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# **Alva's Futures Ideas in the construction of Swedish Futures Studies**

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# ALVA'S FUTURES IDEAS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SWEDISH FUTURES STUDIES 1967-1972.<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Futures studies, or futurology<sup>2</sup>, emerged in the 1960's with the growing attention to the dangers of modern society. The development of futures studies signifies a fundamental break with the optimistic view of societal development marking the golden age of the post-war period. Futures studies developed from the experience of a societal development full of risk. The foundation of welfare capitalist societies, industrial growth, had lead to consequences in the form of the exhaustion of natural resources and "ecocide", psychological pressure and social exclusion, and increasing differences between a developed and an underdeveloped world. The armaments race seemed to suggest that Mankind was only a step away from Mutually Assured Destruction.

Modernity had reached its limits. Social science – so far preoccupied with the idea of progress – became increasingly concerned with risk. The study of the future departed from these gloomy outlooks on future developments. Futurology asked the question what would the future be like? and what could possibly be done to change it?

The first futurology movement was largely dominated by industrial and military forecasts that later provoked a critical and policy directed futurology. In Sweden, the debate on futures studies started in the late 1960's. In 1971, Prime Minister Olof Palme appointed a working group to sketch the outline of Swedish futures studies. Its chairman was Alva Myrdal, in the early 1970's deeply associated with her devoted work for disarmament and world peace, as well as, in the Swedish political context, her radical ideological Equality programme for the Social democratic party, the SAP, in 1969.<sup>3</sup>

The early Swedish discussion on Futures studies contained several of Alva Myrdal's personal ideological concerns. Issues of social equality, sustainable development, international solidarity, world peace and disarmament were all present in the discussion, as was one overarching, theoretical problem: the issue of knowledge, scientific rationality, and reformism in policymaking. Indeed, futures studies seem to capture a fundamental dilemma of modern democratic societies: the dilemma of social engineering and its limits in a democratic society. Futures studies are on one hand an extreme form of social engineering, extending the reach of reformism into the long-term future and generations to come. The futures discourse produced by the Alva Myrdal group was also dominated by the idea that rapid change had

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<sup>1</sup> I am much obliged to prof. Em. Birgitta Odén, Lund University, prof. Lars Ingelstam, Linköping University and prof. Lena Sommestad, Institute for futures studies, Stockholm.

<sup>2</sup> I use both terms in the paper.

<sup>3</sup> Nilsson, Jan Olof (1994) *Alva Myrdal, en virvel i den moderna strömmen*. Lund. Lindskog, Lars (1982) *Alva Myrdal: "Förnuftet måste segra!"* Stockholm. Tilton, Tim (1990) *The political theory of Swedish socialdemocrats. Through the welfare state to revolution*.

become the new order, and that the study and planning of the future was a means to strengthen the scope of reformism in a societal development difficult to control. On the other hand, the Alva Myrdal group was deeply concerned with the democratic problem of *choosing futures*, which also gave the title to their final report *Att välja framtid* in 1972. How could futures studies increase the scope of the democratic state and strengthen the democratic control of the future?

The dilemma of social engineering, opposing expertise, political rationality, and knowledge, against democratic participation and pluralism, became a core issue in the futures constructed by the Alva Myrdal group. In the politically radicalised climate of the late 1960's, in the light of the youth revolt and its criticism of consumerist, capitalist and technocratic societies, this was a fundamental concern. Peter Wagner speaks of the 1960's as a *Krise der sozialtechnokratischen Reform*, a rupture to the alliance between social science and policy in the post-war period, marked by ideas of a harmonious development and the scope of social engineering. Wagner argues that this reformist consensus ended with the epistemological divisions of social science at the end of the decade. Social scientists were increasingly sceptical to finding technical solutions to politically defined problems and the relationship between policy and knowledge was questioned.<sup>4</sup> Futures studies and ideas on long-term planning were right in the midst of these epistemological and political changes.

This paper discusses the Swedish futures studies discourse and the ideas in the work of the Alva Myrdal futures studies group.

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<sup>4</sup> Wagner, Peter (1990) *Sozialwissenschaft und Staat*. Frankfurt/New York.

## Foundations of futurology

### **Rand, Khan and the Club of Rome – establishment futurology**

Bell argues that it is possible to speak of futurology or futures studies as a scientific field in the mid 1960s. Its roots are often traced in historical utopian writings, but also in dystopical modernist narratives like Aldous Huxley's *Brave new world*, or the alarm clock that triggered the environmentalist movement: Rachel Carson's *Silent spring* in 1960.<sup>5</sup>

The early 1960's futurology was dominated by the forecasting and prognoses performed by industrial think tanks and military interests. One of the early futurology institutions was the Rand Corporation in the US. Founded after World War 2, as the institution for research and development within the US Air force during the decades of the cold war, it was devoted to future military scenarios. Associated with the Rand corporation is the futurologist Herman Kahn, famous for his discussions of a third, thermonuclear, world war and "megadeaths", the destruction of entire nations and peoples. At Rand, Kahn developed the so-called Delphi-method of forecasting. The Delphi method, still widely used in futurology, consists of experts' panel discussions on future developments. Another methodology developed at Rand was the scenario technique, developed for military defence purposes to work out possible chains of events from hypothetical threat situations. Herman Kahn later worked for the Hudson institute, another influential American futurology think tank. The projects *The year 2000*, published in 1967, and *The Corporate environment*, discussed future developments relevant to big business and multinational companies.<sup>6</sup> Both the military and commercial focus of this early futurology and its methodology were provocative and resulted in a strong reaction from the so-called critical futurology in the latter part of the decade (below).

Another important futurology institution that also spurred the critical futurology was however the Club of Rome. The Club of Rome was an informal network, consisting of leading representatives of big business but also of leading statesmen. It originated in an OECD symposium on forecasting and planning in 1968. It's activities were strongly characterised by the idea of a post-industrial society and the limits of growth and capitalism. The most important project of the Club of Rome was "The predicament of Mankind", a large scale computer simulation study conducted by the MIT, published in 1972 under the title *The limits to growth*. *The limits to growth* argued that the world had come to end with the rapid industrial development of the post-war period, and was now faced with ending growth and increasing and global consequences of industrial expansion; exhausted global resources, pollution and population decline. The Club of Rome emphasized these problems as the future environment for multinational industry, demanding that the OECD countries take on emerging problems on a global level to assure the survival of capitalism through long-term cross national and cross sectoral planning.<sup>7</sup>

### **Critical futures studies**

Another strong influence to futurist thinking was clearly the radicalised climate of the 1960's and the development in the social sciences. Karl Poppers plead for a rational piecemeal

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<sup>5</sup> Carson, Rachel (1962) *Silent spring*, Greenwich. Published in Swedish in (1963) *Tyst vår*, Stockholm. Bell, Wendell (1997) *The foundations of futures studies. Human science for a new era*. Vol. 1. New Brunswick. Lindblad, Niklas (2000) *Fönster mot framtiden : då, nu, sedan - framtidsforskarnas bild av framtiden*. Uppsala.

