

Mapping a New History of the Ecological Turn: The Circulation of Environmental Knowledge in Sweden 1967

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Introduction

The emergence of modern environmentalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s ranks among the most seminal topics of environmental historians. However, outside the field of environmental history these eventful years are not typically known as ‘the ecological turn’, ‘the ecological moment’ or ‘the age of ecology’.¹ If there indeed was a momentous change in society at large during this period, few historians without the environmental prefix seem to have noted.² I suggest that one way to redress the situation is for us to adopt a new approach inspired by the burgeoning field of *Wissensgeschichte*; that is to closely examine the societal circulation of knowledge. In this essay, I will explore the practical implications of this new scholarly venture through an empirical investigation of a formative moment in Swedish environmental history: the autumn of 1967.

During this historical moment environmental knowledge started to circulate in Swedish society with an unprecedented intensity. One defining characteristic was that a number of well-respected Swedish scientists almost simultaneously raised the alarm about an ongoing environmental crisis of global proportions. Public attention was drawn to the notion that proverbial environmental hazards, such as biocides, mercury poisoning and sulphur emissions, did not constitute isolated problems. Rather they were part of a complex and interrelated web of environmental degradation which constituted a serious threat to the survival of man. The Swedish scientists concerted, albeit not coordinated, effort was something distinctly new at the time and their dire warning calls received both widespread and sustained media attention. Hence, deeply concerned scientists appeared on national television, spoke on radio broadcasts, and featured frequently in the press. By mapping and analysing this transformative moment, I seek to demonstrate how the study of societal circulation of knowledge can help us elucidate the emergence of modern environmentalism in society at large.

The study will make evident that in the span of the autumn of 1967 environmental issues began to be publicly regarded as a pressing global question of survival in Sweden. Furthermore, the essay will demonstrate that this development was intrinsically linked to the production of a certain kind of future-oriented expertise, in the Swedish context embodied in particular by the chemist Hans Palmstierna (1926–1975).

The method of research advocated in this essay has grown out of the field of *Wissensgeschichte* which has commenced in the German-speaking parts of Europe over the last two decades. The field has recently garnered attention in Scandinavian historiography under the label *Kunskapshistoria*, and the approach seems at present to be gathering momentum as *the History of Knowledge*.³ One distinguishing mark of this new scholarly

¹ Holger Nehring, ‘Genealogies of the Ecological Moment. Planning, Complexity and the Emergence of “the Environment” as Politics in West Germany, 1949–1982’ in Sverker Sörlin and Paul Warde (eds.) *Nature’s End: History and the Environment*, pp. 115–120 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Jens Ivo Engels, ‘Modern Environmentalism’ in Frank Uekötter (ed.) *The Turning Points of Environmental History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010); Joachim Radkau, *The Age of Ecology: A Global History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2014).

² Adam Rome, ‘“Give Earth a Chance”: The Environmental Movement and the Sixties’, *The Journal of American History* 90 (2003): 525–527; Frank Uekötter, ‘Consigning Environmentalism to History? Remarks on the Place of the Environmental Movement in Modern History’, *RCC Perspectives* 7 (2011); Frank Uekötter, *The Greenest Nation? A New History of German Environmentalism* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014), pp. 4–11.

³ Christian Jacob, *Lieux de Savoir* 1–2 (Paris: Albin Michel, 2007–11); Johan Östling, ‘Vad är kunskapshistoria?’, *Historisk tidskrift* 135 (2015); David Larsson Heidenblad, ‘Framtidskunskap i cirkulation: Gösta Ehrensvärds diagnos och den Svenska framtidsdebatten, 1971–1972’, *Historisk tidskrift* 135 (2015); Peter Burke, *What Is the History of Knowledge?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016); David Larsson Heidenblad, ‘Ett

endeavor is that the analytical interest is directed towards when, how, and with which consequences something circulates as knowledge. Specific attention is given to historical periods where new forms of knowledge emerge that seek to alter the trajectory of society.⁴ Hence, for historians of knowledge, the emergence of post-war environmentalism is an intriguing topic to delve into.

To this new approach, the analytical concept of circulation is of particular importance. One of the most elaborate discussions to date has been held by the Swiss historians Philipp Sarasin and Andreas Kilcher. They define knowledge as an intrinsically communicative phenomenon, and stresses that knowledge always requires a medium or a carrier. Furthermore, they distance themselves from concepts such as ‘diffusion’, ‘conveyance’, and ‘exchange’, since these imply that knowledge can easily be shared and transferred. Sarasin and Kilcher instead argue that when carriers and mediums transport knowledge they inevitably mould the knowledge in question.⁵ Knowledge is, so to speak, always formatted.⁶ Thereby, it is compulsory that the societal circulation of knowledge is mapped out and analysed, rather than assumed.⁷ I propose that this theoretical underpinning can serve as vital inspiration for environmental historians seeking to write a new and enlarged history of the ecological turn. Moreover, this essay seeks to provide an instructive example of how such research can be carried out in practice.

Visible Scientists and Environmental Expertise

Residing at the very center of the historical process under investigation is the aforementioned Swedish chemist Hans Palmstierna. He was affiliated with the reigning Social Democratic Party that had been the dominant force in Swedish politics and public life ever since the 1930s.⁸ In addition he worked as a researcher at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm and was a regular contributor to the most prestigious Swedish newspaper, the liberally oriented *Dagens Nyheter*. In the month of October 1967 he released a short paperback book entitled *Plundring, Svält, Förgiftning (Plundering, Starvation, Poisoning)*. The book was to become a major environmental bestseller in Scandinavia and propelled Palmstierna to the status of pioneering environmentalist. When he passed away in 1975 he was widely regarded as the person who had awoken the environmental consciousness in Sweden.⁹

But in the autumn of 1967 the environmental alarm bell had just started ringing and Palmstierna was, by no means, alone in this venture. Quite to the contrary, at this formative moment in time, a number of Swedish scientists took active part in the public debate. One of the leading proponents was the histologist Karl-Erik Fichtelius (1924–2016) who served as

ekologiskt genombrott? Rolf Edbergs bok och det globala krismedvetandet i Skandinavien 1966’, *Historisk tidskrift* 95 (2016).

