“Migrating citizenships”

Nationalism, Citizenship, and Sustaining International Mobility Among Swedish-American Return Migrants, 1900-1930.

By the 1930s Uncle Sam and Mother Svea felt they had both suffered dearly from the mobility of their sons, daughters, and cousins. The two nations had spent a great deal of time fretting, researching, and concluding on what to do with these stepchildren or prodigal sons. Conveniently, the suffering of the two countries was interrelated and discussions over custody would soon lead to migration policies which would ultimately alleviate both of their dilemmas. From 1900-1930, citizenship in the United States evolved from a political process of binding the individual with the broader community into an important cultural weapon to solidify cultural unity. Meanwhile, Sweden used political, social, and economic liberalization as a method to encourage return. The combination of being pressured into U.S. citizenship and the development of Swedish liberalization created an environment which led to around 40% return migration rates to Sweden after 1910.¹ This paper will show that as the United States increasingly pushed citizenship as a tool of Americanization, Swedish migrants responded by transforming citizenship papers into a tool to maintain mobility and to keep them connected with their international families, friends and social networks. As citizenship developed a subjective and socially constructed meaning, its usefulness as a variable for measuring the Americanization of immigrants in the U.S. census declined.

¹ Lindberg:1930 p. 246
Prior research

Swedish return migration was under academic discussion as early as 1930 when social scientist, John S. Lindberg published “Background of Swedish Emigration to the United States” (1930)\(^2\). This, his graduate research, was considered so interesting in Sweden, that it made the front page of the Sunday edition of *Dagens Nyheter* in 1924 while it was still in proposal form (he even got his picture in there, not bad for a graduate student!).\(^3\) The data processors during the late 1960’s, allowed Scandinavian historians to analyze return migration in new ways. Both Lars-Goran Tedebrand’s “*Vastornorrlad och Nord Amerika*” 1875-1913,\(^4\) and Bo Kronborg and T. Nilsson’s *Stadsflyttare : industrialisering, migration och social mobilitet med utgångspunkt från Halmstad, 1870-1910*\(^5\) helped usher in an era of historical demography which has since served as a resource for return migration studies in the various disciplines. Unfortunately, these two works ended just as return migration grew. Keijo Virtinen in “*Settlement or Return*” (1979),\(^6\) included questionnaires handed back from returnees in 1930 and 1960, as sources to be added to historical database sources in Finland. The most recent work on the region using historical databases was by Per-Olof Grönberg. In “Åter till vardagen? Livet efter hemkomsten för återvändare till Gävle och Voxnadalen, 1875-1920”\(^7\) he interconnects micro and macro data and follows many Swedes beyond their initial return data. Beyond authors working with Swedish and Finnish sources, Mark Wyman’s *Round

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\(^2\) Lindberg: 1930
\(^3\) *Dagens Nyheter* is Sweden’s equivalent of the New York Times. [Dagens Nyheter June 8th 1924 123:A]
\(^4\) Tedebrand: 1972, p.251
\(^5\) Kronoberg, Nilsson: 1975
\(^6\) Virtanen:1979, p. 175
\(^7\) Grönberg:2004
*Trip America* (1993)\(^8\) provides background on the situation in the United States which made return a common event for most immigrant groups.

Return migration has generally been studied separately from studies of citizenship. In Sweden, Sture Lindmark’s *Swedish America 1914-1932* (1972) asked “how long do Swedes preserve their national character before becoming assimilated with the American milieu?”\(^9\) Lindmark measured “Americanization” by analyzing the census categories “Years in the United States” and “Citizenship.” He surmised that slow action to attain Naturalization or First Papers represented a resistance to the Americanization process by Swedish immigrants\(^10\). Hans Norman’s article “Swede’s in North America” confirmed Lindmark’s findings.\(^11\) Both works allow us to see that Swedish Americans did not always jump quickly into U.S. citizenship yet both also assumed that naturalization and Americanization were linked. Nor are these works alone in this assumption, which can be found in decades of research and crosses the various disciplines in which migration has been researched.\(^12\)

Helpful background works on the social climate surrounding citizenship and immigration include Julia A. Reuben’s “Beyond Politics: Community Civics and the Redefinition of Citizenship in the Progressive Era” (for the progressive influences), Noah Pickus’ chapter called “World War One and the turn to coercion,”\(^13\) (to understand the social climate during the World War), and Keith Fitzgerald’s “The Development and Expansion of the Sectoral State,” (for background on the influence of labor unions on

