Transnational approaches to the history of the United States seek to enrich our understanding of American society by challenging the nation as an analytical category. While historians still debate how to define transnationalism, the debates themselves have opened up new research perspectives. Certainly, transnational approaches are able to analyze forms of social relations that exist outside or defy limitations imposed by nation-states. Transnationalism also has a lot to offer historians of globalization as it can capture the role non-state actors play in the formation of a global civil society. Nevertheless, the transnational, national, and international are not separate spheres. Transnational relations between groups in different parts of the world can shape the environment that nation-states operate in, and transnationalism as an approach does not mean ignoring the nation-state. Nation-states exert power that can disrupt, transform, or encourage transnational relations. This essay explores how, in Weimar Germany, state power and national loyalties interacted with transnational scholarly networks fostered by American foundations and argues that transnational connections, despite all their border-transcending potential, can support national, and nationalist, projects.

During the interwar years, American foundations sought to encourage transnational scholarly collaboration in the study of international relations. The three most notable actors in that field were the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP), the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, and the Rockefeller Foundation’s Social Science Division. They awarded grants to a number of scholars and institutions in Europe and the United States. But the foundations did more than just support national academic communities. They also financed the work of the International Studies Conference (ISC), a transnational network that linked many of their grant recipients and had been formed under the auspices of the League of Nations’ International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) in 1928. Within the framework of the ISC, scholars and foundations alike were experimenting with international relations, a new, interdisciplinary area of research that only became a sub-discipline of political science after 1945. In the interwar years, international relations was not an
institutionalized discipline with an established set of concepts, theories, and methods. There were few international relations specialists, and scholars who addressed international questions generally had a disciplinary background in law, history, sociology, or political economy. Moreover, it should not be overlooked that the activities under the auspices of the ISC were also, in David Long’s words, “a practical normative peace project associated with the League,” not just an attempt to define a novel object of study. The commitment to international understanding was shared by American foundations and was the basis of their support for the ISC. Nevertheless, the foundations also realized that they had first to build up strong national institutions in the larger European countries and to encourage scholars that were interested in cross-border collaboration. Mobilizing those forces in Germany proved to be a particularly complex task.

Two academic institutions were the primary recipients of Rockefeller and Carnegie grants: the Institut für Auswärtige Politik (Foreign Policy Institute—IAP) in Hamburg and the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik (German Academy for Politics—DHfP) in Berlin. They were private institutes, existing outside the state-run university system, and have been credited with laying the foundations for the institutionalization of international relations in Germany. The IAP edited the German volumes of the Carnegie-commissioned *Economic and Social History of the World War* while at the Hochschule the Endowment established a “Carnegie Chair.” There were also plans for an institute for peace research, the Stresemann Academy. The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, and later the Rockefeller Foundation’s Social Science Division, supported both institutes.

Although the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Endowment supported the same institutions and to some extent coordinated their programs, there were significant differences between the two foundations. The Carnegie Endowment’s interest in international relations was a result of its origins in peace advocacy. Founded in 1910, it purported “to bring the sentimental and the practical forces of the world into cooperation on the basis of demonstrable economic and historic truth.” Its two research departments published widely in the fields of international law and history, but the emphasis clearly remained on disseminating, not generating, knowledge. Producing publicity to promote international understanding and establishing personal contacts between the world’s political and cultural elites were the primary aims of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

The Rockefeller philanthropies were more research oriented. Their programs in international relations were part of an endeavor to develop the social sciences in North America and Europe, with a special emphasis on empirical approaches and collaborative research projects. The interest in international relations became more pronounced once the Spelman...
Memorial was amalgamated with the Foundation in January 1929. The newly created Division of Social Sciences singled out three areas for support, namely, international relations, economic stabilization, and public administration. This concentration reflected the impact of the world economic crisis, which had decreased the income of foundations and highlighted the practical importance of certain fields of research.10

Despite differences in emphasis, officers in both foundations shared a broadly liberal internationalist outlook and saw the programs they implemented as instrumental to the creation of a peaceful world order. In that sense, most foundation officers could be described as idealists, sharing a belief in the possibility of progressive change in international relations through education and scholarship.11 They assumed that intellectuals, speaking the universal language of science and scholarship, could forge ties across nations that would pacify international politics. Moreover, the “objective” analysis of relationships among nations was necessary to curb the irrational forces of chauvinism. As James T. Shotwell, director of the Carnegie Endowment’s Division of Economics and History, put it, “the technique of research [was] but the extension and application in greater detail of … sanity in political thinking.”12 This “scientism” resonates in the words of Raymond Fosdick, longtime Rockefeller Foundation Trustee as well as its president between 1936 and 1948, when he declared that “the Foundation’s entire work in all fields has been aimed at the single target of world peace.”13

