ALVA AND GUNNAR MYRDAL IN SWEDEN AND AMERICA, 1898–1945
UNSPARING HONESTY

Walter A. Jackson
Alva and Gunnar Myrdal in Sweden and America, 1898–1945

Alva and Gunnar Myrdal are the only couple ever awarded Nobel Prizes as individuals: Gunnar won the prize in Economics in 1974, and Alva won the Peace Prize in 1982. This dual biography examines their work as architects of the modern welfare state and probes the connections between the public and private dimensions of their lives. Drawing on their extensive personal correspondence and diaries between their electrifying first meeting in 1919 and their protracted marital crisis in the early 1940s, this book presents the psychologist and the economist as they sought to combine love and work in an equal partnership. Alva and Gunnar simultaneously experimented with a new kind of intimate relationship and designed the social supports necessary for women both to bear and raise children and to contribute their talents and energies to society. Like all genuine revolutionaries, they struggled to free themselves from the burdens of their upbringings; to evaluate their own actions with what they called “unsparing honesty”; and to test their policy recommendations in practice, measuring everything against the values they shared.

Walter Anderson Jackson III (1950–2015) is best known for Gunnar Myrdal and America’s Conscience: Social Engineering and Racial Liberalism, 1938–1973 (1990), which analyzes the making of Myrdal’s An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (1944) in relation to early twentieth-century Swedish and American social thought. Jackson grew up in the South during the Civil Rights Movement and earned a BA (mcl) from Duke and a PhD from Harvard. His life’s work was prompted by questions about racial inequality in the United States and the perspective a European social democratic thinker brought to this fraught issue. Jackson published numerous articles on white racial liberalism, African American sociologists and anthropologists, and theories of interracial relations. Beloved by students and the public for grounding the civil rights struggle in local history and highlighting the voices and viewpoints of participants, he appeared on the 2015 PBS program, “American Denial.”
Routledge Studies in Modern History

Eurasian Empires as Blueprints for Ethiopia
From Ethnolinguistic Nation-State to Multietnic Federation
Asnake Kefale, Tomasz Kamusella and Christophe Van der Beken

Atlantic Crossroads
Webs of Migration, Culture and Politics between Europe, Africa, and the Americas, 1800–2020
José Moya

Food History
A Feast of the Senses in Europe, 1750 to the Present
Edited by Sylvie Vabre, Martin Bruegel and Peter J. Atkins

Chinese Theatre Troupes in Southeast Asia
Touring Diaspora 1900s—1970s
Zhang Beiyu

Labour and Economic Change in Southern Africa c.1900–2000
Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi
Rory Pilossof and Andrew Cohen

Engaging with Historical Traumas
Experiential Learning and Pedagogies of Resilience
Edited by Nena Močnik, Ger Duijzings, Hanna Meretoja, and Bonface Njeresa Beti

Sun Yatsen, Robert Wilcox and Their Failed Revolutions, Honolulu and Canton 1895
Dynamite on the Tropic of Cancer
Patrick Anderson

For more information about this series, please visit: https://www.routledge.com/history/series/MODHIST
Alva and Gunnar Myrdal in Sweden and America, 1898–1945
Unsparring Honesty

Walter A. Jackson
Contents

List of Figures vii
Author Biography and Bibliography ix
Acknowledgments xi
Editor’s Preface xiii

1 Unsparing Honesty 1

PART I
Becoming Alva, Becoming Gunnar 11

2 Alva’s Family on the Edge of Poverty 13
3 Alva in the Family Crucible 38
4 Alva and the Great Hunger 60
5 From Kalle Pettersson to Gunnar Myrdal 81
6 Gunnar the Outsider 104

PART II
Alva and Gunnar 131

7 “Faith is that which the heart trusts” 133
8 “Souls as great as ours” 155
9 “How to operate on the heart” 175
10 “I was surprised that you understood me so well” 193
vi Contents

PART III
Gunnar in Crisis, 1941

11 The Dialectic of Love and Power 215
12 Collapse and Catharsis 231
13 Trolls, Strindberg, and Faust 245
14 The Feminist Complex 258
15 Dilemmas of Gender and Race 273

PART IV
Alva in Crisis, 1944

16 Together and Separately 283
17 The Formation of the Psyche 290
18 Dream Diary 301
19 Politician’s Wife or Independent Woman? 311

Index 319
Figures

2.1 Lowa, Albert, and Alva Jansson (later Reimer), circa 1902. Studio portrait by Axel Wester, Eskilstuna. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden

3.1 From left to right: Alva, Folke, and Rut, circa 1906. Studio portrait by Tor Sandels, Stockholm. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden

4.1 Märtta Fredriksson, at an outing of a youth temperance group, Eskilstuna, 1919. Courtesy of Arne Fetveit

4.2 Alva Reimer, Eskilstuna, circa 1918–1919. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden


6.2 Gunnar Myrdal wearing a student’s cap upon his graduation from Norra Real gymnasium, May 1918. Portrait by Vasa Studio, Stockholm. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden

7.1 From right to left: Gunnar, Alva, Sven Tisell, Rut Reimer, and Gösta Lundborg, Slagsta Farm, June 1919. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden
viii  Figures

7.2 From top to bottom: Gunnar, Alva, Sven Tisell, and Gösta Lundborg, Slagsta Farm, June 1919. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden 135

7.3 Gunnar as a student at Stockholm University. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden 144

11.1 Alva Reimer Myrdal, Stockholm, 1932. Portrait by Anna Riwkin. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden 221


16.1 Alva and Gunnar at their shared desk, Äpplevik, Stockholm. Photograph by Arne Holmström. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden 287

16.2 Alva and Gunnar in their library, Äpplevik, Stockholm, Autumn 1942. Photograph by Arne Holmström. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden 288

17.1 Alva at her desk during the 1940s. Photograph by Bo Törngren. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden 291
Author Biography and Bibliography

Walter Anderson Jackson III (1950–2015) is best known for Gunnar Myrdal and America’s Conscience: Social Engineering and Racial Liberalism, 1938–1973 (1990), which analyzes the making of Myrdal’s An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (1944) in relation to early twentieth-century Swedish and American social thought. Jackson grew up in the South during the Civil Rights Movement and earned a BA (mcl) from Duke and a PhD from Harvard. His life’s work was prompted by questions about racial inequality in the United States and the perspective a European social democratic thinker brought to this fraught issue. Jackson published numerous articles on white racial liberalism, African American sociologists and anthropologists, and theories of interracial relations. Beloved by students and the public for grounding the civil rights struggle in local history and highlighting the voices and viewpoints of participants, he appeared on the 2015 PBS program, “American Denial.”

