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At the end of 2001, then Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson spoke about Swedish relations to the United States. He noted a lingering Swedish tendency towards anti-Americanism, something which the Prime Minister deplored, as Sweden still had a great deal to learn from America. He also reminded his listeners that so many young Swedes had spent significant time studying and doing research in the United States, giving the "a first real insight into what initiative and common responsibility actually may mean. American universities," the Prime Minister concluded, "are of course far, far more important for American influences in the world than the American armed forces."<sup>1</sup> Persson was speaking of what Joseph Nye has called the American "soft power" which emphasizes the educational and cultural elements of American society and puts the center stage in the discussion of American relations with the outside world.<sup>2</sup>

This paper will address this dimension of Swedish-American relations, that is that of academic migration and academic influences between the United States and Sweden in the university level. In fact, in 1994 political scientist Olof Ruin even claimed that the Swedish universities and colleges constitute "the best example of a conscious 'Americanization' of Swedish society."<sup>3</sup> The present paper should thus be seen as a first attempt to map out the field and present some preliminary data and results. In particular, I will look at the effects of the American academy and American higher education in Sweden.

First, however, a few words about the US as a receiving country for foreign students. It is by far the leading receiving country for foreign students. Statistics begin in the early

1960's, and show that between 25 and 30% of all students studying abroad in the world have been enrolled at an American institution.<sup>4</sup> In 2004/05, for example the figure stood at more than 565,000 students. The leading sending countries are Asian, and in that year the leading sending countries included India, China, South Korea and Japan, with between 45,000 and 75,000 students each.<sup>5</sup> There are many reasons the popularity of American universities and colleges, but they all revolve around the quality, size and availability of resources in American academic life. This means that the American academy has become so large and so resourceful that what one scholar has called "the sheer mass of the American academic and intellectual community" is bound to appeal to Swedish and other foreign academics alike.<sup>6</sup> American higher education is thus a strong magnet, and is an important factor in the migration patterns to the U.S. today. In 2004, for example, it was estimated that around 400,000 E.U.-born science graduates live in the U.S. One Irish physicist at the University of California, Berkeley commented: "The U.S. is a sponge that's happy to soak up talent from across the globe. It values scientists. Who wouldn't want to work in that environment?"<sup>7</sup>

Sweden's role in the process is of course modest, but still significant. The statistics are not readily available, but it seems clear that at least since the end of World War II, the U.S. has been the most popular country for Swedish university students studying abroad. Still, data compiled by UNESCO and various Swedish authorities suggest that since the 1960's the U.S. has attracted twice as many undergraduate and graduate students as the second-most popular country, which has varied from over time. A survey of Swedish natural scientists and engineers with permanent positions in U.S. universities from the late 1960's showed that opportunities for continued research and permanent employment were the dominant motivations behind their move to the U.S.<sup>8</sup> It is estimated that in the last decade or so between 4,000 and 4,500 students have been enrolled in American universities and colleges. Among

the European countries, Sweden has consistently ranked in fourth place, following the Germany, U.K., and France.<sup>9</sup>

*The nature of Swedish-American academic contacts*

In 1923, the chairman of the Sweden-America Foundation, the Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, professor Svante Arrhenius pointed out that the U.S. offered particularly good opportunities for studies and research in technology, the natural sciences, and economics, and therefore maintained that the Foundation should emphasize these fields among its scholarships.<sup>10</sup> If medicine and the social sciences are added to this list, it includes the major disciplines that have attracted Swedish students and researchers to the U.S. A preliminary analysis of the fellowships for graduate study awarded by the Sweden America Foundation and the Swedish Fulbright Commission has been made for the period 1919-1987. Figures from the Fulbright Commission are only available for 1953-1977. The sample includes some 1,300 individuals.

Although the data is at times incomplete, it does give an indication of certain trends. The on-going work by project member Andreas Melldahl will give a much more detailed analysis of the flow of students and researchers financed by the Sweden-America Foundation between 1919-2000.

The preliminary figures show that the social sciences have consistently drawn Swedes throughout this century, with roughly a third of the scholarships awarded in these fields. The most common field of study in this category has been Business Administration; particularly popular during the 1970's and 1980's, when a third of all scholarships in Business Administration were awarded. The lure of American business schools has been very strong indeed among Swedish business students in the last several decades. Other common subjects

in the social sciences have been economics, political science, sociology, and psychology. The latter three have been particularly popular since 1960.