\(^{8}\) Wyman:1996

\(^{9}\) Lindmark:1971 p. 17

\(^{10}\) Ibid: p. 41

\(^{11}\) Norman:1976 p. 272


\(^{13}\) Pickus:2005 p. 107
their immigrant members). Our comparable analyses of the social and political environment of Sweden during these years will come from works such as Lennart Schön’s *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia. Tillväxt och omvandling under två Sekel* (for a background on economic reforms between 1900-1930), Patrik Hall’s *Den svenska skaste historien* (which covers the development of Swedish nationalism and citizenship), and Lars Ericsson’s *Medborgare i vapen*, which discuss military service in Sweden. Although these works are helpful, this literature devotes very little attention to the subject of citizenship and migration.

**Methodology**

Sweden is an ideal case study for migration historians because, unlike most nations, it has preserved continuous parish records which allow us to observe the enumeration of individual migrants both at the time of emigration and upon return. The combination of age old bureaucracy and the modern data-base has allowed Swedish researchers to crunch migration data for nearly four decades. In addition to their data, Sweden also represents a special group of immigrants in America due to the fact that they were hailed even by eugenicists as desirable political and social neighbors, then distrusted during the course of World War One as being Kaiser-friendly, and finally lost interest in large scale migration a decade and a half before restriction laws. The special nature of the sources, the time period, and both Swedish and American migration policies of that period makes it possible to study the relationship of citizenship and Swedish return migration 1900-1930.

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14 Fitzgerald: 1996 p. 96  
15 Schön: 2000  
16 Hall: 2000  
17 Ericsson: 1999
To explore the political and social environment exerting cultural pressures on migrants in regards to citizenship, I will depend on four types of sources. The first is secondary sources to cover broad issues from both countries. Among primary sources, the Swedish-American press gives a feel for what returnees may have been reading. In addition Emigrationssutredning (The Emigration Enquiry)\textsuperscript{18} provides a comprehensive research done between 1907 and 1913 which included 119 letters from immigrants in America. These letters alert us to what immigrants were saying in regard to the nation and return migration. For evidence on the citizenship of returnees, I link 1900, 1910, and 1920 U.S. censuses and the Swedish parish data from Gävleborg County using “Emibas,” Immibas,\textsuperscript{19} and Ancestry.com’s search engines. I then analyze the linked cases, using SPSS, a statistical program.

My methodology has been influenced by Frank Thistlethwaite’s “Migration from Europe Overseas; Postscript,” (1970) which called for an interdisciplinary and international research agenda.\textsuperscript{20} Thistlethwaite wanted to give the return migrant’s history precedence over the history of the nation. Since I recognize that individuals act at the national scale, this paper will focus on migrants who used national methods of identity (i.e. naturalization) in order to maintain interest which range from the international (mobility for moral, religious and union movements) to the individual and family levels of allegiance.

\textsuperscript{18} Emigrationssutredning:1908
\textsuperscript{19} Emibas and Immibas is an ongoing joint project from Alftas Migranternas hus, Swedish Emigration Institute, Växjö, and The Federation of Swedish Genealogical Societies.
In order to make sense of the scale of Swedish migration, it is important to note the population of Sweden during this period was between five and six million. Emigration, as shown in the first graph had settled to around 200,000 during each of the two decades surrounding the turn of the century. Meanwhile, return migrants into Sweden throughout the whole period after 1890 was a steady 40,000 individuals per decade. The first graph shows that the number of total emigrants per decade then declined after 1910. However, return numbers stayed the same, so that the percent of people returning during that same period increased considerably both for the 1910’s and 1920’s. By the depression of the 1930s, return migration out paced emigration by more than double. (In both graphs I have chosen to omit the year 1923 from the statistics because it both distorts the total of the decade and proves how policy can result directly in the choice to migrate. During that, the final year of non quota immigration, Sweden’s emigration increased almost 300% (26,955) only to return to the same level the following year.) What the graphs show is that return migration to Sweden slowed during the 1910’s although the number of return migrants held steady at around 4000 people per year.

