A local newspaper as mediator in transatlantic networks during the late nineteenth century Isidor Kjellberg and Östgöten

JIMMY ENGREN

Örebro University

JOHAN JARLBRINK

Umeå University

Abstract

As mass migration from Sweden to the USA took off in the late 1860s, texts started to flow between Swedish and Swedish-American newspapers. A network of interconnected papers was established, based on cut-and-paste journalism and journalists moving between the countries. By combining digital text mining and network analysis with a biographical approach, this article examines the role of one specific editor and his paper within the transatlantic exchange system. The analysis shows that Isidor Kjellberg (1841–1895) and his newspaper *Östgöten* acted as a guide, giving advice and updates on American conditions to Swedes who wanted to migrate. Kjellberg also used the Swedish-American press as an ally in his campaigns for political reform, workers' rights, and equality, but he also incorporated the methods of American new journalism in his own reporting. The result was not American journalism according to the standard news paradigm, but a hybrid serving his own political agenda.

KEYWORDS

americanization, computational methods, cut-and-paste journalism, immigrant press, partisan press

Introduction

In March 1875, the Swedish-American newspaper *Nordstjernan*, published in New York, reflected upon the strange fact that the same people who were seen as hopeless nobodies in their birth countries often flourished once they migrated and settled down in the USA. "The old countries are still ruled by the old saying: stay where you are." To prosper and succeed, people had to leave the old world behind (*Nordstjernan*, 3 March 1875).

From the late 1860s to the 1920s, more than 1.3 million Swedes emigrated to the USA. Like immigrants from many other countries, Swedish newcomers started newspapers wherever their communities were large enough. The Swedish-language press played a key role in building and shaping the Swedish immigrant community, creating an ethnic public sphere by providing news from Sweden and educating the immigrants about their new country (Björk, 2000; Beijbom, 1987; Williams, 1991).

Editors in Sweden read these Swedish-American newspapers and republished items for their local readers. Meanwhile, editors of Swedish-American newspapers subscribed to Swedish papers and reprinted news for their Swedish-speaking readership. Thus, the textual traffic bridging the Atlantic Ocean created a network of newspapers connecting the two countries.

If we examine the reuse of border-crossing texts in the nine-teenth-century Swedish and Swedish-American press, one Swedish paper emerges as central: *Östgöten*, established in 1872. People passing by the editorial office in central Linköping in the 1890s would see a miniature replica of the Statue of Liberty above the main entrance, and the Star-Spangled Banner flying over the building (Hellström, 2010, p. 46). The editor, Isidor Kjellberg (1841–1895), was a well-known critic of Swedish conservatism and American society represented his ideal of freedom, democracy, and equal opportunities. He had seen it first hand, and the reflection in *Nordstjernan* in 1875 expressed many of his own ideas. He had cut and published this article in his own paper by April of the same year (*Östgöten*, 7 April 1875) and it was reprinted again in at least five other Swedish papers within a month (cluster 12744661). ¹

By combining digital text mining and network analysis with a biographical approach, our aim in this article is to examine this individual actor and his political and journalistic role in the networks connecting newspapers across the Atlantic during the late nineteenth century. What were the characteristics of the political journalism that Kjellberg developed at the intersection between his American experiences and his political struggles in Sweden? We combine a quantitative analysis of *Östgöten's* position within the

transatlantic exchange network with a qualitative analysis of recurring themes in the textual traffic of which Östgöten was part. Which Swedish-American newspapers did Östgöten borrow from, and which Swedish-American papers reprinted texts from Östgöten? What kinds of texts did he share and how did he use them? Apart from sharing texts written by others, Kjellberg also developed his own brand of political journalism, inspired by the new journalism introduced in the American press during the late nineteenth century. How did he incorporate American new journalism into a Swedish context?

Cut-and-paste journalism and transnational histories

Before newspapers had the financial resources to hire reporters and correspondents, and before the widespread use of the telegraph and news agencies, editors largely relied on other newspapers as sources (Garvey, 2012; Jarlbrink 2015). No copyright restrictions existed to prohibit copy-and-paste journalism; the Berne convention of 1886, protecting literary works, made an exception for news (Hofmeyr & Peterson, 2019). Original content was produced as well, but the newspapers of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries are usually patchworks of texts taken from other newspapers, documents from authorities, private firms and letter-writing individuals, poems, and stories from books, etc.

The scale of this text reuse has been revealed in several studies, based on digitized newspapers and software to detect repeated passages (Cordell, 2015; Düring et al., 2023; Salmi et al., 2020). The resulting databases make it possible to study the movement of texts in space and time, how newspapers were connected, and how they were linked to technologies of transportation and communication. The method can also be used to locate individual newspapers and actors within the larger networks, and what role they played in relation to other papers and other actors.

There is, however, a kind of methodological nationalism built into many of these projects: it is difficult to detect text reuse across languages on a large scale. Most cases of cross-border text reuse analysed in previous work are based on newspapers in the same language (Oiva et al., 2019; Lundell et al., 2023; Pigeon, 2016). Until the methods are improved, the analysis of cross-border text reuse is limited to individual case studies or monolingual databases (e.g. Van Remoortel, 2020).

