$* is equal to 1 for the years of the Trump presidency and zero otherwise. X_{ct} captures several time-varying country characteristics, such as log GDP per capita, while η_c and η_t are vectors of country and year fixed effects respectively. In equation (3), the variable of interest is the interaction term which compares differences in the aggregate value of presidential gifts between Trump and non-Trump donors during the Trump presidency compared to the prior period.

The SDID estimator is appropriate since the treatment-on-treated research design uses just one treatment administered in one time period (i.e., during the Trump presidency). The SDID approach combines the attractive features of synthetic controls (SC) and difference-in-differences (DID). As Arkhangelsky et al. (2021, 4089) state: "Like SC, our method reweights and matches pre-exposure trends to weaken the reliance on parallel trend like assumptions. Like DID, our method is invariant to additive unit-level shifts and allows for valid large-panel inference." Whereas conventional SC approaches reweight units (i.e., countries) only, the SDID approach reweights units on the temporal dimension as well. This improves the overall fit and precision (efficiency) of the DID estimates. Specifically, "unit weights are designed so that the average outcome for the treated units is approximately parallel to the weighted average for control units. Time weights are designed so that the average posttreatment outcome for each of the control units differs by a constant from the weighted average of the pretreatment outcomes for the same control units. Together, these weights make the DID strategy more plausible" (Arkhangelsky et al. 2021, 4090).

Table 3: *Difference-in-differences estimates*

	Log total value of presidential gift (2015 US$)		
Estimator:	OLS	OLS	SDID
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Trump donor x Trump presidency	1.802	1.825	3.254
	(0.250)***	(0.250)***	(0.268)***
Log GDP per capita		0.326	
		(0.123)***	
Ally		-0.217	
		(0.446)	
Democracy		0.87	
		(0.289)***	
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Robust standard errors, clustered by country in parentheses. Data is balanced at the country-year level. Model in column (3) is estimated using SDID developed by Arkhangelsky et al. 2021. *N*=6408. All specifications include country and year fixed effects. These coefficients and a constant are not reported.

Figure 3: *Value of Presidential gifts, Trump donors vs. non-Trump synthetic control*
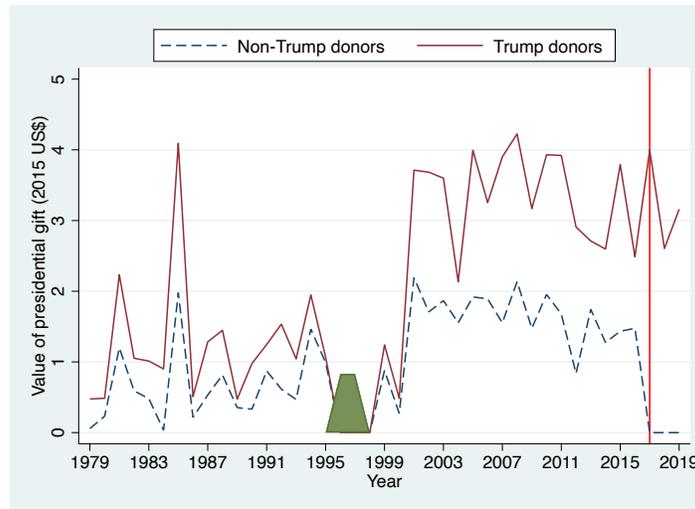
Notes: Figure plots the trajectory of annual (aggregate) value of Presidential gifts (2015 US$) between Trump donors and synthetic control of non-Trump donors. The plot accounts for country and year effects corresponding to column 3 in Table 3.

Table 3 presents the main DID results. Across all the specifications, the estimated treatment effect is positive and statistically significant, which suggests that Trump donors gave more valuable presidential gifts (in aggregate) to President Trump relative to their gift giving to prior

Presidents. Columns 1 and 2 report conventional DID estimate (i.e., without the SDID estimator). In a sparse specification, the DID estimate suggests the total value of Presidential gifts from Trump donors was about 1.802 log points higher relative to their gifts to prior Presidents (column 1). Controlling for several country characteristics increases this DID effect (column 2). Focusing on the specification with the conservative effect, column 3 reports the DID effect using the SDID estimator. This estimator which reweights the data (to better align with pre-treatment differences between the treated and control group of countries) heightens the DID coefficient estimate to 3.25. Figure 3 plots the pattern of presidential gift-giving between Trump donors and the synthetic control of non-Trump corresponding to the specification in column 3. This figure suggests the larger DID coefficient estimate (relative to column 1) may stem from the decline in the value of Presidential gifts from non-Trump donors. As I discuss shortly in section 5.2, this may be due to how the Trump presidency augmented the lobbying market for gift-giving.

5 Evaluating channels

5.1 The characteristics of gift donors

The finding that President Trump received more valuable gifts relative to other public officials – especially, past presidents – suggests that diplomatic gift-giving could be a strategy to influence the recipient's behavior. As discussed in section 2.2, models of vote-buying can offer a framework to understand this lobbying activity. For instance, more affluent and less democratic countries may be more predisposed to give more valuable gifts to Trump. It is also plausible that a gift's value may vary across a gift giver's affinity with the United States, such as U.S. military allies, recipients of U.S. foreign aid, and countries with "closer" voting positions in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). To probe these possible channels, I compare the country characteristics associated with gifts given to President Trump relative to his predecessors.