Engineering has also attracted a great number of Swedish students to the U.S, particularly before 1960. There is a long standing tradition for Swedes to study engineering and gain practical experience in America. It has been estimated that of all engineers graduated from the various Swedish engineering schools between 1800 and 1929 approximately 15 % spent one or several years in the United States.<sup>11</sup> For many Swedish engineers, a period in the United States formed a natural and beneficial part of their education. This American tradition among Swedish engineers is still very strong, and the Sweden-America Foundation in particular has awarded great numbers of scholarships in the field.<sup>12</sup>

The natural sciences have become increasingly more important subjects of study since the end of World War II. Physics, biology, chemistry, mathematics and computer science are the most common disciplines in this category. For obvious reasons, scholarships in computer science have been very common in the 1970's and 1980's. A similar development can be seen in medicine. It is, however, very likely that the figures for the natural sciences and especially medicine should be higher. Many Swedish scholars in these fields have established close co-operation with U.S. institutions of higher learning, which has resulted in frequent research and study sojourns in America outside both official exchange programs and scholarship programs such as the Sweden-America Foundation or the Fulbright Commission. The scope of these contacts is at present un-known. With regard to medicine the first generation of Swedish anesthesiologists was trained almost entirely in the United States,<sup>13</sup> and 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.

Agriculture and Forestry have always been small fields, although of greater significance before the war than today. Scholarships in the humanities, finally, have also been

relatively infrequent. Popular subjects of study in this category include literature, history, and linguistics.

### *The Effects on Sweden*

What were the effects on Sweden of strong American orientation in Swedish academic life?

First we can speak of effects on the individual level. 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>14</sup>. A study from the mid-1950's suggests that a majority of Swedes returning from American universities, considered themselves to have benefitted from their time in America, both personally and professionally.<sup>15</sup> 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. Almost all of the interviewed returnees claimed to have seen effects of their time in America in their careers. Some answers also suggest that the American experience proved professionally advantageous, especially in the fields of technology, natural science and business.

Those who returned to academic life also encountered some difficulties and suspicion of their American experiences. It seems to have varied between the seats of learning, and in "conservative Uppsala they meet more suspicion than in Lund or in the urban universities of Stockholm and Gothenburg." Moreover those who had pursued studies in the humanities and social sciences found themselves in a more uncertain position than those who had studied the natural sciences and technology, fields in which the American academy enjoyed a much higher prestige in Sweden.<sup>16</sup>

An examination of 108 Swedish Fulbright graduate student scholarship winners in the 1960's also suggests that a large number of this cohort pursued successful careers in Sweden following their year of study. In 1977 about 40% of them had permanent academic positions in an institution of higher learning, five percent as full professors. Around 20% occupied managerial positions in private industry and another 20% were found in the higher echelons of the civil service and bureaucracy. Among those with an academic career, there is a clear dominance of those active in the social and natural sciences, such as economics, business administration, mathematics, and physics.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to all those Swedes who have come to pursue graduate study and to do research in the U.S. we must also add the much larger group of Swedes who have enrolled as undergraduates in American universities or colleges. The Sweden America Foundation has awarded at least twice as many undergraduate scholarships as it has graduate scholarships over the years, and our current count stands at well over 3,000 undergraduate fellowship winners in a variety of American colleges and universities.<sup>18</sup> A period of time in an American university or college, often at a fairly young age, brought back important thoughts, ideas and maybe even ways of looking at the world. The significance of this general American cultural baggage is hard to assess precisely, but it can be hypothesized this exposure to American soft power has helped create an awareness of -- or preparedness for -- the United States in Sweden, and facilitated the many contacts between the two countries.<sup>19</sup> The fact that many returning undergraduate students also have pursued fairly successful careers in Sweden has also been significant in this context. The list sometimes looks like a "Who's Who" among Swedish politicians, businessmen, academics, and opinion makers, including more than a few senior Swedish politicians, journalists, authors, academics, business persons and other shapers of the public opinion.

Olof Palme can be used as an illustrative case. He attended Kenyon College in Ohio in the late 1940's, and developed a strong orientation towards and affinity for the US. His ties with American political, social and cultural life were deep, and helped shape his worldviews. Even Palme's strong critique of the US in the 1960's and 1970's should be seen in the light of his American orientation and sympathies and thus partly as a disappointment in America, but not as anti-Americanism.<sup>20</sup>

The impact of America on the Swedish academy has not only been a matter of personal growth and development. We can also speak of effects on academic disciplines in Sweden. Some examples from the social sciences will illustrate this point. As noted Business Administration has been a popular field of study and is a discipline where the American influence has been strong.<sup>21</sup> The first incumbent professor in Business at Uppsala University, Sune Carlson, received his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago in 1936, and has commented that "the experiences from Chicago...were put to use as we built up the Department of Business Administration at Uppsala."<sup>22</sup> Textbooks from the US outnumber those from Sweden by far, and a significant number of professors of business administration in the Swedish universities have been educated in the U.S. In the late eighties the figure stood at about 20%.<sup>23</sup>