A transnational development of special significance in the analysis of Kjellberg's journalism is the so-called Americanization of the European press starting in the late nineteenth century, what Høyer and Pöttker (2005) refer to as "the diffusion of the news paradigm". This process entails an adaptation of the norms, forms, and practices central to modern journalism, what was labelled "new journalism" at the time: a focus on news events and news values, techniques such as the interview and texts structured according to the inverted pyramid, and a professional ideal emphasizing objectivity and political autonomy (Høyer, 2005). In Swedish press history, Americanization is often associated with the new layout introduced on the front page of *Dagens Nyheter* in 1909 (Lundström, 2001).

Broersma (2010) is critical of the teleological narrative dominant in previous research (including Høyer & Pöttker, 2005), where American journalism is the yardstick used to characterize journalism elsewhere. American ideals were influential, but a focus on Americanization, as it is usually understood, will primarily acknowledge the characteristics of European traditions in negative terms. Broersma (2010, 2020) suggests that it makes more sense to examine how American norms, forms, and practices were perceived, incorporated, and adapted in European contexts, including the local hybrids.

One branch of American journalism that is often left out of national press histories is the American immigrant press of the nineteenth century, defined either as an "ethnic" (e.g. Meyrowitz Maguire, 1993; Björk, 2000; Beijbom, 1987) or a transnational (e.g. Hickerson & Gustafson, 2016; Blanck & Hjorthén, 2016) phenomenon. The "ethnic" analysis examines how groups align with or contrast themselves to the mainstream of the host society, while the "transnational" investigates immigrant populations as transnational communities (Faist, 2000; Hoerder, 2002) producing culturally diverse "hybrid media products" (Cunningham & Sinclair, 2001). Many of the immigrants publishing these papers carried ideas and ideals back to Europe.

In 1886, the renowned Swedish author August Strindberg reflected upon the impact of journalists returning from the USA, after he was treated harshly by one of them, who specialized in "revolver journalism" (pay, or we will print scandals about you): "In the future, we might see a study of how immigrants returning from American influenced Swedish cultural life" (Strindberg, 1996, pp. 134–135). The revolver journalist in question was probably Hugo Nisbeth, editor of the *California Scandinav* for a few years in the 1870s, who later established *Figaro* in Stockholm. Other returning journalists mentioned in previous research were correspondents reporting from the USA, such as Mauritz Rubenson, correspondent for *Göteborgs- och Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* in the 1860s, and Ernst Beckman, who wrote for *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* in the 1870s. Back in Sweden, Rubenson became one of the first reporters in the

Swedish press, and Beckman was an early adopter of the interview (Nilsson, 1975; Johannesson, 2001).

Isidor Kjellberg's work is covered in both Swedish histories of the press (Nilsson, 1975; Johannesson, 2001; Hellström, 2010) and histories of the Swedish-American press (Stephenson, 1929; Backlund, 1952; Beijbom, 2020). Still, much of his journalism, his networks, and his political activism falls outside national frameworks. Kjellberg can be understood as a go-between, bridging geographical spheres, but also an intermediary connecting different cultures.

A few studies have addressed transatlantic relations between Swedes in Sweden and Swedish migrants in the USA (Barton, 1994; Blanck, 2016). Recent research on identity formation, migration, and cultural relations has highlighted the importance of transnational networks and information exchange (Levitt & Nyberg-Sörensen, 2004; Hoerder, 2002; Manning, 2013; Blanck & Hjorthén, 2016). Go-betweens are key to such networks. Metcalf (2006, pp. 9-10) distinguishes three different kinds of go-betweens: travellers creating links by being physically present in other countries or cultures, transactional go-betweens facilitating contact by translating between cultures, and representational go-betweens active in explaining one culture to another by sharing knowledge and experiences. As pointed out by Raj (2016), a single individual can act in all three capacities, and the roles and actions are often intertwined and overlapping. We use the concept and its three dimensions here to examine Kjellberg's role as a mediator between the USA and Sweden, between Swedes in the new country and those staying behind, and between American journalism and journalism in Sweden. Where studies of "diffusion" are less specific about the ways in which new ideas and practices circulated, the concept of the go-between enables us to examine the actors and actions that carried, introduced, and adapted them.

Methods and data

Our quantitative analysis is primarily based on the output of the open-access database "Text reuse in the Swedish-language press, 1645–1918". It includes Swedish and Swedish-American newspapers, and papers published in Finland in the Swedish language. Almost every Swedish title from the second half of the nineteenth century is covered in the database (825 titles from 1850-1899, so it extends well beyond the best-known), but only 17 Swedish-American titles. The total number of Swedish-American periodicals is unknown, but is estimated at between 225 and 1,500, where the higher figure includes numerous short-lived newspapers, and papers published after 1900 (Björk, 2000). Among the 17 titles represented in the database, we find the major papers published in Chicago, New York, and Minnesota. These newspapers are often mentioned as the most influential in Swedish-American press histories (Björk, 2000; Beijbom, 2020). The database also includes a few minor papers published in Texas, California, Massachusetts, Washington, and Michigan. The data is far from complete, but it allows us to trace the transatlantic text exchange between Sweden and important Swedish-American hubs in the USA. The exchange with Finland is not part of our analysis here, but the chains of reuse also include Finnish newspapers.