Panel A in Table 4 shows that, on average, richer and less democratic donors tended to give more valuable gifts to Trump relative to his predecessors. For example, the typical Trump donor is a dictatorship since it's democracy score is less than 0.50, whereas under previous presidents, donors tended to more democratic. A greater proportion of gifts to Trump were given by non-allies (68 percent). Unsurprisingly since Trump donors tended to be more affluent, they

received less foreign aid. Across these characteristics, the difference in the group means is statistically significant (column 3a).[24]

Table 4: *Characteristics of the gift-giving market*

Panel A: Characteristics of gift donors			
	Average		
	Previous Presidents	Trump	Difference
	(1a)	(2a)	(3a)
Log GDP per capita (2015 US$)	8.99	9.46	0.48
	(1.32)	(1.25)	[0.08]***
Democracy	0.56	0.48	-0.08
	(0.30)	(0.32)	[0.02]***
US ally	0.46	0.32	-0.14
	(0.50)	(0.47)	[0.03]***
UNGA voting (distance)	2.53	2.48	-0.05
	(1.00)	(0.95)	[0.09]
Log US foreign aid (2015 US$)	8.65	6.65	-2
	(9.10)	(8.87)	[0.46]***

Panel B: Composition of gift valuations		
	Gifts per year	Hirschman-Herfindahl Index
	(1b)	(2b)
Previous Presidents	73.38	0.049
Donald J. Trump	25.33	0.056

Notes: In panel A, the standard deviation is reported in parentheses (under each mean value) in columns 1a and 2a. Column 3a reports the difference in means (i.e., column 2 – column 1) with the standard errors, clustered at the President reported in brackets. *, **, *** = significant at 10, 5, and 1 percent respectively. In panel B, the Hirschman-Herfindahl index is derived using gift valuations aggregated to the donor level to calculate market shares. Data on alliance status is from the Correlates of War Project. United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voting score measures the "distance" from the United States ideal point based on calculations from Bailey et al. (2017, updated through 2020).

Panel B in Table 4 provides an additional snapshot describing the composition of presidential gift giving. Relative to his predecessors, the number of gifts received by President Trump in any given year contracted by 65 percent, from 73.4 gifts per annum to 25.3 (column 1b).

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[24] Consistent with the inferences from Table 4, a probit regression reveals richer countries and less democratic regimes are more likely to be Trump donor. Results available upon request.

Furthermore, the gift-giving market seemingly became less competitive (column 2b). A derivation of the Hirschman-Herfindahl index – based on market shares calculated from donor-level aggregates of Presidential gift valuations - suggests that gift valuations became more concentrated during the Trump presidency relative to prior administrations (i.e., 0.056 versus 0.049).

5.2 Composition of gift donors

The prominence of more affluent and less democratic donors also seems to affect the distribution of gift valuations to President Trump, especially in comparison to donors that did not contribute to Trump (non-Trump donors). Figure 4 reveals significantly less variation in the distribution of gift valuations under President Trump. Two patterns are noteworthy.

First, for gifts to President Trump, the distribution is right skewed where half of the gifts exceed $939. In contrast, the distribution of gift valuations for President Trump's predecessors exhibits a more normal distribution where the top half of gifts exceed $701. The average valuation of gifts for Trump donors is $3092 compared to $1762 to non-Trump donors. This difference in valuation of $1330 is statistically significant (p-value<0.01).

Second, whereas gifts to prior Presidents ranged in value from $4 to $522972 (with 25 percent of those gifts valued under $400), Trump did not seem to receive many "cheap" gifts. During Trump's presidency, Nguyen Xuan Phuc (the Vietnamese President) gave the least expensive gift (a vase displaying the Statue of Liberty and Ha Long Bay), valued at $408. Indeed, since governments in higher income countries tend to give more expensive gifts, the truncated distribution of gifts received by Trump implies that many developing countries may not be able to influence him via gift giving (I explore a possible implication associated with this in the next section). For example, the typical Trump donor country has per capita GDP of $20,094 whereas it is $11,367 for a non-Trump donor. The difference of $8727 is statistically significant.[25]

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[25] This difference has a standard error (clustered at the President level) of 1307.74, with a corresponding p-value=0.001.

Figure 4: *Distribution of presidential gifts valuations (2015 US$, log units) under President Trump and his predecessors*
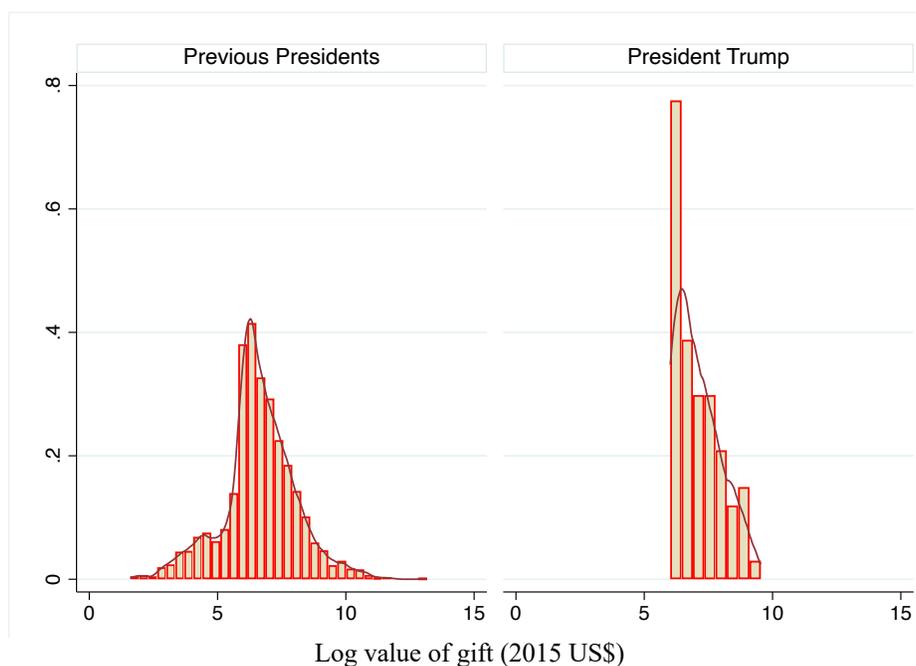
6 Influencing economic policy

6.1 Diplomatic gifts and U.S. foreign aid

As a potential form of lobbying, does giving more valuable diplomatic gifts confer benefits to foreign governments? To answer this question, I build on the findings in the previous section by investigating whether countries that were *unable* to give gifts to President (i.e., non-Trump countries) might have experienced a change in benefits from the United States during the Trump presidency. While probing this possibility can pose several empirical challenges (e.g., studying an unobservable counterfactual), existing studies focused on why countries disburse foreign aid may offer a strategy to make progress.