Fosdick directly experienced working in a multinational environment during his brief stint as under-secretary-general for the League of Nations and remained a League supporter throughout his life. Other foundation representatives became members of elite foreign policy think tanks.14 For the most part, though, foundation officers kept out of electoral politics, conducting their international activities as a private enterprise. This attitude to American philanthropy abroad was shared by U.S. government officials. Before 1938, the State Department showed virtually no interest in cultural relations, including scholarly exchanges, intellectual contacts, or scientific collaboration. Such activities were left to the private sector. The documents in the State Department’s archives relating to foundation activity abroad between 1920 and 1938 consist largely of dispatches from U.S. diplomats, some of whom did display a strong interest in the relevance of transnational philanthropic networks to American foreign policy.15 But only shortly before the Second World War did American government officials fully recognize and take advantage of the expertise and resources that had accumulated within these institutions.16

The relationship between the State Department and the two foundations becomes relevant when one considers whether these nongovernmental organizations can be automatically classified as transnational
actors. On the one hand, the foundations were privately funded, developed their policies independently, and for much of the interwar years operated in a field that was of little interest to foreign policy-makers. The Rockefeller Foundation also kept a cautious distance from anything that smacked of official endorsement. Foundation officers, for example, reacted strongly against an attempt of the IIIC to put pressure on Rockefeller trustees through diplomatic channels. On the other hand, even though the foundations were transnational players, non-state actors operating across national borders, a certain closeness to the foreign policy-making process cannot be denied. Officers in both foundations acted as expert advisers to American delegations to intergovernmental conferences. The Carnegie Endowment in particular had strong personal links to the State Department. But in their dealings with European grant recipients, the foundations were left to their own devices. This becomes especially clear when one compares the foundations’ position to that of their German associates.

In the Weimar Republic, foreign policy-makers displayed a strong interest in transnational cultural relations. Not only did the German Ministry of External Affairs possess a department for cultural relations, it also encouraged scientific exchange. However, this has to be seen in the context of two aims that the Ministry pursued during the 1920s: first, to manipulate domestic and international debates on the origins of the Great War, and second, to end the international scientific isolation of German scholars.

Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty, the so-called war-guilt clause, was pivotal to German attempts at treaty revision. Interpreted as assigning responsibility for the war exclusively to Germany and its allies, the clause caused public outrage. Propaganda campaigns against Article 231 were coordinated by the Ministry of External Affairs, which hoped that influencing public opinion in former Allied countries would improve the prospects for revision. Officials coordinated research into the war-guilt question and commissioned publications and publicity campaigns. As we shall see later, the Ministry tried to influence independent publications on the war, too. The official initiative that received most attention abroad was an authoritative collection of German diplomatic sources relating to the period from 1871 to 1914 entitled Die Große Politik der Europäischen Kabinette. The Ministry commissioned it to present German prewar diplomacy in the best possible light and to put pressure on Allied governments to open their archives in turn. One staff member spent his entire time vetting documents before passing them on to the collection’s editors. There were also direct interventions in the publication process, about which the head of the editorial team, Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, repeatedly complained. The published volumes contained documents that were
shortened and accompanied by apologetic editorials. Some German historians, such as Otto Hoetzsch, criticized this as unscientific. However, co-editor Friedrich Thimme explained that the task had been “not a purely scientific one but just as much a political one and that political purposes made it necessary to ... deviate ... from certain scientific maxims.”

Politics and scholarship, however, were connected in many other ways in the Weimar Republic as well. Cultural diplomacy and cultural relations as alternative forms of foreign policy had already been discussed before 1914 among the educated. After the war, the debate was taken up by politicians and state bureaucrats. According to the advocates of Kulturpolitik, Germany was to expand its scientific and cultural influence to compensate for its lost great-power status. In 1920, the Ministry of External Affairs created a department of cultural relations, the Kulturabteilung, which was responsible for German educational institutions in foreign countries, international scholarly exchange, and the promotion of German culture and language abroad. But in the early 1920s, one of the biggest concerns in the Kulturabteilung was the international isolation of German scholars. Their participation in international scientific networks was effectively curtailed between 1919 and 1926 through an organized boycott of Germany by the national scientific academies of the former Allied and neutral countries. Combined with the general funding crisis of the German university system, this put scholars in serious danger of losing touch with international trends. By the mid-1920s, though, the boycott had started to crumble. This was noted and welcomed in the Ministry. As German diplomacy took a more conciliatory turn, especially once membership in the League of Nations became an option in 1924, good relations with foreign cultural elites became important, and the Ministry encouraged German scholars to cultivate them.