⁴ Philipp Sarasin, ‘Was ist Wissensgeschichte?’, *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 36 (2011); Daniel Speich Chassé and David Gugerli, ‘Wissensgeschichte. Eine Standortbestimmung’, *Traverse: Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, 19 (2012).

⁵ Philipp Sarasin and Andreas Kilcher, ‘Editorial’, *Nach Feierabend: Züricher Jahrbuch für Wissensgeschichte*, 7 (2011); Sarasin, ‘Was ist Wissensgeschichte?’, 168–169; Andreas Hepp, *Cultures of Mediatization* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012).

⁶ Östling, ‘Vad är kunskapshistoria?’, 112.

⁷ James A. Secord, ‘Knowledge in Transit’, *Isis* 95 (2004): 659; Andreas Daum, ‘Varieties of Popular Science and the Transformations of Public Knowledge’, *Isis* 100 (2009).

⁸ Mary Hilson, *The Nordic Model: Scandinavia since 1945* (London: Reaktion, 2008); Francis Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

⁹ Hans Palmstierna, *Plundring, svält, förgiftning* (Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1967); Inger Marie Opperud, ‘Hans Palmstierna funnen drunknad’, *Expressen* 28 May. 1975; Björn Berglund, ‘Han väckte vårt medvetande’, *Dagens Nyheter* 29 May. 1975; Bo Melander, ‘Palmstierna – väckarklocka i flera viktiga miljöfrågor’, *Göteborgsposten* 29 May. 1975.

the editor of another debate book, entitled *Människans villkor. En bok av vetenskapsmän för politiker* (*The Predicament of Man. A Book by Scientists for Politicians*). In the preface to the book Fichtelius wrote: ‘Prophets of doom have existed for as long as there have been people. What is new today is that every politically conscious scientist can act as a prophet of doom.’¹⁰ He signaled that man had entered a new era, a historically unique situation of grave peril. Confronting this reality the perceptive scientist could no longer remain silent. They, and their indispensable knowledge, had to enter the public fray.

Scientific warnings of an impending global catastrophe were, however, not unheard of at the time. The looming threats of overpopulation and resource scarcity had ever since the 1940s had visible public proponents in Fairfield Osborn (1887–1969), William Vogt (1902–1968), and in the Swedish context Georg Borgström (1912–1990).¹¹ In the course of the 1960s a growing number of scientists, such as Rachel Carson (1907–1964), Jean Dorst (1924–2001) and Barry Commoner (1917–2012), also drew attention to the unfolding environmental crisis. Hence, Hans Palmstierna and Karl-Erik Fichtelius was part of a broader trend in the history of science, a drift towards increased societal visibility and impact.¹² In the public sphere of Sweden they acted as national representatives for a new kind of scientific expertise – the globally oriented meta-specialist who saw a dire future approaching fast. Paul Warde and Sverker Sörlin have recently argued that the concept of ‘the environment’ was produced in tandem with such expertise, and that the concept thus from the outset was infused with an orientation towards the future.¹³ Thereby, to study how knowledge of a global environmental crisis circulated, one must also be attentive to the circulation of future-oriented scientific expertise.¹⁴

A National Environmental Moment with Global Consequences

Apart from being an instructive example of how to adopt the new methodological approach advocated in this essay, the events that took place in Sweden in the autumn of 1967 entails attention from environmental historians for two reasons. Firstly, they took place at a comparatively early stage in the emergence of modern environmentalism which makes it an

¹⁰ Karl-Erik Fichtelius (ed.), *Människans villkor: En bok av vetenskapsmän för politiker* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1967), p. 5.

¹¹ Björn-Ola Linnér, *The Return of Malthus: Environmentalism and Post-War Population-Resource Crisis* (Isle of Harris: White Horse Press, 2003); Thomas Etzemüller, *Ein Ewigwährender Untergang: Der apokalyptische Bevölkerungsdiskurs im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007); Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008); Thomas Robertson, *The Malthusian Moment: Global Population Growth and the Birth of American Environmentalism* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2012).

¹² Rae Goodell, *The Visible Scientists* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977); Linda Lear, *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature* (New York: Holt, 1997); Stephen Bocking, *Nature’s Experts: Science, Politics, and the Environment* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004); Michael Bess, *The Light-Green Society: Ecology and Technological Modernity in France 1960–2000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 78–79; Michael Egan, *Barry Commoner and the Science of Survival: The Remaking of American Environmentalism* (Cambridge: MIT, 2007).

¹³ Paul Warde and Sverker Sörlin, ‘Expertise for the Future: The Emergence of Environmental Prediction c. 1920–1970’ in Jenny Andersson and Eglė Rindzevičiūtė (eds.) *The Struggle for the Long-Term in Transnational Science and Politics*, pp. 49–50 (New York: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁴ Jenny Andersson, ‘The Great Future Debate and the Struggle for the World’, *American Historical Review* 117 (2012); Elke Seefried, ‘Steering the Future: The Emergence of “Western” Futures Research and its Production of Expertise, 1950s to Early 1970s’, *European Journal of Futures Research* 29 (2013); Libby Robin, Sverker Sörlin and Paul Warde (eds.), *The Future of Nature: Documents of Global Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Sverker Sörlin, ‘Reconfiguring Environmental Expertise’, *Environmental Science and Policy* 8 (2013); Elke Seefried, *Zukünfte: Aufstieg und Krise der Zukunftsforschung 1945–1980* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015).

interesting case to highlight.¹⁵ Secondly, there are indirect connections between the events in Sweden in 1967 and the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in June 1972. As a matter of fact the first steps towards this conference were taken on 13 December 1967 when the Swedish delegation to the United Nations proposed an environmental conference to be held in the early 1970s. This diplomatic initiative was an independent move by the delegation, and as such it was not noticed in Sweden at the time, but the members of the delegation claims to have felt supported, knowing there was a strong resonance in Swedish society.¹⁶

Historical research has affirmed this sentiment and the scholars who have engaged with the emergence of modern environmentalism in Sweden have acknowledged 1967 as a national breakthrough.¹⁷ In particular Lars J. Lundgren has emphasized the chain of events that took place that very autumn. However, his accounts have primarily been centered on how certain environmental hazards, mainly acid rain and mercury-poisoning, were discovered by scientists and subsequently came to be transferred to the political arena.¹⁸ Hence, the questions of where, when, and how knowledge of a global environmental crisis circulated in the public sphere have not previously been explored.