In the database, the first publication of a text and all its reprints are presented as a cluster with metadata identifying all the newspapers publishing the text, the dates and printing locations, the total number of reprints, and the number of days between the first printing and the last reprint. A cluster consists of segments of at least 300 characters matching one or more text segments in the dataset. Evaluations show that the algorithm used to cluster texts in the Swedishlanguage press (Basic Local Alignment Search Tool) performs better than alternative matching methods on digitized newspapers with plenty of errors generated by the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) (Vesanto et al. 2017). That said, it is not foolproof. Segments shorter than 300 characters are not matched at all. Text items spanning several columns or pages are often treated as separate segments, thus ending up in more than one text cluster. During postprocessing, we filtered out duplicate clusters (where single texts appear in more than one cluster), based on identical starting and end dates. Our final dataset consisted of about 37,000 transatlantic text clusters starting in Swedish-American papers, and 260,000 clusters starting in Sweden, from 1856 to 1899.

In the analysis, we first traced Kjellberg's journey from Sweden to the USA, his journalistic contacts, and the political controversies he was involved in before returning to Sweden to start his new project, *Östgöten*. To gain an understanding of the role of *Östgöten* in the larger network of text reuse, we then identified the most important newspapers in the transatlantic exchanges by performing a quantitative analysis. Based on these calculations, we zoomed in on *Östgöten* and its exchanges with Swedish-American papers. We followed this with a qualitative analysis of recurring themes in both the Swedish-American texts reprinted in *Östgöten* and texts from *Östgöten* reprinted across the Atlantic. Our focus is on Kjellberg's role as a gobetween, on the one hand mediating Swedish-American experiences to a Swedish readership, and on the other hand supplying Swedish-American readers with news and views from Sweden. In this analysis, we refer to shared texts by the cluster IDs that make it

possible to find all the reprints in the database. The final part of the analysis examines how Kjellberg adapted an American style of journalism in a Swedish context, exemplified with his interviews and his use of headlines.

Becoming a newspaperman

Isidor Kjellberg was born in Stockholm in 1841. In his teens, he started training as a mechanic and a draftsman. He worked at several factories in and around Stockholm during the 1860s and was later hired by a leading engineering company in Motala, 40 kilometres from Linköping, where he would set up his newspaper in the 1870s. In the spring of 1869, he travelled to Britain to continue his apprenticeship but failed to secure a position. He soon continued his journey to the USA, where he was employed as a draftsman in Philadelphia (Hellström, 2010, pp. 18-22).

Before Kiellberg crossed the Atlantic, he was already a published poet and had written short travel stories and plays (Hellström, 2010, p. 22). In 1869, his poems were printed in Svenska Amerikanaren (17 August 1869; 12 October 1869). Later that year, he signed a call for funds to raise a statue of the Swedish author August Blanche, published in Svenska Amerikanaren and co-signed by its editor, Herman Roos (11 November 1869). In January of 1870, he was contracted as a correspondent writing for the Swedish paper Göteborgs-Posten and made several journeys to Swedish settlements in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. In June of the same year, he took over as editor of Svenska Monitoren, published in St Paul, Minnesota (Beijbom, 2020). Within a year of leaving Europe, he had established contacts with editors on both sides of the Atlantic, he had his own paper, and he had travelled extensively. Very soon, he also gained enemies.

Already in his letters to Göteborgs-Posten, Kjellberg had exposed prominent actors in the Swedish-American community who were trying to exploit newly arrived immigrants. The "runners" were his main target, commissioners who offered land or work for a fee, without delivering on their promises (27 January 1870). Kjellberg's second target were the Swedish-American priests, the "spiritual runners" (3 April 1870), who exploited newly arrived Swedes financially, but also promoted the Swedish state-church ideology that many Swedes in the USA had tried to escape. Kjellberg's depictions were criticized in both Sweden and the USA. The editor of Göteborgs-*Posten* was concerned that these letters would drag his paper into Kjellberg's American conflicts and censored some of the material (Bonnier, 1870, 17 February).

Early in 1871, Kjellberg moved to Chicago, where he set up a new paper together with the Norwegian socialist Marcus Thrane. The first issue of *Justitia*, published on 25 February, stated that the newspaper had been founded by "some liberal-minded and truth-loving men" who had found that "every Swedish newspaper published in this country is to a greater or lesser extent dependent on circumstances that prevent their respective editors from speaking freely and in strict accordance with justice". Kjellberg became the editor, while the publisher was said to be "the public".

Justitia was critical of the Swedish-American elite, and its primary targets were the clergy, conservative journalists, and emigration profiteers (Söderström, 1910). It was not a newspaper in the traditional sense, mostly printing sarcastic opinion pieces, political poems, lists of commissioners to avoid, and fictionalized accounts of prominent Swedish-Americans – those whom Kjellberg saw as notorious swindlers. One example is a text about the city of Göteborg, a Swedish town supposedly founded in Kansas by Mr Burger, but non-existent according to Kjellberg and only used by "runners" to sell worthless property to newcomers. In Justitia it was labelled the "City of Humbug", and Kjellberg speculated about suitable candidates for official posts in the town: Mr Burger himself would be a worthy mayor, Charles Franklin, a commissioner recently sent to jail for fraud, would serve as the chief of police, former priest and known trickster Nils Anderson would be the minister, etc. (10 June 1871).