American foundations were one of the groups keen to collaborate with German scholars even while the boycott was in place. In particular, the role of the Rockefeller Foundation in ending the country’s scientific isolation was acknowledged at the time. But why were the foundations so interested in rehabilitating German academia? First, the intentional isolation of a country, especially one sporting significant scientific achievements, ran contrary to the universalist ideals of foundation officers. Those who went to Germany in the early 1920s noted with regret that scholars were lagging behind. Guy Stanton Ford, visiting several universities on behalf of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, wrote, “Intellectually as well as physically they have lived for ten years on their own flesh.” German scholars, he believed, needed “new hope and outside intellectual contacts.” James T. Shotwell regarded American assistance to German academic institutions as “a stimulus to productive scholarship which may offer a contribution to us all.”
There was also a fear among foundation officers that an isolated Germany would split the international scientific community into two warring camps. In a letter to Fosdick, Shotwell recalled the 1923 World Conference of Historians, which had excluded scholars from the Central Powers. As a consequence, they considered setting up a rival organization. This, Shotwell feared, “would be accentuating a rival line of European history based upon German theories, especially those dealing with the origin of the war.” As the head of the American delegation, he convinced the conference organizers to make the next meeting more representative. The task for American foundations, he wrote to Fosdick, would be to heal political rifts between scholars as much as to support them with grants. The growth of “rival national schools … in the social and political sciences” had to be prevented as it “would put back our movements of internationalism for many a long year.”

American foundations began to offer Germany material assistance from 1920, when the Rockefeller Foundation started donating medical journals. To distribute them, the Foundation cooperated with the quasi-governmental Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft (Emergency Association for German Science, hereafter Notgemeinschaft,) which had representatives at all German universities. Formed by scientists and bureaucrats after the war, it coordinated and funded university research. It was also one of the few organizations authorized by the Ministry of External Affairs to collect donations abroad. The experience, knowledge, and networks of the Notgemeinschaft proved very valuable to the Rockefeller Foundation, and their successful collaboration accounts for the large share of Rockefeller aid that Germany subsequently received under the medical literature program.

The first collaborative research project in international relations that involved American foundations and German scholars was the Carnegie Endowment’s multi-volume Economic and Social History of the World War, designed to become “the greatest co-operative history ever written.” Its aim was to analyze the impact of the Great War on society with the “ultimate purpose … to further peace by revealing what war does to civilization.” As with similar efforts in the twentieth century, the Carnegie History’s publishers assumed that a collaborative attempt at (re)writing the past, involving participants from different countries, could create mutual understanding between them. In each country, the Carnegie Endowment appointed an editorial committee to commission and edit the volumes. The
German committee, formed in 1922, was headed by Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, the editor of *Große Politik der Europäischen Kabinette*. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, a law professor with a specialization in Anglo-Saxon law, was a liberal democrat with pacifist leanings. He co-founded the Institut für Auswärtige Politik (IAP), the first German research institute for the study of international conflicts and their prevention. Like most German scholars, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy pleaded for the revision of the post-World War I settlement, but he insisted that a diplomacy of conciliation rather than confrontation would best achieve this end. This moderate revisionist also belonged to the transnational network comprising members of the three liberal foreign affairs institutes that emerged in the context of the Paris Peace Conference. The American Council on Foreign Relations, the British Royal Institute of International Affairs, and the IAP in Hamburg had all been founded under similar circumstances and with similar aims. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was well known within the small Anglo-American elite that populated the Council and the Royal Institute of International Affairs. This circle also had close personal links with American foundations, a fact that helped to bring Mendelssohn-Bartholdy to the attention of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial. From 1926 to 1930, the IAP received a $20,000 grant from the Memorial. This provided stipends for special research projects, some in collaboration with the Royal Institute of International Affairs. There is evidence that the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial had ambitious plans for the IAP that would see it transformed into a “house [for] all of the social sciences,” though by mid-1930 this plan had faltered due to a lack of local support.

