

# Scholars across the Seas: The American-Scandinavian Foundation and the Sweden- America Foundation in the Trans- Atlantic Exchange of Knowledge

**Dag Blanck**

Uppsala University

***Abstract:** The article discusses the academic and cultural relationships between Sweden and the U.S in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It focuses on the activities of two key institutions, the Sweden-America Foundation in Stockholm and the American-Scandinavian Foundation in New York. Both foundations were established in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and sought to promote educational and cultural exchanges and contacts between Sweden and the United States.*

*Although the foundations had similar goals, the reasons behind their establishment were quite different. The American foundation had one root in the development of Scandinavian-American ethnic communities. Another source of origin can be traced to a growing interest in medieval England, Old English, and Anglo-Saxon in American universities, in which Scandinavia came to occupy a privileged position. The Swedish foundation was established partly as a result of a Swedish cultural and academic re-orientation following World War I, away from Germany towards the U.K. and the U.S.*

*The effects of the work of both foundations have been significant, both in establishing close academic contacts between Sweden and the U.S. and in creating improving and promoting closer cultural and political ties between the two countries.*

***Keywords:** Swedish-American cultural contacts—educational exchange—American-Scandinavian Foundation—Sweden-America Foundation—Scandinavian studies*

Educational and academic contacts play an important role in the shaping of relations between nations. The migration of students and researchers create links and channels of influence between countries, and constitute signifi-

cant elements in the process of cultural and social transfers. These links are often strong and long lasting, and operate both on individual and collective levels. This article sees the Swedish-American exchange of knowledge as a part of a larger ongoing study of cultural relations between Sweden and the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and explores the ways in which the countries have reacted to each other culturally.

The role of the United States in the world is a topic which has been discussed in a multitude of ways ever since 1776. Clearly, the world of scholarship and higher education is a very important aspect of the American impact on the rest of the world, and it is a part of that dimension of American power and influence that Joseph Nye has labeled soft power.<sup>1</sup> Given the fact that the U.S. is still the most popular choice of destination for students who seek to go abroad for higher education, with close to 600,000 foreign students enrolled in American universities and colleges in 2007,<sup>2</sup> it seems safe to say that even though the standing of the United States has declined in many parts of the world since 2002, this is an element of American society which still resonates around the globe.

Two institutions have played an important role in the academic and cultural relationships between Sweden and the U.S in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely the American-Scandinavian Foundation (ASF, based in New York) and the Sweden- America Foundation (SAS, based in Stockholm). They form the basis for this article which examines their origins and activities with an emphasis on the first three decades of the organizations' histories. First, the reasons behind the creation of the foundations will be discussed. Why were they established? What role did the specific national and cultural contexts play? Secondly, the effects of the work of the Foundations on both Sweden and the United States will be addressed. This analysis will be more tentative, as I will return to it in greater length at a later point in future research. Even so, some hypotheses and preliminary results will be presented.

## ii

The Foundations were both established in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, largely as a result of private initiatives. The American-Scandinavian

1 Joseph Nye, *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York, 2004).

2 Institute of International Education, *Open Doors 2007* (New York, 2007), available at <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=113743>.

Foundation was incorporated in 1911. One of the moving forces behind the Foundation was the Danish-born industrialist and philanthropist Niels Poulsen, who at an early age had emigrated to the U.S. A self-made man, Poulsen eventually became the owner of the Hecla Iron Works in Brooklyn, N.Y., which was one of the most important manufacturers of architectural and ornamental iron and bronze in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1909 Poulsen had provided scholarship funds for Danish students to study at the Carnegie Technical School in Pittsburgh; in 1910 he established a trust fund of \$100,000, and upon his death in 1911 the bulk of his estate was added to the endowment and the Foundation was incorporated.<sup>3</sup>

Its mission was formulated as encouraging cultural understanding between the United States and Scandinavia and promoting educational exchange between the respective countries. From the very beginning, the ASF sought contacts in Scandinavia, and national committees in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were established to nominate candidates for the American fellowships. These committees were initially appointed through the Foreign Offices of the respective countries and represented an academic and cultural elite.<sup>4</sup> In the case of Sweden, the head of the first committee was the director of the National Museum of Art.