Eventually, the Scandinavian Emigrant Association, regularly smeared in *Justitia*, sued the paper for libel, demanding \$10,000 in damages. Kjellberg initiated fundraising efforts, but the Great Chicago Fire of October 1871 wiped out the paper and put an end to Kjellberg's journalistic career in the USA (Beijbom, 2020).

Kjellberg informed his colleagues in Chicago that he would "take Justitia with [him] and return to Sweden" (Beijbom, 2020, p. 76). His journalism in *Justitia* might suggest that he saw the USA as a land of swindlers, but that was far from the case. To him, it represented a land of opportunities, where immigrants could flourish regardless of their name or background, and they (i.e. white men) were free to vote in elections. Runners and conservative priests represented the antithesis of freedom, and this is what attracted Kjellberg's criticism. He would continue his battle against the enemies of progress, but from his new base in Linköping.

The transatlantic text flow in numbers

The transatlantic flow of news written in Swedish was already significant before Kjellberg started in journalism. Although still limited

in the 1850s, the reprinting increased during the following decades. Nevertheless, the text flow from Swedish to Swedish-American papers was more intense than traffic in the other direction. The growing intensity of cross-border text reuse over time seems to reflect the flow of Swedish immigrants to the USA, the expansion of the press in both countries, and the increasing fleet of vessels crossing the Atlantic.

Decade	From America to Sweden		From Sweden to America	
	Clusters	Average	Clusters	Average
		transfer time		transfer time
1850s	59	20 years	540	37 days
1860s	969	49 days	5 769	38 days
1870s	5 953	35 days	33 221	34 days
1880s	13 894	46 days	84 320	30 days
1890s	16 372	37 days	123 879	26 days

Table 1: The total frequencies of transatlantic clusters per decade, and the average time in days between the first printing of a text and the first reprint across the Atlantic, calculated as median values.

As seen in Table 1, the text items published in Swedish-American papers during the 1850s were not reprinted in Sweden until an average of 20 years later, indicating that Swedish editors did not follow the Swedish-American press at the time. During the later decades, the time became shorter between the first printing and the first reprinting of the same text on the other side of the Atlantic. Many texts made the journey in four to seven weeks.

In these transatlantic chains of reuse, a small number of newspapers served as bridges connecting the Swedish and Swedish-American press. These were the papers that were first to republish items from the other side of the Atlantic. Editors with limited access to foreign sources could borrow from these well-connected domestic papers.

Judging by the figures in Table 2 (see below), Östgöten, under Isidor Kjellberg's editorship, was the leading newspaper in Sweden for republishing texts from the Swedish-American press. It even surpassed major dailies in Stockholm and Gothenburg such as Dagens Nyheter and Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning. Table 2 also illustrates that Swedish-American newspapers often borrowed content from major Swedish newspapers based in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö.

So, Östgöten, which is not even in the top ten, was clearly more important for the spread of Swedish-American texts in Sweden than as a source for the Swedish-American press. One explanation is that immigrant papers in the USA usually reprinted stories from across the home country (Björk, 2000, p. 271), and Östergötland, where *Östgöten* was published, was only one region among many. The total number of transatlantic clusters starting in *Östgöten* (including local editions from the first few years, *Linköpings-Östgöten* and *Norrköpings-Östgöten*) was 1903.

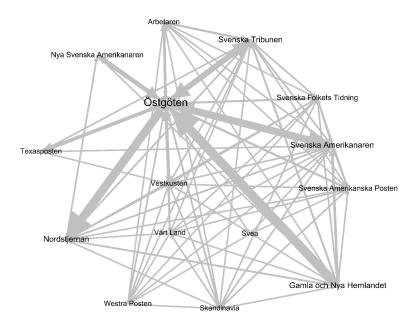
The Swedish papers first to publish Swedish-American texts	Number of clusters	The Swedish pa- pers originally printing what was reprinted in the USA	Number of clusters
Östgöten (Linkö-		Dagens Nyheter	
ping)	1 417	(Stockholm)	17 261
Göteborgs Han-			
dels- och Sjö-		Göteborgs Handels-	
fartstidning (Gö-		och Sjöfartstidning	
teborg)	1 273	(Göteborg)	13 903
Sydsvenska			
Dagbladet		Aftonbladet (Stock-	
(Malmö)	1 193	holm)	13 368
Smålandsposten		Sydsvenska	
(Växjö)	1 146	Dagbladet (Malmö)	8 712
Dagens Nyheter		Smålands-Posten	
(Stockholm)	1 054	(Växjö)	8 367
Göteborgs-			
Posten (Göte-		Norrköpings Tid-	
borg)	1 034	ningar (Norrköping)	7 224
Aftonbladet		Göteborgs-Posten	
(Stockholm)	969	(Göteborg)	6 790
Nya Norrlän-			
ningen (Sunds-		Stockholms Dagblad	
vall)	955	(Stockholm)	6 037
Hallandsposten		Svenska Dagbladet	
(Halmstad)	700	(Stockholm)	5 904
Göteborgs Af-			
tonblad (Göte-		Nerikes Allehanda	
borg)	656	(Örebro)	5 830

Table 2: Top lists of the Swedish papers first to publish Swedish-American texts, and the Swedish papers originally printing the texts that were reprinted in Swedish-American papers, 1645–1899.