Mendelssohn-Bartholdy’s close ties to Anglo-American internationalism as well as his experience with editing diplomatic sources had also recommended him to the Carnegie Endowment. In early 1923, the IAP became the base for the German editorial committee of the Carnegie History project. As all volumes of the Carnegie History were to be based on official sources, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and co-editor Carl Melchior sought the cooperation of government ministries, claiming that the purpose of the *Economic and Social History of the World War* was to “give an objective account of the effects of the war and to contribute to a balancing of the different evaluations of the World War that are still prevalent in the world.” For Germany this would be the first opportunity “to participate in a discussion on an entirely equal footing with other countries” as “the German volumes [were] on a par with those offered by England and France and describe[d] the economic and political aspects of the conduct of the war in an objective and convincing fashion, especially to the audience in the United States.” Since the American public was the main target of government-orchestrated propaganda, and since the volumes would be published in an international series, the Carnegie project generated interest in the government ministries...
that the editors addressed. While some officials vilified the Carnegie History as “vicious propaganda,” the majority concluded that the German contribution to the project was “politically important.” Government cooperation came at a price, though. Manuscripts had to be sent to the relevant authorities for review, and certain topics, such as the extraction of raw materials in occupied territories or the Hindenburg Program, were out of bounds. To ensure compliance with these conditions, the editorial board had to liaise with a governmental committee. State officials encouraged the collaboration between American foundations and German scholars because it gave them the opportunity to convey a positive image of Germany to an American audience but, at the same time, put this collaboration under close surveillance.

In effect, the Carnegie History underwent the same vetting process that had been developed during the compilation of Die Große Politik der Europäischen Kabinette. What could have become a rival project, an unofficial history of the Great War that avoided taking the government line, had been stifled. Certain volumes, for instance, those on the German war industry, were written but never published because of government interference, to the bitter disappointment of the Carnegie Endowment. But were the editors who had conducted the negotiations with the ministerial bureaucracy and agreed to censorship entirely to blame for this? To some extent, the episode exposed defects in the entire project. Ultimately, the border-transcending Carnegie History had been designed along strictly national lines, with national editing committees headed by scholars and politicians—Melchior was also the Weimar Republic’s first ambassador to Britain—who were likely to become embroiled in a conflict of interest. This seems to have happened in the case of Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, who, when approached by the Ministry of External Affairs in 1926 with a request to “further influence the Carnegie foundation,” politely declined.

Carnegie and Rockefeller interest in the IAP also lessened during the 1920s. While Mendelssohn-Bartholdy continued to carry great weight with the foundations, the institute, given its small size and location, could only have a limited impact on the political and academic cultures of the Weimar Republic. Another institution became more prominent in the policies of both foundations, the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik in Berlin. Founded in 1920, the Hochschule loosely collaborated with the IAP. However, while the Hamburg institute had been designed as a specialized research institute from the start, the founders of the Hochschule stressed the broader educational role of their school. From the mid-1920s, the number of courses at university level rose and professional academics increasingly replaced politicians and civil servants as teachers. Although the Hochschule was able to increase its academic reputation over time, the overall emphasis remained on teaching.
The founders of the academy emerged from the “national-liberal” milieu around Friedrich Naumann. They supported the constitutional consensus of the Weimar Republic, even if most of them were Vernunftrepublikaner who lacked a firm commitment to parliamentary democracy as such. At the Hochschule, they aspired to create an institution that was above party lines, capable of educating a new political elite. After the humiliation of the lost war, the aim was to contribute to a national renewal. Some members of the founding generation were politically on the right—for example, the historian Otto Hoetzsch. Young scholars like Herrmann Heller, Hajo Holborn, and Sigmund Neumann represented the liberal left. From 1927, there was an increased influx of the anti-democratic and radical right, a development that threatened the Hochschule’s original maxim to remain open to all parties, except those on the extremes. It is important to note that the Hochschule had excellent links with the political and administrative elites of the Weimar Republic. Ernst Jäckh, its well-connected director and president from 1930, was a compulsive networker. He had made a name for himself as a publicist and had been an adviser to the Ministry of External Affairs before the war. Tirelessly seeking official backing for his institution, he managed to recruit a number of public figures for its board of trustees, such as Chief Justice Walter Simons, the industrialist Robert Bosch, and the banker Hjalmar Schacht.