Several studies find that foreign aid donors, especially the U.S. government, strategically disburse aid to influence recipient government policies (Kuziemko and Werker 2006, Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2009, Vreeland and Dreher 2014). Inverting this aid-for-policy perspective suggests that aid receiving governments may give more expensive diplomatic gifts to persuade aid donors to disburse greater amounts of aid.[26] As discussed in section 2.1, diplomatic gifts could

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[26] Such persuasion can be viewed as form of lobbying.

influence U.S. aid by acting as a bribe and/or signaling appreciation and friendship with the United States (or possibly, the specific President).[27]

This conjecture may be applicable to this paper's empirical setting for at least two reasons. First, the President plays an important role in allocating aid. In the United States, every year the President proposes and negotiates a foreign aid budget with Congress (Lancaster 2000).[28] During this budgetary process, each Presidential administration enjoys considerable discretion in allocating funds, even if many of them are earmarked for specific purposes, such as education (U.S. Congress 2001). Second, as both a candidate in the Republican primary and subsequently as president, Donald Trump viewed foreign aid skeptically. Upon his ascendency to the presidency, Trump governed with an eye to reduce foreign aid whenever possible, especially to recipients which he described as "shithole" countries with little strategic value to the United States (Reed 2018, Mason 2020). Together, these reasons generate the following hypothesis: during the Trump presidency, countries that did not give a gift to President Trump – and plausibly lost some of their ability to influence U.S. policies – may have suffered sharper reductions in U.S. bilateral aid.

To evaluate this hypothesis, I aggregate the value of Presidential gifts to the country-year level and estimate the following Bartik-style (shift-share) specification:

$$AID_{ct} = \alpha + \beta \left(\overline{GIFT_{ct}} \times TRUMP_t \right) + \delta \overline{GIFT_{ct}} + X_{ct}\theta + \eta_t + \varepsilon_{cpt} \qquad (4)$$

In equation (4), AID_{ct} measures country c's total receipts of U.S. foreign aid in year t (in log units, 2015 US$). On the righthand side of equation (4), the shift-share variable interacts a country's average (annual) value of gifts given to U.S. presidents in the period *prior* to the Trump presidency ($\overline{GIFT_{ct}}$) with a dummy variable ($TRUMP_t$) equal to 1 during the years of the Trump presidency and zero for the period before.[29] X_{ct} captures several time-varying country characteristics that can affect the allocation of U.S. bilateral aid, such as a recipient country's per capita GDP, level of democracy, and security ties with the United States (Alesina and Dollar 2000). η_t is a vector of year fixed effects.

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[27] Figure A1 provides suggestive evidence of a *positive* association between Presidential gift-giving (prior to Donald Trump) and average annual outlays of U.S. foreign aid. While figure A1 is illustrative of a potential association, it does not establish a direction of causality. The results in Table 5 strive to untangle a causal relationship *from* more generous gift-giving *to* greater U.S aid outlays.

[28] The discretion enjoyed by the President means the United States can quickly change its allocation of bilateral aid, for example when a recipient country joins the United Nations Security Council (Kuziemko and Werker 2006).

[29] The former average $\overline{GIFT_{ct}}$ is the share variable which varies across countries and is time-invariant. The latter *(TRUMP_t)* is the shift variable, which varies across time but not across countries. In equation (3), the vector of year fixed effects accounts for the main effect associated with $TRUMP_t$ (associated with the interaction term).

Table 5: *Presidential gifts and outlays of U.S. bilateral foreign aid*

Sample of gift-giving countries:	Log US foreign aid (2015 US$)				
	All	Trump donors	Non-Trump donors		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
GIFTS x *TRUMP*	-0.727	-0.14	**-0.749**		-0.801
	(0.278)***	(0.667)	**(0.351)**		(0.355)**
Probability of receiving aid x *TRUMP*				**1.671**	
				(0.816)	
GIFTS x Non-ally					**2.606**
					(1.247)
GIFTS	0.29	-0.884	1.406		0.273
	(0.446)	(0.531)	(0.624)**		(1.066)
Probability of receiving aid				15.775	
				(0.975)***	
Non-ally	-1.772	-1.917	-1.038	-0.577	-3.478
	(0.792)**	(1.456)	(0.914)	(0.445)	(0.252)***
Log GDP per capita	-3.872	-4.477	-3.441	-0.556	-3.1
	(0.204)***	(0.428)***	(0.257)***	(0.234)**	(1.314)**
Democracy	-1.668	-0.481	-2.533	0.216	-2.432
	(1.268)	(1.663)	(1.683)	(1.097)	(1.599)
Constant	42.449	49.508	38.348	5.605	40.003
	(1.909)***	(4.609)***	(2.273)***	(2.578)**	(2.363)***
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No. observations	6060	1502	4558	4558	4558
No. countries	172	43	129	129	129
R-squared	0.53	0.56	0.51	0.66	0.52

Notes: Robust standard errors, clustered by country reported in parentheses. *, **, *** = significant at 10, 5, and 1 percent respectively. In column 2 the sample is restricted to countries that gave gifts to President Trump ('Trump donors'). In columns 3-6 the sample is restricted to countries that did not give any gifts to President Trump but may have given to other Presidents ('non-Trump donors'). "*GIFTS*" measures the average annual value of total gifts given to U.S. presidents (2015 US$, log units) in the period prior to the Trump presidency (1979-2016). "*TRUMP*" is equal to 1 for the years of the Trump presidency and zero otherwise

In equation (4) the variable of interest is $\overline{GIFT_{ct}}$ x $TRUMP_t$. This interaction term estimates how U.S. bilateral aid changed *during* the Trump presidency across (increasingly) more generous gifts donors (in the period prior to 2016) *relative* to the period *before* the Trump presidency. Thus, a negative and statistically significant coefficient on β implies that more generous gift-giving countries that *exited* the gift-giving (lobbying) market during the Trump presidency (i.e., non-Trump donors) experienced a decline in U.S. foreign aid during the Trump presidency.