The SAS was established eight years later, in 1919. Its main mission was to further develop academic contacts and exchanges between Sweden and the United States, but also to promote understanding between the two countries on a more general level. The ASF played an important role in the establishment of the SAS, as the American foundation actively sought partners of co-operation in Scandinavia. Henry Goddard Leach, the leading force in the ASF for many decades, was also present at the organizational meeting of the SAS at the Grand Hotel in Stockholm.<sup>5</sup> The founders included a group of Swedish industrialists, academics, and shapers of public opinion. Let us first examine the reasons behind the launching of the Foundations.

An examination of the early founders and activists of the ASF uncovers

3 Much of the information for the early history of the ASF is based in Erik J. Friis, *The American-Scandinavian Foundation 1910-1960. A Brief History* (New York, 1961) and on the Foundation's *Annual Reports*, published in New York from 1912.

4 For the relationship between the ASF and Norway, see Norge-Amerika Fondet, *Fem og tyve års utveksling av stipendiater mellem Norge og Amerika* (Oslo, 1939).

5 For a general history, see Dag Blanck, *Sverige-Amerika stiftelsen 1919-1989. De första sjuttio åren* (Stockholm 1989).

two groups of people, namely those connected with the Scandinavian-American ethnic communities and those who did not have any ethnic relations to Scandinavian countries, but who showed a strong interest in Scandinavian languages, culture, and history. The first group, individuals of Scandinavian ethnic background who were engaged in the Foundation's work, came from both the business world and the academic world. Niels Poulsen represented the former and made significant financial contributions to the Foundation. Others were Scandinavian-American academics, often teaching Scandinavian studies in one of the Scandinavian-American colleges or at an American state university. Examples of the latter include Norwegian-born Gisle Bothne, eventually head of the Scandinavian department of the University of Minnesota (1907-1929), and Danish-born William Hovgaard, professor of Naval architecture at M.I.T.<sup>6</sup>

Persons of non-Scandinavian background but with an interest in Scandinavia also played an important role. In fact, many of the early leaders within the ASF were persons without any direct ethnic ties to Scandinavia. Early examples include William Henry Schofield, professor of comparative literature at Harvard, who eventually donated a library to the Foundation, and perhaps most notably Henry Goddard Leach who served in different capacities of leadership as general secretary, editor, president, chair, etc. from 1912 to 1951. Of old New England background, he was a graduate of Princeton who later entered Harvard as a graduate student in medieval languages and literature. There, his mentor became William Henry Schofield with whom he studied Old Norse. His dissertation dealt with literary relations between Scandinavia and England in the 13th century. Upon graduation he traveled extensively in Scandinavia, visiting libraries and archives. He also encountered modern Scandinavian literature, met with Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson in Norway, Otto Jespersen, Georg Brandes, and Henrik Pontopidan in Denmark, and other leading names in Sweden.<sup>7</sup>

The Foundation's Scandinavian-American context was one in which large numbers of Scandinavian immigrants had been coming to the U.S. for well over half a century. Substantial Scandinavian-American communities had been established in the U.S., and by the time the ASF was established, large parts of the immigrants and their children were on their way toward integra-

6 Friis, pp. 19-28.

7 On Leach, see, James Creese, "Henry Goddard Leach" in Carl F. Bayerschmidt and Erik J. Friis, eds, *Scandinavian Studies. Essays Presented to Dr. Henry Goddard Leach* (Seattle, 1965).

tion into American society. This process was of course uneven and took place in different social arenas. Entering the academic world was one important such means, one that has not really been discussed by previous scholarship.

As the Scandinavian-American immigrant communities came of age, they used what we can call the process of academization as a way to enter American society. In states with large Scandinavian-American population groups, they acted as pressure groups in establishing Scandinavian studies in the state universities. In Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Washington, special laws were passed by the state legislatures stipulating that the state universities should establish professorships in the Scandinavian languages.<sup>8</sup> Many of the early professors of Scandinavian studies in American universities were also of Scandinavian extraction, such as George Flom (Illinois), Gisle Bothne, A.A. Stomberg (Minnesota), and Sverre Arestad and Walter Johnson (Washington). These Scandinavian Americans were able to put their ethnic background, in the form of linguistic and cultural competencies, to use in American universities.