In Sweden, as in other parts of the world, environmental concerns had rose steadily on the agenda throughout the 1960s, and in June 1967 the Social Democratic government installed *Naturvårdsverket*; the world's first Environmental Protection Agency. Nevertheless, it is of importance to keep in mind that the Swedish government, like most other actors in the mid-1960s – the lion's share of environmental scientists included – predominantly saw environmental hazards as a series of isolated problems to be solved by scientific and technical means.¹⁹ The notion of a globally entangled environmental crisis, originating from the very foundation of modern industrial civilization, was not yet a prevalent stance in public debate. From a Swedish perspective, the autumn of 1967 thus marks a turning point. It was the first

¹⁵ John McCormick, *Reclaiming Paradise: The Global Environmental Movement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Andrew Jamison, Ron Eyerman and Jacqueline Cramer with Jeppe Læssøe, *The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness: A Comparative Study of the Environmental Movements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990); Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History* (New York: Longman, 2000); Bess, *The Light-Green Society*; Kai F. Hünemörder, *Die Frühgeschichte der globalen Umweltkrise und die Formierung der deutschen Umweltpolitik (1950–1973)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004), pp. 154–159; Jens Ivo Engels, *Naturpolitik in der Bundesrepublik: Ideenwelt und politische Verhaltensstile in Naturschutz und Umweltbewegung 1950–1980* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006); Peder Anker, 'Den store økologiske vekkelsen som har hjemsøkt vårt land' in John Peter Collett (ed.) *Universitetet i Oslo 1811–2011: Bok 7 Samtidshistoriske perspektiv* (Oslo: Unipub, 2011); Adam Rome, *The Genius of Earth Day: How a 1970 Teach-in Unexpectedly Made the First Green Generation* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2013); Frank Zelko, *Make it a Green Peace! The Rise of Countercultural Environmentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Radkau, *The Age of Ecology*, pp 79–113; Uekötter, *The Greenest Nation?* pp. 84–85.

¹⁶ Lars-Åke Engfeldt, *From Stockholm to Johannesburg and Beyond: The Evolution of the International System for Sustainable Development Governance and its Implications* (Stockholm: Government Offices of Sweden, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009), p. 32.

¹⁷ Jamison et al. *The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness*; Martin Bennulf, *Miljöopinionen i Sverige* (Lund: Dialogos, 1994); Jonas Anshelm, *Socialdemokraterna och miljöfrågan: En studie av framstegstankens paradoxer* (Stockholm: Symposion, 1995); Monika Djerf Pierre, *Gröna nyheter. Miljöjournalistiken i televisionens nyhetssändningar 1961–1994* (Göteborg: Göteborgsstudier i journalistik och kommunikation, 1996); Jonas Anshelm, *Det vilda, det vackra och det ekologiskt hållbara: Om opinionsbildningen i Svenska naturskyddsforeningens tidskrift Sveriges natur 1943–2002* (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 2004).

¹⁸ Jan Thelander and Lars J. Lundgren, *Nedräkning pågår: Hur upptäcks miljöproblem? Vad händer sedan?* (Solna: Statens naturvårdsverk, 1989); Lars J. Lundgren, *Acid Rain on the Agenda: A Picture of a Chain of Events in Sweden 1966–1968* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1998).

¹⁹ Thelander and Lundgren 1989; Lundgren 1998.

time that a choir of scientists argued aloud that the environmental issue was not just a series of local inconveniences. It was a pressing global question of survival.

This apocalyptic framing was characteristic for how knowledge of a global environmental crisis circulated during the late 1960s and early 1970s.²⁰ It was a frame that owed much to the cold war setting in which modern environmentalism emerged, not least the looming threat of nuclear war.²¹ But, before the autumn of 1967, it had not yet been widely applied to environmental issues. The Swedish case thus marks a historical shift in the societal circulation of knowledge which warrants closer inspection. My empirical analysis is structured in a largely chronological fashion as to enable the precision and attention to detail which an analysis of societal circulation of knowledge requires.

The starting point for the empirical investigation has been set to the release of Hans Palmstierna's seminal book. However, in contrast to conventional methods of analysing the advent of influential environmentalist writings my examination will not focus on the content of the book, but rather use the contemporary reception to map out how knowledge of a global environmental crisis circulated in Swedish media. Special emphasis will be given to platforms which at the time had a broad public outreach such as national television, popular weekly magazines, leading newspapers and tabloids.

Hans Palmstierna's Book and the Onset of Circulation

In the middle of October 1967 the first edition of Hans Palmstierna's book was released by *Rabén & Sjögren*, a medium-sized publishing house owned by the Swedish Co-operative Union. It was a short paperback of 129 pages and prized rather steeply at SEK 22.50. Since *Rabén & Sjögren* was not one of the leading companies on the Swedish book market the publication did not receive any immediate attention from the media. It was not until 27 October that the book was first noted by the tabloid *Expressen* who dubbed it 'one of the most pessimistic books to date.'²² On the very same day Hans Palmstierna also appeared in a seven minute feature on the televised evening news.

In the television spot the cover of the book, featuring a drawing of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, was put prominently on display. Palmstierna himself, dressed in white shirt and tie, was interviewed in his office and told the interviewer that starvation was already a permanent global condition. The present state of famine would spread over the world, he declared, and in a decade the effects would be felt in Sweden. Already, rising prizes on meat was an indication of things to come. Palmstierna's neo-Malthusian views were however but a minor part of the news feature which primarily was centered on the ongoing poisoning of the environment. Palmstierna elaborated on a wide range of environmental topics and his account was illustrated by billowing chimneys, contaminated watercourses and scenes of traffic jam. He emphasized that the current environmental situation constituted a 'massive

²⁰ M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jaqueline S. Palmer, 'Millennial Ecology: The Apocalyptic Narrative from "Silent Spring" to "Global Warming"', in Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown (eds.), *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996); Egan, *Barry Commoner and the Science of Survival*.