Ernst Jäckh was crucial for establishing the Hochschule’s international contacts, too, especially with regard to bringing in the support of American foundations. In the winter of 1924/1925, he traveled to New York where he met Nicholas Murray Butler, the president of both the Carnegie Endowment and Columbia University. Jäckh’s visit occurred at a time when Butler himself was seeking to establish official relations between the Carnegie Endowment and the German government. A letter from Butler to Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann in April 1925 was followed by several conversations between Butler and Ago von Maltzan, the German ambassador in Washington. The latter had come across the Endowment before, as his support for the Carnegie History had been sought by Carl Melchior while Maltzan was still state secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. Maltzan saw clear advantages in a stronger link between the Endowment and Germany, as expressed in a memorandum to Berlin: “Because of its large assets—since 1913 the Endowment has spent on average more than half a million dollars, in some years significantly more—the Carnegie Endowment has remarkable opportunities to influence public opinion in all countries, especially in intellectual circles. We must not miss this opportunity to work for a more favorable attitude toward Germany.”

Jäckh succeeded in using his official contacts to ensure that prospective benefactors of the Hochschule were welcomed in Berlin. When Butler visited in June 1926, he was treated to a high-profile dinner. Those invited
included government officials, politicians, professors, business leaders, the U.S. ambassador, and Gustav Stresemann. At Jäckh’s behest, Maltzan ensured that other Endowment representatives were received with similar honors. The negotiations between Jäckh and the Endowment became more concrete, and in March 1927 the “Carnegie Chair for International Relations and History” was officially inaugurated at the Hochschule. Fitting in with the Endowment’s emphasis on publicity, the Carnegie-sponsored lectures were open to the general public and mostly concerned with current affairs. The speakers were drawn from universities, international organizations, or government bureaucracies—among them were the historian Johan Huizinga; Albert Thomas, the head of the International Labor Organization; and Alfred Zimmern, professor of International Relations at Oxford. The Endowment favored this format as it brought foreign scholars to Berlin and generated a significant amount of news coverage. In response to complaints from the Hochschule that the existing setup was not academic enough, a permanent professorship was established by the Endowment in 1931.

From the beginning, Butler had impressed on Jäckh the importance of international cooperation, suggesting that he “establish friendly relations and cooperation both with the British Institute for International Affairs … and with the Institut des Hautes Etudes [sic] Internationales, in Paris.” Helped by the contacts and prestige of the Endowment, the Hochschule succeeded in becoming part of the Conference of Institutes for the Scientific Study of International Relations, the precursor of the ISC. Its first meeting was held in Berlin, with the participation of the Carnegie Endowment’s European Center in Paris. Jäckh dutifully reported this achievement to the Ministry of External Affairs.

The collaboration between the Endowment and the Hochschule satisfied both sides and was cemented by cordial relations between Butler and Jäckh. After a trip to Berlin in 1930, Butler declared that this visit had been “the high-water mark of my European experiences during more than forty years.” Butler may have enjoyed this particular sojourn so much because Jäckh had involved him in a new project for international conciliation, a foundation commemorating the recently deceased Gustav Stresemann. The mission and organizational structure of the planned “Stresemann Memorial Foundation” bore a striking resemblance to those of the Carnegie Endowment. The new foundation’s aim was to “examine the real conditions and requirements for peaceful relations between states and nations in all areas and to disseminate the results of these inquiries.” An associated “Peace Academy” would conduct research, disseminate knowledge, encourage international understanding and collaboration, and educate the public. Butler directed the fund-raising effort for the Stresemann Memorial in the U.S., putting together an American support committee. The Carnegie Endowment itself pledged 100,000 marks.
Designated president of the Stresemann Memorial was Julius Curtius, the acting Minister of External Affairs. He announced the creation of the Memorial and the Peace Academy on American radio on 21 June 1930. Only four days after his radio appearance, Curtius demanded “full political freedom and equality of rights” for Germany in the Reichstag, marking a move toward a more assertive foreign policy. Those who watched German politics closely had strong misgivings about Curtius’s role as a patron of peace research. The former Agent General for Reparation Payments S. Parker Gilbert refused to join the American support committee for the following reasons:

I had the greatest admiration for Dr. Stresemann and his work and would be happy to share in a movement to honor his memory. But I have some fear that the German mind would regard an Academy of this kind as an instrument of German foreign policy rather than as a memorial to Dr. Stresemann, and there are many indications nowadays that German foreign policy is no longer the foreign policy of Dr. Stresemann.