*for both graphs I removed data for 1923, which was abnormally high to the influence that the July 1, 1923 free migration deadline had on immigration. It was on this date that the 1921 quota act came into effect…

21 Data taken from Lindberg:1930 p. 246
22 Beijbom:1995, p. 41


**Immigration laws**

From the beginning of the 20th century until the depression, the United States was attempting to reverse the Laissez-faire migration policies that had prevailed for almost one hundred years. In doing so it passed a series of immigration restriction laws. One of the first acts came on the heels of the President McKinley assassination in 1903 which restricted political radicals. In 1907 an immigration act was passed to raise the tax on immigration and to exclude people with mental and physical “defects.” Fearing a mass migration from more Southern and Eastern Europeans after the world war in Europe (although the two years of war preceding the law were marked by a practical migration standstill), the 1917 law restricted illiterates, immoral people, alcoholics, vagrants, and stowaways. With eugenics in full bloom, the Quota Act of 1921 and then an even more restrictive law passed in 1924 placed varying restrictions on the more or less desirable nationalities (i.e. Southern and Eastern European). Keith Fitzgerald claims that with the nationalization of immigration, “although many of these early laws lacked substance”, they help develop a national policy network and state bureaucracies to gather information, analyze it and then paved the way for more substantive laws as came into effect in the late 1910’s. Although Swedish born immigrants never filled their relatively generous quota, “they opposed every measure which might conceivably have concerned the fate of their countrymen.

**Naturalization**

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23 Fitzgerald: 1996. p. 124  
24 Lindmark: 1971. p. 147
Just as important as entry laws were the limits of naturalization. For Europeans (those from Asia were not eligible for naturalization), the first significant change during the period was the Naturalization act of 1906 which included English as a basic requirement for citizenship. The general requirements for the naturalization process began with the declaration of intention which could occur as early as 18 years old and within their first year of entry. A petition for naturalization could then only be done after five continuous years from the date of immigration, not more then two years from receiving first papers, and not more then six years after receiving the first papers. Besides five consecutive years in the U.S. the final naturalization hearing required evidence of proficiency in English, declarations that the subject was not an anarchist or a polygamist, an oath of loyalty to the Constitution, and evidence that the candidate understood the political process, was of good moral character, and had two witnesses who were likewise. In the period following the First World War, judges could reject citizenship for immigrants who had their first papers at the time of the war but who had avoided the draft by claiming foreign citizenship. The Cable Act in September 1922 was one of the few exceptions to increasingly more restrictive laws. The law made it possible for immigrant married women to apply for their own citizenship if they met the standards. Prior to this date immigrant women had to take the citizenship of their husbands.25

Migration policy clearly influenced events such as the July 1, 1923 migration rush to avoid the new restrictive laws. However, it is important to note that such policies were almost impossible to administer. Return migrants soon found the ability to work around the rules in order to visit their friends and family and work in Sweden even after they had

25 Lovfström:1930
begun the naturalization process. Readers should remember the requirement of “five continuous years” of residence when observing cases with of migrants with “First Paper” and the “two year limit” law limiting residence abroad for the “Naturalized immigrant” when interpreting the cases in our sample later in the paper. These examples bring up the question of what extent migrants disregarded these laws on their way to becoming citizens.

**Sweden and Emigration policy**

Sweden never adopted Emigration acts or laws like the United States. Yet, much like the United States, nationalistic influences were at work when discussing migration. Massive emigration from Sweden meant Chicago was the second largest “Swedish” city and that Sweden began wondering how to keep migrants at home.\(^\text{26}\) The Emigrationsutredning was undertaken to reveal problems in Sweden under discussion by those who had left Sweden. As we will see later, the most common motivations for those leaving after 1900 was voting rights, military service, and economic issues.

Sweden incrementally increased voting rights from 1909 until it attained universal voting rights in 1919. Meanwhile, the military service began a new era of conscription in 1901, which encouraged over 3100 men born in 1882 to emigrate to America within a year of the law being passed.\(^\text{27}\) Common complaints in “the Emigration Inquiry” included that the length of service was too long and pay too little for families, which at age 21 often included a wife and children. These numbers began to fall the following years even though by 1905 there was a serious threat of war with Norway.

\(^{26}\) Hall: 2000 p. 226

\(^{27}\) Eriksson: 1999 p. 111
Meanwhile as World War One began to heat up, Sweden’s neutrality policy allowed it to maintain a high volume of exports at a time when raw materials were costly.  

With all the energy that went into speeches and studies of it by the Swedish government, in combination with improving economic conditions, emigration slowed to a trickle after 1910, without the passage of a restrictive emigration law.  