Table 5 reports several specifications based on estimating equation (4). Column 1 shows that across the full sample of countries, more generous gift givers experienced a decline in U.S. aid receipts during the Trump presidency. The coefficient on the shift-share variable is negative and statistically significant (coefficient=-0.73, p-value=0.01). This estimated effect, however, seems to mask differential effects across Trump and non-Trump donors. For the sample of Trump donors, column 2 suggests their receipts of U.S. bilateral aid did not change significantly during the Trump presidency. While the effect on the shift-share variable is negative (=-0.14), suggesting a slight reduction in aid outlays among Trump gift donors, the coefficient is nevertheless statistically indistinguishable from zero. Furthermore, more generous donors (in the period prior to the Trump presidency) tended to receive less aid (coefficient= -0.89). This is unsurprising since Trump gift donors tend to be affluent (see Table 4) and thus less likely to receive (need) U.S. foreign aid in the first place. In contrast, for a sample of non-Trump gift-giving countries, column 3 shows that more generous gift donors tend to receive higher amounts of aid (coefficient = 1.41, p-value=0.03) and importantly, more generous non-Trump countries experienced a statistically significant *decline* in their aid receipts *during* the Trump presidency (coefficient= -0.75, p-value=0.04). This negative association supports the conjecture that the exit of gift-giving countries from the "lobbying market" during the Trump presidency seems to have reduced their ability to influence U.S. aid outlays during the Trump administration.

It is plausible, however, that the effects in column 3 may be spurious. In particular, non-Trump donors – countries who tend to be poor and thus more likely to receive (need) U.S. bilateral aid (see Table 4) – may have experienced a decline in U.S. aid writ large during the Trump presidency (e.g., because Donald Trump viewed these countries as not being important to U.S. interests). To discount this possibility, I examine aid patterns for countries that tended to receive *any* U.S. aid (in the years prior to the Trump presidency) during the Trump presidency. Using a shift-share design for a sample of non-Trump countries, column 4 shows that more frequent U.S.

aid recipients in the period before the Trump presidency (i.e., countries with a higher average probability of receiving any U.S. aid prior to 2017), *continued* to receive U.S. bilateral aid during the Trump presidency (coefficient = 1.671).[30] This finding coupled with the negative coefficient on the shift-share variable in column 3 suggests that the *absence* of non-Trump donors in the gift-giving market during the Trump presidency may have ruled out the gift-giving channel through which these non-Trump donors could have influenced their level of foreign aid receipts. That is, many gift-giving aid recipients (e.g., countries from Africa) may have lost their capacity to lobby for development assistance during the Trump presidency.

6.2 Bribery vs. signaling

This lower capacity to lobby by non-Trump countries could be indicative of either a reduced ability to "bribe" President Trump and/or to "signal" importance to him (as discussed in section 2.1). Regarding possibly bribery, two aspects of gift-giving in the U.S. context tends to discount this channel. First, by law, only gifts below a (low) value can be kept by the President.[31] Since 70 percent of Presidential gifts are valued above this threshold (~$450), most gifts are *not* kept by the President. Indeed, during his Presidential term, Donald Trump received only 9 gifts (equivalent to about 12 percent of his total number) that could be legally kept by him. Second, even *if* more valuable gifts could be kept by the President, the average value of gifts from non-Trump donors tended to be significantly smaller relative to those given by Trump donors (i.e., $1762 compared to $3092). Since a more valuable gift is likely to strengthen the potency of a bribe, gifts from non-Trump donors would presumably be less effective as a bribe.

In contrast, there is more compelling evidence pointing to the signaling channel. To evaluate this channel, I consider whether a government's strategic ties to the United States and its gift-giving might influence with its aid receipts. Presumably, a government that is strategically less aligned with the United States (e.g., countries who are not a U.S. military ally) might view giving more valuable gifts as a signal to strengthen its relationship with the United States (e.g., by expressing the gift-giving country's appreciation for the U.S). To probe this conjecture, I use information on military alliances to measure a non-Trump country's strategic tie with the United States. The results are reported in Table 5, column 5.

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[30] The coefficient estimates on the shift-share variable is positive – not negative – and statistically significant.
[31] Gifts exceeding this threshold (~$450) are deposited with the National Archives.

I use the Correlates of War database to identify whether a country is in a formal military alliance with the United States in a given year. For ease of interpretation, I create a dummy variable (*Non-ally$_{ct}$*) equal to 1 if a country (*c*) is not a military ally of the United States in year *t*, and zero otherwise. I then interact this with a country's average annual value of gifts given to U.S. Presidents in the period prior to the Trump presidency ($\overline{GIFT_{ct}}$). The coefficient estimates in column (5) are informative. First, U.S. foreign aid tends to be lower for non-allies (coefficient = -3.478); a finding consistent with prior research that strategically less important countries receive lower U.S. foreign aid disbursements (Alesina and Dollar 2000). Crucially, however, gift-giving seems to increasingly offset this negative association. The positive and statistically significant coefficient on the interaction term (coefficient = 2.606) implies that U.S. aid tends to be higher for more generous non-Trump countries that are *not* in a formal military alliance with the United States. This positive effect suggests that non-allies may give more valuable gifts to possibly signal the importance of the United States to them (as a means to elicit more U.S. foreign aid).