Education is another field in which the U.S. has played a significant role. Beginning with Per Adam Siljeström in the 1850's, a long line of Swedish scholars and educators have looked to the U.S. for examples and inspiration, and one scholar has observed that "[a]fter 1945 a pilgrimage to America was seen as a necessity among researchers and practitioners in education."<sup>24</sup> Sociology was introduced as a separate discipline in Swedish universities in 1947, and was greatly influenced by American scholarship. The first incumbent professor at Uppsala, Torgny Segerstedt, has noted that "during the 1950's and 1960's, most of the younger

Swedish sociologists spent a term-- often a year-- at some American university," and concludes that the significance of American scholarship in sociology and in the social sciences in general for the developments in Sweden have been of "enormous importance."<sup>25</sup>

Academic ideas cross and recross the Atlantic in complex ways. Thus the interest in Marxist sociology in the 1960's seems to have had American roots, and Hans Zetterberg has commented that "Swedish professors of sociology did not start treating Marx seriously until their American colleagues did so." It will be interesting to follow the work on literary scholarship by Bo Ekelund in the present project, as the hypothesis that the body of work associated with deconstructionism found its way to Sweden via the United States.

Effects from American higher education can also be found in organizational models and practices. As early as in the 1890's the president of the newly founded Göteborg University who had been trained in the US used his American experiences in fund-raising practices for the new university.<sup>26</sup> Various reforms of the Swedish system of higher education have also looked to the United States for inspiration. In the early 1950's, a government report on medical education was presented, advocating a system similar to the American one. One of the key members of the commission also stated clearly that the Swedes followed the American models openly and purposefully.<sup>27</sup> The reform of graduate education in the early 1970s and the new Swedish doctoral degree were obviously inspired by American models; a government commission from 1977 even characterizes the Swedish doctor's degree as "a near translation of the American Ph.D.-degree." The plans for evaluation and quality control that have been introduced in Swedish university life in the recent decades have also been attributed to American ideas by such a centrally placed person as Stig Strömholm, who in 1993 wrote that "there can be no doubt that much of the ideological contents in these new plans emanates from the United States."<sup>28</sup> The creation of new regional colleges and universities in Sweden in the 1980s and 1990s is another area in Swedish university life



where it ought to be possible to observe how American educational ideas have approached Sweden.

A final, and perhaps more general illustration of the significance and effects of American higher education and academic research in Sweden can be seen in the construction of the Wenner-Gren Center in Stockholm in early 1962.<sup>29</sup> Following a donation of five million Swedish crowns by the Swedish industrialist and millionaire Axel Wenner-Gren in 1955 for an international center in Stockholm for visiting international scientists, the highly positive attention given modernistic Wenner-Gren Center project became an illustration of the high esteem which Sweden attached to the world of research. The Center was inaugurated by the King in the presence of the Minister of Education, the vice-chancellors of Sweden's universities at the time, and several Swedish and foreign Nobel Laureates. The 23 story, 70-meter skyscraper—the first in Stockholm—stood as a link between Sweden and the international world of science.

Clearly, that international world of science was strongly associated with the United States, as many visitors were Americans and as the Center was discussed in reference to the U.S. The Stockholm daily *Svenska Dagbladet* noted that a pleasant environment for geniuses and families of geniuses had been created, and that in the living quarters “everything was even more tip top American than in the United States itself. The building themselves were described as the first time when Swedes had begun to “fully build in the American fashion”, and several newspapers wrote about what may have been the first celebration of Halloween in Sweden among the families of visiting American scholars. According to Svante Lindqvist, the reporting about Wenner-Gren Center was characterized by a combination of “an admiration of science, academic life, the United States and modernity, contributing to a Swedish self-image of modernity, which had entered into a covenant with the future through the international—American—academic world”.

The academic dimension of the American influence in Sweden has thus been significant. It has been a part of American "soft power" and should be seen in the larger perspective of how American influences and ideas have reached Sweden. In that way it has contributed to the shaping of a Swedish orientation towards the outside world in which the U.S. plays a significant role. In fact, it is possible to speak of the creation of Swedish mental maps in which the significance of different countries has varied over time. A number of factors have contributed to these maps, and American higher education has been a significant such element during at least the past half century. By placing these Swedish-American educational and academic ties and contacts in this larger context we will thus gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of these processes contact and influence between the two countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Dagens Nyheter, 2 January 2002

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power. Why the World's only Superpower can't Go it Alone* (New York, 2002)

<sup>3</sup> Olof Ruin, *Amerikabilder : anteckningar om USA från 50-tal till 90-tal* (Stockholm, 1994), 228.