It was sufficient for Sweden to pass laws that made the country more democratic and economically stable to begin to realize its national aspirations. These liberal developments not only affected the reality of migration in Sweden but also the feelings of how Sweden was presented in the media and in letter to migrants in Swedish America.

Contemporary Influences

Gary Gerstle, in his recent work: American Crucible, makes the distinction between civic nationalism and racial nationalism. The development of racial nationalism emphasized cultural Americanization which was impressed on immigrants through the Naturalization Bureau’s education of citizen’s literature, which according to an Oregon judge “should have more about history and political theory.” Instead the Bureau’s textbook gave nine pages to history and 20 pages devoted to “thing a wife should do to make her and her family happy.”

By the 1910’s, citizenship had shifted away from a membership in a political community toward membership in a cultural community, requiring cultural conformity.

By World War One, the progressive social reform attitudes of the early part of the decade had completely deteriorated into a hostile environment for aliens which demanded

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28 Schön: 2000, p. 283
29 Kälvemark:1976 p.112
external proof of one’s “Americaness” from even the naturalized foreign-born population.  

Labor unions added pressure on foreign workers for sworn allegiance in order to get or keep union jobs, while increasing political pressure to stem the tide of immigration through strong anti-immigrant political activist groups in Washington D.C.

Swedish-Americans expressed excitement internationally during the period of progressivism and the development of the unions in Sweden and America before World War One. During the early part of the first decade of the 20th century, Sweden’s workers and “moralist” movements were limited to what political influence they had in Sweden. However, in the United States workers and common folk had voting rights (adult male) which naturally lead to the propagating naturalization to Swedish-Americans for the purpose of pursuing their societal goals through politics. An example of this is found on the cover page of a pamphlet published by the Skandinavian Socialiska Arbetare Forbundet-Socialist Labor Party, which states that “goal number six is to teach members of their duty to become United States Citizens.” A second example comes from a annual publishing from the Missionförbundet which states in its second goal for members is “…to reform the world through politics...” Organizations such as these knew that in order to make changes the United States they needed voters, while Swedish migrants with political interests enjoyed the opportunity to feel as though they were important in the fabric of their community. The broader American community could easily mistake the

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32 Pickus:2005 p. 107  
33 Gosnell:1928 p. 932  
34 Fitzgerald:1996 p. 96  
35 Deleon:1905, cover page  
36 Aurora:1915, page 35
participation in the progressive (often republican) culture of Swedish immigrants for Americanism.

Unfortunately by the beginning of the First World War Native-born opinions of the Swedish-Americans took a turn towards mistrust. With American learning in June of 1917 that 137 Swedish socialists had been arrested for draft dodging and sentenced each to a year in prison\(^{37}\), the Swedish-American community was force do fend off their reputation for both “Kaiser loving” and socialist prejudices. Their fears were reflected in the writings of the renowned publisher Ernst Skarstedt. In the period between 1900 and 1920 Skarstedt turned his writing away from the subject of successful Swedish-Americans and their communities toward biographies and sketches of historical iconic Americans such as Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Henry David Thorough. The U.S. government’s interest in Americanizing Swedes showed through the preface of “Amerikanska typer och karaktärer : sex lefnads- och karaktärsteckningar” published in 1919, where Skarstedt states “the above named book on Lincoln was printed in a very limited amount, but the American government bought the rights to the book and published it in large quantities in Sweden.”\(^{38}\)

According to a contemporary writer Victor Berger, it is likely that Ernst Skarstedt needed to teach emigrants about patriotism. In Berger’s chapter “Do Swedish-Americans really love Sweden?” he argued that Swedes brought with them no special patriotism for Sweden, only love of a place. “In America they meet Americans whose patriotism which is mixed up with their greatness, which is nearer to them than to the Swedes. They idealize the hero’s like Washington’s honesty, Franklin’s diplomatic abilities and

\(^{37}\) Beijbom1995, p. 203
\(^{38}\) Skarstedt:1919
Lincoln’s wisdom etc. Swedes bow out of loyalty, and celebrate happily those patriotic memories. Only lately has the idea of “great men” rubbed off on Swedish-Americans, so that is why they have just begun to celebrate Gustaf Adolf, Linnes, John Ericsson’s memory. Their homesickness, return and remittance is tied to the local place and people they knew not to the love of Sweden.” 39 Berger considered the fact that no one in Swedish America celebrated Sweden’s national day, (June 6 1909) as proof that Swedish nationalism did not flourish among Swedish Americans.