7 Conclusion

Foreign governments often strive to lobby (influence) other governments. In this paper, I provide evidence that the practice of diplomatic gift-giving may comprise a (new) form of lobbying. Using the universe of data on diplomatic gifts received by public officials in the United States and leveraging the especially transactional nature of Donald Trump, I adopt a revealed preferences approach to show that foreign actors gave President Trump more valuable gifts relative to other gift recipients.

Regarding a likely channel, the transactional nature of Trump seems to have augmented the composition of donors: officials from richer and less democratic countries (and their overlap, e.g., dictatorships from oil rich Persian Gulf countries) gave more highly valued gifts, while officials from poorer countries seemingly exited the gift-giving market. For the latter, this may have contributed to a reduction in U.S. bilateral aid to poorer countries during the Trump years; possibly because these aid recipients effectively exited the gift-giving market and were less thus less able to lobby Trump for greater aid.

The notion that seemingly altruistic acts may be strategic and serve to influence the recipient's policies aligns with donor motives in international development (e.g., Alesina and Dollar 2000, Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2009) and recent scholarship documenting the returns

to corporate philanthropy (Bertrand et al. 2022). This paper's introduction of a new measure of foreign lobbying using diplomatic gifts could be attractive to answer other questions. For example, one fruitful avenue could investigate whether diplomatic gifts influence other areas of economic policies, such as U.S. tariffs. Another avenue might explore why certain countries give more or less valuable gifts.

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APPENDIX A: DATA

Table A1: *Sample of Presidential gift donors*

Trump donors: Entities that gave gifts to President Trump and Other Presidents			
Afghanistan	Czech Republic	Kuwait	Russian Federation
Australia	Egypt	Malaysia	Saudi Arabia
Austria	France	Mongolia	Singapore
Bahamas	Germany	Nigeria	Switzerland
Bahrain	Holy See	Oman	Turkey
Brazil	India	Palestine/West Bank	Ukraine
Belgium	Iraq	Paraguay	United Arab Emirates
Bulgaria	Ireland	Peru	United Kingdom
Canada	Israel	Philippines	Uzbekistan
China	Israel Museum	Poland	Vietnam
Colombia	Italy	Qatar	West. Wall & Holy Sites
Cote d'Ivoire	Korea, Rep.	Romania	

Non-Trump donors: Entities that did not give gifts to President Trump			
Albania	Cyprus	Kurdistan	Russian-American Co.
Algeria	Dalai Lama	Kyrgyz Republic	Senegal
Angola	Denmark	Lao PDR	Slovak Republic
Argentina	Djibouti	Latvia	Slovenia
Armenia	Dominican Republic	Lebanon	Somalia
Arts Council of Ireland	Ecuador	Lesotho	South Africa
Azerbaijan	El Salvador	Liberia	South Sudan
Bangladesh	Equatorial Guinea	Libya	Spain
Barbados	Estonia	Lithuania	Sri Lanka
Bavaria	Eswatini	Luxembourg	St. Kitts and Nevis
Belarus	Ethiopia	Madagascar	St. Lucia
Belize	European Commission	Malawi	Sudan
Benin	Fiji	Maldives	Suriname
Bermuda	Finland	Mali	Sweden
Bethlehem	French Polynesia	Malta	Switzerland
Bhutan	Gabon	Mauritius	Syria
Bolivia	Gambia	Mexico	Syrian Orthodox Church
Botswana	Georgia	Moldova	Taiwan
Brunei Darussalam	Ghana	Monaco	Tanzania
Burkina Faso	Greece	Morocco	Thailand
Cambodia	Guatemala	Mozambique	The Vatican
Cameroon	Guinea	Myanmar	Togo
Cape Verde	Guinea-Bissau	NATO	Trinidad and Tobago

Caroline Islands	Haiti	Nepal	Tunisia
Catholic Church	Honduras	Netherlands	Turkmenistan
Central African Republic	Hungary	New Kosovo Alliance	Uganda
Chad	Iceland	New Zealand	United Nations
Chile	Indonesia	Nicaragua	Uruguay
Congo	Int'l Affairs Committee	Niger	Venezuela
Congo, Dem. Rep.	Jamaica	North Macedonia	Yemen
Constantinople	Japan	Northern Ireland	Yugoslavia
Costa Rica	Jordan	Norway	Zambia
Croatia	Kazakhstan	Pakistan	Zanzibar
Cuba	Kenya	Palau	Zimbabwe
Curacao	Kosovo	Panama	

Table A2: *Gift recipients and number of gifts received (in parentheses)*

Presidents

Barack Obama (421)	George H. W. Bush* (363)
Bill Clinton (331)	George W. Bush (922)
Donald J. Trump (76)	Jimmy Carter (76)

Vice Presidents

Al Gore (29)	Michael R. Pence (31)
Dan Quayle (28)	Walter Mondale (5)
Dick Cheney (208)	Joseph Biden (118)

Secretary of States

Alexander M. Haig (31)	Madeleine K. Albright (32)
Colin Powell (147)	Michael R. Pompeo (40)
Condoleezza Rice (142)	Rex W. Tillerson (20)
Cyrus R. Vance (2)	Warren Christopher (33)
George P. Shultz (66)	John Kerry** (161)
James A. Baker III (82)	Hillary Clinton*** (380)

Spouses of Presidents or Vice Presidents

Barbara Bush (153)	Lynne Cheney (68)
Jill Biden (11)	Marilyn Tucker Quayle (8)
Joan Mondale (3)	Nancy Reagan (171)
Karen Pence (8)	Rosalynn Carter (45)

Presidents and their wives ("First couple")

Barack Obama and Michelle Obama (65)	George W. Bush and Laura Bush (15)
Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton (210)	Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter (32)
Donald J. Trump and Melania Trump (6)	Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan (185)
George H. W. Bush and Barbara Bush**** (68)	