Scandinavian Americans also formed their own educational institutions, where the study of the ancestral cultures played an important role. These colleges often became explicit sources for identity formation among Scandinavian Americans, and the Scandinavian studies programs played an important role in these processes.<sup>9</sup> The significance of the Scandinavian-American academics is also evident in the early history of the professional association for American Scandinavianists, the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study (SASS), which was formed in 1911. An examination of the 70 charter members shows the influence of the ethnic factor, including such leading Scandinavian-American academics as Ole Rølvaag (St. Olaf College), Jules Mauritzson (Augustana College), Joseph Alexis (University of Nebraska), Gisla Bothne (Minnesota), and David Nyvall (Washington).<sup>10</sup>

In that roster of persons, we also find a number of Americans without any Scandinavian ethnic ties. Included here are persons such as Lee Hollander (Wisconsin), Henry Goodard Leach (ASF), Schofield (Harvard), and A.M. Sturtevant (Kansas). This latter group provides another important context

8 Larry E. Scott, "Passing the Torch: Scandinavian Studies in the United States," in Philip Anderson et al., *Scandinavian Immigrants and Education in North America* (Chicago, 1995) 161-62; Esther Chilstrom Meixner, *The Teaching of the Scandinavian Languages and Literatures in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1941), p. 57.

9 See Dag Blanck, *The Creation of an Ethnic Identity, Being Swedish American in the Augustana Synod, 1860-1917* (Carbondale, Illinois, 2006) ch. 4, for an in depth analysis of the role of Augustana College.

10 Scott, p. 165.

for the establishment of the ASF, namely a general American interest in Scandinavia and Scandinavian culture that was very much focused on languages and philology.

This interest can be observed in several American universities. In 1868-69, Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, started a Scandinavian studies program. A very strong element in this program was Icelandic/old Norse under the leadership of Willard Fiske. Fiske had a deep interest in Icelandic, to which the Fiske Icelandic collection at Cornell is a testimony. "Courses in Old Norse, The Icelandic Sagas and Old Norse Literature have been offered almost continuously since their introduction at Cornell," wrote Esther Chilstrom Meixner in her 1941 study of the teaching of Scandinavian language in the U.S.<sup>11</sup> Parallel situations with Old Norse playing an important role in the early American Scandinavian studies programs can be found at other universities as well, such as the Universities of Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota.<sup>12</sup> Although the study of Old Norse may be in some decline today, it is safe to say that the subject has enjoyed a long history in U.S. universities and played an important role in the establishment of Scandinavian studies there.<sup>13</sup>

Why did this interest in Old Norse and medieval Scandinavia develop in the United States and in American universities around the turn of the century 1900? One explanation has to do with a parallel academic interest in medieval England, its language and literature and in Old English and in Anglo-Saxon in both American and British universities. Scandinavia and especially the literature and language associated with the Viking era attracted a great deal of attention as linguists and historians sought to identify and describe English historical and linguistic roots. In many cases, these interests led to philology, Iceland, and to Old Norse, with Beowulf playing a particularly important role.<sup>14</sup>

11 Chilstrom Meixner, p. 45.

12 James M. McGlathery, *German and Scandinavian at Illinois: A History* (Urbana, Illinois, 1990); *Catalogs* from the Universities of Iowa and Minnesota 1900-1930, preserved in the university archives in Iowa City, Iowa, and Minneapolis.

13 Henrik Williams, "Framtidens fornordiska filologi. Etymologisk exempelsamling eller litteraturteoretisk lekstuga?", in Kristinn Jóhannesson et al., eds, *Den fornordiska texten i filologisk och litteraturvetenskaplig belysning* (Göteborg, 2000), pp. 12-13.