Strong influence against migrating to America could also be seen in Sweden by 1910. Leading the charge was secretary of the “National Society Against Emigration,” Adrian Molin. According to Franklin D. Scott, Molin was the “theoretically” a protofascist. 40 His works such as “Den Nya Sverige” and “Maja-Lisa Kom hem Fran Amerika” proved to be very influential in developing a movement against migrating to America though highlighting Sweden’s developments and American pitfalls.

Other literature by less biased authors also began to highlight progress as Sweden began to adopt more liberal democratic policies. An example of this is found in the yearly Christmas “Calendar” book called *Aurora* in 1917. The article called “Home Again or Hemma Igen” states,

“…but there is much to witness, that the Old Sweden during the past few years is growing and is well kept in faith and diligent hands….there are new railways and new societies with factories, schools and general institutions everywhere….at least in quality is equal to the work in the present-day States .”

39 Berger:1916, p.135-137 “Ett triumfåtag genom Svenska Bygder,”
40 Scott: 1965. p. 321
Many literary works from *Skogsbloomor, Hemat*, and *Aurora*, from 1910’s emphasized Sweden’s development and spoke of emigrants’ homesickness. Often individuals and social groups would return and right articles and books with great things to say about their visit in Sweden, one writer even calling it “the happiest land in the world.”\(^{41}\) Throughout the whole of this period, the monthly women’s journal *Kvinnan och Hemmet* (Women and the Home) began each monthly segment with an article called for “For Women By Women” which included positive developments for women in Sweden and around the world. Most articles included developments in women’s suffrage as well as for women researchers who were attaining doctorate degrees or were writing literature.\(^{42}\)

In a strange example of influence which predated the political and economic changes in Sweden, Axel Lundeberg struck a Swedish-American nationalist pose, asking for Swedish-Americans to return to Sweden to Americanize it in order for Sweden to reclaim the greatness which it had lost over the centuries (i.e. the colonies in Estonia and Latvia, Finland and then Norway). Lunderberg wrote about a man called John Johnson who left Sweden as a servant and returned as a capitalist who gave speeches on how Sweden could become great! How they could drain bogs for more farm land, tame Swedish rivers for electricity, and stop exports of natural resources by making Swedish-made products! In Lundeberg’s book, Swedish-American John Johnson was able to make Sweden a world power in only 20 years because of his American business methods and liberal politics.\(^{43}\)

\(^{41}\) Nilsson: 1910, p. 6, Wickman: 1924, Lidney:1933, p. 5  
\(^{42}\) Kvinnan och Hemmet July 1903 Cedar Rapids IA 16:deår N:6 among others  
\(^{43}\) Lundeberg: 1906 p. 4, 13
While Swedish writers emphasized how great Sweden was becoming, they also noted how difficult life in industrial America was becoming by the turn of the century. Popular Swedish-American press journalist Johan Person’s “I Svensk-Amerika” was an early example of a work which reached beyond the glorified portrayals of Swedish-America life so common for literature during the period. In this work, is a story called “I Amerikas Jord” described an immigrant, Leopold Löfgren, who after being raised in an upper-class home fell in love with the servant girl and moved to the United States to marry her. In America he became a “slave” in the American factory environment. Only after he and his wife had a child, did he finally find a life’s goal which was to buy and set down roots on a plot of land on the prairie. In doing so his son would have a chance to free himself of the kind of bondage his father suffered. One day after he enjoyed a quiet day with his child sleeping under the trees at local graveyard, the child fell silent for ever. From that day on, Leopold had laid roots in America only at the grave plot of his child. He could not return to Sweden because he had no money and he did not want to lose the memory of his child. Letters to the Emigrationsutredning (analyzed below) repeat the theme of immigration becoming slavery; it was not only in literature but also on the minds of some average Swedish industrial laborers.