The Swedish- American papers first to publish Swedish texts	Number of clusters	The Swedish-American papers originally printing what was reprinted in Sweden	Number of clusters
Svenska Tribunen (Chicago)	45 568	Svenska Tribunen (Chi- cago)	9 774
Svenska Ameri- kanaren (Chi- cago)	44 361	Gamla och Nya Hemlan- det (Chicago)	7 270
Nordstjernan (New York)	42 243	Svenska Amerikanaren (Chicago)	7 068
Gamla och Nya Hemlandet (Chi- cago)	35 817	Nordstjernan (New York)	4 480
Skandinavia (Worcester)	14 014	Skandinavia (Worces- ter)	2 056
Svenska Ameri- kanska Posten (Minneapolis)	12 686	Svenska Folkets Tidning (Minneapolis)	1 764
Svenska Folkets Tidning (Minne- apolis)	9 980	Svenska Amerikanska Posten (Minneapolis)	1 391
Vestkusten (San Francisco)	5 600	Vestkusten (San Fran- cisco)	1 058
Hemlandet: Det Gamla och Det Nya (Galesburg)	4 800	Nya Svenska Ameri- kanaren (Chicago)	643
Vårt Land (Jame- stown)	4 257	Hemlandet: Det Gamla och Det Nya (Ga- lesburg)	501

Table 3: Top lists of the Swedish-American papers first to publish Swedish texts. and the Swedish-American papers originally printing the texts that were reprinted in Swedish papers, 1645-1899.

Four Swedish-American papers published in Chicago and New York dominated the transatlantic flows in both directions - Svenska Tribunen, Svenska Amerikanaren, Nordstjernan, and Gamla och Nya Hemlandet. They were the first to publish 65 percent of the total incoming traffic from Sweden and accounted for 77 percent of the content reprinted in Swedish newspapers. These papers were also connected to Östgöten in various ways. Figure 1 illustrates the text loans between Östgöten and the Swedish-American newspapers.



Figur 1: Part of the transatlantic network of text reuse, 1859–1895, filtered to only show the Swedish-American newspapers reprinting texts from *Östgöten*, and Swedish-American papers used as sources by *Östgöten* (15 nodes, 120 edges). Altogether, 2907 cases of reuse are shown, excluding clusters where other Swedish newspapers served as bridges between *Östgöten* and the Swedish-American press. The arrows show the direction of text flow, from the source-paper to the reprinting paper.

The network shows that Östgöten had connections with newspapers across the USA. These connections were not always symmetrical, however. Östgöten's main Swedish-American sources were the conservative Gamla och Nya Hemlandet, and the liberal Svenska Amerikanaren and Svenska Tribunen, all of them based in Chicago, where Kjellberg had most of his contacts. Still, Gamla och Nya Hemlandet was more important as a source for Östgöten than Östgöten was for *Gamla och Nya Hemlandet.* The opposite is true for *Nordstjernan* in New York, which frequently borrowed from Östgöten while being less important as a contributor to the Swedish paper. The ties with papers outside of Chicago and New York were weaker, but Figure 1 shows that Kjellberg's paper exchanged texts with Texas Posten, Arbetaren (Michigan), and Vestkusten (California), among others. It is often difficult to establish whether newspapers shared texts between them or reprinted them independently, but Figure 1 suggests that several Swedish-American papers were involved in the traffic. In the following, we examine recurring themes in the texts that were shared.

Östgöten in the transatlantic text flow

After Kjellberg's arrival in Sweden, he worked for a brief period at the liberal Aftonbladet in Stockholm, before founding Östgöten in 1872 in Linköping. In the first issue (24 December 1872), he declared that the paper would be a voice for the working classes (and also mentioned that Swedes in America could subscribe to it for \$7.50 per year). Later ads stated that the paper was politically independent, worked for progress in social, political, and religious matters, and was against bureaucracy, militarism, and religious constraints (Östergötlands Allehanda, 17 December 1879). Kjellberg started off with only one editorial assistant, but the paper soon became successful (with the largest circulation in the region), employing a handful of staff members by the mid-1890s (Hellström, 2010, pp. 60-61).

Östgöten not only reprinted items from Swedish-American papers, it also commented on these papers as sources. After speculations in Swedish newspapers about the US presidential election of 1884, Östgöten commented that most Swedish papers were ill-informed, mostly relying on reports in the German press. If the Swedish press had "made an effort to take note of what the Swedish-American newspapers have to say about it, it would have come to very different conclusions" (15 November 1884). For many years, Östgöten contained a standing section publishing items "Från Amerika". As we have seen, however, Östgöten also served as a source for the Swedish-American press.

Apart from local news about accidents, crime, human interest stories, and local industries, which made up the bulk of the text reuse, Swedish-American papers often reprinted Östgöten's negative reports and comments about Swedish society, especially about the state church. For example, a story republished in Svenska Folkets Tidning and Svenska Amerikanaren in 1882 described a priest undertaking a clerical survey, to make sure that parishioners were true Lutherans, but who was instead interrogated by community members about the state church's view on Communion (clusters 30009532 & 30009525); a text about another priest, who called children taking Communion "sacramental dirty dogs", spread to Svenska Amerikanaren, Svenska Amerikanska Posten, Svenska Folkets Tidning, and Vestkusten in 1890 (cluster 31160873). Östgöten was not always named as a source, but Kjellberg's message came across anyway: "Through the church, freedom of speech is restricted. It is said that there is religious freedom in Sweden, but it is indeed poorly managed" (cluster 101816742). Many Swedes left the country for religious reasons, and Östgöten's coverage confirmed their experiences. As a go-between, Kjellberg shared the views of many

Swedish-Americans and wrote in a way that made his texts attractive to reprint. As indicated in Figure 1, news and opinion pieces critical of Swedish society were shared mostly by the liberal press in the USA. Still, there were several exceptions. Among other texts, conservative *Gamla och Nya Hemlandet* reprinted a call to ban child labour (cluster 11616385), another call against animal cruelty (cluster 11843003), news about the temperance movement (cluster 12577568), and complaints about the economic difficulties forcing people to migrate (cluster 11758865).