Butler encountered further setbacks during his fund-raising campaign for the Stresemann Memorial. Potential donors were struggling with the impact of the Depression and proved unwilling to give. More than a year after Curtius’s announcement, the Stresemann Memorial still only existed on paper.

Jäckh’s ambitious plans and hopes for the Stresemann Memorial had crossed the Atlantic with Butler, who did his part in trying to fulfill them; via Berlin and the Carnegie and Rockefeller branch offices in Paris, they were also communicated to the Rockefeller Foundation’s headquarters in New York. There they created sufficient momentum to bring the Hochschule back into the Foundation’s network of grant recipients. The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial had already supported the Hochschule with emergency grants in 1926 and 1928. However, on the grounds of Rockefeller fellowship adviser Fehling’s reports, subsequent applications had been rejected. Fehling had described the Hochschule as an innovative, promising institution but also—correctly—identified its main activity as teaching. The Rockefeller Foundation, however, was only willing to support research activity.

During the first two years after taking over from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, the Rockefeller Foundation’s Social Science Division made no new appropriations in Germany but considered a number of projects. One of these ideas harked back to an older plan for a social science research institute in Germany and entailed expanding the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in
Berlin into a research center for international law and international relations. The trustees earmarked $750,000 for this venture, significantly more than the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial had ever given to any other institution in Europe, with the exception of the London School of Economics. However, the plan never got past the stage of informal discussions, and the announcement of the Stresemann Memorial as a rival project caused the Rockefeller Foundation to shelve it.

Once it became clear, though, that the Stresemann Memorial had not progressed, Rockefeller Foundation officers became receptive to new proposals in the area of international relations. Again, personal relationships between foundation representatives and long-term collaborators were crucial. Schmidt-Ott, head of the Notgemeinschaft and also a member of the Stresemann Memorial’s governing board, approached Beardsley Ruml, the former director of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, with the idea of requesting Rockefeller funds for the stalled Peace Academy. Schmidt-Ott, Ruml, and Jäckh agreed on the wording of a grant application made to the Rockefeller Foundation. As a result, $25,000 was awarded to a “Notgemeinschaft Committee for Research in International Relations” in December 1931. This committee was, in effect, staffed by the members of the defunct Stresemann Memorial. The Hochschule itself received an even larger grant. In April 1932, the Rockefeller Foundation awarded $90,000 over three years for its research program.

What had caused this change of heart on behalf of the Rockefeller Foundation? First, once Jäckh realized that the Foundation would only support research-oriented institutions, he and the new director of the Hochschule, Arnold Wolfers, tailored grant applications accordingly. From the late 1920s, research activities at the Hochschule had indeed increased, and the policies of the Rockefeller Foundation may have accelerated this process. Second, Jäckh and Wolfers increasingly presented their case to Rockefeller officers in person during meetings that had been organized through the Carnegie Endowment’s European Center, and could thereby bypass Fehling, the Rockefeller fellowship adviser. Rockefeller policy changed, too. Worried by the tense political situation in Germany, Foundation officers began to emphasize what they perceived to be a “liberal spirit” at the Hochschule. Regardless of concerns about the quality of research, Gunn insisted that the Hochschule was justly considered to be a real ray of light in Germany, as far as an objective attitude in connection with international affairs is concerned. [...] The very existence of an institution in Germany which has the objective attitude and scientific spirit in problems in the social sciences is an encouraging fact, and, in my opinion, the chief argument for aid from the Foundation.
Thus, the Rockefeller Foundation ended up pursuing a twofold research strategy: some research took place within a collaborative framework set up by the Notgemeinschaft, and some was conducted at the Hochschule. Which format was the more successful? The Notgemeinschaft Committee was composed of the same members as the corresponding Stresemann Committee. Initially, its meetings were dominated by Julius Curtius, whose proposals for research topics were “German reparations,” “international migration and settlement,” “the Polish Corridor,” and “limits of arbitration,” reflecting the tendency of the Ministry of External Affairs to use scholarship in the service of power politics. The Committee adopted two of the suggestions (the Polish Corridor and reparations) as part of a long list of research topics. Those included international economic relations, the prices of raw materials, the concept of the state, and political science terminology. Gunn admitted to “some forebodings” regarding research on the Polish Corridor but decided that this would be a test for the Committee. “It will be interesting to see how objective the Germans can be in this investigation,” he noted. During the second year of the Committee’s existence, Curtius’s suggestions had vanished from the agenda, and some promising interdisciplinary approaches had developed, for example, that of Alfred Weber’s research group at Heidelberg, which combined political science, sociology, and psychology in a study on foreign policy. Research conducted at the Hochschule, however, did not meet Rockefeller expectations. “During the past year it has taken the form of unsystematic, individual research by members of the staff, according to their several interests and inclinations.” Interestingly, Foundation officers did not comment on the fact that many Hochschule teachers writing on international questions openly rejected the supposed “liberal spirit” there. One striking example is Max H. Boehm, an explicitly anti-Weimar irredentist.