Another story from the same book discussed the reality of wartime military service. “Den Nya Kärleken” was a story of Erik Berg who, the day after taking American citizenship, learns that William McKinley has declared war with Spain. In the story, Erik’s national love is problematized. He discusses how he had always had a romantic love for Spain the “home of romance,” how he loved Sweden as his mother, and now his love for his adoptive land the United States. He fought against prejudices and

44 Person:1900 p. 121-124
native born believe that Swedish immigrants only came to America to scrape together a few dollars. Although Erik Berg shared European views about the Spanish-American War his feelings about duty nevertheless brought him to sign up. He becomes wounded and during recovery finds the company of a nurse who is a sister to his fallen battle buddy. Later, during a call from a millionaire gentleman caller named Mr. Vansant (a “Mayflower” descendant and native born) Erik Berg’s blood and fire baptism into Americaness through military service is contrasted with Mr. Vansant’s unwillingness to serve the U.S. due to its “horribly ugly uniforms and the risk involved in war. Mr. Vansant is even offended to meet “that Swede” due to Erik’s low social status. Erik represents Swedish immigrants’ sense of duty to their new found citizenship but also a feeling that nativism bore a disgusting burden of the class superiority that many Swedes had attempted to escape by leaving Sweden.45

Home sickness filled given a full chapter in Johan Person’s much less controversial book Svensk-Amerikanska Studier from 1912. Person claimed that due to the overly optimistic hopes they brought with them to America and usually within the first few years, immigrants developed a very strong desire to return home. However, return was often not possible due to costs of return; their pride also mitigated return if they could not provide proof of their ability to succeed in America. He mentioned two groups; those immigrants that who continue to experience homesickness after three to five years many immigrants who finally gained the economic ability to return to Sweden, and the second group of Americanized immigrants who experienced homesickness after 20 to 30 years in America. These two groups returned to Sweden only to have home

45 Person:1900 p 69-78
sickness for America set in. Person ended his discussion with the remark “it is unlucky to have two homelands.”

Berger also wrote about the general “homesickness” that motivated return migration. He claimed that the pull to return home was not economic since work and the hunt for money never ended. “Here one can never move about like in Sweden,” he concluded. Many Swedes desired the harmony of life and variety that the rural work afforded them in their memory of Sweden, such variety allowed them to enjoy very hard work. Berger felt without doubt that many Swedish-Americans returned in order to avoid the monotony and the constant hunt for money in the U.S. Yet like Person, Berger was Swedish-America had more experience with those who returned again to the U.S., having lost economically Berger says that on return many say, “It’s alright in Sweden but it is not America anyway”

**Emigration Inquiry Letters**

A final source of information about the growing pressures that nations placed on the migrant comes from the Swedish letters from America returned at the request of the Swedish Royal Bureau of Statistics and published in their entirety in 1907. These 119 letters were an attempt by the Swedish government to better understand why emigrants left and what might bring them back. Most letters included the writer’s initials, date or year of birth, birth-county, and where they settled. Often these letters covered the writer’s entire life history. While some writers were highly political, others did not venture outside their personal story. I have read through all of these letters and submitted them to a simple quantitative analysis, categorizing the topics they address.

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46 Person:1912 p. 145-150
47 Berger:1916, p.135-137
The results show that most emigrants commented on economy, voting rights, and social equality. However, when these groups are divided into age sub-groups we see that some issues are more important to certain age groups than others. Within the 20-29 year old group, conscription, voting, and social equality were most often mentioned, while taxes and religious issues were considerably less important. Taxes and religious issues were mentioned more often by 40-49 and 50-65 year olds. Since military service in Sweden drew men aged 21-40, older men not affected by it could ignore it. Social equality was the topic mentioned most by all groups. This topic emerged in both the literature and in the letters: under Sweden’s old rule, for example, a lower class individual was required to remove his hat when in the presence of a gentleman, such practices grated especially on the men of all ages. However, political and social issues were not the only thing Swedish-Americans wrote about; many mentioned their family either in Sweden or in the U.S. and often how these family members influenced them to migrate to the U.S. or return for a short period. Naturally, the middle aged group in the table had more family because of living parents and children. This was something most age groups had mentioned. However, highly political letters rarely mentioned family.
Some letters talked about less common but important issues. For instance, Letter #207’s was in Sweden on more than three occasions. The first time he remained under three months so as to not be spotted by the priest helping his parents on the farm. On the second visit, becoming brave with his American Citizenship papers in hand, he stayed for over a year. However, one evening a military officer and his “muscle” (the local slaughterer) came to carry him off to the military training. He quickly requested to be brought to the priest who held his citizenship papers. Although the priest had sent in his name to the officer for service the priest was forced to release the migrant. Here is a concrete example of how migrants used citizenship papers to maintain their freedom as they moved between the two countries.