<sup>6</sup> Bell (1997) pp. 29-38. Kahn, Herman and Wiener, Anthony (1967) *The year 2000, a framework for speculation on the next thirty-three years*. New York.

<sup>7</sup> *The limits to growth* (1976). New York. SOU 1972:59 p. 23.

engineering and the end of historicism and deterministic outlooks on future developments influenced a critical futurology reaction in the late 1960's that focused on values, democracy and policy. The critical futurology regarded the futurology of Kahn and likes as static, labelling it *establishment futurology*, in the sense that it did not question present military structures or industrial interests, but extrapolated trends from present conditions. It also accused establishment futurology of meritocratic tendencies and technological determinism disregarding policy, which Kahn primarily saw as strategic power games between military super powers. Its dystopical element, presenting the future as a paved road to destruction, was said to create self-fulfilling prophecies and feelings of helplessness.<sup>8</sup>

One of the leading figures of the critical futurology was the Norwegian philosopher Johan Galtung, who coined the term "chronological imperialism" for establishment futurology. Chronological imperialism meant that future visions tended to extend the values and interests of the present into the shaping of the future itself, thus controlling what should democratically be choices of future generations.

Another strong epistemological influence to critical futurology was the French Bertrand de Jouvenel, who in 1960 started the *Association Internationale de Futuribles* in Paris. The publishing of de Jouvenel's book *L'art de la conjoncture*, (*The art of conjecture*), in 1964, spread the terms *futures studies* and *futuribles* as distinctive notions for the critical futurist discourse. *Futures* in the plural form highlighted the element of democratic choice between alternative future visions. In the thinking of de Jouvenel, it was a democratic condition that forecasting and conjecture should avoid determinism through the production of alternative future visions and a clear focus on the scope for choice between such futures. De Jouvenel also had a particular epistemological argument about the nature of futures studies: futures studies wasn't just forecasting and prognoses, but futures studies should aim at critically analysing the variables of future developments (such as demography, technology, or values) and the importance given to these variables in future visions. These variables were the *futuribles*, components of change. Futures studies had to use scientific rationality to tackle the analytical process in which predictions were made, the process of conjecture, that to de Jouvenel was characterized foremost by universal uncertainty. The art of conjecture was a kind of art of good guesses, through a critical and systematized analytical process where the postulates and values of the conjectures were also subject to scrutiny.<sup>9</sup> In the critical futurology discourse, there was thus a strong emphasis on the scope for change and the active shaping of the future through futures studies and collective decision making.

### **Futures studies and planning**

From the late 1960's there was also a growing emphasis on futures studies in relation to long-term planning in national administrations. In Holland, in 1968 there were suggestions to reinforce planning through a Council for planning that would conduct futures studies. When the Dutch government rejected a proposal that this council would conduct expert studies and give direct advice to policy with the motive that this would mean a shadow government, the Alva Myrdal group discussed this. The other example often discussed by the Alva Myrdal group was France. French planning, especially economic planning, was highly advanced in the so-called *Commissariat du Plan*, producing economic 5 year plans. French futures studies were otherwise dominated by the autonomous activities of de Jouvenel's *Futuribles*, substantially supported by the national administration.

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<sup>8</sup> Popper, Karl (1961) *The poverty of historicism*. London. Asplund, Johan (1979) *Teorier om framtiden*. Stockholm.

<sup>9</sup> de Jouvenel, Bertrand (1967) *The art of conjecture*. New York. Asplund (1979). Schwarz, Stephan (1976) *Knowledge and concepts in futures studies*. Boulder.

Long-term planning had of course a special position in the socialist countries. In the Soviet Union, so called *prognostiks* were an important part of national planning. In Rumania, a special institute conducted futures studies.<sup>10</sup>

Prior to the early 1970's, the economic planning and the Långtidsutredningen, the economic 5-yearplan, dominated longterm planning in Sweden. The Swedish discussion in the early 1970's was dominated by attempts to strengthen and widen planning and develop cross-sectoral dimensions, especially for regional and environmental structures. This was part of the context of the Alva Myrdal group and the debate on futures studies in Sweden. In 1970, the Nordic council debated a Nordic institute for futures studies, but chose to recommend that each individual country would start futures studies.<sup>11</sup> The work of the Alva Myrdal group resulted in the Secretariat for futures studies, from 1972, which was later replaced by the Institute for futures studies.

### The Swedish discourse on futures studies

The discussion on futures studies in Sweden began in 1967 when the IVA, the Royal Swedish academy of engineering sciences (*Ingenjörsvetenskapsakademin*), started discussing futures oriented research in Sweden. In May 1969 the IVA published a report suggesting the construction of a Swedish institute for futures studies. The report had a strong bias towards technical and defence industry interests.<sup>12</sup> In the debate that followed the proposal certain conflicting lines of discourse regarding the nature and aim of futures studies became apparent.

The IVA proposal suggested that a futures studies institute should have a board of interest representation primarily from business.<sup>13</sup> In an article in the social democratic daily *Aftonbladet*, professor of Mathematics Lars Ingelstam, who was later a member of the Alva Myrdal group and eventually the president of the Secretariat for futures studies, objected that business interests regarding the study of the future were fundamentally different than the public interest. Ingelstam argued that a social democratic government must have more far reaching ambitions for futures studies than private capitalism. Another objection to the IVA report came from parliament, where the liberal party argued that the public interest of futures studies demanded that they be conducted by an autonomous research institute, where they would be independent not only from business interests but also from the planning of a socialist government.<sup>14</sup>

A third objection came from the white collar employees association, TCO (*Tjänstemännens centralorganisation*). To the TCO, the IVA report and the suggested representational board reflected "meritocratic attitudes", and the domination of scientific expertise over the democratic interest in futures studies. TCO suggested that futures studies should be conducted in near relation to the government in the council of ministers, the *statsrådsberedningen*. To the TCO, futures studies were a reformist instrument and should therefore be conducted in near relation to political planning. Wittrock has shown that the core ideas of the TCO program came to dominate the further debate on futures studies in Sweden, and that they were reflected in the work of the Alva Myrdal group and the later construction of the Secretariat for Futures studies in 1972.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> SOU 1972:59 pp. 32f.