²¹ Ronald Doel, 'Constituting the Postwar Earth Sciences: The Military's Influence on the Environmental Sciences in the USA after 1945', *Social Studies of Science* 33 (2003); Holger Nehring, 'Cold War, Apocalypse and Peaceful Atoms: Interpretations of Nuclear Energy in the British and West German Anti-nuclear Weapons Movements, 1955–1964', *Historical Social Research*, 29 (2004); John R. McNeill and Corinna R. Unger, *Environmental Histories of the Cold War* (Washington D.C., German Historical Institute, 2010); Jacob Darwin Hamblin, *Arming Mother Nature: The Birth of Catastrophic Environmentalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Joseph Masco, 'Bad weather: The time of planetary crisis' in Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pedersen (eds.) *Times of Security: Ethnographies of Fear, Protest and the Future*, (New York: Routledge, 2013); Joshua P. Howe, *Behind the Curve: Science and the Politics of Global Warming* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014).

²² Ulf Nilsson, 'Hur lång tid har vi kvar på jorden?' *Expressen* 27 Nov. 1967.

complex of poisoning' and stressed that children and youth were particularly endangered. The whole situation thus prompted an urgent response from society, but Palmstierna stressed that the situation was not yet desperate – technical solutions were within reach. It would be costly for consumers and taxpayers, but the alternative was far worse.²³

An appearance on the evening news amounted to a substantial public outreach in Sweden at the time. By 1967 most households had access to television and there was only one channel on air. Hence, Palmstierna's appearance was undoubtedly seen by many people, but from the perspective of circulation it is notable that the long feature was not directly followed by any further public discussion. Though the book was highlighted a few days later in *Skånska Dagbladet* it would be two more weeks before the book received more sustained attention in the Swedish press.²⁴

However, this did not mean that environmental issues were temporarily put to the sidelines. On 1 November the Royal Commission on Natural Resources delivered its final report: the two part volume *Miljövärdhetsforskning I–II (Environmental Research I–II)*. The Commission had been appointed in 1964 and the advent of the report received extensive media coverage. The final statement was the result of a thorough inventory of existing and ongoing scientific research in five sectors: air; soil and water; nature conservation; biocides and toxicology; and health effects. It was written as a scientific basis for political action and as a comprehensive resource to spur further research. In contrast to Palmstierna's book it was not intended to awaken politicians or the public at large to the seriousness of the global situation. The knowledge and expertise which the Commission represented was of a distinctly more practical and technical kind. Accordingly, the report did not speak in terms of global survival, but rather in terms of national planning.²⁵ This was the established way of handling environmental issues in Sweden at the time and the moderate tone, which was mirrored in the media coverage of the report, is important to keep in mind. This was the default mode for environmental knowledge in circulation, a mode that Palmstierna deviated from.

The apparent differences were however not at all emphasized in the op-ed in *Dagens Nyheter* on 11 November which discussed both publications. The sweeping global scope of Palmstierna and the in-depth national focus of the Commission were seen as supplementary, and both were highly recommended for further reading. The op-ed pointed to the gravity of the environmental situation but was at once decidedly optimistic about the possibilities for society to rise to the occasion. It was stated that an environmental awakening was well underway and that a firm, and growing, basis of instructive knowledge had developed in recent years. Moreover, there existed a pervasive will to act.²⁶ In a similar vein other op-eds lauded Palmstierna for his politically constructive approach.²⁷

However, there was also an apocalyptic frame of reference in circulation which was considerably less sanguine. The tabloid *Kvällsposten* raised the question if we were witnessing the beginning of the end. Was it really possible to turn the tide and avoid a global catastrophe? Time was running out and the next few decades could prove fatal for man.²⁸ Another op-ed lamented that alarming scientific facts seemed to have an increasingly hard

²³ *Aktuellt* 27 Nov. 1967.

²⁴ Ivar Peterson, 'Samhället plundrar våra naturvärden', *Skånska Dagbladet* 2 Nov. 1967.

²⁵ *Miljövärdhetsforskning. Betänkande del 1. Forskningsområdet* (Stockholm: Jordbruksdepartementet, 1967); *Miljövärdhetsforskning. Betänkande del 2. Organisation och resurser* (Stockholm: Jordbruksdepartementet, 1967).

²⁶ 'Sent på jorden', *Dagens Nyheter* 11 Nov. 1967.

²⁷ 'Lort-Sverige-67', *Kvällsposten* 9 Nov. 1967; 'Attack mot Lort-Sverige', *Kvällsposten* 10 Nov. 1967; Bengt Sjögren, 'Internationell planhushållning – ett livsvillkor', *Aftonbladet* 12 Nov. 1967; 'Vår hotade miljö kan räddas', *Aftonbladet* 19 Nov. 1967.

²⁸ Staffan Ulfstrand, 'Början till slutet (?)', *Kvällsposten* 15 Nov. 1967.

time to engage citizens and politicians. Where was the political will to actually do something about the pressing issues at hand?²⁹

From the perspective of societal circulation it is further notable that Palmstierna's account was hardly criticized at all. His facts and warnings were almost unanimously seen as impeccable. The only dissenting voice was Nils Landell in *Svenska Dagbladet* who considered Palmstierna's book too passionate and imprecise. He wanted more facts, more specific examples and less speculative musings. Landell was also hesitant towards Palmstierna's conviction that only a socialistic government of sorts could successfully handle the perilous situation.³⁰ This was however a marginal position and it did not spur any further discussion. Instead, Palmstierna would already the next day strengthen his position as a knowledgeable public expert.

Hans Palmstierna's Expertise and the Formation of the Global Environmental Crisis

On 21 November Hans Palmstierna wrote the seventh installment in *Dagens Nyheter's* feature series 'Miljö för framtiden' ('Environment for the Future'). This ambitious undertaking had been launched two months earlier and consisted of in-depth pieces written by Swedish environmental scientists on topics within their area of expertise. Among the previous contributors was the chemist Svante Odén who had recently discovered the environmental hazard of acid rain. Odén was also the person who made this discovery public knowledge in Sweden, notably through an article in the aforementioned series. It was published on 24 October, just a few days before Swedish media began to take notice of Palmstierna's book. According to Lars J. Lundgren this intervention immediately transformed the Swedish environmental debate around sulphur emissions. Previously this particular hazard had been seen as a local problem, but in late October it was rapidly transformed into a regional and international concern.³¹ Taking a broader cultural perspective into account, I argue that this momentous change was part of an even larger process of transformation – the increasingly global framing of the environmental crisis. In Sweden the pivotal moment was the autumn of 1967 and Hans Palmstierna resided at the very core of the process.