Jackson’s first book, published by the University of North Carolina Press, won the Anisfield-Wolf Prize in Cultural Diversity and the Gustavus Myers Human Rights Award and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, Bancroft Prize, and National Book Award. His other publications include:


The “American creed” from a Swedish perspective: The wartime context of Gunnar Myrdal’s An American Dilemma. In The Estate of Social
Author Biography and Bibliography

Acknowledgments

On behalf of my late husband, Walter Anderson Jackson III, I would like to thank some of the many people who helped him trace and interpret Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s lives and careers in Sweden and the United States.

I owe a special debt to Kaj Fölster and Sissela Bok, Gunnar and Alva’s daughters, for encouraging Walter throughout this project. They generously granted him interviews and shared important documents and photographs with him.

Kaj Fölster followed this project from its beginning to its conclusion. She and Walter had stimulating discussions about the Myrdal family and Swedish society. She took him to places in Sweden where the Myrdals and their relatives had lived, and introduced him to friends and family members. I am particularly grateful to Annika Reimer, the late Urban Myrdal, Gunnel Holst, Arne Fetveit, and Ann-Mari Carlman for their help.

The members of the Myrdal family valued Walter’s work and his commitment to high standards of scholarship and objectivity, and I owe them more than I can say.

I would like to acknowledge some of the many scholars and friends in Sweden and the United States who were interested in this project and offered crucial assistance at various stages.

Stellan Andersson, the former archivist at the Swedish Labour Movement’s Archives and Library who interviewed Gunnar Myrdal, and Örjan Appelqvist, who studied Gunnar Myrdal’s economic thought, provided continuous support over many years and commented on portions of the manuscript. Archivist Lars Gogman provided essential guidance to the photographs in the Myrdals’ extensive collection.

Faculty members at Uppsala University in Sweden, where Walter spent a year as a Fulbright scholar, were very helpful. I especially thank Erik Åsard, a historian of the labor movement, who was then the director of the Swedish Institute for North American Studies (SINAS). He and Walter collaborated closely, and they often met when Walter returned to Sweden every summer to conduct research.
Swedish scholars whose expertise and collegiality were particularly valuable to Walter include Dag Blanck, the current director of SINAS; Sven Eliaeson, who studied the Myrdals’ contributions to social theory; Hedvig Ekerwald, who analyzed the Myrdals’ work on family policy; the late Tore Frängsmyr, a historian of science who was deeply knowledgeable about the history and culture of rural Sweden; and Per Wisselgren, who examined Alva Myrdal’s contributions to international social science. Charlotte Fellenius also provided valuable assistance during the research process.

Other scholars who commented on portions of the manuscript include Fred W. Anderson, a historian of colonialism, and Richard H. King, a British historian of the United States.

Walter’s colleagues at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill were supportive of his work and provided helpful feedback. The members of the Global South group, anthropologist James Peacock, and cultural historian William R. Ferris deserve special mention. Walter’s colleagues in the History Department at North Carolina State University, especially David Zonderman, Gerald D. Surh, James E. Crisp, and David Gilmartin, were deeply engaged with his work. Zonderman and the library director, Gregory Raschke, have assisted us during the final preparation of the manuscript.

Many academic institutions and fellowship programs provided essential support for this project, including the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Studies and the Charles Warren Center for American History at Harvard, the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, the Virginia Center for the Humanities, the Mellon Faculty Fellowship at Stanford, North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Swedish National Archives, Uppsala University, Umeå University, the American Scandinavian Foundation, and the Fulbright Scholar Program.

I gratefully acknowledge the invaluable support I have received from our friend and lawyer, Stewart Fisher. His professionalism, enthusiasm, and kindness made this project run very smoothly.

It is a pleasure to thank Grey Osterud for editing the manuscript. Her skill and dedication made the publication of this book possible.

Max Novick, senior editor at Routledge, responded enthusiastically to this project, and the staff at Routledge have efficiently guided the work from acceptance through production.

Finally, I would like to thank our daughter, Sarah Naomi Jackson, for her patience, love, and joyful spirit.

Rachida Chbihi Jackson
Chapel Hill, North Carolina
2020
When I took on the task of producing a publishable book manuscript from the drafts that remained unfinished at the time of Walter Jackson’s death, I had worked as his editor for six months. As a historian of women and gender, I knew that his dual biography of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal would make a major contribution to scholarship, not simply because of the Myrdals’ role as architects of the welfare state but also because of Jackson’s insightful analysis of the connections between the public and private dimensions of their lives. The economist and the policy advocate are presented in their full personal and interpersonal contexts as they sought to combine love and work in an equal partnership. Alva and Gunnar simultaneously experimented with a new kind of intimate relationship and designed the social supports necessary for women both to bear and raise children and to contribute their individual talents and energies to society. Like all genuine revolutionaries, they struggled to free themselves from the burdens of their upbringings; to evaluate their own actions with what they called “unsparing honesty”; and to test their policy recommendations in practice, measuring everything against the values they shared.

Jackson’s project was possible because the trove of personal letters and autobiographical reflections the Myrdals preserved in their extensive archive was opened to researchers in 2000, and their descendants and relatives made other documents available as well. Jackson pored over every word Alva and Gunnar wrote, interviewed their families and friends, and investigated the many intellectuals and reformers whose ideas and proposals influenced their thinking. He wrestled with the task of interpreting their private writings, often scribbled in longhand with incomplete sentences and many dashes but revealing the vital interplay of thought and feeling with an immediacy that more carefully crafted documents lack. Focusing clearly on central themes, he traced the changing dynamics of their interactions over time.