Vice Presidents and their wives ("Second couple")

Al Gore and Tipper Gore (27)	Dick Cheney and Lynne Cheney (49)
Dan Quayle and Marilyn Quayle (35)	Joseph Biden and Jill Biden (2)

Family of President ("First family")

Amy Carter (8)	Hillary and Chelsea Clinton (38)
Bill and Chelsea Clinton (3)	Kathleen Biden (3)
Chelsea Clinton (13)	Vice President's daughter (3)
Clinton family (66)	William Mondale (1)

U.S. Senators

Alfonse D'Amato (1)	Gordon J. Humphrey (4)	Nancy Erikson (1)
Amy Klobuchar (1)	Hank Brown (3)	Norm Coleman (2)

Angus S. King Jr. (3)
Arlen Specter (3)
Barbara Boxer (1)
Barbara Mikulski (2)
Ben Nelson (1)
Bernard Sanders (1)
Bill Bradley (11)
Bill Frist (10)
Bill Nelson (12)
Blanche Lincoln (1)
Bob Dole (13)
Byron Dorgan (1)
Carl Levin (17)
Catherine Cortez Masto (1)
Charles Grassley (3)
Charles H. Percy (1)
Charles Schumer (7)
Christopher A. Coons (11)
Christopher Murphy (1)
Chuck Hagel (5)
Claiborne Pell (2)
Clair McCaskill (1)
Connie Mack (1)
Cory A. Booker (1)
Dan Sullivan (1)
Daniel Inouye (1)
Daniel J. Evans (1)
Daniel P. Moynihan (3)
Dave Durenberger (2)
David Pryor (1)
Debbie Stabenow (1)
Dennis DeConcini (4)
Dianne Feinstein (5)
E. Benjamin Nelson (4)
Edmund S. Muskie (3)
Edward J. Markey (2)
Edward Kaufman (8)
Edward M. Kennedy (16)
Edward Zorinsky (1)
Evan Bayh (3)

Harry Reid (9)
Howard H. Baker Jr. (2)
Howard M. Metzenbaum (2)
Jack Reed (15)
James E. Risch (5)
James M. Inhofe (1)
Jeanne Shaheen (1)
Jeff Sessions (3)
Joe Donnelly (1)
John Barrasso (4)
John Chafee (1)
John D. Rockefeller IV (5)
John Edwards (1)
John F. Reed (1)
John Glenn (1)
John Hoeven (2)
John McCain (36)
John Thune (3)
John Tower (1)
John Warner (15)
Johnny Isakson (3)
Jon Tester (1)
Joni Ernst (1)
Joseph Lieberman (7)
Ken Salazar (2)
Lamar Alexander (1)
Lindsey Graham (16)
Lisa Murkowski (1)
Lowell Weicker (1)
Mack Mattingly (1)
Maggie Hassan (1)
Marco Rubio (2)
Mark Begich (1)
Mark Dayton (2)
Mark Kirk (1)
Mark O. Hatfield (1)
Mark Pryor (2)
Mark Udall (2)
Max Baucus (5)
Mazie K. Hirono (5)

Olympia Snowe (1)
Orrin G. Hatch (1)
Pat Roberts (2)
Patrick J. Toomey (1)
Patrick Leahy (6)
Paul S. Sarbanes (2)
Paul Simon (3)
Peggy McDonnell (1)
Richard J. Durbin (1)
Richard Lugar (20)
Richard Shelby (5)
Rob Portman (2)
Robert Bennett (1)
Robert C. Byrd (5)
Robert Dole (6)
Robert Menendez (2)
Robert P. Casey (1)
Robert W. Kasten (2)
Roger F. Wicker (2
Ron Johnson (1)
Roy Blunt (2)
Rudy Boschwitz (1)
Russell Feingold (8)
Sam Brownback (2)
Sam Nunn (6)
Sheldon Whitehouse (3)
Sherrod Brown (2)
Strom Thurmond (2)
Susan Collins (3)
Tammy Duckworth (3)
Ted Cruz (1)
Ted Kennedy (1)
Ted Stevens (8)
Terry Sanford (1)
Thad Chochran (6)
Thomas Carper (1)
Thomas F. Eagleton (1)
Tim Kaine (5)
Tipper Gore (5)
Tom Cotton (1)

Frank Church (3)	Mike Crapo (1)	Tom Daschle (3)
Fred Thompson (1)	Mike DeWine (2)	Tom Harkin (2)
Gary Sisco (1)	Mike Lee (1)	Tom R. Carper (1)
George Allen (2)	Mitch McConnell (10)	Tom Udall (1)
George J. Mitchell (10)	Mitt Romney (1)	Trent Lott (1)

Notes: * George H.W. Bush received several gifts while serving as Ronald Reagan's Vice President. ** John Kerry received several gifts as a US Senator. *** Hillary Clinton received several gifts as First Lady. **** George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush received several gifts while George H.W. Bush served as Ronald Reagan's Vice President. There are 141 U.S. Senators that received diplomatic gifts.

