

# Introduction

The modern development of private ownership rights was a necessary precondition for nineteenth-century urbanisation. The expansion of European towns – the way in which the ‘urban reserves’ were filled – took place largely through private land and property investments. It was, at least initially, a decentralised and fairly unregulated process. Public intervention in the urban environment was often ineffectual when faced with private interests in land companies and the construction and property industry.<sup>1</sup>

The background to this development lay in the high valuations of property in the nineteenth century liberal and bourgeois society. Since the classic liberal era, private ownership rights were considered the very fundament of economic prosperity and of a sound society based on political and civil rights. Private property was a mainstay in the development of European towns towards freedom of trade and increased autonomy. Real estate involved rights and obligations which were connected to a number of norms that in a comprehensive way characterised economic and social relations.<sup>2</sup>

In particular, ownership of buildings and land was regarded as a guarantee for a person’s independence and integrity. In certain periods, those who possessed real estate could be attributed with, or could attribute themselves with, a series of determined properties – such as industriousness, thrift, work performance and the capacity to steer their own lives. Property has thereby also been an important tool in excluding other social groups from participation and co-determination.<sup>3</sup> Through the entire nineteenth century, a view was underpinned of the private property owner as a fundamentally ‘apolitical’ person. Ownership freed the individual from bias in his social engagement. ‘In property, the will became objective’, as Hegel put it in his *Rechtsphilosophie* from 1820, which led to the emergence of an idealised picture of landowners and property owners, in which their supposed autonomy was at odds with other political and economic developments in society.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul M. Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe 1000–1994*, Cambridge/London 1995, pp. 321, 326. Leonardo Benevolo, *The European City*, Oxford 1993, p. 165f.

<sup>2</sup> C.M. Hann, ‘Introduction: the embeddedness of property’ in: C.M. Hann (Ed.), *Property Relations. Renewing the anthropological tradition*, Cambridge 1998, pp. 1f., 7f.

<sup>3</sup> Hannes Sigriest and David Sugarman, ‘Geschichte als historisch-vergleichende Eigentumswissenschaft. Rechts-, kultur- und gesellschaftsgeschichtliche Perspektiven’ in: Hannes Sigriest and David Sugarman (Eds), *Eigentum im Vergleich 18.-20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 1999, pp. 12f. and 18.

<sup>4</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Rechtsphilosophie* (1820) §41, Zusatz, §46, quoted from Dieter Schwab, ‘Eigentum’, in: Otto Brunner/Werner Conze/Reinhart Koselleck (Eds), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland (GG)* Band 2, Stuttgart 1975, p. 82, see also p. 103ff.

The present investigation delves into a transformational period in the history of European towns, from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the First World War. Due to the emergence of market capitalism, strong pressure for change came to be exerted on private ownership rights as a basis for influence in society, for political legitimisation – and as a legal concept. Parallel with the high esteem in which real estate was held, criticism grew of the political paradigm which had placed private property as an unimpeachable centre around which to mould society. With increasing urgency, it was asked how ‘natural’ the individual’s claims to freedom, intertwined as it was with freedom of ownership, could be considered when such claims indubitably and repeatedly came into conflict with the best interests of society. At the same time as ownership rights created greater prosperity for the wealthy, there was concrete evidence of increasing unwillingness among owner groups to reinvest at a corresponding level in land, people, and society. Freedom of ownership needed to be ordered in a system of obligations to society, lest private ownership develop into an anomaly and an asocial phenomenon.<sup>5</sup>

The tension between on the one hand the significance of ownership to the formation of society, to the creation of rights and to morality; and on the other hand, its autonomous, profit-seeking and market-oriented character form the backdrop against which this study shall put, and attempt to answer, its questions.

### Prior Research

The central players in the investigation are the private urban property owners. The term property ownership in a wider sense denotes ownership of both land and buildings – just like the German term *Grundbesitz* and the Swedish term *fastighetsägande* – and there was no legal instrument in either nation to distinguish them until around the year 1900. But the study is principally concerned with ownership of residential buildings.

Naturally, urban property owners have been mentioned and discussed in individual urban monographs and in studies of housing policy and the emerging social question of housing around the year 1900. However, there has long been a lack of investigations specifically addressing the actions, motives and significance of the property-owning group in the period in question. The private property owners have often being depicted exclusively as antagonists of state intervention and regulation of the property and housing market. This book shall not attempt to refute that approach. However, to thereby assert that the property owners by extension were hostile to urban modernisation and social development is a problematic conclusion which requires additional nuances.