At the time of his death, Jackson had completed the first third of his planned book, which examines Alva’s and Gunnar’s family backgrounds and childhood experience and their relationship from their electrifying initial encounter in the summer of 1919 through the next two years.
He had outlined the middle third, which would have explored their personal and intellectual development up to World War II. Fortunately, he left a complete draft of the final third, which probes the crises that occurred in their relationship from 1941 through 1944 while Gunnar was writing *An American Dilemma* and Alva was coming into her own as a feminist. Since Alva found introspection more rewarding than Gunnar, who was frightened by his history of bleak depression, she left much richer first-person material than he did from this time of trial. These chapters take Alva's perspective more than her husband's, probing her dilemmas as a woman who aspired to equality in a partnership that was marked both by intimacy and distance, and based on a shared project of social reconstruction.

In editing the work that Jackson left unfinished, I have not added anything except an occasional footnote to his manuscript. Although I read his mountain of research materials and multiple drafts of many sections, I did not construct any new chapters from his outlines and notes. Jackson's social-historical and psychological insights into the Myrdals are inimitable, and no one else, however deeply immersed in the sources, could reproduce his thought process and mode of expression sufficiently to complete the book he had conceived. Instead, I have taken a manuscript he did write, which summarizes the years between 1922 and 1940, and turned it into a transitional chapter. What the finished work lacks in comprehensiveness, it makes up for in its depth and clear focus on the intersection between the personal and the political in the intertwined, yet individual lives of these epoch-making social reformers.

I am deeply grateful to Rachida Chbihi Jackson for entrusting me with the task of preparing her late husband's manuscript for publication and to his friend and counsel, Stewart Fisher, for his guidance and support. Lars Gogman and the rest of the staff at the Swedish Labour Movement's Archives and Library as well as Arne Fetveit of Oslo, Norway, provided generous assistance as I assembled the illustrations. At Routledge, Max Novick offered expert advice and responded rapidly to my questions, despite the adverse circumstances we were all working under in 2020. Finally, I am personally indebted to Lena Sommestad, a Swedish feminist, economic historian, and policy maker, for her insights into recent debates about the Myrdals and the postwar welfare state.

Grey Osterud
Needham, Massachusetts
2020
1 Unsparking Honesty

On the night of February 20, 1950, Gunnar Myrdal sat at his desk in Geneva and wept. He had just received word of the death of his closest friend from secondary school and university, the chemist and novelist Fritz Thorén, with whom he had had little contact during the previous decade. This shock led him to reflect on his early life in a handwritten letter to his wife, Alva Myrdal, who was living in New York. At 51, Gunnar directed the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, charged with rebuilding the European economy and encouraging trade between the Soviet bloc and the West. Alva headed the United Nations Department of Social Affairs, which addressed the needs of children and women living in poverty amidst the aftermath of war. Together they had contributed important ideas to the formation of the Swedish welfare state in the 1930s. Now, as Gunnar and Alva pursued careers on different continents, their relationship had taken a new turn. Without Alva at his side and with the future of their marriage unclear, Gunnar felt peculiarly alone as he picked up the pen to capture the emotions he felt. (G to A, Feb. 20, 1950)

To Gunnar, the death of his old friend symbolized the loss of his own youth, and he sensed that a very deep-rooted part of himself had been severed and was now decaying.

A personality is constructed like a shell, like a suit of armor, and one manages ever greater things. But inside one remains frozen and sad. I am crying tonight for the first time in many years. . . . I had forgotten so much! If I had the time, I would like to shut myself away for a week and think about . . . myself. It is such a macabre pleasure to brood on one’s youth. What has gone wrong and what turned out right.

Suddenly terrified of being alone with these powerful memories, he blurted out: “Alva, I am so lonely here. . . . Alva, dearest, you won’t abandon me, will you?”

Why was it such a “macabre pleasure to brood” about his youth? What memories had he repressed in his rise from his parents’ cottage in the rural province of Dalarna to his position of worldwide prominence? Why does a man describe his personality as a “suit of armor” inside of which
he remains “frozen?” What hidden side of his divided self had Fritz seen that no one else but Alva had glimpsed?

As Gunnar contemplated these vivid images from his youth, his early life seemed cut off from the professional and public persona he had fashioned as a young economist in the 1920s, an economic advisor to Sweden’s Social Democratic government in the 1930s, an internationally known expert on race relations and racism in the early 1940s, Sweden’s Minister of Trade in 1945–1946, and then director of a major UN commission during the early years of the Cold War. “I would like to write my memoirs,” he told Alva, but not about his public activities. Instead, he was focused on the “images” of the past “that continually pop up about the boy with a hip injury, and the girls, and the books and the dream” of being a “lawyer, handwriting, Father [underlined three times], Elsa [his sister], Stockholm, . . . the cold streets, yes . . . everything that is important and small and frightening.”

He was also tempted to write about “you [Alva] who were also a bit frightening but more and more the opposite.” At first, Gunnar remembered, he had been “scared of life,” but then “indifferent.” When does a person “live fully,” he wondered, and “what does it mean?” “What is truth and what is illusion?” Having lived through two world wars in Sweden and America, he asked, “What [is] an ideal which you are really prepared to—not die [for] because I am not willing to die for anything—but work for?” How does one distinguish “‘honest logic’ from . . . opportunism?” “And how does it all come together to form a fate?”

“What am I frightened of?” Gunnar wondered. On reflection, “mostly childish things, memories of fear. Everything is so complicated to work out. Much more complicated than all my books.” Gunnar nervously reassured his wife that he “will soon be normal again.” But “it feels so good for a depressive like me to cry. It is horrible to be alone.”

Gunnar Myrdal never wrote his memoirs. Until his early 80s, he strove to keep up the public persona of a wide-ranging social scientist engaging in global public policy debates. Over a decade after his death, his personal papers were opened to reveal some of the conflicts and self-doubts that he had learned to repress.