Table A3: *Summary statistics*

	No. obs	Mean	Std. Dev	Mix	Max
Value of gift (2015 US$) to…					
All officials	6082	1824.05	13688.37	1.00	522972
Presidents	2571	2455.80	12184.11	3.95	522972
Non-President	3511	2443.72	17018.21	1.38	516165.50
Donor country characteristics					
Log GDP per capita (2015 US$)	5595	8.77	1.37	5.152	11.781
Democracy	5780	0.49	0.30	0.01	0.93
UNGA voting (distance)	5596	2.66	0.98	0.11	4.77
US ally	6082	0.41	0.49	0.00	1.00

Figure A1: *Association between a gift-giving country's cumulative value of gifts to Presidents (annual average prior to the Trump presidency, 2015 US$) and their average annual receipts of U.S. foreign aid (2015 US$)*
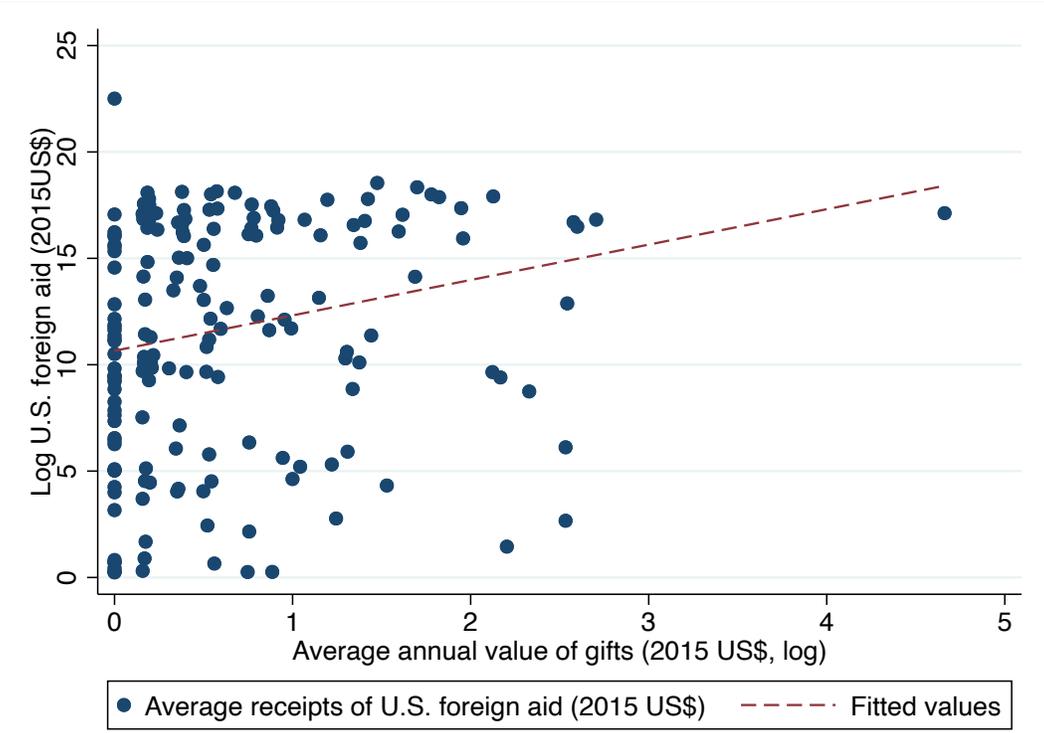
Notes: Each point in the figure refers to a country. The x-axis measures each country's average (cumulative) annual value of gifts given to Presidents for the period *prior* to President Trump.

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL RESULTS

Table B1: *Trump effect, controlling for time trends*

	Log value of gifts (2015 US$)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Donald Trump	0.497	0.54	0.544	0.559
	(0.144)***	(0.113)***	(0.110)***	(0.111)***
Log GDP per capita	-0.607	-0.089	-0.11	-0.121
	(0.161)***	(0.110)	(0.086)	(0.089)
Democracy	-0.378	-0.656	-0.757	-0.681
	(0.322)	(0.212)***	(0.369)**	(0.219)***
Ally				12.622
				(7.432)*
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE x Year	Yes			
Region FE x Year		Yes		
Democracy FE x Year			Yes	
Ally x Year				Yes
F-test on trends	1.4x10^5	1.16	0.03	3.16
… P-value	0	0.33	0.86	0.08
Number of gifts	5465	5465	5465	5465
R-squared	0.19	0.16	0.16	0.16

Notes: Standard errors clustered by President reported in parentheses. *, **, *** = significant at 10, 5, and 1 percent respectively. Column 1 controls for a fixed effect for each donor country interacted with a year trend. Column 2 controls for a fixed effect for each donor country's geographic region (Latin America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Oceania) interacted with a year trend. Column 3 controls for a fixed effect if a donor country is a democracy (=1) interacted with a year trend. Column 4 controls for a fixed effect if a donor country is a U.S. military ally (=1) interacted with a year trend. These trends, country and year fixed effects, and a constant are not reported.

Table B2: *The Trump effect with additional controls*

	Log value of gifts (2015 US$)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Donald Trump	0.532	0.545	0.535	0.273
	(0.109)***	(0.113)***	(0.113)***	(0.136)**
Log GDP per capita	-0.102	-0.208	-0.208	-0.225
	(0.090)	(0.101)**	(0.103)**	(0.098)**
Democracy	-0.703	-1.036	-1.044	-1.111
	(0.222)***	(0.282)***	(0.285)***	(0.264)***
Personalized gift	0.217		0.255	0.187
	(0.073)***		(0.086)***	(0.062)***
US military ally		-0.537	-0.558	-0.62
		(0.292)*	(0.297)*	(0.289)**
UN voting (distance)		0.121	0.121	0.113
		(0.084)	(0.085)	(0.084)
Log US foreign aid		0.002	0.003	0.008
		(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Constant	7.981	9.18	9.187	9.376
	(0.849)***	(0.943)	(0.965)***	(0.918)***
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Recipient type FE				Yes
Number of gifts	5465	4802	4802	4802
R-squared	0.16	0.17	0.17	0.22

Notes: Standard errors clustered by recipient type reported in parentheses. *, **, *** = significant at 10, 5, and 1 percent respectively. In column 1, personalized gift is equal to 1 if a gift is personalized for the recipient and zero otherwise. In columns 2-4, US military ally is equal to 1 if the donor country is a US military ally and zero otherwise, UN voting (distance) measures a donor country's policy (voting) alignment with the United States in the UN General Assembly (based on Bailey et al. 2017), and log US foreign aid is the volume of US foreign aid received by a gift-giving (donor) country in 2015 US dollars.