His article in *Dagens Nyheter* on 21 November raised the fundamental question how we had gotten into the perilous environmental situation at hand. Palmstierna's answer was concise: we had blindly striven to as rapidly as possible raise our material standards. By putting this goal above everything else we had been indifferent to the dangerous environmental consequences involved. Palmstierna lauded the Royal Commission's report and pointed out that it included cutting-edge research, such as Svante Odén's discovery of acid rain. However, the report had also made evident that more knowledge was needed. Considerable resources had to be put forth by the government. Moreover, Palmstierna proposed that the report should be supplemented by a preliminary programme for action which could be of more immediate use to politicians. He admitted that such a programme inevitably would be costly, but underscored that the individual standard of living must not be allowed to rise further at the expense of our children's future. In addition, he proposed that an experimental city should be selected somewhere in Sweden, where new technologies could be extensively tested at state expenditure. This city could also provide a training ground for the sorely needed environmental expertise.³²

Palmstierna's article had by no means a desperate or apocalyptic tone. It was focused on political and technical solutions and it was not, in any sense, confrontational. This differed somewhat from his book where he was markedly skeptical of private initiatives and industrial

²⁹ Anders Clason, 'Katastrofskval?', *Vi* 18 Nov. 1967.

³⁰ Nils Landell, 'Väckarklocka mot förgiftning', *Svenska Dagbladet* 20 Nov. 1967.

³¹ Lundgren, *Acid Rain on the Agenda*, pp. 74–90, 151.

³² Hans Palmstierna, 'Vår smutade värld', *Dagens Nyheter* 21 Nov. 1967.

interests. In the high profile feature article in *Dagens Nyheter* he did not follow up on this polemical trail, and instead focused firmly on what politicians and scientists could do. The scope of his article was also largely national.

However, the global outlook of Palmstierna's book was increasingly a part of the societal circulation of knowledge and expertise. A particular illustrious example derives from a review of the book in *Göteborgs-Posten*. There, it was stated that several global issues, such as overpopulation and biocides, had already had their revivalist prophets. On these accounts, Palmstierna followed suit, but the reviewer also declared that Palmstierna brought something new to the global equation when he raised the multifaceted topic of environmental pollution to the same catastrophic level as the aforementioned issues.³³ Here it becomes salient that knowledge of a global environmental crisis, and Hans Palmstierna's meta-scientific expertise, were being co-produced.

Of equal importance was the fact that Palmstierna was assertively being portrayed as a man of action, not least by the influential author and debater Sven Fagerberg (1918–2006), who had been engaged in public discussions on various global issues throughout the 1960s. He argued that the perilous global situation was first and foremost a precarious problem of knowledge. It was however not, he insisted, that any of the required information was missing. Sufficient knowledge lay at hand, but it had to be brought to life, so that it would compel us to take action. Fagerberg lauded Palmstierna's comprehensive approach and stressed that his best feature was that he was one of the few responsible scientists who had come to realize that they had to actively engage in the practical course of events. Fagerberg hoped that Palmstierna's bold synthesis would provoke and inspire other experts in adjacent fields to less anxiously enter the public fray. For, as Fagerberg stated, those who want to accomplish something have to renounce perfectionism, they cannot wait for complete information. They must risk making mistakes, lest it might be too late to do anything at all. The fitting headline for the article was 'Från kunskap till handling' ('From Knowledge to Action').³⁴

Another familiar voice in the Swedish environmental debate that at this stage drew attention to Palmstierna's work was the zoologist Bengt Hubendick (1916–2012). He was the head of the Museum of Natural History in Gothenburg and a vocal public proponent for a holistic biological worldview. He lauded Palmstierna's book and stressed that it was exceptionally accessible, both in length and style. It ought to be read, Hubendick proposed, by each and every one who occupied a leading position in society. By pondering over Palmstierna's account a vital public discussion could emerge on the concept of welfare. Should this only mean raised salaries, increased consumption and more pollution? Wouldn't it be better if the concept could also encompass a biologically sound environment for us and our descendants?³⁵ As we can see, the future was ever-present, in the societal circulation of environmental knowledge, and so was Hans Palmstierna's meta-scientific expertise. By early December 1967 he was widely lauded as a knowledgeable voice of reason and man of action. This was about to contrast sharply with the passionate debate that followed upon the release of *Människans villkor. En bok av vetenskapsmän för politiker* (*The Predicament of Man. A Book by Scientists for Politicians*). As the subtitle indicated the book was written by a group of scientists, among them scholars of international renown such as Hannes Alfvén (1908–1995) and Gunnar Myrdal (1898–1987). In twelve individual chapters they spoke up on a wide range of global issues: the prospects of nuclear war, overpopulation, dwindling natural resources, and environmental degradation.

Science, Politics, and the Limits of Expertise

³³ Göran Michanek, 'Väckarklocka med skräll', *Göteborgs-Posten* 29 Nov. 1967.

³⁴ Sven Fagerberg, 'Från kunskap till handling', *Dagens Nyheter* 3 Dec. 1967.

³⁵ Bengt Hubendick, 'Nu är det allvar', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 4 Dec. 1967.

While Palmstierna's book shared many characteristics with the book edited by Karl-Erik Fichtelius there were from the outset some notable differences. The latter was printed in a new paperback-series of debate books launched by the expansive publishing house *Wahlström & Widstrand*, which was partly owned by the leading actor on the Swedish book market *Bonniers*. Every book in the series had the urgent headline 'Now!' and their cover was distinctly yellow. This particular book featured a photograph of a young girl with bunches that looked straight into the camera. She symbolized the future generations whose very survival was now at stake. The conspicuous cover signaled something different than the somber painting of the tree of knowledge of good and evil featured on Palmstierna's cover. The yellow book was also priced more modestly at SEK 12.50, which signaled intent of wide circulation.

The book first entered the public sphere on the 7 of December through the weekly television program *Monitor*. Most of the airings 25 minutes were devoted to the new book, and five of the contributors made an appearance in the broadcast. This extensive display on national television was an integral part of the marketing of the book, which was deliberately scheduled to hit the Swedish bookstores on the following day.