It is difficult to give a rounded assessment of the Rockefeller Foundation’s work in international relations in Weimar Germany as the collaborations ended prematurely. Immediately after Hitler assumed power, the Hochschule was targeted by the NSDAP and eventually came under the direction of Goebbels’s propaganda ministry. Jäckh’s unsuccessful attempts to reach a compromise with the new regime that would have allowed him to retain Rockefeller support damaged his credibility. In May 1933, the Rockefeller Foundation decided to terminate its support, and the Carnegie Endowment followed suit in June. The Rockefeller grant to the Notgemeinschaft ended in 1934, coinciding with Schmidt-Ott’s forced resignation. The Institut für Auswärtige Politik suffered a similar fate. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy had to resign his directorship in March 1934, shortly before his emigration to Britain. In 1937, the institute was merged with the former Hochschule and moved to Berlin.
However, while the institutions supported by American philanthropy were completely transformed in the process of Nazi Gleichschaltung, the personal networks the foundations had built up remained in place. Most of the Rockefeller and Carnegie protégés emigrated, among them Jäckh, Holborn, and Wolfers, and continued to receive foundation funding. The foreign contacts they had established as members of the philanthropic network were a great advantage as they built new careers abroad. Jäckh, for example, first went to Britain and later to the United States, where he took up a post at Columbia University. Jäckh also continued to contribute to the ISC, which received increased funding from both the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Endowment from the mid-1930s. Wolfers emigrated to the United States, where he became a leading authority in the field of international relations. Moreover, the end of the Weimar Republic did not put an end to the collaboration between scholars in Germany and American foundations. As is well known, the Rockefeller Foundation did not terminate all of its German grants in the natural or social sciences after 1933. Throughout the 1930s, Rockefeller and Carnegie staff kept in contact with Fritz Berber, Jäckh’s successor at the Hochschule, and an adviser to the Nazi Ministry of External Affairs.

Therefore, state officials were not completely successful in their efforts to control and subvert philanthropic networks. Those networks persisted, more fragmented, with a stronger reliance on people instead of institutions, leading to outcomes the foundations could not have foreseen. But state intervention did have a significant impact on transnational relationships between American foundations and German scholars. Government officials saw the presence of philanthropic foundations as an important asset to Germany’s cultural diplomacy that could be used to reach foreign policy aims. The Ministry of External Affairs tried to manipulate the relationships between foundations and collaborators, influencing their form and outcome and effectively limiting transnational agency. American foundations generally accepted these limits by seeking the approval of state authorities before becoming active in Germany, either by establishing contact through official channels, or by working with a semi-governmental agency like the Notgemeinschaft. Nonetheless, the foundations were wary of official interference; the fact that the Rockefeller and Carnegie philanthropies cooperated largely with private institutes suggests a desire to avoid state bureaucracies. As we have seen, these fears were not unfounded.

Notes

* I would like to thank those who attended the Young Scholars Forum 2007 as well as Kathleen Burk and Adam Smith for their thoughtful comments on this paper.


8 “To Spend $500,000 a Year for Peace,” *New York Times*, 18 December 1911.


21 Heinemann, Die verdrängte Niederlage, 80–82, 85–87.

22 Friedrich Thimme to Friedrich Meinecke, 15 May 1926, quoted in German, ibid., 87. All translations are my own.

23 Eckard Michels, Von der Deutschen Akademie zum Goethe-Institut (Munich, 2005), 11–12; Notker Hammerstein, Die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft in der Weimarer Republik und im Dritten Reich (Munich, 1999), 35; Kurt Düwell, Deutschlands auswärtige Kulturpolitik, 1918–1932 (Cologne, 1976), 70–88, 103.


27 Ford to Beardsley Ruml, 12 March 1924, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, Series III.6 (hereafter LSRM III.6), box 61, folder 657.