Letter writer # 176 exemplified the stereotype of the male circular migrant whose migration was very much economically related. Time and again he was hit with “Amerikasfeber” (migrating 1868, 1888, 1891, 1904) mentioning how he would go to the U.S. and make money only to return home and to fall behind financially, forcing him to repeat the cycle. Considering the number of years he spent in the United States, his reference to the successful results of the McKinley election, and his call for voting rights in Sweden, he was likely a U.S. citizen who did not abide by the two year law limiting residence abroad.

Similar concerns were voiced in Axel Lundberg’s “John Johnson’s Hemkomst.”

And Letter # 212 wrote

“We never feel at home here, instead we want to work for a while. And when we have scraped together enough money, we travel back to Sweden to stay there, but when we get there, we find the conditions in Sweden miserable, and so we must return to America again. I not saying Sweden should copy everything America does because America could learn some things from Sweden, but there are some things Sweden can learn. But I can’t return, if I did I couldn’t find work, then I’ll just stay here, it is a question of putting bread on the table”48

48 Lundberg:1907 p. 184
Concerned about the strength of the nation, the Swedish government took seriously the migrant’s thoughts and feelings in 1907. Yet, these letters cannot tell us how returned immigrant felt while they were in their homeland. Fortunately, returnees were at least given a chance to explain their reasons for return in neighboring Finland. In *Settlement or Return*, Virtanen shows a survey from 1930 and 1960. In the data collected, “family” related issues for return ranked as the most important reason with 491 of 937 of returnees, family was followed by 373 individuals who listed “economic” reasons as the most influential, and then finally 29 who mentioned “political” reasons. As expressed in the letters and in the contemporary literature, homesickness ranked as the most common reason for return (N=200). We also see that intention to re-emigrate was among the top three reasons. The result of the Finnish surveys echo similar sentiments to that of Person’s statement of the migrant with two homes.\(^49\)

Both the Letters and the Survey give historians access to the migrant’s voice. Both often mentioned political rights as things that might entice them back but it was their personal relationships that most often pulled migrants across borders. Family allegiances forced migrant to straddle national borders. Little wonder that they used citizenship to accomplish that end.

**U.S. Census and Parish data**

Sweden’s careful record-keeping and digitized nominal lists on both sides of the Atlantic make it possible to document migrants using citizenship to facilitate their travels. Here I focus on Gävleborg County, located three hours north of Stockholm on the Baltic Coast. Throughout industrialization period it was an important source of lumber and iron products. There were three cities in the county during this period; Hudiksvall (pop. 6,000), Soderhamn (pop. 11,000), and Gävle (pop. 35,000). Until 1909 the lumber industry was unstable and plagued by labor strikes and mill closing. Between 1909 and

\(^{49}\) Virtanen: 1979 p. 176
1920 there were very few labor problems in the county--likely due to the export economy built up during the Wars and then continuing while Europe rebuilt.\footnote{For mill closings; Haraldsson:1989 p. 209, 210, Labor strikes in Hudiksvall; Savolainen:1985 p. 93, in Soderhamn; Rondahl:1972 p. 33, Metall:1955 p.33,and in Gavle; Karlström:1974 p. 242; Sterner:1999 p. 138}

The Gävleborg data included individual cases of returnees from most parishes in that county. The total cases returning from North America in the first three decades of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century numbered 1037. I was able to locate 239 of these cases by linking the U.S. census, Emibas, and Immibas. It is from this group that we will take up the question of citizenship. The second group, consisting of 241 cases, could be found in both Emibas and Immibas but due to name changes, mobility during census year, or oversight, I could not link them to the U.S. census. The final group also had Swedish linkage but could not be linked to the U.S. because the complete migration event occurred between U.S. census enumerations. This group totals 557 cases.

### Return Migrant Sample for Gävleborg County, Sweden 1900-1930

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizenship Variable on U.S. Census</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alien</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalized</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstated</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Successful Linked Cases

Within the group with successful matches, I found 61 naturalized citizens in the 239 cases, or 26% of the total. Those with first papers numbered 50 and made up another 21% of the total. Alien residence totaled 74, or 31%. Although almost all single women had no listed citizenship records during this period, some of these numbers include women and children who had taken up the head of household’s citizenship. In order to
decipher which part of this group had their own “Naturalization” and “First Papers”, we can perform a cross tabulation of the data. This allows us to disregard cases that do not meet the criteria of the steps towards citizenship.