The broadcast began with three words scrolling over the screen: world conflagration, world famine and world poisoning. This was followed by an array of photographs showing starving, suffering, and dead children in Third World countries. The discomfiting photographs were ironically accompanied by a sung version of *Gud som haver barnen kär* (*God, who holds the children dear*) – the most well-known prayer for children in Sweden at the time.

This explicit opening sequence was followed by a talk by Georg Borgström on the topic of global injustices, malnutrition and overpopulation. Borgström was filmed sitting in a chair in his office with numerous books behind him. He was presented as a world authority and declared that we were on the verge of a monumental crisis. Borgström lamented that we at the same time were being surrounded by storytellers who forecasted an ever-brighter future of technological progress and material affluence. We cannot, Borgström emphasized, trust these storytellers. We must remove our blinders and face the facts, that we in the rich world do not only have much more resources than the rest of the world, but also plunder their economies through world trade.

'An uneasy reminder in Christmas time', the voice-over summed up, while clips of industrial smoke, exhaust pipes, and water contamination began scrolling by. 'Discomfiting as well', the voice-over remarked: 'We have seen them so often and yet there seems to be nothing we can do. Images of how we heave dangerous substances into nature and over ourselves with consequences that we have yet to grasp. The only thing we know for sure is that it runs the risk of being devastating.' This sequence of *Monitor* serves as a concise illustration of how environmental hazards in the autumn of 1967 began to circulate in tandem with other global issues, and thus added a new dimension to the meta-scientific expertise. Georg Borgström's public persona is an apt case in point, as he had put forth his words of warning long before environmental concern became a public phenomenon. Through TV-programs such as *Monitor*, and books such as *Människans villkor*, his dire predictions became entangled with environmental issues at large, notably through visions of impending global catastrophe.

This branch of thought was further emphasized when the nuclear physicist Tor Ragnar Gerholm (1925–2007) was interviewed on the topic of nuclear weapons. He spoke at length of the superpowers enormous military expenditures and pointed out that it was in principle possible to solve most of the global issues facing man. The arms race, the population explosion and the severe food shortages were, according to Gerholm, not insurmountable problems. Rational knowledge and conceivable solutions lay at hand, but the adequate

decision-making mechanisms were not in place. Hence, he likened the global situation to France in 1789 and alluded the saying ‘after us the deluge’.

Gerholm’s critique of the political order was further elaborated by Carl-Göran Hedén (1920–2009), a professor in bacteriology at Karolinska Institutet. He emphasized that the overarching problem was that the current political system rendered decisive international steering highly improbable. As politicians had their primary loyalty to their voters, there was a strong inclination for local and national interests to overrule the long-term interests of mankind. Hedén therefore argued that a new breed of politicians was required. One who did not only act on behalf of their voters, but also took the well-being of future generations into account. Short-sighted party politics was, according to Hedén, a sure recipe for global disaster. An almost identical criticism was put forward by Lars Gyllensten (1921–2006), a physician, scientist, novelist and member of the Swedish Academy. His views on the topic had appeared on the radio and in the press during the autumn of 1967, but it was first upon the book release that his opinions became more widely noticed.³⁶

The starting point of the public discussion was the final section of *Monitor* where a debate was staged between Gyllensten and the government representative Krister Wickman (1924–1993). In this installment the tables were turned, as the statesman in office got to question and criticize the views put forth by the scientists. Wickman argued that their book revealed contempt, not only for politicians, but also for the electorate and the democratic system. Would it really be better, he asked, if political democracy was replaced by technocratic rule? Put on the defense, Gyllensten dampened some of his criticism. He declared that he did not propose a system of expert rule, but maintained that the influence of science and scientists must be strengthened in order to come to terms with the perilous situation at hand. The future had to be seriously taken into account by policymakers. Responsible and informed politicians should also strive to create a public opinion that put proper value on the living conditions of future generations. Wickman agreed to this, but emphasized that the global situation had arisen because of lack of knowledge and insight – not for lack of political will. While environmental risks had for a long time been underestimated, they were no longer, and a remarkable change in attitude was now clearly visible throughout society. With this remark *Monitor* ended on a rather positive note.³⁷

Both the broadcast and the book release were observed in the press on the following day.³⁸ In addition *Svenska Dagbladet* published the first review of the book, which harbored some sharp criticism of the scientists’ initiative. While the ambition to awaken politicians and the public at large was welcomed, the political insights the scientists advocated was deemed overtly presumptuous and vague. Moreover, the confrontational stance, particularly assigned to Carl-Göran Hedén and Lars Gyllensten, was profoundly put into question. *Svenska Dagbladet* considered it highly unlikely that this stance would result in enhanced co-operation between scientists and politicians – rather the opposite.³⁹

A few days later *Aftonbladet* applauded that scientists now actively had started to take part in the political debate, but voiced reservations regarding the expressed contempt for politicians, voters, and democratic procedures. It was further stressed that many of the threats that man was facing directly derived from scientific and technological developments.⁴⁰ Hedén and Gyllensten were further criticized for their elitist views by *Dagens Nyheter* who also

³⁶ Lars Gyllensten, ‘Politik och undanflykt’, *Kvällsposten* 3 Nov. 1967; *Röster i Radio och TV* 18–24 Nov. 1967; Per Gahrton, ‘Världsnöd och ansvar’, *Kvällsposten* 10 Nov. 1967.

³⁷ *Monitor*, SVT 7 Dec. 1967.

³⁸ Rune Johansson, ‘Hotet mot mänskligheten’, *Dagens Nyheter* 8 Dec. 1967; Gall, ‘Syndafloden som stiger’, *Svenska Dagbladet* 8 Dec. 1967.

³⁹ Thure Stenström, ‘Naturvetarna och världens nöd’, *Svenska Dagbladet* 8 Dec. 1967.