<sup>11</sup> Nordic council, recommendation nr. 14 1970.

<sup>12</sup> IVA: *Ett svenskt institut för framtidsstudier*. Wittrock, Björn. *Möjligheter och gränser* (1980) pp.32f.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Wittrock (1980) p.35.

<sup>15</sup> Wittrock (1980) p. 35f.

In 1969, the debate on futures studies started also in the Board of research, (*Forskningsberedningen*). The Board of Research aimed at coordinating research and development and was under the direct chairmanship of Prime Minister Olof Palme.<sup>16</sup>

In 1969 the Board of research published a memorandum discussing futures studies. It firmly established that the study of the future was a matter of policy and planning. The memorandum also criticised existing futurology for "disregarding circumstances of central importance for public decisionmaking" and serving as an "instrument of forces that counteracts changes to the advantage of society's unprivileged groups". The main task of a public institute for futures studies should be to counterbalance such biased futures studies.<sup>17</sup>

A central meeting of the Board of research took place on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1970, when Olof Palme expressed the government's intention to appoint a working group for futures studies. If Sweden did not engage in the study of the future, Palme said, Sweden would be dependant on future visions foreign to Swedish policy and Swedish values. Futures studies were a necessary tool for the small state to maintain its independence in a world order dominated by the great powers.<sup>18</sup>

On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, Arne Engström, the secretary of the Board of research, who was later attached to the Alva Myrdal group as an expert, presented a draft on futures studies. Engström pointed out that a central question in futures studies must be the difference between explorative or normative futures studies; a difference that he said corresponded to the difference between *prognosis* and *plan*. Should futures studies deal with the conjecture and foresight of the future in a passive and descriptive way, or should they be explicitly normative and active, outlining priorities and goals for public policy? Engström also stated that a fundamental concern for the working group must be how to guarantee the public influence in futures studies and avoid "self-righteous elitism". Engström also discussed the essential issues to be dealt with by such a group, being the scope of a small state in a world dominated by multinational corporations and great powers, social reactions, motivation and the sense of helplessness in a post-industrial society, the relationship between technological development and human values, ecological equilibrium, and 'quality of life'.<sup>19</sup> These issues did become the core issues tackled by the Alva Myrdal group.

Engström had certain contacts with the "establishment futurology", and apparently, so did prime minister Olof Palme. In February 1972, Engström wrote a confidential letter to Palme about "The Predicament of Mankind", where he suggested that Peccei, the leader of the Rome club and the vice president of Fiat, be invited to Stockholm. He also said that he met with Alexander King, another leading figure of the Rome Club, and that King was discussing the organisation of a futurology institute based on small state initiatives with the Austrian leader Bruno Kreisky.<sup>20</sup> According to Lars Ingelstam, Kreisky was behind the Institute for applied systemic analysis in Vienna in 1972. The motive behind this institute was to bridge over East and West, and Kreisky was anxious for the participation of Olof Palme.<sup>21</sup>

The relationship between the Board of research and the establishment futurology is commented upon in Alva Myrdals archive through a series of notes from Hans Palmstierna<sup>22</sup>,

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<sup>16</sup> Wittrock (1980). Benner, Mats (1997): *The politics of growth. Economic regulation in Sweden 1932-1994*. Lund.

<sup>17</sup> Wittrock (1980) p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> Wittrock (1980) p. 44.

<sup>19</sup> Memo dated 1971-02-03. Alva Myrdal's archive vol. 5:066-1. Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Arne Engström to Olof Palme 1972-02-14. There is a copy of this letter in Alva Myrdal's archive vol. 5: 066-2. Several drafts on the Predicament of Mankind were discussed by the Myrdal group.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Lars Ingelstam 2002-02-20. The Alva Myrdal group also had certain contacts with this institute primarily through Lars Ingelstam who visited it in 1972.

<sup>22</sup> Palmstierna was a well known environmentalist.

primarily to Alva's husband Gunnar Myrdal. In the spring of 1971, Palmstierna writes to Myrdal about the state of "the so-called future research":

Best Gunnar. Sending you a nasty sign of the times. Two gentlemen from this so-called Rome Club showed up at the Board of research. They belong in Boston where they have established some kind of headquarter. One of them is called Peccei and is the vice president of Fiat. The moral standard is quite clear when you hear him, after two cocktails, utter that it would be best if India could be freed from people ... so that other people (white?) could take over. One of his ideas was that accumulated DDT in Indians would be a great solution ... [-] Palme should never have let the rabble [*packet*] into the Board of Research (and not Engström either). They are representative for a kind of sophisticated neofascism ...<sup>23</sup>

And on the 5th of March, 1972, he writes to Myrdal that the Rome club, spreading "its doctrine like a plague over Europe" has an obvious influence on Palme.<sup>24</sup>

Palme's outlook on futurology is difficult to assert. Later, as he appointed the Alva Myrdal group, he did express critical feelings against the establishment futurology. Wittrock has argued that neither Palme, nor the government, were really that interested in the question of futurology and that this was a reason why the futures studies group was never given any more specific instructions. Tiberg, however, has written that the Swedish government mistrusted the establishment futurology and that the appointment of the Alva Myrdal group was a reaction to the IVA report in 1969. Lars Ingelstam points to a strong personal interest in critical futurology of both Olof Palme and Alva Myrdal.<sup>25</sup>

The futures studies group was appointed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1971. The purpose of the group was outlined in a press release the same day.<sup>26</sup> The group was to assess an epistemological basis for Swedish futures studies, as well as identify problems of particular interest for Swedish futures studies. Two problems were explicitly mentioned: the scope of a small state in a world of growing influence for big corporations and the super powers, and the problems of working life following technicalization and structural change in industry. In the press release, Olof Palme made a clear statement of his view on the role of futures studies and emphasised the importance of founding democratic and alternative studies to the "evil futurology" dominated by military or industrial interests.