The latter issue was a key concern for Kjellberg and Östgöten. Kjellberg acted as a guide who informed – and warned – his readers about migration routes, what to expect, and what to avoid. The texts he reprinted from Swedish-American papers gave advice on where to settle down (clusters 101939209; 9831698; 11311649), and where to find work (9688865; 12775307; 11762719), sometimes narrated from the perspective of successful Swedes (12738408; 11762362; 11750043). Other texts warned about "runners" and shared stories about Swedish migrants being exploited and ruined (cluster 11883344), or dangers such as dishonest priests, uncivilized Native Americans, or countrymen who had fallen into quackery (clusters 12816139; 11617852; 11530337).

Östgöten's agenda clearly aligns with the ideology already visible in *Justitia*. Kjellberg borrowed texts from the USA that expressed his scepticism towards clerical rule, religious narrow-mindedness, and the transplanted power structures among Swedes in the USA. Yet, as well as educating future migrants, he also used the Swedish-American press as an ally in his mission to democratize Sweden.

Editors of the Swedish-American press often complained about their new country being misrepresented in Swedish papers. "If the Swedish-American press was biased in the same way, it would mainly print news from Sweden about fraud and crime" (cluster 12509511). Kjellberg had already tried to counterbalance these negative reports in a series of articles written for *Aftonbladet* when he returned to Sweden in the summer of 1872: "America and Sweden: Parallels". He specifically focused on what he described as "social conditions". One article focused on social hierarchies (*Aftonbladet*, 11 June 1872), and another on career possibilities for those coming from poor families (*Aftonbladet*, 9 July 1872). In all of these comparisons, Sweden came up short.

As the editor of *Östgöten*, Kjellberg used texts from Swedish-American papers to amplify his own message about the need for urgent democratic and social reforms in Sweden. An illustrative example is "Why people emigrate", a letter first published in *Svenska Amerikanaren* in 1893. "I still remember", the author explained, "what made me leave Sweden". The main reason turned out to be

Swedish election laws, also a prime concern for Kjellberg. "As it is in Sweden, money and the value of money, such as pigs and cattle, have the right to vote, not the people." The USA, on the other hand, offered "the greatest liberties and rights" (cluster 11313693). An interview republished by Östgöten in 1892 gave a similar answer: The main reason why people leave Sweden "is the unequal division of power" (cluster 11612620). The same thoughts were also expressed in reprinted poems. "A voice from America" asked: When will I return? "When the Swedes abolish / Power based on birth and family" (cluster 11700050). Another poem described how Swedish contractworkers, who had a status similar to serfs in Sweden, were offered land of their own once they settled in the USA (cluster 30266956). Other texts compared the booming economy in the USA to the difficult conditions in Scandinavia (cluster 11882097), and the educational systems, where American practical skills stood out against Swedish theoretical learning that was not of much use in real life (cluster 11593496).

When Swedish emigration to the USA really took off, various actors in Swedish society tried to prevent people from leaving (Kälvemark, 1972; Alm, 2003). In Kiellberg's analysis, these actors - conservative politicians, landed gentry, industrialists, and clergy - were the same as those blocking social reforms and new election laws that forced Swedes to migrate. The best way to make people stay, he argued, would be to improve the social, political, religious, and economic conditions in Sweden. He used the Swedish-American press to push for such reforms.

The texts from Swedish-American newspapers that Kjellberg reprinted in his own paper show few signs of the new journalistic features introduced into American metropolitan dailies during the late nineteenth century. In this respect, the Swedish-American press was more similar to the Swedish papers. Interviews were rare, and headlines were labels rather than news-oriented summaries. As we shall see, Kjellberg was much more experimental in his own newspaper, where he introduced his own brand of "new journalism".

New journalism

Conventional histories of the Scandinavian press have emphasized the idea of the party-political press as the main framework explaining key characteristics of newspaper journalism from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. During periods when political loyalty was the main concern, editors did not prioritize the news, or American inventions. This, according to Høyer (2005, p. 75), explains why it took half a century for the news paradigm to pass from the USA to Scandinavia.

Yet, an editor such as Kjellberg, regarded as a Swedish pioneer of the partisan press (Johannesson, 2001, p. 201), does not fit this picture. Politics dominated the pages of his paper, but he used elements central to the US news paradigm to cover the topics and edit the texts. Like the muckraker emerging in the American press at the same time, Kjellberg used his paper to expose negligent and corrupt public officials, and what he saw as social and political injustices.