⁴⁰ ‘Forskare diskuterar politik’, *Aftonbladet* 12 Dec. 1967.

wondered why the book was directed only to politicians and not to the public at large. The latter neither could nor should be circumvented in a democracy.⁴¹

Among the twelve scientists only Carl-Göran Hedén tried to address this wave of public criticism.⁴² His response, however, did not alter the discussion. Throughout the month of December the debate book continued to attract attention for its urgent warnings while its political content kept receiving harsh criticism.⁴³ A particularly extensive and severe attack was launched by the liberal politician Carl Tham on the 20th of December. He considered the political arguments in the book to be emotional and unfounded. Hedén was singled out and accused of holding scientists to be morally superior to others. This form of scientific pride was, according to Tham, not only unjustified but politically dangerous.⁴⁴

The widespread criticism of the scientists' initiative demonstrates rather poignantly the limits of scientific expertise in Sweden 1967. While scientists were held in high regard for their knowledge their political ideas held no privileged position. In particular the confrontational stance adopted by Gyllensten and Hedén was met with strong resistance. This was a distinguishing feature of how the initiative circulated but it was not the only characteristic. An equally important trait was that the threats to mankind were described as an encompassing complex of interrelated issues. Both in the book and in the media coverage nuclear war, overpopulation, and environmental degradation were mentioned in the same vein and given equal importance. This consolidated the trend towards framing the environmental issue as a distinctly global problem. It is further notable that Hans Palmstierna's book was frequently referred to in the discussion. Hence, by mid-December 1967, knowledge of a global environmental crisis circulated widely in Sweden and so did meta-scientific expertise of what the future held in store. However, the public breakthrough was marked by a certain degree of ambivalence. There were controversial scientists, such as Carl-Göran Hedén and Lars Gyllensten, which were met by suspicion. But there was also a politically proficient one who kept strengthening his central position in the societal circulation of environmental knowledge.

The Consolidation of Hans Palmstierna's Meta-Scientific Expertise

While the debate raged around *Människans villkor* the expertise of Hans Palmstierna was further consolidated. On 13 December *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* lauded his book as 'the harshest, most imaginative, best informed, and in addition best written' account to date. The reader was informed that the author was a docent in chemistry, working as a laborator at Karolinska Institutet, and in addition was very well read in the humanities. Palmstierna was praised for his ability to exceed his formal area of expertise and got depicted as a fearless debater. 'And this is what is needed', the newspaper emphasized, 'We need an elite of intrepid debaters with broad frames of reference who have the ability to think cross-disciplinary.'⁴⁵

The admiration for Palmstierna's breadth of scope and knowledge was a characteristic feature for how his expertise circulated. Another important trait was that he kept being portrayed as an optimist. *Borlänge Tidning* wrote that 'one could have presumed that Palmstierna, with all his knowledge, long ago would have given up on collective reason' – but

⁴¹ 'Vetenskap och politik', *Dagens Nyheter* 11 Dec. 1967.

⁴² Carl-Göran Hedén, 'Ett genmäle om vetenskap och politik', *Aftonbladet* 19 Dec. 1967.

⁴³ Jean Braconier, 'Utmaning till politikerna', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* 15 Dec. 1967; Folke Johansson, 'Vetenskapsmän och politik', *Upsala Nya Tidning*, 21 Dec. 1967; Gösta Bringmark, 'Människan som parasit eller Kunskapens träd på gott och ont', *Arbetet* 24 Dec. 1967; 'Vetenskapsmän och politiker', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* 29 Dec. 1967; 'Politik och vetenskap', *Kvällsposten* 30 Dec. 1967; Erik Hjalmar Linder, 'Debatternas år', *Göteborgsposten* 31 Dec. 1967.

⁴⁴ Carl Tham, 'Forskare och politiker', *Dagens Nyheter* 20 Dec. 1967.

⁴⁵ Lars Holmberg, 'Giftvatten, snuskland', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* 13 Dec. 1967.

despite taking the global problems at face value, Palmstierna still believed in man. Through joint efforts and political steering the looming catastrophe could be avoided.⁴⁶

It is evident that there was a stark contrast between how the two books circulated in the public sphere of Sweden. While the alarming warning calls to a great extent were the same – the meta-scientific expertise of their authors were not. Hans Palmstierna was considered to be reasonable and politically sound, while Carl-Göran Hedén and Lars Gyllensten were deemed vague and presumptuous. It seems highly likely that this contrast served to strengthen Palmstierna's position even further. For among the expansive choir of scientific alarm he stood out as an exceptional example of reason and pragmatism.

Palmstierna also had a unique media platform at his disposal – the cultural pages of *Dagens Nyheter*. The newspaper occupied a leading national position in general, and in the mid-1960s it had developed a high profile on environmental issues – in part because of Palmstierna's regular contributions. But already in 1964 the newspaper had employed Barbro Soller as a full-time environmental journalist and the op-eds were frequently devoted to environmental issues.⁴⁷ That the feature series 'Miljö för framtiden' ran in *Dagens Nyheter* in the autumn of 1967 is thus no co-incidence. And there was only one scientist who got to compose two articles in it: Hans Palmstierna.

On 29 December he published the ninth and final installment titled 'Insikt, kunskap, handling' ('Insight, Knowledge, Action') which provided an overview of the emerging environmental consciousness. Palmstierna stated that the insight that the Earth is small and that mankind has the means to destroy its own basis for survival was discovered late. Until recently this knowledge had been the questionable privilege of a small number of perceptive scientists. But this was no longer the case, he pointed out, the insight had started to emerge as public knowledge. The incorporation of this insight had though received a variety of reactions. Many had experienced feelings of hopelessness and resignation, hence trying to ignore the disturbing facts. Others had with bitterness turned against the scientists who had raised the alarm and wondered why they had not warned the public at an earlier stage. The truth is, Palmstierna underscored, that not even the most savvy and imaginative scientist have been fully aware of the risks. Though some for a long time have had an intuitive feeling for the risks involved, the evidence at hand was not strong enough to fully convince others. The alarm had not been sounded since society had insisted on too detailed knowledge.

Palmstierna put special emphasis on the problematic role of scientific communication. He stressed that a calm and trustful dialogue between scientists and politicians was needed, but at present there seemed to be a lot of suspicion, deriving from the fact that the two groups spoke different languages. He proposed that the scientific community should discern a new group of interpreters, who had the ability to translate scientific findings and warnings to a clear and concise everyday vocabulary. By conveying factual knowledge to the politicians and the public at large society could be enlightened, hence the scientific interpreters could promote a societal readiness to act decisively on environmental issues. Moreover, this didactic mission could not be restricted to the national arena since environmental hazards transcended political borders. Palmstierna's frame of reference was ultimately global.