14 Allen J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins. New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1990), pp. 74-83; Robert E. Bjork, "Nineteenth Century Scandinavia and the Birth of Anglo-Saxon Studies," in Allen J. Frantzen & John D. Niles, eds, *Anglo-Saxonism & the Construction of Social Identity* (Gainesville, Fla., 1997); Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians. Inventing the Old North in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 2000).

Changing patterns of immigration in the United States at the turn of the century 1900 provide another (but non-academic) explanation for the interest in Scandinavia and Scandinavian culture. The coming of large numbers of Southern and Eastern European immigrants towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century created growing concerns about the greater ethnic variety of the American people and an increase in nativism and calls for immigration restriction.<sup>15</sup> An increasingly racialized language developed, in which the Scandinavians were gradually becoming a part of the Anglo-Saxon group, which by many old-stock Americans was also perceived to be the “original” American cultural group.<sup>16</sup> In this way a link between Scandinavian and English culture was established, which is well expressed in a letter from 1858 by Howard Crosby, professor of Greek at the University of the City of New York—today New York University—where he argued that the study of Scandinavian literature was needed in order “to render more complete the examination of the roots of our race.”<sup>17</sup>

Scandinavian Americans themselves also played a role here. In an article from 1915, published in the *American Scandinavian Review*, the journal published by the ASF, William Hovgaard of M.I.T and an early leader in the ASF wrote on the topic of “The American Scandinavian Movement.” He argued that the Scandinavian peoples were especially close to the Americans, and that there were “their inherent similar qualities and characteristics” that tied them together. In his conclusion, the racialized language of the time is clear, as he argued that “Scandinavian peoples are as a race closely related to the Anglo Saxons and through these to the United States.”<sup>18</sup> Hovgaard’s article is a part of the larger construction of Scandinavian-American histories that took place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which sought to both establish an early presence for Scandinavian immigrants in the U.S. and to link them to American colonial history. For Norwegians and Swedes, the Viking journeys to North America and the supposed Norse establishment there, and for the Swedes the 1638-1655 New Sweden colony on the Delaware

15 John Higham, *Strangers in the Land. Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. (New Brunswick, N.J., 1955).

16 Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny. The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*, (Cambridge, MA, 1981); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color. European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA, 1998).

17 Quoted after Chilstrom Meixner, p. 42.

18 William Hovgaard, “The American Scandinavian Movement,” *American Scandinavian Review*, March 1915.

River became important building blocks in the making of this history, as the Scandinavian Americans sought to argue that, unlike the immigrants pouring in from southern and eastern Europe, they were particularly well suited for membership in the American republic.<sup>19</sup> Scandinavia and Scandinavians were thus being embraced by old-stock Americans and in the increasingly polarized American ethnic landscape, the academic interest in Scandinavia in this way helped by placing the group in a privileged position.

Let us now turn our attention to the origins of the Sweden-America Foundation. Its establishment must be seen as a part of a Swedish cultural, social, and academic reorientation after World War I. Sweden's previous strong relations and ties with Germany were weakened after World War I and were now being replaced with an orientation towards Anglo-Saxon countries, both Great Britain and the United States.<sup>20</sup> A general sense of the need for rejuvenation from America after the disastrous war existed. In 1939, when the Foundation celebrated its twentieth anniversary, J. Sigfrid Edström, the chair of the Board of Directors, looked back to 1919. As a result of the war, Edström argued, Sweden had seen European culture "weaken" and it was thus "only natural" to turn toward "the young and vigorous nation on the other side of the Atlantic" with its "rich spiritual and technological growth."<sup>21</sup>

The specific experiences of the war also left many Swedish politicians and opinion makers with the keen sense that Sweden needed to improve its relations with and image in the U.S. As Steven Koblik has shown, the Swedish efforts during the final year of World War I to maintain its formal policy of neutrality while at the same time trying to negotiate trade agreements with Great Britain and the United States proved a difficult balancing act.<sup>22</sup> The Swedish-American negotiations about the possibilities for Sweden to import food stuffs and grain from the U.S. in Washington in December 1917, at a time when the country was facing severe food shortages and there was fear of domestic political turmoil in Sweden, provide an illustration of these difficulties. The Swedish negotiators felt that they had been treated coolly by

19 Blanck, *The Creation of an Ethnic Identity*, ch. 7.

20 See Martin Alm, *Americanitis. Amerika som sjukdom eller läkemedel. Svenska berättelser om USA åren 1900-1939* (Lund 2002) and Gunnar Eidevall, *Amerika i svensk 1900-talslitteratur* (Stockholm, 1983) for general overviews of Swedish-American cultural relations.