In a handwritten PM, possibly from 1893 (Hellström, 2010, p. 56), Kjellberg explained who his readers were: "Östgöten is edited for the simple folks. They have a hard time reading long essays [...] They prefer to read short news items." Therefore, the "dry and 'boring'" news should be kept to a minimum, and he instead gave priority to "stories about fates and misfortunes". Texts describing meetings and political deliberations should go "directly to the heart of the matter, without expositions" (Kjellberg, n.d.). The result was a paper that followed "American principles", according to a Swedish-American editor in San Francisco, who explained in a letter to Kjellberg in 1893 that he read *Östgöten* regularly: "It seems to me that you run the paper according to American principles. It is fearless, lively – and spicy, something that cannot be said about Swedish papers in general, which to us Americans appear as boring and old fashioned" (Skarstedt, 1893).

Still, the body text of most news articles published in *Östgöten* during Kjellberg's active years lack the features of the inverted pyramid. Stories were usually told in chronological order. The headlines, on the other hand, were often of the American kind, summarizing the most important elements of the stories in several rows:

The railway accident.

The former traffic director's answers to several questions,

Important but tragic revelations about multiple, similar accidents recently discovered.

A malfunctioning locomotive still in use.

Deceptive signals.

Locomotives and train cars meeting [on the same track].

The train drivers' resourcefulness is often put to the hardest tests.

A cry of despair from Inspector Björkelund.

A collection among train drivers to hire an attorney for dead train driver Andersson's widow.

(24 November 1875).

Knut Wicksell's lecture. ("Marriage and its future")

Tightly knotted, almost indissoluble bonds. or more free love?

One of the most important cultural issues: it is discussed in a very lively way in the thinking world.

The question is posed on the occasion of women's position in marriage, bordering slave-like conditions.

The treatment of Doctor Knut Wicksell shows with all clarity the scary madness in that a small town authority can ban him from talking.

(15 June 1887).

Such multi-decker headlines were rare in *Östgöten* in the 1870s and the early 1880s but used on a regular basis from 1887 onwards. They were non-existent in most other Swedish newspapers, and used mainly to illustrate how American papers were edited (cf. Nilsson, 1974, p. 53). When other papers lifted articles from Östgöten, they usually reprinted the body text but added more conventional headlines (see, for example, clusters 13524874, 7218139 & 9210968). The standard headline at the time would give the topic ("The parliament") or the location ("Stockholm"), not the story itself (Johannesson, 2001). Similar headlines are found in leading Swedish-American papers from the 1880s and 1890s, like Svenska Amerikanaren. Gamla och Nya Hemlandet, Nordstjernan and others. In his own paper, Justitia, Kjellberg had used more colourful headlines, like "Scandal! Scandal!", and "Bragging, hypocrisy, and falsehood" (both from 13 May 1871). For the multi-decker headlines in Östgöten, however, Kjellberg's inspiration probably stemmed directly from the big metropolitan dailies in Chicago or New York. Like the popular press in the USA, Kjellberg used the new layout to attract the "simple folks" who made up his readership. In his local

adaptation, however, he often arranged individual segments of the headlines into arrow-shapes pointing at the body texts, ensuring that the most important news stood out even more (see the headline from June 1887 above).

Kjellberg did not shy away from leading articles and opinion pieces, but they were often dressed up as sensational news, with polemical headlines capturing the essence of the main text. Below are a few examples to illustrate his technique:

The torture of swine.
Atrocities without limits.
Animals are scalded alive.
It is still not abolished.
But it must come to an end!

(10 March 1890).

That is why the right to vote is necessary.

As long as you don't want Sweden to be a deserted country.

The real truth about immigration.

(25 July 1892).

The last of these examples was a text cut from a Swedish-American paper, but the original headline simply asked: "Why do we emigrate?" (*Arbetaren,* 11 February 1892). The more elaborate headline in *Östgöten* was Kjellberg's own addition.

Apart from the editing, Kjellberg's adoption of the new journalism is most noticeable in his interviews. The method is not always visible in the texts, but there are exceptions. In July 1875, *Östgöten* reported that several buildings in central Linköping were about to be torn down. One of them had already had its upper floors partly demolished when a mother and her five children moved into the ground floor to seek shelter. *Östgöten* sent one of its staff members – probably Kjellberg himself – to "crawl inside" and investigate their situation. What makes this news item stand out is the fact that the mother spoke to readers in her own words.

— Maybe, she said, we can stay here tonight, but then I must take the children out into the woods. [...] I knew the building was about to be demolished, but it was impossible for me to find another home. Another woman staying here is lucky, she has no children. I've tried to support my family by working (washing and the like) but now it's impossible.

Östgöten's representative also spoke to those responsible for the demolition. How long could the family and others sheltering in the

house stay inside, before the roof collapsed? They too were speaking directly to readers, although with a collective voice:

- It depends, they said, on how efficient the workers are: if they only manage to take the top floor apart today, she can stay the night.

(24 July 1875).

In the text itself, the term "interview" was nowhere to be found. Yet, it is hard to label this investigation and the questions that were asked in any other way. Kjellberg was first introduced to the interview method while he was in the USA in the early 1870s (Nilsson, 1975). When he returned to Sweden, he used it regularly to cover local issues in Östgöten. In a way, the feedback loop was completed when the Chicago paper Nya Svenska Amerikanaren (26 August 1875) reprinted the story about the homeless family, introducing an interview conducted in Sweden for readers in the USA. Journalistic inventions usually travelled in the other direction. The article was also reprinted in Swedish papers (cluster 9767659).