We do not have a written response to these anxious reflections from Alva Myrdal, but the couple discussed these memories in phone calls between Geneva and New York. The daughter of a family with roots in rural Sweden and in the working class, Alva was born in 1902. They moved many times before she was 12, as her father struggled to lift them out of poverty. Alva had to leave school at 14 because there was no high school for girls in the town where she lived. She was working as a secretary at age 17 in June 1919, when Gunnar, age 20, and two other Stockholm University students on a summer bicycle trip stopped at her family’s farm. The bond between the two was immediate and transformative for both and, despite chronic stresses and serious crises, lasted for 66 years.
They were passionately attracted to each other in spite of their differences in class background, education, and politics. Although both were the children of builders, Gunnar’s father had become a successful contractor in Stockholm, while Alva’s father had been a farm worker, clerk and bookkeeper, life insurance salesman, cement mixer, home builder, and farmer. When they met, Alva’s and Gunnar’s political outlooks differed sharply. Her father was an ardent Social Democrat. While Alva worked as a secretary, she dreamed of leading a life of service to humanity. His bourgeois father was quite conservative. As a law student, Gunnar considered himself an intellectual aristocrat and professed disdain for the uneducated masses.

Both Alva and Gunnar had grown up in unhappy families, considered themselves rebels against conventional Swedish society, and studied the social sciences in order to enable people to live happier and more productive lives. During the first year of their relationship, they wrote to each other constantly, both about their voracious reading and about themselves. They discussed psychology, analyzed each other, and even hoped to achieve a catharsis by correspondence during times of personal crisis. Although the youthful Gunnar believed men to be superior in intellectual capacity, he quickly became dependent on Alva, who served as both his debating partner and his counselor. While still a teenager, she came to function as a kind of therapist for Gunnar, whose extraordinary egotism, brilliance, and creativity were sometimes derailed by periods of paralyzing depression, anxiety, and fear. A university student 3 years older than Alva, Gunnar initially dominated their intellectual discussions, but Alva learned to be the strong one in the relationship, to listen sympathetically to Gunnar’s painful descriptions of psychological torment, build his self-confidence, and restore him to good health.

As the two young people discussed how to live their lives and how to find an ethical basis for decision making in an era when relativism had upended traditional moral values, honesty emerged as their highest value. If they could remain honest with each other, they believed, they could overcome personal difficulties and respond to changes in each other’s lives. Gunnar helped Alva take herself seriously as an intellectual and encouraged her efforts to complete a college-preparatory course and enroll in Stockholm University. After her graduation in 1924, they married. Gunnar pursued a PhD in economics, while Alva studied psychology in Uppsala and cared for their son Jan, born in 1927. Although they were not politically active during the 1920s, Gunnar managed to pull Alva away from her Social Democratic moorings into the intellectual elite, where social scientific expertise was more respected than democratic principles. Over time, however, her egalitarian and humanitarian outlook had an equally profound impact on Gunnar.

An important turning point in their lives came in 1929–1930, when Gunnar and Alva spent a year in the United States as Rockefeller fellows,
visiting leading universities and immersing themselves in recent interdisciplinary social scientific research. Alva laid the foundation for a career as a child psychologist and educator, although she acceded to Gunnar’s demand that they leave their son with his parents during his second year. Her exposure to new work on early childhood development, psychoanalysis, Boasian anthropology, Chicago sociology, and John Dewey’s educational thought gave her new tools for understanding how cultural and environmental influences shape personality, gender, and family life. Although national politics in the United States was still dominated by conservative Republicans, the Myrdals were impressed by the continuation of progressive reforms at the state and local levels and by the role that applied social science research played in them. Glimpsing new possibilities for social engineering, the young Swedes decided to become politically active when they returned home.

In Sweden, the Myrdals emerged as prominent Social Democratic intellectuals and architects of the welfare state during the 1930s. Gunnar became a leading economist of the Stockholm School and a key author of the Social Democrats’ “Crisis Program,” which helped pull the country out of the depression. Alva helped to design apartment buildings with communal kitchens and daycare, enabling women to work outside the home and spend less time on housework. She founded a training school for preschool teachers and taught parenting.

The Myrdals were seen as heralds of modernity, advocates of a forward-looking, scientifically based form of social engineering designed to rationalize the family and childrearing, balance gainful work and family responsibilities in women’s lives, and provide greater equality of opportunity to all Swedes. In 1934 Alva and Gunnar coauthored a bestselling book, *Kris i befolkningsfrågan* (*Crisis in the Population Question*), which challenged Swedes to rethink social policy regarding birth control, education, and housing and played a formative role in the making of the Swedish welfare state. The national debate also brought unprecedented public attacks on the Myrdals, which had the effect of strengthening their professional partnership, which Gunnar liked to call “the firm” of “AGM.”

Despite Alva’s impressive achievements, she was held back in her professional development by class and gender barriers in higher education and public life. Moreover, she assumed far more of the responsibility for raising their three children than her husband. It was not until her early 30s that Alva came to the realization that much of what she had learned about the biological differences in the abilities and temperaments of men and women was bunk. “Where does ‘femininity’ come from?” she asked.

Sociologists and anthropologists trace the division of labor in primitive societies to notions of women’s “impurity,” such as the Christian idea of sin. Traditional concepts of “femininity” are rooted in
women’s economic dependency on men and kept alive in women’s “psyche” by an “inferiority complex” which actually is the background to all ideas of “femininity.”

“The woman,” she concluded, was largely a social construction conditioned by centuries of male-dominated socialization. In fact, “the woman as she really is does not exist. We don’t know her. We will have to discover her.”

The following year, in a speech to a Social Democratic youth group, she compared women to various “minorities,” including Negroes, Jews, the poor, and the unemployed, and insisted that their behavior is shaped by socialization, not determined by nature. Paradoxically, she observed, women are not a minority. “Why isn’t this considered a ‘man’s problem’ or a ‘masculinity problem’?” One answer she offered was that women had unconsciously accepted the subordination that had been forced on them. A second reason was the many social divisions among women, such as “home-makers versus working women, rural versus urban,” which are exacerbated by ideological differences among political parties.

From this point on, Alva became a significant figure in the women’s movement in Sweden. She was already renowned as a developmental psychologist, educator, and family policy reformer, which made her especially effective. Working both within the Social Democratic Party and in all-women’s organizations, Alva sharpened her ability to think strategically and plan long-term policy changes that would advance the status of women in many areas of life. She learned to build coalitions with women from other political parties, uniting women of all classes to achieve common goals. What new qualities did Alva discover in herself as she plunged into the feminist movement? How did it affect the firm of AGM, and did she see her marriage to Gunnar in a different light?