One must emphasise the obvious risks [with such futures studies], not only for developing countries but also for small states like Sweden, if the study of the future becomes something of an uncontrolled monopoly for a small number of especially powerful interestgroups. Biased future visions, produced in various ways, can in a dangerous way induce [*suggerera*] a public understanding of a determined development for nations and peoples, when in reality it is the citizens themselves who can and must decide the future development of society. Our own study of the future, departing from democratic objectives and with pronounced demands for international solidarity, is an important and necessary instrument for us and for the world surrounding us. In this way the small state can create a public debate as to what our future world should be.<sup>27</sup>

Palme repeated this view a year later in a speech on futurology at the German industrial group IG Metall in Germany. To Palme, the future was irrevocably the active creation of Man. It was up to living generations to choose what would be permitted to be the driving forces of the

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<sup>23</sup> Letter from Hans Palmstierna to Gunnar Myrdal 1971-05-13, in Alva Myrdal's archive vol.5: 066-2.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Hans Palmstierna to Gunnar Myrdal 1972-03-05, in Alva Myrdal's archive vol. 5: 066-2.

<sup>25</sup> Wittrock (1980). Tiberg, Joar (1995) *Vart tog framtiden vägen? Framtidsstudiernas uppgång och fall, 1950-1986*, in Polhem nr 13, pp.116-175. Interview with Lars Ingelstam 2002-02-20.

<sup>26</sup> Statsrådsberedningen "Pressmeddelande" 1971-05-04. Alva Myrdal's archive vol. 5:066-1. This was a somewhat unusual construction. Normally, the outline of working groups or committees would be sketched in the *direktiv*, political instructions presented at the appointing of such a group. There were never any such formal instructions to the Alva Myrdal group.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

future development: technology, profit, or solidarity? No one could deny the responsibility for the future by blindly believing in dystopic prognoses or the promise of technological future visions: ”*Ob sie nun schlecht oder gut ist, so ist die Zukunft doch das Eigene Werk des Menschen.*”<sup>28</sup> And to Palme, the fundamental question was then, just as much as the question of *what* the future would be, *whose* future it would be and in whose interest the future was shaped.

### Choosing futures – the Alva Myrdal group

Alva Myrdal became the chairman of the group. The other participants were all distinguished scholars and experts from the Board of research: Martin Fehrm came from the research bureau of the Swedish military (*Försvarets forskningsanstalt*), and had been part of the IVA report in 1969. Marianne Frankenheuser was professor of behavioural psychology, Torsten Hägerstrand was professor of Geography, Lars Ingelstam, was the professor in mathematics and planning theory from the Royal institute of Technology who had already been an active spokesman in the debate following the IVA report, Birgitta Odén was professor of history in Lund, and Ingemar Ståhl was an associate professor in economics, deeply involved in the economic planning. Arne Engström was attached to the group as an expert from the Board of Research.

Their constitutive meeting took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May in 1971. This meeting was decisive.<sup>29</sup> In her introduction, Alva Myrdal addressed the central problem in Swedish futures studies as *how could a small state find its own model of the future?*

Yesterday Arne Engström gave me a book, *Europe in the year 2000*, and it says amongst other things that we should consider the American development since they are 20 years ahead of Europe. I guess this is precisely what we would deny from a Swedish perspective, that they are 20 years ahead of us and that we should follow their development. ... But this is just the terribly dangerous thing about most futures studies conducted so far, that precisely because of their technological focus they shrink the independence of the small state, they tend to reduce the scope of the democratic Man – the things that we consider our fundamental values in this country. Therefore I think that areas like democratic participation, Man as a social creature, the quality of life that the most courageous futures studies speak of, these are issues that we have to deal with. If we are to think ourselves towards [*forska fram*] a future in Sweden that differs from the future that will follow from sailing with all the others – it should be something really grand.<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, it was rather grand. The protocols of this first meeting of the group emit the feeling that the members were rather overwhelmed by the huge ambitions of their task. However, the core ideas had already been sketched in the preceding debate, and the direction was clear from this first meeting. A limited number of problems were to be addressed explicitly to prepare the ground for a continued discussion on futures studies in Sweden. The first of these was an analysis of the epistemology of futures studies and the ‘state of the art’ of futurology. Alva Myrdal specifically mentioned this in her opening address – how did the existing futurology interfere with the scope of a democratic state and how could the group free themselves from futures studies produced elsewhere?

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<sup>28</sup> “Be it good or bad, the future is still the product of Man himself.” Olof Palme speech at IG Metall in Oberhausen, Germany, 1972-04-11. Arbetsgruppen för Framtidsstudier vol. 5. Riksarkivet. It is likely that Palme was influenced in this speech by the ongoing discussions of the Alva Myrdal group.

<sup>29</sup> The meeting was recorded and there are printouts of the tapes in Arbetarrörelsens arkiv and Riksarkivet.

<sup>30</sup> Protocol 1971-05-18, Alva Myrdal’s archive vol.5: 066-1.

Have futures studies been conducted elsewhere in ways that limit our freedom? Do the Swedish companies conduct studies that prevent society from starting futures studies? Can the futures studies of multinational companies interfere with our scope? What consequences does the planning of foreign governments have on Swedish conditions? The superpowers and their military technology is furthermore tremendously influential on the technological and also the social development. Eventually, there is the possibility that the *models that theoretical futures studies are a part of are of such a character that they limit the scope of our imagination and thus constrain our perspective on future alternatives*.<sup>31</sup>

A small state like Sweden must conduct futures studies of its own to avoid “the microcopying of the values of the great powers”. The group must therefore try to detach itself from the values as well as the methodology of existing futurology. A first theme was thus to find a critical epistemological position that permitted the independent production of Swedish futures. Alva Myrdal further emphasized this in a letter to the members of the group after the summer holidays, where she asked them to look for literature and research dealing with the question of “paralysing future studies”.<sup>32</sup>

A second problem that was addressed as a central research priority of the group was the issue of values in futures studies.<sup>33</sup> It was a complicated matter. First, there was an epistemological problem of tackling the value postulates underlying futures studies and planning. Second, there was a democratic problem in the sense that all long-term planning dealt with the distance between present values, reflected in contemporary decision-making, and the eventual effects they might have in another time, thus interfering with the scope of decisions and social preferences of the next generation. Third, there was the problem of empirical value change and the contemporary impression of living in a time of extremely rapid or even revolutionary value change. The young generation had turned against the ideals of growth and material standard that the post-war generation had taken for granted.