21 "Återblick 1919-1939", Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen, *Årsberättelse 1938* (Stockholm, 1939), p. 3.

22 Steven Koblik, *Sweden- The Neutral Victor. Sweden and the Western Powers 1917-1918. A Study of Anglo-American-Swedish Relations* (Lund, 1972).

the Americans, who thought that Sweden's policy of neutrality had benefited Germany. One of the chief delegates in Washington, Axel Robert Nordvall, who significantly enough would become one of the leading names in the Sweden-America Foundation, claimed that "much misinformation has been published in the press and generally believed by the public, under the general subject of 'Sweden is Feeding Germany.'"<sup>23</sup> The low Swedish standing in American public opinion was also taken seriously by the Foreign Office in Stockholm, and, according to Allan Kastrup, a series of discussions were begun regarding ways in which it could be improved.<sup>24</sup>

Those who attended the founding of the SAS at the Grand Hotel in Stockholm on June 2, 1919, and became members of its first Board came from leading positions in academic, political, industrial, and cultural life in Sweden and shared this sense of urgency to increase and strengthen ties with the U.S. Among the academics were two Nobel Laureates, the physicist and chemist Svante Arrhenius and the chemist The Svedberg. The industrialists included J. Sigfrid Edström of ASEA, Axel Robert Nordvall of AGA, and Axel Ax:son Johnson. The politicians included the liberal Ivan Bratt and the social democrat leader Hjalmar Branting, whereas cultural life was represented by the author and Nobel Laureate Selma Lagerlöf, the publicist Torgny Segerstedt, and the Archbishop Nathan Söderblom. The war had clearly shown that the U.S. was becoming an increasingly more powerful and important country. It was, said Söderblom, about to "become the most important nation in the world," and it was especially important to have close ties to it for those "men and women who soon will shoulder the responsibility for our society."<sup>25</sup>

Apart from these political or cultural reasons for a reorientation towards the U.S., there were also clear academic benefits. In 1923 the chair of the board of the SAS, Svante Arrhenius, explained that the Foundation's emphasis should be within technology, business, and natural sciences, areas in which the U.S. was perceived as particularly strong.<sup>26</sup> America after World War I entered the world scene as a country that was driving technological

23 Axel Robert Nordvall, "Sweden's Food Supply," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 74, November, 1917, p. 62.

24 Allan Kastrup, *Med Sverige i Amerika. Opinioner, stämningar och upplysningsarbete* (Malmö, 1985), pp. 30-31.

25 Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen, *Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsens jubileumsskrift 1919-1929* (Stockholm 1929), p. 22.

26 Blanck, *Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen*, p. 30.

change, and with very strong connotations to modernity. "I have been to America, and I have seen the future" was a common way of describing an encounter with the country. For many years the Sweden-America Foundation was the main vehicle for Swedes who sought such an encounter.

### iii

The second question to be examined deals with the effects of these educational and cultural exchanges on both Sweden and United States. For Sweden, the American academic world was relatively unknown in 1919. The possibilities offered by the ASF and the SAS opened up new academic opportunities for Swedes and Swedish scholarship. As Andreas Melldahl has shown, the subjects that attracted Swedish attention in American universities and colleges among the Sweden-America Foundation fellows have changed during the twentieth century. During the pre- World War II era engineering, medicine, the social sciences, and agriculture were particularly important, whereas the natural sciences and the humanities became more pronounced during the post World War II period.<sup>27</sup> The significance for the Swedish academic world of these American experiences has only been partially studied and will be the focus of more work within the overall project. Some observations will, however, point out the direction for further work.