While Gunnar won election to the upper house of the Swedish parliament, became a governor of the Bank of Sweden, and served on royal commissions on Population and Agriculture, Alva—like many women who actively addressed social questions—was not elected or appointed to an important public office. At the age of 36, she could look forward to continued success as a feminist writer, speaker, and educator, but the Social Democratic Party leadership was not interested in elevating her to a position with significant power.

In the fall of 1938, the Myrdals, with their children, returned to the United States at the invitation of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. This major philanthropic foundation commissioned Gunnar to lead an “unbiased” investigation into America’s “Negro problem” and supported Alva’s work on an English-language book on the Swedish experiment in social welfare and family policy. In a previous book, I have told the story of Gunnar Myrdal’s immersion in the issue of race, his creation of an interracial staff of social investigators representing several major points
of view, and his production of a landmark study, *An American Dilemma* (1944), which was the key work in shaping postwar liberal thinking about race relations and framing the issue of civil rights as a problem “in the heart of the American.”

This study takes a closer look at both Alva and Gunnar as intellectuals and political reformers in Sweden and the United States. Inspired by their commitment to the human and social sciences and their willingness to scrutinize themselves as well as their society, it focuses on the psychological dynamics of their marriage and their evolving views of how the social sciences can enable men and women to overcome the conditioning of race, gender, and class to achieve a more rational, equal, and modern way of living in which each person is free to develop their special talents and cooperate with others to enrich our common life.

I draw on a treasure trove of personal letters between Alva and Gunnar and their unpublished autobiographical writings, as well as oral history interviews, to explore their family backgrounds and the shaping of their personalities in early twentieth-century Sweden. Indeed, this book was made possible by the remarkable commitment of Gunnar and Alva Myrdal to collecting and preserving their correspondence and manuscripts. In order to make these documents available to future researchers, they donated them to the Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek (Swedish Labour Movement’s Archive and Library), which has organized and catalogued them and offers valuable assistance to scholars. The Myrdals’ personal papers, including an extensive collection of letters they exchanged from their meeting in 1919 to Alva’s death in 1986, became available in 2000, 13 years after Gunnar’s death. Subsequently more material has been added by their families. This extraordinary collection was assembled because Gunnar thought that we need to know more about the values, life experiences, and biases that social scientists bring to their interpretations of the world.

Tracing the development Alva and Gunnar’s relationship from 1919 to the end of the Second World War, this book explores their effort to forge an honest and equal partnership as husband and wife and the intellectual and emotional dimensions of their “unsparing honesty.” The psychological interdependency of Alva and Gunnar both furthered and limited their careers. In their lives, the personal and the political were inseparable; Alva, especially, staked her own life, as well as her marriage, on this experiment in gender equality. Together and as individuals, the Myrdals brought a unique perspective to the study of modern families and child development, the shaping of the Swedish welfare state, the critical analysis of race relations in the United States, the reform of gender and class in Sweden, and the resistance to the threat posed by Nazi Germany to the democratic values they espoused.

This dual biography devotes considerable attention to the personal crises between Alva and Gunnar in 1940–1945 that brought to a head
tensions long simmering beneath the surface of the marriage and affected his work on American race relations as well as her work on gender and the family in Sweden. How was Gunnar able to overcome cycles of anxiety and depression, look deeply into complex issues of race, economics, and society, and summon the willed optimism necessary to offer policy solutions to seemingly intractable social problems? How did his doubts about his self-worth drive him to a frenzied perfectionism in his social scientific research and writing? Both of the Myrdals emerged from the crisis as stronger public intellectuals, more confident in their contributions to national and international debates, but many interpersonal issues—although explored exhaustively in intense dialogue—remained unresolved.

During the spring and summer of 1941, without Alva at his side, Gunnar had difficulty writing his “big book” on race relations in America and fell into a severe depression. In increasingly frantic letters, he badgered his wife to do her “duty,” leave the children with relatives, and undertake the risky wartime journey to the United States. Alva fought back with a devastating critique of Gunnar’s dominance in their relationship, and a full-scale marital crisis ensued. In daily letters back and forth across the Atlantic, the Myrdals relived their 22-year relationship, explored the moral issues it involved, analyzed their current crisis in relentless psychological detail, and discussed whether they would continue their marriage.

While he was working on *An American Dilemma*, Gunnar wrote long letters to Alva in which he ruminated on his life, his faults, his philosophy, and his ideas. Fearing that his personality was disintegrating, he envisioned his study of American Negroes as his final redeeming mission. “From the first page to the last it is about just me and us and my fateful life dilemma,” he confessed. In its analysis of racial inequality in a democracy with egalitarian ideals, it exemplified “humanity’s elemental tragedy: that good people turn life into a pure hell when they live . . . in families and in society.” (G to A, July 26, 1941) After two months of psychotherapy by letter, Alva Myrdal felt that the “intoxicating honesty” of their correspondence had cleared the air and set out on a dangerous journey to join him in the United States.

A crucial period of introspection for Alva came in 1944, when Gunnar, having published *An American Dilemma* in January, took on a major role in planning Sweden’s postwar economy and returned to parliament. Alva, whose parents had died the previous year, wrote three unpublished manuscripts that have hitherto remained unknown. The first two were written simultaneously from April to June: an autobiography that explores the psychological dimensions of her childhood and youth to age 17, when she met Gunnar; and a dream diary that she kept each morning. Her reflections on her family, her friendships, and the process of growing up shed light on the sense she made of herself and her relationships with others. The record of Alva’s dreams, which range from childhood
memories to surreal, cinematic vignettes of her marriage and her political career in the Social Democratic Party, provides a unique window on the imagination of the 42-year-old feminist activist, wife, and mother.

The third manuscript in the 1944 trilogy is a private journal that Alva kept for three weeks in December. Like a movie camera, it records Gunnar’s words and gestures at a party, and Alva compares herself to the women fawning over him. Alva asks herself how she could stay in a marriage with a man whose extraordinary demands drained so much emotional energy from her relationships with her children and from her own work. She then confronts a list of four alternatives she gives herself: divorce, separation, an open marriage, or plodding on in her relationship with Gunnar. But the world would not stand still long enough for her to give much attention to these options. When she completed the journal in December 1944, the war in Europe was entering its final phase.