A third aspect of the group’s work was the place of futures studies in a socialdemocratic research policy. Futures studies, as a way to strengthen strategic planning and increase debate on long-term development, had an obvious socialist interest and the group clearly worked within the ideological framework of the SAP.

### ***Creating the future – knowledge and policy. The epistemological basis of the AM group.***

The point of departure of the Alva Myrdal group was thus a critical outlook on epistemology. The group had a clear emphasis on *active* futures studies, studies that aimed at actively creating the future; “mould the future rather than let us be mould by the future”. Their understanding of futures studies was thus highly policy oriented – futures studies were explicitly regarded as a tool for reformism, creating the scope for democratic decision making. In the final report in 1972, the Alva Myrdal group stated that a basic division in futures studies was the relationship between the passive (establishment) futurology of the Kahn kind, and active studies aiming at “genuine” decisions. A prerequisite for the latter was that futures studies dealt with such phenomena that *could* be changed and affected by public decision making, not changes supposed to be beyond the scope of politics. The group also accused “passive futurology” of dealing with occurrences that could be changed – such as

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<sup>31</sup> Protocol 1971-05-18. min kurs.

<sup>32</sup> ”*Handlingsförlamande framtidsstudier*”, letter from Alva Myrdal to the members of the futures studies group, 1971-08-21. Alva Myrdal’s archive vol. 5: 066:2.

<sup>33</sup> Protocol 1971-05-18. Alva Myrdal’s archive vol.5: 066-1.

energy or technological change – in a deterministic manner that neglected the issue of active choice.<sup>34</sup>

According to the group, there were a number of conditions for democratic futures studies. To provide the basis for genuine decisions, the main function of futures studies was to highlight the possibility for change. This required that futures studies set a realistic public discourse on the future, which also showed the real limits to the capacity and scope of change and decision-making. Secondly, it would have to present such adequate information that all possible outcomes could be taken into account and give room for democratic choice between alternative futures. Furthermore, many long-term decisions were said to be taken outside of the democratic sphere – in industry and business. A large number of societal decisions were also taken without reflecting upon their possible repercussions in other areas. Moreover, democratic decisions in the modern society tended to be so complicated that citizens could not really participate. The aim of futures studies must therefore be to promote citizens participation in political decision-making. The group also stated that since the production of futures enclosed a power aspect, where the production of persuasive knowledge might become the tool of social conflict, the democratic state had a responsibility to produce futures studies for the benefit of weaker groups of society. One of the main reasons for futures studies was also, an issue that evoked a longer principal discussion within the group, that the democratic state had a responsibility to represent the interest of unborn generations. Here, futures studies had a responsibility for future generations, even if it implied a conflict with the interest of the living, since citizens did not automatically understand and act with the long-term interest in prospect.<sup>35</sup>

The Alva Myrdal group thus clearly emphasised the normative, critical, and active function of futures studies. The group's epistemological heritage manifestedly came from the critical futurology advocated by de Jouvenel and Galtung. However, it seems impossible to understand the work of the Myrdal group without emphasising its rather "Swedish" reformist element. Wittrock has pointed to the strong policy orientation, that also well followed Alva Myrdal's personal outlook. The strong emphasis on knowledge as the basis for rational planning and policy can also be put in what scholars like Rothstein and Skocpol have seen as a rationalist Swedish political culture, now extending the reach of social science and policy into the distant future.<sup>36</sup>

Focused on knowledge as the group was, there was however on the other hand also a strong rejection of technocratic social engineering. The ambition of the Alva Myrdal group was also to question the relationship between knowledge, expertise, and policy. During their first meeting, the historian Birgitta Odén stated her fear of the meritocratic tendency in futurology:

I am uneasy to the prospect that we are sitting here like a selected group of top scholars producing our values and point of views on what the future should consist of.<sup>37</sup>

The prospect of becoming such "future dictators", as Alva Myrdal put it, made them all uneasy. One of the group's concerns was thus how to anchor their work in different segments of society and reach out to public debate, a problem that they addressed by creating a number of referential groups and by arranging a series of seminars around the particular topics addressed in the report and its four appendixes following its publication in 1972.

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<sup>34</sup> SOU 1972:59 p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> SOU 1972:59 p. 11f. See Wittrock (1980).

<sup>36</sup> Rothstein, Bo (1996) *The socialdemocratic state*. Pittsburgh. Skocpol, Theda, and Weir, Margaret: "Institutional responses to the great depression in the US, Britain and Sweden", in Skocpol, Rueschemeyer, Evans (1985) *Bringing the state back in*. Cambridge.

<sup>37</sup> Protocol 1971-05-18. Alva Myrdal's archive vol. 5: 066-1.

The fear of technocratic futures studies also came to question positivism as the scientific framework for futures studies, primarily through the emphasis on values rather than objectivity. The group rejected the idea that neither futures studies, nor any planning activity, were value neutral activities. In fact, values were a “cardinal question” to futures studies, and one that had to be addressed scientifically.<sup>38</sup> Gunnar Myrdal’s work with values in reformism and science was a clear epistemological influence to this part of the group’s thinking.<sup>39</sup>

This deeply policy oriented but also democratic and pluralistic perspective was obvious in how the group positioned futures studies as a scientific activity in the Swedish research policy debate. The Alva Myrdal group argued that futures studies must be regarded as applied research (*riktad grundforskning*) with specific social purposes, not as an autonomous academic discipline. To them, the problem in futures studies was not their link to policy, but the absence of policy. Moreover, the group dismissed the terms *futureology* or *futures research* for the notion *futures studies*, which was said to be a more democratic term than futureology. *Futures studies* implied that the study of the future was a concern to a broader group than researchers and scholars.<sup>40</sup> To the Alva Myrdal group, futures studies was a kind of public good, and futures producing knowledge was a public responsibility, but also an activity that demanded a high degree of reflection from the epistemological community and futurists themselves.

### Values and democratic participation

The “cardinal question” of values was the subject of the appendix of the group’s historian Birgitta Odén. The basis of the interest with values of the group was not only a matter of critical epistemology, but also very much the contemporary observation in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s of rapid value change. This observation of rapidly changing value structures led the group to the question of value change, or as historian Odén put it, the twofold question of values for futures studies: how did values change, and was it possible to find general patterns behind value change in a way that would permit predictions and generalisation of value change?

