

new industrial districts on which these 'sinks of consumption' were so heavily dependent.

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**Jeffrey S. Adler**, *First in Violence, Deepest in Dirt: Homicide in Chicago, 1875–1920*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2006. 367pp. 14 figures. Appendix. \$35.00.  
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Several factors combine to make this book rival Eric Monkkenon's study of New York as the best history of big city homicide yet published. Start with Chicago in its explosively growing heyday, 1875–1920, its reputation for murderous violence unmatched; add numerous contemporary reports and studies; stir in some theoretical points scored for and against Norbert Elias and the Chicago School of Sociology; and top with a juicy title from Lincoln Steffens. But the key ingredient is an unmatched collection of primary sources, led by nearly 6000 detailed police reports, which allow Jeffrey Adler to exercise his interpretative skills with more subtlety and precision than any previous researcher.

Adler deals with a paradox; at a time when other cities experienced falling murder rates Chicago's was going up. But he argues, convincingly, that the key is not the rate but the type of homicide, whose changing nature actually helps to show that the still new city was in fact growing more orderly, its residents responding to the demands of industrial capitalism and adopting middle-class norms of self-control. Adler criticizes the Chicago School's emphasis on urban anonymity and "senseless" violence – every killing made sense to the perpetrator – and in the process comes closest to explaining the 'I can lick any man in the house' bachelor subculture of the 1880s, a time when the bar-room brawl was the modal murder. But this type of murder in time gave way to two other forms whose rationale was more easily understood in middle-class terms; first domestic homicide, increasingly sparked by changing contemporary ideals about marriage and women's roles, and the cold-blooded instrumental killing associated with armed robbery and gangs. At the same time, some of the apparent rise in homicide rates is misleading because police and prosecutors were influenced by new standards of humanitarianism and personal responsibility, pursuing or reclassifying previously ignored infanticides, deaths from abortion and, in the dawning automobile age, careless accidents.

The number of cases Adler examines, and the available detail about each, have two advantages. First, they allow Adler to make distinctions within and between types of homicide and their perpetrators, such as African Americans, Italians and others. These murders changed over time, related to the nature of work and/or contemporary social expectations. Wife-killers, for example, once brutally savage, became regretful and typically suicidal, as their motives moved past rejecting challenges to masculine prerogatives to brooding about failing to live up to the newer companionate ideals of marriage. Second, the many illustrative stories are full enough to allow readers to check Adler's interpretations against their own,

almost always nodding in agreement, and confirming the judgment expressed in the first paragraph of this review.

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**Håkan Forsell**, *Property, Tenancy and Urban Growth in Stockholm and Berlin, 1860–1920*. Historical Urban Studies, Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2006. xiii + 303pp. 4 maps. 1 table. 6 figures. Bibliography. Index. £55.00.

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There are not many studies that try to balance the economic underpinnings of urban growth with the political and socio-cultural perspectives that often are more familiar to historians. Håkan Forsell's actor-oriented dissertation, however, is a promising attempt. Its subject matter is a comparison between the property owners' organizations in two north European capital cities – Stockholm and Berlin – during the transition phase from mid-nineteenth-century liberal capitalism to the democratic breakthrough of the first decades of the twentieth century. The study is divided into three parts: first, the formation of the property owners as organized pressure groups; second, their role in the urban development process; and third, the debates about the legal character of tenancy, leading up to law amendments and rent control in the first decades of the twentieth century. Moreover, in both cities the main part of this period was characterized by the proliferation of and intense debate about the large tenement building – *die Mietskaserne/hyreskasernen* – that constituted the staple of urban expansion. There is good reason to see these perceptions as ways to conceptualize the modernization of urban life.

One of the main strengths of Forsell's study is its broad contextualizations and how he uses the property owners as a key to a general and deepened understanding of the economic preconditions of urban development. Both modernized forms of municipal administration and the sequence of reforms of credit institutions were important conditions for change, but, as Forsell shows, so was the degree to which changes in the economic structure were accepted, and not resisted, by the main actors. Yet, there were some important differences in the roles played by the property owners' organizations in the two cities. While property owners in Berlin retained much of their status and obligations from the older, corporative, city administration, municipal administration in Stockholm (and other Swedish towns) from 1862 was purely in the hands of the city council. While property owners in Berlin thus drew much of their influence from their status as burghers, in Stockholm voting power grew exclusively out of sheer economic wealth. This difference made the Stockholm property owners more likely to take part in national and party politics, and in that way gave them a progressive role, helping to integrate important new political actors from the labour movement and the free professions into the political process. Not least, the Stockholm property owners looked favourably on state intervention in order to modernize the system of building credits. The influence of the Berlin property owners, on the other hand, was much more conservative in that they tried to defend their inherited status. As a consequence, they favoured a larger degree of municipal independence and a system where the control of credit facilities was kept largely in private hands,