28 Shotwell to Fosdick, 17 January 1924, LSRM III.6, box 52, folder 558.

29 Ibid.

30 Susan Gross Solomon, “The Power of Dichotomies: The Rockefeller Foundation’s Division of Medical Education, Medical Literature, and Russia, 1921–1925,” in American Foundations in

31 Schmidt-Ott to Ministry of External Affairs, 27 March 1925, PA AA, R 65521.


34 Shotwell, Autobiography, 150; Erich Nickel, Politik und Politikwissenschaft in der Weimarer Republik (Berlin, 2004), 25.


36 Memorandum “Social Science,” 23 November 1926, LSRM III.6, box 63, folder 676; LSRM III.6, box 52, folder 561, passim.

37 “Memorandum of conversation of Selskar M. Gunn with B. Ruml,” 15 August 1928, LSRM III.6, box 63, folder 676.

38 Mendelssohn-Bartholdy to Ruml, 17 October 1928, LSRM III.6, box 52, folder 561; Diary excerpt John Van Sickle, 4 July 1930, RF RG 1.1, Series 717, box 20, folder 184.


40 Heinemann, Die verdrängte Niederlage, 91.


42 Göppert to Melchior, 8 May 1923; Ministry of Interior to Ministry of External Affairs, 15 May 1923; Memorandum, 2 June 1923, all PA AA, R 65152.


44 Memorandum, 11 January 1926, PA AA, R 65804, microfiche reel 7859.

45 On the DHfP, see Stephen Korenblat, “The Deutsche Hochschule für Politik” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1978); Antonio Missiroli, Die Deutsche Hochschule für Politik (Sankt Augustin, 1988); Rainer Eissfeld, Ausgebürtigt und doch angebräunt (Baden-Baden, 1991); Alfons Söllner, Deutsche Politikwissenschaftler in der Emigration (Opladen, 1996), esp. chapter 1; Nickel, Politik und Politikwissenschaft. Missiroli and Nickel stress the liberal character of the Hochschule in opposition to Söllner and Eissfeld. Korenblat’s remains the most comprehensive and authoritative account, especially regarding the institution’s international connections.


50 Memorandum Maltzan to Ministry of External Affairs, 11 September 1925, PA AA, R 53701.


52 Hans Simons to Butler, 6 June 1928, CEIP CE, box 183, folder 1. The Carnegie lectures were reported in national and regional newspapers; see newspaper clippings in CEIP CE, box 182, folder 6 and box 183, folder 1; Hans Simons to Erich von Prittwitz und Gaffron, 12 June 1929; Hans Simons to Earle Babcock, 23 October 1929, both in CEIP CE, box 183, folder 2.


55 Butler to Jäckh, 5 May 1930, CEIP CE, box 183, folder 3.


59 Quoted in Steiner, The Lights That Failed, 488.

60 Gilbert to Butler, 19 January 1931, CEIP, box 324, folder 4.

61 Selskar M. Gunn to Edmund E. Day, 8 November 1931, RF RG 1.1, 717, box 20, folder 188.

62 Ruml to Walter Simons, 18 March 1926; Ruml to Jäckh, 6 April 1928, both in LSRM III.6, box 51, folder 537.

63 Fehling to Ruml, 31 January 1926; Fehling to Day, 3 May 1928, both in LSRM III.6, box 51, folder 537; Thomas B. Appleget to Hans Simons, 12 August 1930, RF RG 1.1, 717, box 19, folder 177; Söllner, Deutsche Politikwissenschaftler, 38–39.


67 Gunn to Day, 10 March 1932, RF RG 1.1, 717, box 19, folder 177.

68 Schmidt-Ott to Van Sickle, 24 July 1931, RF RG 1.1, 717, box 20, folder 188.

70 Gunn to Day, 30 March 1932, RF RG 1.1, 717, box 20, folder 188.

71 “Memorandum,” Kittredge, 21 November 1932, RF RG 1.1, 717, box 20, folder 188.


73 Söllner, Deutsche Politikwissenschaftler, 42.

74 Korenblat, “The Deutsche Hochschule für Politik,” 323–37. For an account of Jäckh’s retrospective embellishment of his activities in 1933/1934, see Eisfeld, Ausgebürgert und doch angebräunt, passim; Van Sickle to Day, 12 May 1933, RF RG 1.1, 717, box 19, folder 178; Babcock to Jäckh, 20 June 1933, CEIP CE, box 184, folder 3.

75 Ulrich Marsch, Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft (Frankfurt/M. 1994), 132–33; Missiroli, Die Deutsche Hochschule für Politik, 44–47.