In his concluding remark he highlighted that the individual standard of living must not be allowed to rise further at the expense of our shared standard of living: that is the environment. The latter was essential for our very survival and failure to adhere to this basic understanding would surely prove fatal. The dire situation did not, however, call for neither pessimism nor optimism – but realism. We had to face the facts and act rationally on the basis of existing knowledge.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Erik Nyhlén, 'Vår nedsmutsade värld', *Borlänge Tidning* 18 Dec. 1967.

⁴⁷ Djerf Pierre, *Gröna Nyheter*.

⁴⁸ Hans Palmstierna, 'Insikt kunskap handling', *Dagens Nyheter* 29 Dec. 1967.

The basic line of reasoning advocated by Palmstierna was by and large similar to that which had been put forth by the scientists behind *Människans villkor*. But his meta-scientific expertise and the knowledge he drew attention to circulated in a distinctly different fashion. Moreover, the last few months of 1967 were but the beginning for Hans Palmstierna as a politically active public scientist. His account of the global environmental crisis would continue to attract attention in the upcoming years and through his affiliation with the Social Democratic Party he would receive influential positions and appointments. For example, he was one of the key figures behind the party's political programme for the environment in 1968, and in the same year he also wrote the outline for the official environmental conference proposal to the United Nations.⁴⁹ In parallel the insurance company *Folksam* launched the information campaign *Front mot miljöförstöring* (*Front Against Environmental Pollution*) which was based on an abbreviated version of Palmstierna's book.⁵⁰ Hence, Palmstierna's expertise and knowledge continued to circulate in manifold ways while *Människans villkor* did not. By early 1968 the political controversy, and the book's public impact, began to fade away.

Concluding Remarks

This essay has set out to introduce environmental historians to a new approach derived from the burgeoning field of *Wissensgeschichte*; that is the study of societal circulation of knowledge. I have been advocating that this line of research can help us to better map out and analyse the emergence of modern environmentalism in society at large. By examining when, where, and how environmental knowledge has circulated in public we can, I propose, begin to explore and write an enlarged history of the ecological turn.

To demonstrate the practical implications of my argument the essay has been centered on an empirical investigation of a formative moment in Swedish environmental history. The study makes evident that during the autumn of 1967 environmental issues began to be publicly regarded as a pressing global question of survival. While this frame of reference was in itself not new at the time, the intensity with which it circulated in the public sphere of Sweden was. In comparison with similar developments in other national contexts in Western Europe this was rather early.⁵¹ Hence, the period constitutes a cultural turning point of considerable national importance that was to have global repercussions through the diplomatic initiative which eventually led to the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972.

The analysis further establishes that the emergence of the global environmental crisis in Sweden in 1967 was intrinsically linked to the production of a certain kind of future-oriented expertise. By pinpointing how this meta-scientific expertise and the global environmental crisis were co-produced the essay sheds new light on this historical process. One key empirical finding is that this sort of expertise circulated in various ways at the same time. While the choir of concerned scientists that sought to awaken the Swedish public and politicians to the perilous environmental situation at hand had a similar agenda, a closer examination reveals that their accounts and expertise circulated in distinctly different ways. As Hans Palmstierna rose to prominence and got a sustained political influence, other

⁴⁹ Anshelm, *Socialdemokraterna och miljöfrågan*, pp. 20–28; Engfeldt, *From Stockholm to Johannesburg*, p. 307.

⁵⁰ Hans Palmstierna and Lena Palmstierna, *Front mot miljöförstörelsen. Diskussionskurs* (Stockholm: Brevskolan, 1968).

⁵¹ Jamison et al. *The Making of the Modern Environmental Consciousness*; Bredo Berntsen, *Grønne linjer: Natur- og miljøvernets historie i Norge* (Oslo: Grøndahl Dreyer, 1994); Bess, *The Light-Green Society*; Hünemörder *Die Frühgeschichte*; Tuomas Räsänen, 'Converging Environmental Knowledge: Re-evaluating the Birth of Modern Environmentalism in Finland' *Environment and History* 18 (2012); Radkau *The Age of Ecology*.

scientists encountered public controversy and was rather quickly put to the sidelines. Nevertheless, in late 1967, the concerted effort served to raise the issue to a new level of public interest.

Another important aspect that the essay elucidates is that knowledge of a global environmental crisis at this stage became entangled with other global concerns such as overpopulation, resource depletion, and nuclear war. This was not at the time a particularly common frame of reference in Sweden, even though there had been predecessors, notably the diplomat Rolf Edberg who in the autumn of 1966 had published the pioneering ecological account *Spillran av ett moln* (translated to English as *On the Shred of a Cloud* in 1969).⁵² However, from the perspective of societal circulation of knowledge, it becomes clear that Edberg did not have the same public impact in 1966 as Palmstierna, Fichtelius and other scientists had in 1967.

The empirical findings of the essay shows that by shifting our analytical attention towards the societal circulation of knowledge we can gain new insights into the public emergence of environmentalism. By examining the ecological turn as a phenomenon that took place in society at large the results also become of more immediate relevance to historians without a particular interest in the advent of modern environmentalism. The formation of a global understanding of the environmental crisis in Sweden in the autumn of 1967 was a cultural historical event and should, I argue, be acknowledged as such.

To properly situate the ecological turn into the general history of the post-war period we need, as Frank Uekötter has argued, a new and enlarged history of environmentalism. Such a history cannot, as has often been the case in the past, be exclusively centered on politics, NGOs, pioneering intellectuals, and civic activism.⁵³ The broader cultural and historical setting must be taken into account. I argue that this article demonstrates one fruitful direction which can serve to widen our scope and raise our level of ambition. By examining societal circulation of knowledge we can provide a new basis for writing an enlarged history of the ecological turn. If we succeed in this endeavor we will not only strengthen our understanding of the emergence of environmentalism, we will also have strong arguments for consigning environmentalism to the history of the post-war period.

⁵² Rolf Edberg, *Spillran av ett moln: Anteckningar i färdaboken* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1966); Rolf Edberg, *On the Shred of a Cloud: Notes in a Travel Book* (Alabama: Alabama University Press, 1969).

⁵³ Uekötter, *The Greenest Nation?*, pp. 4–11.