As Gunnar planned Sweden’s postwar economy, Alva wrote articles about reforming Swedish public education, advocated a vast campaign of building apartments for working families, and advanced ideas for improving the status of women in the labor force. Working with leaders of women’s organizations in Sweden, the United States, and Britain, she drew up plans to defend the gains that women had made in the work force during the war, knowing that if women did not get in on the ground floor of postwar planning they would have no chance of making permanent improvements in their situation. Alva had also contributed numerous articles on international relations to Swedish magazines and newspapers since 1938, adding to her portfolio an expertise on foreign policy to complement her achievements as an advocate for domestic reform. When the Social Democrats won an outright majority in the first parliamentary election after the war’s end and Gunnar was appointed Minister of Trade, the couple saw unprecedented opportunities for each of them to be effective in expanding Sweden’s social democratic welfare state and to contribute to the shaping of a more just international order.

In an address in 1972, Gunnar complained to a group of sociologists that there had been much more research on the lives of businessmen, workers, politicians, criminals, and prostitutes than on social scientists. He suggested that scholars should not only investigate the breadth or narrowness of social scientists’ training, their “reading habits,” and the “scope of their social contacts,” interests, and biases, but also examine how their research is “irrationally conditioned.” Observing that most of the great economists, such as Smith, Marx, Mill, and Keynes, were “strikingly idiosyncratic” personalities, he envisioned “a large field for intensive psychological research, which must, however, situate individual social scientists in the social setting where they lived and worked.” This lacuna cannot be excused on the grounds that these materials are inaccessible, since “the corpus delicti, our writings, is on the table.” “And for
the rest, it should not be more difficult to get at the other forces influencing us in our work besides our intention to seek true knowledge.”

Alva was keenly aware that her own life story illuminated painful issues that faced women in the twentieth century who plunged into public life and intellectual debate while carrying the burden of providing emotional support for a husband and caring for children. We have a glimpse of an extraordinary couple, both born in modest circumstances, who were engaged in some of the twentieth century’s most important issues. They are the only husband and wife ever to win Nobel prizes independently in different fields. By the time this book ends, Alva and Gunnar had each found their own separate path.

Although Gunnar was 3 years older, my narrative begins with Alva’s family, which in its struggle against poverty and its involvement with popular social movements is representative of Swedish social and political history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Alva’s family history helps to crystallize many of the issues with which the couple contended during their careers. While Gunnar’s father also began in poverty, Gunnar was educated for membership in Sweden’s small leadership class, which found the intellectual ground shifting under its feet during and after the First World War and encountered fierce resistance from below as the Social Democrats, with strong links to the growing trade union movement, eclipsed the Conservatives and Liberals as the nation’s largest political party. The Myrdals established themselves as leading intellectuals in this modern movement for greater equality, and their success in Sweden led to their confrontation with even more profound challenges in other parts of the world.

Notes
1 Alva Myrdal, Uppfostrad till “akta kvinnlighet.”
2 Alva Myrdal, Moderna kvinnoproblem.
3 Alva Myrdal, Nation and Family.
4 Jackson, Gunnar Myrdal.
5 Alva and Gunnar’s commitment to unsparing honesty has also struck others: see Hederberg, Sanningen, inget annat än sanningen.
6 Gunnar Myrdal, How scientific are the social sciences? See also Lyon, Use of biographical material in intellectual history.

References
Alva Myrdal’s published works, 2.1
Alva Myrdal. Uppfostrad till “akta kvinnlighet” (Socialized to protect “femininity”). Idun, no. 8 (1934).
Unsparking Honesty

Alva Myrdal’s manuscripts, 2.3

Correspondence between Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, 3.3
[Letters cited as A to G or G to A, date]

Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Published Works


Published Sources


Part I

Becoming Alva, Becoming Gunnar
Remarkably, Alva emerged from a background that did not nurture young women’s aspirations, support their education, or offer them models of achievement. Born in Uppsala on January 31, 1902, she was the first child of a young couple from rural Sweden who were struggling to gain a foothold in the expanding industrial economy. The Industrial Revolution had come to Sweden relatively late, but the urbanization that followed was phenomenally rapid. Stockholm’s population tripled between 1870 and 1900. Uppsala, a commercial center north of Stockholm, was home to the country’s oldest cathedral and its oldest university. As manufacturing took hold, it attracted numerous migrants from the countryside. The cityscape was marked by a deep division between the cathedral, castle, and university buildings on the west side of the Fyris River, and the railroad, factories, and crowded wooden housing where the working class lived on the east side.

Sweden remained a rigidly hierarchical society, and fewer than 10 percent of adults could vote in parliamentary elections. Although the country had achieved mass literacy by the mid-nineteenth century, only a small proportion of young men were able to attend the college preparatory schools called gymnasium. But there were no gymnasiums for young women, so only a handful of women could be admitted to university. A small proportion of school teachers were women, and most other white collar and professional occupations were closed to them. The majority of wage-earning women toiled as domestic servants. Factory jobs were open to women in some industries, but paid roughly half of the low wages men earned.