Table B3: *The Trump effect across alternate samples*

Sample:	Log value of gifts (2015 US$)				
	Non-personalized Gifts	90/10 trim (gift value)	Excl. Mid. East	Excl. Europe	Excl. allies
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Donald Trump	0.517	0.329	0.388	0.55	0.612
	(0.109)***	(0.073)***	(0.155)**	(0.124)***	(0.127)***
Log GDP per capita	-0.117	-0.073	-0.031	-0.062	-0.101
	(0.089)	(0.055)	(0.098)	(0.094)	(0.105)
Democracy	-0.82	-0.183	-0.524	-0.616	0.612
	(0.232)***	(0.111)*	(0.209)**	(0.250)**	(0.127)***
Constant	8.186	7.331	7.005	7.484	8.722
	(0.820)***	(0.515)***	(0.948)***	(0.888)***	(0.968)***
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of gifts	5117	4380	4487	4230	3108
R-squared	0.21	0.16	0.15	0.15	0.17

Notes: Robust standard errors, clustered by recipient in parentheses. **, *** = significant at 10 and 5 percent respectively. In column 1, the sample is restricted to non-personalized gifts. In column 2, the sample omits the top and bottom decile of gift valuations. In column 3, the sample excludes gifts given by officials from the Middle East and North Africa region. In columns 4 and 5, the sample excludes gifts given by officials from European countries (column 4) and US military allies (column 5).

Table B4: *Trump effect, controlling for time trends across a sample of Presidential gifts*

	Log value of Presidential gifts (2015 US$)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Donald Trump	1.864	0.142	0.231	0.219
	(0.135)***	(0.064)**	(0.051)***	(0.049)***
Log GDP per capita	-0.640	0.032	0.050	-0.050
	(0.252)**	(0.242)	(0.191)	(0.177)
Democracy	-0.543	-0.442	-0.911	-0.759
	(0.732)	(0.368)	(0.760)	(0.294)**
Ally				11.604
				(3.670)**
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE x Year	Yes			
Region FE x Year		Yes		
Democracy FE x Year			Yes	
Ally x Year				Yes
F-test on trends	5x10^5	10.76	0.09	12.47
… P-value	0	0.005	0.78	0.012
Number of gifts	2277	2277	2277	2277
R-squared	0.28	0.25	0.24	0.25

Notes: Standard errors clustered by President reported in parentheses. *, **, *** = significant at 10, 5, and 1 percent respectively. Column 1 controls for a fixed effect for each donor country interacted with a year trend. Column 2 controls for a fixed effect for each donor country's geographic region (Latin America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Oceania) interacted with a year trend. Column 3 controls for a fixed effect if a donor country is a democracy (=1) interacted with a year trend. Column 4 controls for a fixed effect if a donor country is a U.S. military ally (=1) interacted with a year trend. These trends, country and year fixed effects, and a constant are not reported.

Table B5: *The Trump effect with additional controls across a sample of Presidential gifts*

	Log value of Presidential gifts (2015 US$)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Donald Trump	0.225	0.2	0.207	0.535
	(0.054)***	(0.077)**	(0.078)**	(0.215)**
Log GDP per capita	-0.047	-0.117	-0.124	-0.124
	(0.192)	(0.213)	(0.220)	(0.212)
Democracy	-0.751	-1.179	-1.172	-1.172
	(0.328)	(0.363)**	(0.382)**	(0.382)**
Personalized gift	0.142		0.22	0.22
	(0.064)*		(0.061)**	(0.061)**
US military ally		-1.361	-1.395	-1.395
		(0.183)***	(0.177)***	(0.177)***
UN voting (distance)		0.207	0.212	0.212
		(0.087)*	(0.089)*	(0.089)*
Log US foreign aid		0	0.001	0.001
		(0.007)	(0.008)	(-0.008)
Constant	7.819	8.974	9.011	8.683
	(1.844)***	(1.848)***	(1.908)***	(1.753)***
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
President FE				Yes
Number of gifts	2277	2033	2033	2033
R-squared	0.25	0.27	0.27	0.27

Notes: Standard errors clustered by recipient type reported in parentheses. *, **, *** = significant at 10, 5, and 1 percent respectively. In column 1, personalized gift is equal to 1 if a gift is personalized for the recipient and zero otherwise. In columns 2-4, US military ally is equal to 1 if the donor country is a US military ally and zero otherwise, UN voting (distance) measures a donor country's policy (voting) alignment with the United States in the UN General Assembly (based on Bailey et al. 2017), and log US foreign aid is the volume of US foreign aid received by a gift-giving (donor) country in 2015 US dollars.

Table B6: *The Trump effect across alternate samples of Presidential gifts*

	Log value of Presidential gifts (2015 US$)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Donald Trump	1.864	0.142	0.231	0.219
	(0.135)***	(0.064)**	(0.051)***	(0.049)***
Log GDP per capita	-0.64	0.032	0.05	-0.05
	(0.252)**	(0.242)	(0.191)	(0.177)
Democracy	-0.543	-0.442	-0.911	-0.759
	(0.732)	(0.368)	(0.760)	(0.294)**
Ally				11.604
				(3.670)**
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE x Year	Yes			
Region FE x Year		Yes		
Democracy FE x Year			Yes	
Ally x Year				Yes
F-test on trends	5x10^5	10.76	0.09	12.47
… P-value	0	0.005	0.78	0.012
Number of gifts	2277	2277	2277	2277
R-squared	0.28	0.25	0.24	0.25

Notes: Robust standard errors, clustered by recipient in parentheses. **, *** = significant at 10 and 5 percent respectively. In column 1, the sample is restricted to non-personalized gifts. In column 2, the sample omits the top and bottom decile of gift valuations. In column 3, the sample excludes gifts given by officials from the Middle East and North Africa region. In columns 4, the sample excludes gifts given by officials from US military allies.