Future s studies must take into consideration that different generations have different orders of preference, and that rising expectations and new demands follow every progress. Rapid technological and social changes affect the values of people, but meanwhile the mechanism of value change is very fragmentarily known.<sup>41</sup>

The issue of values was controversial. As Odén pointed out in her memo, the post-war period was in social science discourse clearly marked by the idea, or “myth” as she polemically put it, of objectivity. In the same way, doctrines of planning were built on the idea of a rationalist and value neutral process of knowledge accumulation. The Swedish academic debate was still dominated by ideas of value neutrality or value nihilism advocated by foremost Herbert Tingsten in the 1950’s. Odén was clearly influenced both by Gunnar Myrdal and by the Frankfurt school. Prognoses were never neutral, and science, researchers

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<sup>38</sup> Odén, Birgitta (1972) *Planering, värdestruktur och demokratisk participation*. Ds Ju 1972:27. Also Odén, Birgitta (1996) ”Stabila och föränderliga värden” in Gerner, Kristina, ed. *Stat, nation, konflikt* pp. 159-180.

<sup>39</sup> Myrdal, Gunnar (1968) *Objektivitetsproblemet i samhällsforskningen*. Stockholm. Published in English in (1969) *Objectivity in social research*. New York.

<sup>40</sup> 1972:59 p. 12. Odéns pm s 6-8. See also letter from Alva Myrdal to the minister of Education Sven Moberg 1972-04-06. Alva Myrdal’s archive vol. 5: 066-2.

<sup>41</sup> Protocol 1971-05-18. Alva Myrdal’s archive vol. 066-1.

and planners had to be exposed for hidden values through public debate. She contended that the social sciences had so far been little bothered with the issue of values and that it was high time to take them on.<sup>42</sup>

As an historian, Odén pointed to historical methodology for the analysis and eventual prediction of social change. Within economy and political science, the issue of values had been increasingly addressed in the 1950's and 60's, largely in the analysis of preferences behind consumerist behaviour or the influence of commercial advertising or mass communication, but also in the social choice analysis of preferential systems and logics in collective decision making.<sup>43</sup> Odéns conclusion was that none of these perspectives came close to the problem of how to predict value change, but that systematical historical analysis would be a possible way to find general connections between for phenomena like technological or demographic change, and value change. Historical studies of value change were also a way of avoiding "chronological imperialism", since, from a historical perspective; values that might seem extremely stable seemed more volatile. Democracy, for instance, had a short history of a hundred years or so, where as values like survival, reproduction or care, seemed like "stable" values. 'Swedish' values like neutrality, solidarity and equality, the bricks of the Swedish middle way model, did from this perspective seem less reliable.<sup>44</sup>

The historical perspective was in this way also a way of nuancing discourses on the future. Odén was highly critical of the historicist tendency in futurology, seeing a specific end to societal development (especially the work of Toynbee).<sup>45</sup> But she also broke with the established history paradigm in Sweden, of which a fundamental postulate was the particularity of historical phenomena and a strong rejection of generalisations. To Odén, Swedish history was dominated by the traditions of Leopold von Ranke and the Swedish historian Weibull. The conclusion of the former was that history was about "wie es gewesen", strict descriptions of the past. The source critical school of the latter avoided all values in past time and history writing. The outcome was that the historical knowledge community refrained from generalisations and predictions on social change.<sup>46</sup> When her appendix was discussed at one of the symposiums following the report in 1973, her emphasis on values was also criticized. The sociologist Walter Korpi didn't think values were an important historical force and Rolf Torstendahl, professor of history in Uppsala, rejected the idea of finding generalisations of value change in historical material.<sup>47</sup>

Behind Odéns question on the mechanisms of value change, it is difficult not to see the events in the late 1960's and the contemporary impression of a value revolution. To Swedish social democracy, this was a central discussion. When Alva Myrdal presented the work of the Equality group to the party congress she defended their radical programme by stating that never had the gap in values been larger between the party and the younger generation.

A core idea of Swedish social democracy in the 1950's and 1960's was the notion of "*förväntningarnas missnöje*", the "revolution of rising expectations".<sup>48</sup> "*Förväntningarnas missnöje*" was used in the rhetoric of the 1950's to describe the political problem of the affluent society, where growth lead to ever increasing demands on consumption. When basis needs were fulfilled, values changed and people directed their demands towards more sophisticated needs. Odén discussed this problem quite thoroughly, relating it to the ideas of

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<sup>42</sup> Odén (1972) pp. 9, 16, 32f.

<sup>43</sup> Here, Odén discussed the work of Kenneth Arrow.

<sup>44</sup> Odén (1972) p. 28.

<sup>45</sup> Odén (1972) p. 16-18, 37. Also Odén (1973) "Historia och framtidsstudier", in Föreningen för Framtidsstudier: *Än sen då?* and Hägerstrand, Torsten (1987) "Samtal med Birgitta Odén" in *Över gränser*.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ds Ju: *Värderingars förändring och spridning*.

<sup>48</sup> Erlander personally admitted to two fundamental influences to the notion, the writer Stefan Zweig and the American economist John Kenneth Galbraith and his work *The affluent society* (1962).

Maslow on elementary and sophisticated needs. In the early 1970's, the stable values of the generation of the post war period – employment and consumption – seemed to be replaced by demands of a clean environment, more equality, and solidarity with the third world. In Sweden, these demands took the form of a strong leftist critique against the SAP and the growth policy of the post-war period.<sup>49</sup> Part of this critique was channelled to the environmentalist movement. A spectacular event in Swedish political history is the so-called “battle of the elm-trees”, *Almstriden*, in 1971: massive protests against the cutting down of the trees in the Stockholm park Kungsträdgården by city planners.

The environmentalist movement echoes in the archives of the futures studies group. In June of 1972, the UN held a conference in Stockholm on “The human environment”. This also assembled large parts of the environmentalist movement, organising a parallel protest-conference.