Albert and Lowa Jansson, Alva’s parents, had lived in Uppsala for less than two years when Alva was born. They rented an apartment with Albert’s cousin in a new building near the city center, which was a great improvement over the squalid conditions elsewhere. Albert Jansson arrived with great optimism about the prospects for both his family and the nation. Although poor people faced the ups and downs of the market economy without any government system of social services or unemployment insurance, the Janssons’ neighborhood included the offices of self-help and voluntary associations that served the working
class. The temperance, cooperative, and labor movements had gained a mass following. A gathering place for union meetings called the People’s House was under construction nearby. The Uppsala Workers’ Institute, founded in 1883, sponsored lectures on politics and economics. By 1900, study circles had been fostered by the labor movement and Social Democratic Party, which eventually coalesced into a national adult education program.¹

After the founding of the Social Democratic Party in 1889 and the national trade union confederation in 1898, the workers’ movement became independent of middle-class reformers. Demands for universal male suffrage moved to the center of political discourse. As Sweden’s Conservative government resisted fiercely, the debate became more polarized and workers’ class consciousness intensified. The People’s Parliament, formed in 1892, organized alternative parliamentary elections open to all adult men, demonstrating their determination to win the right to vote. At a national meeting protesting the extension of military conscription in 1895, Hjalmar Branting, who led the Social Democrats from 1892 to 1924, addressed the People’s Parliament at a hall in Uppsala, contrasting the privileged överklass, centered in the business elite, large landowners, church hierarchy, and university, with the underklass, the working poor, and sought a voice in government for those who were disfranchised but subject to the military draft.²

Alva’s father participated enthusiastically in the culture of mutual aid and self-education promoted by popular movements. He had been active in the Good Templars, Sweden’s largest temperance organization, since his teenage years. Unable to continue his education beyond elementary school, he was determined to educate himself. In workingmen’s libraries he read books by Karl Marx, Peter Kropotkin, and other socialists and anarchists, which offered a radical alternative to the conservative, religious, and patriotic history he was taught in school.³

Albert Jansson sold life insurance to working men, many of whom had grown up in rural poverty. The son of a blacksmith in Västmanland, the county west of Uppsala, he had started working as a farm laborer at 14, then became a store clerk and bookkeeper. Albert’s father had died young, leaving his widow and children only a small house and a few possessions, so Albert understood first-hand the fragility of life and the needs of working-class families. Private life insurance was well beyond the means of working people. The Swedish Workers’ Security Insurance Company, established in 1899, charged low premiums for basic benefits. Albert sold policies, collected premiums, and investigated claims. It is doubtful that he made much money, since the city had many other insurance agents.⁴ This white collar job gave him a comprehensive view of the problems that urban working-class families encountered. He became a Social Democrat and struggled for a fairer society for all.
Lowa Larsson Jansson, Albert’s wife, was the only surviving child of a family that owned a small farm in Södermanland, the county immediately west of Stockholm and south of Lake Mälaren. An attractive, well-dressed woman, she had no formal education beyond elementary school. After her mother died in childbirth when she was 9, she devoted herself to raising her younger siblings, Anna and Edvard. Lowa loved sewing and had been trained by a seamstress in Eskilstuna, the nearby small town, but she did not want to earn her living by plying her needle. She had escaped life on the farm by marrying Albert, and she expected her husband to support her and their baby. When she read the city’s newspaper, she saw advertisements for many consumer goods—for those who could afford them. The liberal newspaper proclaimed its “free-thinking and democratic principles,” but included little of interest to working people.5

Lowa’s married life had begun in the shadow of death. Her beloved sister Anna succumbed to tuberculosis only 12 days before Lowa and Albert’s wedding. The couple decided to go ahead with the ceremony, but the bride wore her black mourning dress. Just six weeks before she expected her baby, her brother Edvard died during his military service. Lowa had shaped her identity around nurturing her siblings. Now they were both gone; only her father and paternal grandmother remained. Doubly bereft, Lowa was extremely apprehensive about giving birth for the first time.6

Albert and Lowa had hoped for a son, but they rejoiced at the birth of a healthy daughter. Her name, which combined the first syllable of Albert’s name with the last syllable of Lowa’s, symbolized the new beginning for their family (see Figure 2.1).

Alva’s parents had quite different personalities, opinions, and tastes. It took a long time before their daughter could comprehend the class, gender, and political tensions in the family or see her family in relation to Swedish society as a whole. Eventually she came to understand the world of her parents and the roots of her childhood experiences in the stories of two farming families in Södermanland and Västmanland. The history of these families in the century before her birth encapsulates many of the social issues for which Alva would struggle to find policy solutions: the class system; the vulnerability of working families—especially women and children—in the new capitalist agricultural and industrial economy; inadequate housing; and women’s lack of educational opportunities, access to birth control, and the right to vote.

In Search of Livelihoods

The nineteenth century brought downward mobility for many rural Swedes whose families lost their land or were unable to provide land for their children. The population soared after 1800, as mortality declined first among infants and then among adults. The causes of this increase in
Figure 2.1 Lowa, Albert, and Alva Jansson (later Reimer), circa 1902. Studio portrait by Axel Wester, Eskilstuna. Courtesy of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s Collection, Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek, Stockholm, Sweden.

Life expectancy included agricultural improvements, potato cultivation, vaccination against smallpox, better hygiene, and the long peace after the Napoleonic wars. In 1800, land ownership was more widely distributed in Sweden than in many other parts of Europe, where large estates worked by peasants and laborers were the norm. But the gap between those with
land and the landless widened in Sweden as well. Many farmers increased the amount of land they cultivated by clearing forests, draining swamps, and converting meadows and pastures to fields. Some raised productivity by taking advantage of legal reforms that encouraged the consolidation of small plots of land in open, common fields into contiguous, privately owned and separately cultivated farms. The property rights of small landowners were strengthened by Sweden’s parliament, the Riksdag.7

For those who did not inherit land, the prospects were bleak. Many young men joined the migratory class of annual or seasonal farm laborers. Others eked out a livelihood as tenants, artisans, loggers and lumbermen, or laborers in the mines and ironworks that dotted the countryside. Young women found jobs mainly as servants and were expected to work in the barn and the fields as well as the dairy and the house. Some young men and women moved to small towns and cities, but there were few large factories, and employment for the unskilled was uncertain. In these circumstances, many could not afford to marry, so illegitimacy and prostitution became more common, especially in Stockholm. A wave of migration to North America that had begun in the 1840s became a flood in the late nineteenth century. By 1900, one-fifth of the Swedish population had emigrated in a massive effort to escape rural and urban poverty.