It is not until recently that a marked interest has been shown in these *property issues*, even though real estate is a fundamental factor in forming an opinion on the emergence of towns and changes in towns in the time of rapid growth in the age of

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<sup>5</sup> Hann 1998, pp. 15, 45. Adolph Samter, *Das Eigentum in seiner sozialen Bedeutung*, Jena 1879, p. 211. Adolph Wagner, *Grundlegung der politischen Oekonomie, Bd 2: Volkswirtschaft und Recht*. 3. Auflage, Leipzig 1894, p. 12. Henry George, *Poverty and Progress*, (1879) Everyman’s Edition London 1911, p. 331f.

industrialisation.<sup>6</sup> For clarity, the works which have more expressly addressed the role of property owners in urban growth from the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War have been divided into four thematic categories. The first has above all adopted a *socio-cultural perspective* and studies property ownership either in connection with pursuing the trade associated with owning an urban property, or in relation to tenants in accordance with a class-oriented analytical framework. The second, has adopted a *legal perspective* and above all analysed how legal relations between property owners as landlords and tenants were subjected to radical change in the first decades of the twentieth century. The third has dealt with the *political actions and influence* of the organised property owners in municipal politics. The fourth has discussed the property owners' *influence on the spatial design of the urban environment*. The studies most important to the present work are briefly mentioned here, and at the same time a general presentation of the subject is given. Certain central studies, their questions and findings will be investigated in more detail in connection with this investigation.

1. In studies by Geoffrey Crossick (1995, 2000) and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (1995), property ownership in major European towns in the nineteenth century has been linked to a particular social class, namely the petty bourgeoisie or traditional middle class. Property ownership was a characteristic feature for this group alongside such professions as craft, the retail trade and small-scale production. In pre-industrial times, property ownership had been associated with owning one's own dwelling and possessing one's own enterprise. When the property market became liberalised – which coincided with industrialisation and population influx to towns – the property owner role changed. Many property owners began rental operations, letting rooms as a subsidiary income or as a main income. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, it was considered an established role distribution in several European cities for the middle class to occupy itself with letting properties to the working class. As an occupation, it was far too problematic for more prominent capitalists. The 'smaller capitalists' on the other hand could keep an incessantly vigilant and supervisory eye on the tenants in their properties. This was indeed a necessity if the investment in the rental property was to be profitable. There was a broader middle-class grouping in the towns which ascribed property ownership enormous significance. Property ownership was associated with prosperity and social influence. It was a form of investment and a source of income which bore powerful social implications, and in many cases could reveal deep-seated mentalities. In fact, property ownership was never stripped of its social and moral significance, neither was it ever completely identified with a neutral market. The middle class gladly invested its savings and income in secure investments such as land and property in its search for a more personal vision of prosperity. The attraction of the security it could offer and the social prestige it gave to be a property owner meant that property ownership tended to increase in the middle class even in periods when investments fell among other economically favoured social groups. Property ownership was possibly the most important single identity-creating factor to the European middle class in a broad

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<sup>6</sup> Alastair Owens and Jon Stobart, 'Introduction' in: Jon Stobart and Alastair Owens (Eds), *Urban Fortunes. Property and Inheritance in the Town 1700–1900*, Aldershot 2000, p. 1.

sense, and something which distinguished the group both from the working class and from the industrialist bourgeoisie. With respect to the latter, it was above all the property owners' close ties to the urban environment that played a central role.<sup>7</sup>

In a socio-cultural perspective, previous research has directed its intention above all to the relations between the tenant working-class and the landlord middle class. The Swedish historian Hans Wallengren (1994), for example, in his historical-materialistic study of tenant-landlord relations in Malmö in the years surrounding the turn of the century, has also linked property ownership and the activity of letting urban flats to a petty bourgeois social class. According to Wallengren, conflicts on the housing market increasingly tended to take on the form of a class struggle around and after the First World War.<sup>8</sup> The British historian David Englander, in his book *Landlord and Tenant in Urban Britain 1838–1918* (1983), also reasons on the theme of social and cultural norms which became apparent in the occasionally fierce conflicts between landlords and tenants in British towns. Like Wallengren, Englander in his study has put emphasis on working-class housing conditions and how conflicts over tenancy conditions could strengthen class-consciousness in the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

2. Urban tenancy relations as an area for socio-political legislation were discovered relatively late. For a long time, authorities preferred to address the problematic urban housing situation through public civil legislation – for example by regulating housing ordinances and by setting up town planning and expropriation legislation. Until quite recently, public legal initiatives provided the predominant perspective in housing policy research, even though civil legislation was of crucial importance to everyday conditions in the growing towns of the nineteenth century.