CONTINUOUS WAR! POLLUTION! EXPLOITATION! GLOBAL ECOCIDE! IMPERIALISM!  
Forced by the intensified discussion of the conditions of life in our limited planet, the UN is planning a huge conference on the Human environment to be held in Stockholm, Sweden ... While the politicians are only passing endless resolutions, we the people have an alternative: we are acting, struggling to create a new way of life. We are having a POWWOW! POWWOW is ACTION – direct actions, demonstrations, parades, street theater, exhibitions, leaflets, bulletins, films, underground comic strips...just whatever your thing is to help in the struggle to create a new way of life. [-] Copy this letter and pass it on to as many friends and groups as possible. We need thousands of contacts around the world to make POWWOW everywhere! [-]

All power to the Red Indians!  
WE'RE ALL RED INDIANS  
POWWOW!<sup>50</sup>

Rapid value change was a challenge to reformism and planning. Behind Odéns question on the mechanisms behind value change lurked another question, which was mentioned but never thoroughly discussed: What values were desired values for a ‘good’ future development, and how could policy plan for desired value changes?

### **Technology assessment and quality of life**

A big part of the groups work was also devoted to the problem of post-industrial society, and the idea of the limits of growth. They were concerned with the environmental aspect, but even more so with the problem of the human limits to growth, and what was perceived as a conflict between technology and human values and needs. The issue of technological assessment and how to evaluate the human use and function of technological development was discussed by the group through the presence of Martin Fehrm. In the appendix of Torsten Hägerstrand, the issue of technological innovation and change in social values was explicitly addressed. Hägerstrand argued that modern technological change differed from historical technological change in the sense that it was so rapid that it wasn't, like historical innovations, gradually embedded and socially accepted. Futures studies should deal with the connection between innovation and values, and emphasise the moment of choice between technological innovations that with them brought about a certain development, for instance massive

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<sup>49</sup> Friman, Eva: ”Domedagsprofeter och tillväxtpredikanter – debatten om ekonomisk tillväxt och miljö I Sverige 1960-1980”, i *Historisk tidskrift* nr. 1 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Alva Myrdal's archive, vol. 5: 066i. The Powwow was organised in connection to the movement Alternative city, *Alternativ stad*, in Stockholm.

investments in infrastructure or specialised technology that would set the way for a long time coming.<sup>51</sup>

Another strand in the group's discussion on the human limits of growth was the issue of 'quality of life', primarily discussed in the appendix of Marianne Frankenheuser. In the early 1970's, growth and GDP as measures of societal development were strongly questioned since such economic measures did not at all capture what growth meant to human welfare. In 1971, OECD published a report, the Brooks report, arguing for a wider perspective on development and the bringing into planning of qualitative welfare factors and so-called social indicators, indicators on poverty and social development.<sup>52</sup> A pioneer work in social indicators had been done in Sweden, by the sociologists Per Holmberg and Sten Johansson in the Committee on low income, *Låginkomstutredningen*, from 1967 onwards. Their disclosing of the character of modern poverty stirred huge public debate and great ideological turmoil for Swedish social democrats and it was highly influential on the leftist critique against the SAP. The work of Johansson and Holmberg was also a major influence on the deeply ideological work of the SAP Equality group that Alva Myrdal chaired 1967-1972.<sup>53</sup>

The influence of this left wing critique of growth was obvious in the work of Frankenheuser. Frankenheuser's memo addressed the issue of human limits to change. To her, the debate on quality of life was a reaction against "competition society": a society based on economic values where individuals were constantly forced to adapt to rapidly changing technological and economical structures. Departing from a behaviouristic perspective, Frankenheuser put forward that the capacity of human beings to adapt to rapid change was limited. Exposure to over- or under stimulation, in the form of information overload or mechanical work, caused stress disorders and feelings of helplessness. Careful as she was to avoid the dystopical narratives of for instance Alvin Toffler, and his book *Future shock*, Frankenheuser advocated that longterm planning had to take in knowledge from the behavioural sciences in order to understand and plan for such human reactions to change.<sup>54</sup>

The ongoing Swedish debate on social indicators in the aftermath of the Committee on low income came to the fore in relation to the never finished work of the economist Ingmar Ståhl. He was supposed to develop the relationship between welfare measures and GDP in economic planning.

### **Socialist futures studies**

There was an obvious social democratic interest in futures studies, as the activity to understand and plan for the future. Wittrock has argued that the government and Olof Palme were only moderately interested in futures studies. However, the discussion on futures studies coincided with the reorientation of social democratic growth policy towards longterm planning and research and development.<sup>55</sup> In the late 1960's, the SAP started actively discussing research as an instrument for societal development.

Lars Ingelstam came to the Board of research from the Royal Academy of Science as an expert on planning theory. He was an active member of the SAP. In his first article in *Aftonbladet* in 1969 he objected to the IVA proposal from social democratic point of views. In 1971, Ingelstam wrote a memo together with Kerstin Niblaeus, who was also later an active

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<sup>51</sup> Hägerstrand 1971-12-29, Alva Myrdal's archive vol. 5:066 g. Hägerstrand (1972) *Om en konsistent, individorienterad samhällsbeskrivning för framtidsstudier*. Ds Ju 1972:25.

<sup>52</sup> OECD, 1971.

<sup>53</sup> Andersson, Jenny (2001) *Mellan tillväxt och trygghet, idélinjer i socialdemokratisk socialpolitik under efterkrigstiden*. Licentiatuppsats, department of Economic history, Uppsala University.

<sup>54</sup> Frankenheuser, Marianne (1972) *Synpunkter på forskning om människan i framtiden*. Ds Ju 1972:24.

<sup>55</sup> Wittrock (1980). Benner (1997).

member of the Secretariat for futures studies; “Social democracy and futures research” (*Socialdemokraterna och framtidsforskningen*).<sup>56</sup>

Ingelstam and Niblaeus stated that establishment futurology was about the “profit” of multinational companies. From an ideological point of view, the study of the future mustn’t be left to the “prophets” of establishment futurology. Knowledge of the future meant the power to control the future.

Futures studies could and should also be a tool for a continuous input in the debate on socialist society to create an ideological consciousness of the long-term nature of societal decisions. Some long-term decisions might be electorally unpopular, like the environmental regulation of industry, but they were, said Ingelstam and Niblaeus, a step towards a socialist society. Future studies therefore had to depart from the overarching ideological goals of the SAP and primarily solidarity: solidarity with the “weak” of society, with unborn generations, and with poorer countries. Likewise, they argued that social democratic politicians through futures studies would be made more aware of the long-term nature of their decisions and thus more apt to take decisions that extended their electoral period. The focus on knowledge and research as the basis for futures studies would also “free” the socialist conscience and commitment of many scholars.<sup>57</sup>

Futures studies were addressed in a SAP party report on research in 1975. The report stated that there was an obvious social democratic interest in research and in futures studies.