**Linked Data of Individuals of Legal Age and Years in United States**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases with greater then one year in the U.S. and over 21 at the time of census enumeration</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aliens</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First papers</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases with greater then six years in the U.S. and over 21 at the time of census enumeration</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naturalized</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aliens</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First papers</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By removing individuals under 21 years of age *at the time of the census* we begin to see who was actually naturalizing or intending to naturalize. For those who were in the country over a year and met the age qualifications for receiving papers (N=74), 47% had elected to attain their first papers (N=36) prior to return. The total for those who met the qualification for Naturalization (N=90), was 41 cases or 46%. Thus, aliens returning to Sweden were the minority in this group with only total 28%.

**Missed Cases**

If we consider the cases in which their stay in the U.S. crossed a census year but were not found in the U.S. census, we see similarities in the percent of Naturalization qualified returnees. For this group we will use those who were 21 and over and six years in the U.S. *at the time of return*. When we separate these groups along our three categories of sample taken, individuals missed, and returnees between censuses we see
that those missed or who crossed the census period accounted for 81% (N=179) of the over 21 year old group that had been in the U.S. longer than six years as compared to 73% (N=141) of our sample. However, the group of adults over 21 that fell in between census samples, naturally had low numbers of cases qualified for Naturalization 14% (N=60). In total, qualified adults made up 46% of the total return migrants over 21 years old.

**Breakdown of Linked, Missed, and Non-Census Crossing Cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CENSUS YEAR</th>
<th>LINKED CASES</th>
<th>MISSED CASES</th>
<th>NON-CENSUS CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number in Census Year</td>
<td>% of Census Year</td>
<td>Number in Census Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we attempt to compare the three census years for the fully linked cases we find 1900 has considerably fewer cases than 1910 and 1920. As we saw above, the majority of 1900’s cases came and left before the census could be enumerated in 1910.

Considering that the sample window at the time of the census enumeration for roughly half of these cases was over three years away from return, these naturalization numbers can be regarded as conservative and may have been larger. Needless to say, the researchers who used census returns for studying Americanization through Naturalization did use data from exactly these same census records, introducing another source of uncertainty about how to interpret my results.

Still, according to this sample, about half of all return migrants had met the U.S. standards for naturalization and were citizens. Normally, such naturalized persons were considered fully Americanized, yet a significant number of them had returned to Sweden.
Furthermore, half of all those cases who meet the qualification for first papers had filed for them at the time of census enumeration. These individuals would also be considered on track in the Americanization process. Yet all of these individuals had plans for an extended stay in Sweden and many had returned for good. This sample clearly shows that return migration was not dominated by those who had remained aliens and Swedes in the U.S. but, on the contrary, were made up in large part of “Americanized” citizens.

**Conclusion**

By tracking the citizenship census variable in the Census, the U.S. government also sought to understand “who was one of us,” distinguishing them from “who was one of them.” Return migrant’s mobility during this period blurred those lines and suggests that migrants viewed citizenship differently and more strategically. Throughout the period 1900-1930, the United States developed laws, followed census data, and developed methods which have attempted to calculate the progress of making “them” into “us.” Swedish-American return migrants were told by the U.S. government, cultural institutions, members of the Swedish-American society, and likely even family members to naturalize. Yet for each group naturalization meant something slightly different. The stability that naturalization implied for the Nation’s institutions made for more predictable, efficient administration. For labor unions, naturalization’s stability offered the prospect of wage protection. The Scandinavian Socialist-Workers Party knew naturalization of like minded Swedish workers would give them more votes on the election day. Yet for the return migrant, U.S. naturalization gave a stability that was not sedentary. Their stability instead relied on their freedom of movement.
Through secondary sources the paper has shown the demands for a sedentary life placed on international migrants by national governments. Primary sources have revealed the difficulties migrants faced in having two homes. The letters showed that there were many migrants who had allegiances to family in both nations. Through the data we find that almost half of the sample who qualified for citizenship, had actually naturalized in the U.S. Nevertheless we find them living and working in Sweden, often returning to the same quarter they migrated from. From these sources I have provided in this research and our data sample, we are made aware that the citizenship variable on the U.S. census does not necessarily represent Americanization or predict permanence in the United States.

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