Clearly, the American powerful university structure itself, which Swedish anthropologist Ulf Hannerz, himself a part of the trans-Atlantic exchange of knowledge, has described as "a scholarly industry, not likely to be matched in any other national academia,"<sup>28</sup> has played a large role and left significant imprints on many visiting Swedes. The Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics Bertil Ohlin observed about his years in the American universities in the 1920s that "[t]he American universities are strongholds for education and research in a sense that a European hardly can imagine before he visits them,"<sup>29</sup> and another economist writing about the situation fifty years later concluded that "the lavishness and splendor of American

27 Andreas Melldahl, *Västerled tur och retur. Del 1: Utbildning och ekonomi. En ekonomihistorisk studie av Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsens stipendieverksamhet 1919-2006*. (Uppsala, 2008), pp. 19-23. Available as PDF file at [www.skeptron.uu.se/broadly/sec/sec-44.pdf](http://www.skeptron.uu.se/broadly/sec/sec-44.pdf)

28 Ulf Hannerz, "American Culture: Creolized, Creolizing" in Erik Åsard, ed., *American Culture: Creolized, Creolizing and other lectures from the NAAS Biennial Conference in Uppsala May 28-31, 1987* (Uppsala, 1988), p. 24.

29 Bertil Ohlin, *Bertil Ohlins memoarer. Ung man blir politiker* (Stockholm, 1972), p. 87.

universities are almost staggering in comparison with continental or Scandinavian institutions.<sup>30</sup> A survey of Swedish natural scientists and engineers with permanent positions in U.S. universities from the late 1960s showed that opportunities for continued research and permanent employment were the dominant motivations behind their move to the U.S.<sup>31</sup>

It is, however, already possible to see that both individual disciplines and areas of study in Sweden were affected by impulses and ideas brought back from the United States. Engineering and technology have already been mentioned as important fields. Medicine is another area where American influences have been noticeable, and the first generation of Swedish anesthesiologists was trained almost entirely in the United States.<sup>32</sup> Similar observations about the strong American influence can be made with regard to business administration, education, and sociology.<sup>33</sup>

The American sojourn also played an important role for individual fellowship winners. Upon returning from a year in America, one Swedish scholar observed that "America does change people but in ways so subtle that it is hard to describe,"<sup>34</sup> an attitude which is probably common among many returnees. In a study from the mid-1950s based on travel reports by and interviews with SAS fellows, Franklin Scott concluded that a majority of Swedes returning from American universities ... considered themselves to have benefitted from their time in America, both personally and professionally. Most of the students claimed that they had gained a broader outlook on the world, that they perceived Sweden in a new light, and that they felt that they had matured as individuals. Some answers also suggest that the American experience proved professionally advantageous, especially

30 Göran Ohlin, "Economics. The Interchange of Ideas between Sweden and the United States" in Allan Kastrup & Nils William Olsson, eds, *Partners in Progress. A Chapter in the American-Swedish Exchange of Knowledge* (Minneapolis, 1977), p. 57.

31 Göran Friberg, "Fortsatta studier rörande forskarmigrationen", *Nordisk Forum*, 4, (1969); Göran Friberg, "Motives and Qualifications of Scientists and Engineers Emigrated from Sweden to the USA" in Friberg & Jan Annerstedt, *Brain Drain and Brain Gain of Sweden* (Stockholm, 1972), p. 62.

32 Franklin Scott, *The American Experience of Swedish Students. Retrospect and Aftermath* (Minneapolis, 1956), p. 103. It is sometimes jokingly said that there are three kinds of medical researchers in Sweden; those who currently are in the United States, those who have just returned, and those who are planning their trip

33 See the various contributions in Allan Kastrup & Nils William Olsson, eds, *Partners in Progress. A Chapter in the American-Swedish Exchange of Knowledge* (Minneapolis, 1977) and Dag Blanck, "The Impact of the American Academy in Sweden" in Erik Åsard & Rolf Lundén, eds, *Networks of Americanization. Aspects of the American Influence in Sweden* (Uppsala, 1992).