Decisive for whose interest will be promoted by science is who controls research, who has the power over the production of knowledge.

Knowledge and research was political, and futures studies were a way of controlling the future. Systematic futures studies could also form the basis for research policy, pointing to scientific areas that should be politically prioritised.<sup>58</sup>

### **The secretariat for futures studies**

The main suggestion of the Alva Myrdal group was a temporary secretariat for futures studies that would continue to work with the question of Swedish futures studies. The group presented its final report *Att välja framtid* to Olof Palme on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1972 and to the Board of research on September 22.<sup>59</sup> In the public debate, the report was received more or less along the earlier lines of discourse. There were some objections from the liberal side objecting to a secretariat close to the Council of ministers, instead arguing for an autonomous institute, but largely the reactions to the report were positive. The secretariat was constructed within the Council of ministers with a referential group consisting of interest group and parliamentary representation and Lars Ingelstam became its president.<sup>60</sup> In 1973 and 1974 the Secretariat’s main activity was to analyse the reactions to the report and arrange a series of symposiums on the themes of the report; values, and the future of man in communication society in 1973, quality of life, and long-term planning in 1974.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ingelstam, Lars and Niblaeus, Kerstin: ”Socialdemokratin och framtidsforskningen” 1971-12-21, Alva Myrdal’s archive vol. 5: 66f. Niblaeus had written an article on futurology in the socialist revue *Tiden* in (nr 8 1971), and Ingelstam had written in an article in the socialist daily *Arbetet* 1971-06-21 on the neomarxist influence in critical futurology. Alva Myrdal’s archive vol.5: 66d.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> SAP (1975) *Socialdemokratisk politik för forskning. Förslag till forskningspolitiskt program*, p. 6 , 20.

<sup>59</sup> Wittrock (1980).

<sup>60</sup> Wittrock (1980) pp. 91f.

<sup>61</sup> Ds Ju: *Värderingars förändring och spridning*, Ds Ju 1973:23 *Människan i framtidens kommunikationssamhälle*, Livskvalitet, Ds JU 1974:10 *Långsiktig planering och folkstyrelse, Begrepps- och kunskapsproblem i framtidsstudier*.

The future of the Secretariat was unclear until the mid 1970's. In 1973 the Secretariat itself suggested that it be permanent within the Council of ministers to work for cross-sectoral and long-term problems. In the same year the Secretariat also suggested four main problem areas, which were tackled in the following years; the working life of the future, future energy supply, resources and growth, and Sweden's place in the world order. These were discussed and approved by Olof Palme personally.<sup>62</sup> In the aftermath of the oil crises, the energy question in particular became a central topic, and the work of the Secretariat resulted in a report in 1978 that attracted much attention, *Sol eller Uran*, (Sun or Uranium?) discussing the choice and long term effects of finding alternative energy sources.<sup>63</sup>

In 1975, preceding the election of 1976 when the social democrats lost parliamentary power, futures studies were again on the agenda with liberal bills in parliament demanding an autonomous institute. This was institutionalised in 1975 as the Secretariat was detached from the council of ministers.<sup>64</sup>

### Constructing Swedish futures studies – concluding remarks

The Swedish discussion of futures studies, in the shape it took between the first report of the IVA in 1969 and the final report of the Alva Myrdal group in 1972, had certain characteristics. Futures studies were explicitly regarded as a democratic, reformist tool, to through increased knowledge about future developments provide the basis for rational longterm political decisions. The discussions of the Alva Myrdal group also fit well into a Swedish political tradition. The group was concerned with questions central to the Swedish model of reformism. The most important of these was without doubt the question of small state autonomy and political scope in the world order of the 1970's and the protection of core values in the Swedish model, neutrality, solidarity, equality. The critical epistemology of the Alva Myrdal group was a way to find a rational knowledge position that permitted the critical analysis of futures discourses and visions produced elsewhere, in different value-systems and in interests, thereby safeguarding independence.

The harmonious perspective on societal development marking the post-war period has never quite regained its strength. The planning optimism of the early 1970's disappeared with economic crisis in the late 1970's and ideological critique in the 1980's. However, the scope of politics, the relationship between technological development and democratic values, and the relationship between knowledge, science and reformism, remain Alva Myrdal's important questions to our time.

Our outlooks on the future are still characterized both by uncertainty and by uneasiness with the forces shaping tomorrow's world. Aren't we also living in a time dominated by ideas of extreme change, driven by technology and a global world order, where new social movements question the underlying values of development? In recent years, the Swedish institute for futures studies has again addressed the question of the relationship between knowledge, scientific rationality, and policymaking, arguing for social science to take up the futures battle with deterministic technological future visions, highlighting the democratic aspects of futures studies.<sup>65</sup> The institute has also emphasized critical historical perspectives

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<sup>62</sup> Wittrock (1980).

<sup>63</sup> Lönnroth, Måns, Johansson, Thomas B., Steen, Peter (1978) *Sol eller uran: att välja energiframtid*. Liber/Sekretariatet för framtidsstudier. Stockholm.

<sup>64</sup> Wittrock (1980) p. 133.

<sup>65</sup> Sommestad, Lena (2000) "Människan formar framtiden" in *Framtider* nr. 1. In 2000, the Swedish government was involved in a large Delphi based technological foresights project, "Teknisk framsyn".

in futures studies.<sup>66</sup> This recent debate echoes of the one that preceded the introduction of futures studies in Sweden. Maybe there are moments in history<sup>67</sup>, when the future seems more threatening, more difficult to envisage, more important to study and control. In that case, historical knowledge of futures discourses in the past may be an important way to strengthen critical and democratic perspectives on present future visions and discourses.

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<sup>66</sup> The director of the institute from 1998 to February 2002 was Lena Sommestad, professor in Economic history at Uppsala university.

<sup>67</sup> I borrow the term “moments” from the economic historian Emma Rotschild, who speaks of moments of globalisation. She argues that there are particular moments in history where suddenly the *idea* of globalisation, more so than the phenomenon itself, becomes a force that seems to challenge existing institutions and societal structures.



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