<sup>4</sup> These figures only include students, both undergraduates and graduates. No figures are available for post-doctoral researchers and university teachers. It seems unlikely, however, that the situation is different for this group.

<sup>5</sup> These figures are based on the annual reports from the Institute of International Education in New York, *Open Doors*. See also the statistical compilations in the *Almanac* published annually by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

<sup>6</sup> 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), 24.

<sup>7</sup> "J. Chu, "How to Plug Europe's Brain Drain" Time Magazine, European edition, January 2004 (<http://www.time.com/time/europe/html/040119/brain/story.html>)

<sup>8</sup> See Göran Friberg, "Fortsatta studier rörande forskarmigrationen" in *Nordisk Forum*, 4, (1969); and Friberg "Motives and Qualifications of Scientists and Engineers Emigrated from Sweden to the USA" in *Brain Drain and Brain Gain of Sweden* (Stockholm, 1972) [FEK-Rapport, 1], p. 62.

<sup>9</sup> See note 4 for sources.

<sup>10</sup> Dag Blanck, *Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen. De första sjuttio åren 1919-1989* (Stockholm, 1989), 30.

<sup>11</sup> Sten Carlsson, *Swedes in North America 1638-1988. Technical, Cultural, and Political Achievements* (Stockholm, 1988), 58.

<sup>12</sup> Blanck, 31.

<sup>13</sup> Franklin Scott, *The American Experience of Swedish Students. Retrospect and Aftermath* (Minneapolis, 1956), 103.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Scott, 96.

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<sup>15</sup> The following is based on Scott, 96-109.

<sup>16</sup> Scott, 91

<sup>17</sup> See the register of Fulbright grantees in [Swedish Fulbright Commission] *Alumni Directory 1953-1977* (Stockholm, 1977).

<sup>18</sup> Database of students from the Sweden-America Foundation, 1919-2000. Available through the project "Transnational Strategies within Higher Education," Uppsala University.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Olof Palme, "Swedish-American Relations" in Sture Lindmark and Tore Tallroth, eds., *Swedes Looking West. Aspects on Swedish-American Relations* (Stockholm, 1983), 18.

<sup>20</sup> Dag Blanck, "Television, Education, and the Vietnam War. Sweden and the United States during the Postwar Era" in Alexander Stephan, ed., *The Americanization of Europe. Culture, Diplomacy, and anti-Americanization after 1945* (New York, 2006), 105.

<sup>21</sup> The following section is based on Lars Engwall, Elving Gunnarsson and Eva Wallerstedt, *Europa et Taurus. Foreign Inspiration of Swedish Business Administration* (Uppsala, 1987) [Working Paper 1987/3, Department of Business Administration, Uppsala University], 11-24.

<sup>22</sup> Sune Carlson, *Studier utan slut. Ekonomi, företag, människor* (Stockholm, 1983), 71.

<sup>23</sup> Engwall et al., p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Torsten Husén, "Psychology and Education. U.S.-Swedish Scholarly Contacts in Psychology and Education" in Allan Kastrup & Nils William Olsson, eds., *Partners in Progress. A Chapter in the American-Swedish Exchange of Knowledge* (Minneapolis, 1977), 244.

<sup>25</sup> Torgny Segerstedt, "American and Swedish Sociology" in Kastrup and Olsson, p. 307. Cf. also Anders Gullberg, "Några punkter om svensk sociologi och dess ursprung" in *Häften för Kritiska Studier*, 3, (1970), pp. 50 & 55.

<sup>26</sup> Harald Elovson, "Den liberala Amerikabilden i Sverige" in Lars Åhnebrink, ed., *Amerika och Norden* (Uppsala, 1964), 96.

<sup>27</sup> Scott, 106.

<sup>28</sup> Li Bennich-Björkman, *Learning a passionate profession. The failing of political reform in higher education. A Swedish example* (Stockholm, 1993); Stig Strömholm, "Högskolan och 90-talet" i *Vart är högskolan på väg?* (Stockholm, 1993)

<sup>29</sup> For the following, see Svante Lindqvist, "Forskningens fasader : Wenner-Gren Center som symbol för svensk vetenskap", *Lychnos. Årsbok för idé- och lärdomshistoria* (1997)