34 Quoted in Scott, p. 96.

in the fields of technology, natural science, and business. Students in the humanities, on the other hand, seem to have had a more difficult time in getting concrete career results out of their American experience.<sup>35</sup>

These results can be supported with some quantitative data. An examination of 108 Swedish Fulbright graduate student scholarship winners in the 1960s shows that a large number of this cohort pursued successful careers in Sweden following their year of study. In 1977 about 40 per cent of them had permanent academic positions in institutions of higher learning, five per cent as full professors, around 20 per cent occupied managerial positions in private industry, and another 20 per cent were found in the higher echelons of the civil service and bureaucracy.<sup>36</sup> As noted above, these results are preliminary, but do suggest that further research of both a qualitative and quantitative nature will be both necessary and fruitful for a more precise discussion of the American academic impact on Sweden.

Even less is known about the reverse situation—that is, the significance of the fellowships in Sweden for American scholarship and scholars. Preliminary works on the American fellowship winners from the American-Scandinavian Foundation suggests that the majority of the American fellows have come from medicine, technology, and the natural sciences, often working directly with colleagues in Sweden.<sup>37</sup> No doubt the exchange of knowledge has gone in both directions in these fields, and one important issue for further work will be to examine areas in which Swedish scholarship may have achieved particular prominence and thus exercised a power of attraction and influence on the U.S.

It is also clear that American academic interest in Sweden—its language, literature, history, and social development—has been strengthened by the ASF fellowship program. During the Foundation's first decade of operations, approximately a fifth of the fellowships to Sweden were awarded to scholars pursuing studies of Swedish language, literature, and culture, and in the 1960s, some 15 per cent of the fellows belonged to this category. It is interesting to note how an American academic interest in the social reform programs of Sweden from the mid 1930s and onwards is reflect-

35 Scott, pp. 96-109.

36 See the register of Fulbright grantees in [Swedish Fulbright Commission] *Alumni Directory 1953-1977* (Stockholm, 1977).

37 The following two paragraphs are based on examinations of registers of fellowships in the archives of the American Scandinavian Foundation, 58 Park Avenue, New York, NY.

ed in the fellowship programs. The 1936 publication of Marquis Child's bestseller *Sweden—The Middle Way*<sup>38</sup> placed Sweden prominently in the American public and academic mind for decades to come,<sup>39</sup> and a succession of American scholars interested in the Swedish welfare were able to spend time in Sweden through the ASF fellowship programs. The sustained ASF support for American academic study of Scandinavia in general and Sweden in particular was, as we have seen, present from the Foundation's very beginning and has continued up until the present day. Over the years, several of the key persons in the ASF have also played an important role as officers of SASS.

Finally, the role that both the Foundations played in promoting general cultural exchange between Sweden and the U.S should be underscored. The effects of these activities went beyond the purely academic and helped increase a general understanding and awareness of both countries. In 1921, the SAS took the initiative with the establishment of the American-Swedish News Exchange in New York and Svensk-amerikanska nyhetsbyrå in Stockholm. Together with the ASF and the SAS, these institutions became important sources of information about the respective countries, at times fulfilling the roles that government information agencies such as the United States Information Service and the Swedish Institute play today.<sup>40</sup> World War II changed the activities of the Foundations, as the fellowship programs had to be halted. The Sweden America Foundation instead increased its informational work about the U.S., arranging lectures and "American weeks" throughout Sweden. In 1943, for example, the annual report noted that 163 lectures had been given to a total audience of more than 10,000 persons. The ASF also played an active role in trying to inform American audiences, including several U.S. government agencies, about the effects of the war in Scandinavia and maintained a significant Scandinavian-oriented library.<sup>41</sup>

The Swedish policy of neutrality clearly posed a special challenge for both the ASF and the SAS. In 1939, the Sweden-America Foundation pro-

38 (New Haven: Yale University Press).

39 John Logue, "The Swedish Model: Visions of Sweden in American Politics and Political Science," *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, 50 (July 1999).