Originating in the USA, the first interviews are dated either to the mid-1830s or the 1860s (Nilsson, 1975; Schudson, 1994). They became widely accepted during the 1880s, when public figures agreed to be interviewed on a more regular basis (Schudson, 2005). In the Swedish press, interviews were rare until the 1880s, and it took a few decades before they became common features (Nilsson, 1975). Kjellberg's travel writing, published in Göteborgs-Posten in 1870, shows traces of the many conversations he had with the people he met. A Swedish settler in Wisconsin, for example, was quoted like this: "'My piece of land", he explained, "is satisfactory for my needs; and it's a thousand times better that I paid for a small plot in cash, rather than a large one on credit'" (Göteborgs-Posten, 25 August 1870; additional reprints in clusters 101114879 & 2336458). This conversational style, where ordinary people talked about their situation directly in the text, was something that Kjellberg brought back to Sweden.

In Swedish press history, Kjellberg is recognized as an early adopter of the interview, but his contribution is mainly associated with his interviews with striking workers and the most senior governmental representative in the town of Sundsvall in 1879 (Johannesson, 2001). Published in a Stockholm paper to increase the impact, this was almost certainly the first time in Sweden that a member of the press had received direct answers from a public official (Nilsson 1975). In his own newspaper, however, Kjellberg had already been using the method for a few years.

The interviews in Östgöten were not labelled as such in the newspaper itself, and people's answers were not always reported as direct

speech. As pointed out by Høyer (2005, p. 12), the "news interview is a tool journalists use to retrieve information from information sources and does not necessarily appear in the text as questions and answers." Kjellberg initiated "inquiries", made "visits", and "posed questions". In 1873, for example, he visited the local jail to investigate the conditions for the prisoners, he asked the workers at the paper mill in neighbouring Norrköping how they were treated by their superiors and visited a local charity that provided housing for poor widows (22 March 1873; 29 March 1873; 19 April 1873). After a fatal railway accident just outside Linköping in November 1875, Kjellberg made inquiries which suggested that the railway company was to blame, rather than individual train drivers. The extensive report was widely circulated, reprinted in full or in part, but never with Östgöten's detailed, multi-decker headline, cited above (see clusters 1933858, 8946021, & 6818948). One paper explained to its readers what the news in Östgöten was about: Kjellberg had, "as is the custom in the American press, posed questions to the assistant director of traffic, and received calmly stated answers" (Mariefreds Tidning, 8 December 1875).

Journalists' ability to interview the powerful is often seen as a significant shift in the dynamics between the press and the government. Kjellberg's interview with a governmental representative in 1879 has been described as an important step in the coming of age of the Swedish press (Nilsson, 1990, p. 48). The idea that the interview is primarily an encounter between a journalist and a public figure also runs through Schudson's (1994) account of the institutionalization of the interview in the USA and Europe. It is not incorrect to understand the importance of the interview in this way, but it is limited. In a context where most news arrived as texts, copied and reprinted from other newspapers and official statements, the voices of public figures spread from column to column. The hybrid that Kjellberg introduced into the Swedish press involved interviews with those who would otherwise remain unheard: the factory workers, the widows, the homeless.

Conclusions

Copy-and-paste journalism created links between Swedish communities across the Atlantic and readers in Sweden. *Östgöten* was a vital node in this exchange network, serving as a platform for Swedish-American news and views in a Swedish context. The newspaper's role in the traffic going from Sweden to the USA was less prominent, but all the major Swedish-American papers reprinted *Östgöten* texts critical of Swedish society.

As a go-between with experience of both countries, Kjellberg acted as a guide, giving advice and updates on American conditions to prospective Swedish migrants. The Swedish-American press also provided him with an outsider's perspective on Sweden. Kjellberg used it as an ally in his campaigns for political reforms, workers' rights, and equality. In Kjellberg's opinion, those who wanted to prevent Swedes from migrating by spreading negative images of the USA were the same as those who blocked democratic and social reforms. By sharing testimonies from Swedish Americans, he was able to show that the political system and inequalities were important reasons explaining why so many had already left.

Kjellberg was no objective journalist merely reporting the facts. He was a political activist and used his paper to promote his agenda. Nevertheless, the methods he used to uncover injustices and corruption borrowed from the new journalism that was then emerging in the USA. Kjellberg was an early adopter of both the interview and a graphical form of layout highlighting the news. The result was not American journalism according to the standard news paradigm, but a hybrid inspired by his work in the USA and his experiences from Sweden.

Taken together, Kjellberg's life history, his movements in the USA and Sweden, and his experiences as a newspaperman in Chicago explain his role in the information network and how he used it in his efforts to democratize and liberalize Sweden.

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NOTES

¹ This ID identifies the cluster of reprinted or overlapping texts in the database "Text reuse in the Swedish-language press, 1645–1918", available at https://textreuse.sls.fi/. Matching segments of at least 300 characters in two or more papers are identified by a clustering algorithm, see the section on methods and data. To find the cluster, this search string must be used: "cluster_id:cluster_12744661".

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JIMMY ENGREN

Senior Lecturer School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences Örebro University iimmy.engren@oru.se

JOHAN JARLBRINK

Associate Professor Department of Culture and Media Studies **Umeå University** johan.jarlbrink@umu.se