In the nineteenth century, large landowners had evicted tenants in order to enlarge the estates they cultivated with hired labor. Although the landless population grew, landowners did not always have enough workers at their disposal during planting and harvest seasons. They worried about controlling large numbers of migratory workers and the social disorder that might arise from masses of unsettled people. As a solution to this perceived crisis, they introduced the statare system, hiring married couples to work for them year round. Statare lived on the estate, often in barracks-like buildings, and were paid mostly in kind rather than in cash. Married women in statare families were required to work in the estate’s dairy and fields. Although rising from this class was very difficult, the system enabled young couples to marry and contributed to the rapid growth of the rural labor force. By the mid-nineteenth century, the statare system had become common in the thickly settled counties of east-central Sweden that surrounded Stockholm and Lake Mälaren. Statare worked on annual contracts, which usually expired on October 1 and could not be broken during the rest of the year. During the first week of October, the roads were clogged with wagonloads of families fleeing bad conditions and seeking better situations somewhere else.8

The situation of other agricultural workers was no better. Tenants on estates and large farms lacked secure contracts and could easily be dispossessed. They usually had access to barely enough land for a small garden and performed seasonal or day labor for their landlord. Although agricultural productivity increased over the course of the nineteenth century, harvest failures led to famines. During Alva’s childhood, older
people who could remember the 1860s told stories of starving children and families wandering in search of work.

Alva’s mother’s family, the Larssons, had managed to hold onto their small farm through the many economic crises of the nineteenth century. Alva’s father’s family, the Janssons, was less fortunate. By the middle of the century they were landless and faced the difficult task of finding work in a rural economy increasingly dominated by commercial agricultural estates.

The stories Alva knew about her father’s family begin with her great-great grandparents. Jan Jansson, born in 1793, married Stina Cajsa Larsdotter, a widow eight years his senior. Stina had inherited a small farm after the death of her father, and under Swedish law Jan became the manager of his wife’s property. Jan was regarded with respect in the community, but he, Stina, and their three children worked the land by themselves. Gustaf Jansson, their middle child and oldest son, was Alva’s great-grandfather. At the age of 20, he left home and worked as a wagon driver among 20 farm employees supervised by the leaseholder on a nearby estate. In 1846 Gustaf married Anna Maria Leisted, the daughter of a farm worker. The newlyweds moved back to his father’s farm, where two sons were born. In 1853 they moved west to Västmanland in the heart of Sweden’s Bergslagen, a region known for mining, charcoal burning, iron works, timber, and handicrafts. Here Gustaf and Anna Maria had their third and last child, a daughter.9

Gustaf became the foreman and then manager of a commercial farm owned by Adolph Zethelius, a wealthy Stockholm businessman who owned several ironworks and estates. In 1872, ownership of these enterprises passed from the family to a corporation. Jansson supervised roughly 70 people, including tenants, laborers, and their families. He managed the estate for 30 years, an unusually long tenure, and his family was proud of his skill as a “forward-looking” agriculturalist, draining swamps, bringing new land under cultivation, and increasing productivity, as well as buying, fattening, and selling steers for slaughter. For all his achievements, the corporation awarded Gustaf a medal. Yet he never owned land himself and left only a small estate at his death in 1903. His descendants remembered him as a gruff, tight-fisted patriarch, nicknamed “Upsala gubben,” the old man of Upsala farm.10

Fredrik Jansson, Gustaf’s eldest son, was born in 1847. He left the farm when he was 17 and went to work on a much larger estate with an impressive manor house that had been owned by noble and wealthy families before Zethelius purchased it. His younger brother, Albert, followed him to the estate village a few years later. The place was dominated by its paternalistic landlord, who owned his employees’ housing and tried to instill industrial work discipline. Although Fredrik learned the blacksmith’s trade, he did not find his feet financially or socially. During his late teens he got into trouble with the law and moved to a nearby city, then tried
his hand at factory work in his native parish. He returned to the farm his father managed in 1866. Fredrik worked there as a blacksmith until 1873, when he married a young woman from a neighboring parish and took a job as a smith on the vicarage estate in the tiny hamlet of Munktorp.11

Anna Sofia Jansdotter, Fredrik’s wife, came from a poor family that had lived in the parish for three generations. Her grandfather, Jan Erik Söder, was born in 1811 to an unwed servant in Västerås. Four years later, Jan Erik’s mother married a man from Munktorp and moved to the parish with her son. After an unsuccessful apprenticeship, Jan Erik Söder became a soldier but never had to fight. When he retired on a small pension, he served as the church watchman and died in 1870, leaving a minuscule estate. He and his first wife, Christina Larsdotter, had eight children, five of whom lived to maturity. The second-oldest, Jan Erik Ersson, was born in 1835 and was a 19-year-old farm worker when he had a daughter out of wedlock with Sofa Louisa Anderssdotter, a young woman in the village. Sofa’s father was not sure if the lad could support his daughter and grandchild, so he made them wait to marry until Jan Erik reached the age of 21. Sofa Louisa and her baby, Anna Sofia, lived with her parents for three years.12

After marrying in 1857, Jan Erik Ersson, Sofa Louisa, and their daughter moved to a cottage on a nearby estate, where Jan Erik was employed as a wagon driver by Henrik Sebastian Tham, an aristocrat who had served in the cavalry. They lost an infant in 1859, and Sofia remembered bitterly that Tham had said it was not suitable for a simple family to have such a fine funeral. Three years later they rented a farm on the estate, where they lived for more than 35 years; Sofia Louisa stayed on after her husband’s death in 1898. The couple had nine children, but only three lived to adulthood. In 1873 Jan Erik asked the pastor to give his new son-in-law, Fredrik Jansson, a job as blacksmith. Fredrik and Anna Sophia settled down in a small house next to the forge, 50 meters from the church and even closer to the pastor’s elegant mansion.13 But the blacksmith’s income from the vicarage estate was meager and irregular, so Fredrik sought other customers as well.

Munktorp consisted of the vicarage, a few small houses, and a general store on the pastor’s large estate. In addition to their religious duties, pastors of the Church of Sweden were civil servants and employers. Most of their income came from the grain their farms produced, as well as from church taxes that farmers generally paid in kind. The pastor at Munktorp enjoyed considerable secular power as well as clerical authority. His income placed him in the top 10 percent of men in the parish. He employed an assistant minister, a farm manager, and a teacher for the elementary school, and often served on the parish council that oversaw local government. All pastors in Sweden conducted an annual census, visiting each household in the parish and recording the name, age, and sex of each inhabitant, as well as their degree of literacy, knowledge of