40 Kastrop, pp. 30-37

41 Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen, *Årsberättelse 1943*, (Stockholm, 1944), pp. 3-4; American-Scandinavian Foundation, *Thirty Second Annual Report 1943* (New York, 1944), pp. 5-6.

posed that a "Committee for Swedish academic lectures in the U.S." should be established, through which especially selected Swedish lecturers would travel to the U.S. and "in a balanced and convincing way" provide information about the "current conditions" in Sweden. Similarly, the Foundation provided its fellows in the U.S. at the time with an orientation about the situation in Sweden, so that they could provide answers to questions "they might receive."<sup>42</sup> In 1943, the ASF annual report spoke of the "vigorous" ways in which both Foundations were working in "interpreting" each others' cultures to the benefits for both Sweden and the U.S.<sup>43</sup>

Early on, exhibitions of different kinds also became an important dimension of this work. In 1930, for example, the first major exhibition of American art and architecture ever in Sweden was on display at the Academy of Art in Stockholm. Opened by Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf, it became a great success with an estimated 10,000 visitors. Among the painters included were Hesselius, West, Sargent, and Whistler. Similarly, in 1931 Sweden was invited to participate in the annual exhibition of the Architectural League of New York, where 40 Swedish architects with pictures, drawings and photographs of well-known Swedish buildings were included. The Swedish part of this exhibition won "great acclaim" by the experts, and was greeted with enthusiasm in the newspapers. Both these events were jointly organized by the ASF and the SAS, and, according to the annual report of the SAS, confirmed their status as "cultural links between America and Sweden."<sup>44</sup>

#### iv

The ASF and the SAS are two important institutions in the educational and cultural exchange between Sweden and the United States. They emerged out of quite different political and cultural contexts. In the U.S., the interest in promoting increased ties with Scandinavia should be seen as a part of the institutionalization of Scandinavian studies in American higher education towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, through which the academic study of the Scandinavian languages and cultures were taken up. It should also be

42 Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen, *Årsberättelse 1939*, (Stockholm, 1940), p. 6.

43 American Scandinavian Foundation, *Thirty Second Annual Report 1943* (New York, 1944), p. 7.

44 *Utställning av amerikansk konst i Stockholm mars 1930* (Stockholm, 1930); *Swedish Architectural Exhibition in connection with the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of The Architectural League of New York, 1931* (New York, 1931); Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen, *Årsberättelse 1930* (Stockholm, 1931), p. 5.

seen in the context of growing ethnic tensions in the U.S. at the run of the century 1900 and of the attempts to emphasize the Anglo-Saxon origins of American society, in which Scandinavia came to occupy a privileged position. The Swedish context was quite different and was largely connected to the beginning of a reorientation away from Germany and to a growing understanding of scientific and technical advances in the U.S. Both Foundations did, however, find common ground in seeking to achieve their respective goals through the medium of educational and academic exchange. In that way, education and scholarship began to play a significant role in the larger pattern of Swedish-American relations, a role that would grow increasingly important during the twentieth century.

Especially during the period before 1945, their roles also went beyond the academic and scholarly realms. They became important vehicles in promoting a cultural awareness of Sweden and the U.S. on the other side of the Atlantic. This took place through, for example, art exhibitions or through attempts to convey information about political developments in the respective countries, activities which also were consistent with the reasons behind their establishments. It thus seems clear that academic exchanges and contacts between Sweden and the U.S. are linked to the general cultural flows between the two countries, and should be seen as one important dimension of those larger patterns of interaction.

The effects of the work of the Foundations on Sweden and the U.S. were important. Although more specific research needs to be done in this area, it is clear that both individual scholars and certain academic fields of study in Sweden benefitted from and were influenced by the scholarly developments and circumstances in the United States. This relationship became particularly strong after 1945, but its origins can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century. Swedish academic influences on the U.S. have been more limited, but observable in certain fields. As further work on this aspect of the Swedish-American academic patterns of contact will be done, the picture will become both more complete and more nuanced.

The ASF and the SAS have been two important actors in the larger patterns of cultural and political contacts between Sweden and the United States in the twentieth century. As these networks of interaction are analyzed, it is important to underscore the role played by the world of higher education and scholarship and general cultural factors. In a world where hard power is often seen as the determining factor in the relationships between countries, it seems both prudent and fruitful to emphasize the signifi-

cance of soft power, of which .the American-Scandinavian Foundation and the Sweden-America Foundation provide two good examples.