The German legal historian Tilman Repgen (2001), in an extensive investigation of the prehistory of the new Civil Code of 1900 in Germany, has focused on tenancy relations as an area of particular complexity in its day, with regard to weighing liberal property claims against social considerations. One important finding of Repgen's study is that the property-based legal conception, the social reformists' demands for protection for the weaker party, and the more socially conservative preservation of the community concept together came to make up a complex fabric of strivings in the late nineteenth century, aimed to control the acute social problems in German cities around the turn of the century. In this context, the relation between property owners and tenants under civil law was a particularly large social problem.<sup>10</sup>

Karl-Christian Führer (1995) has published an investigation which thematises the marginalisation by the social state of private property owners in German towns after the First World War. During and after the war, state constrictions upon private ownership rights increased, and private property owners' function as landlords on an

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<sup>7</sup> Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe 1780–1914. Enterprise, Family and Independence*, London 1995. Geoffrey Crossick, 'The Meaning of Property and the world of the petite bourgeoisie' in: Stobart and Owens 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Hans Wallengren, *Hyresvärlden. Maktrelationer på hyresmarknaden i Malmö ca. 1880–1925*, Malmö 1994.

<sup>9</sup> David Englander, *Landlord and Tenant in Urban Britain 1838–1918*, Oxford 1983.

<sup>10</sup> Tilman Repgen, *Die soziale Aufgabe des Privatrechts. Eine Grundfrage in Wissenschaft und Kodifikation am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen 2001.

unregulated housing market became the subject of a politically-oriented realignment. Führer analyses the political, social and economic motives which meant that private property owners were seen as an undesirable relic from a superseded social system after the fall of the empire in 1918, which therefore could be ‘sacrificed’ to further new social housing aims.<sup>11</sup>

3. The function-oriented study *Sammanslutningarnas roll i politiken 1870–1910* (The Role of Alliances in Politics, 1870–1910) (1967) by Swedish political scientist Pär-Erik Back is the only example of a more systematic audit of property owners’ associations in general in Sweden, and of Stockholm Property Owners’ Association in particular, and of the role of the organisation as a pressure group, principally with respect to Stockholm municipal authorities. Back’s investigation makes an important contribution to understanding of the political culture which emerged through the 1862 municipal reform – the Municipal Constitution – and above all the interaction and exchanges which were set up between liberal associations and municipal authorities in the second half of the nineteenth century. Back shows that alliances of the time that the property owners’ associations exemplify – that is, organisations of an exclusive character, not open to everyone (unlike popular movements in Sweden) – have had a major and underestimated importance in forming the political agenda in Swedish towns. The organised property owners in Stockholm played an active role in City Council elections and in the design of new housing legislation and state guaranteed property credit. The forms of networking, lobbying and collaboration which emerged between state and municipal authorities and ‘reputable’ alliances towards the end of the nineteenth century, according to Back, were profound, constant and normative.<sup>12</sup>

Taking a different approach, Detlef Lehnert has drawn attention to the municipal influence of organised property owners in Vienna and Berlin, in an article in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* in 1994. Lehnert’s investigation is essentially a study of the ideological aspects behind how the political history of the two capital towns has been characterised by two power groupings which dominated the municipal administrations: on the one hand, the Magistrat (municipal executive) jurists and on the other, the property owners. The property owners’ organisations had a decisive influence on the character of municipal self-governance in Vienna and Berlin during the late nineteenth century. The property owners embraced ideas from a pre-modern era where property owners were identified as representatives of the state norm for ‘stability and order’ in society. Their self-assumed role as moral authorities resulted among other things in carefully designed control and protection methods to deal with difficult working-class tenants. Lehnert describes how property owners were the foremost defenders of bourgeois ideals in both towns, and how this self-perception aimed to retain political dominance in the urban society, and to steer the social and economic priorities of the municipal administration.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Karl Christian Führer, *Mieter, Hausbesitzer, Staat und Wohnungsmarkt. Wohnungsmangel und Wohnungszwangswirtschaft in Deutschland 1914–1960*, Stuttgart 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Pär-Erik Back, *Sammanslutningarnas roll i politiken 1870–1910*, Skellefteå 1967.

<sup>13</sup> Detlef Lehnert, ‘Organisierter Hausbesitz und kommunale Politik in Wien und Berlin 1890–1933. Skizzen zu einer vernachlässigten Kategorie der grossstädtischen Bürgerlichkeit’, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 20, 1994.

That which characterised property owners in both Berlin and Stockholm in the industrialisation era was thus the fact that they represented the urban taxpayer in municipal governance, at the same time as they were to a significant degree administrators and landlords over a heterogeneous tenant population, often of lower social standing. The significance in society of being a property owner in the town was determined by this complex relation.

4. Relatively little research has been published addressing the question of the property owners' significance to the urban housing environment and spatial design. With regard to both Stockholm and Berlin, players participating in direct housing production in the town have attracted far more interest than property owner groupings. In Stockholm, construction companies and state regulatory policies have been dealt with, among other areas. In Berlin, corresponding research has addressed land companies. Another section of research has focused on land division policies and land speculation – both private and municipal – and how land use practices derived therefrom have influenced the design of towns and city districts.<sup>14</sup>

In Christoph Bernhardt's thesis *Bauplatz Gross-Berlin. Wohnungsmärkte, Terraingewerbe und Kommunalpolitik im Städtewachstum der Hochindustrialisierung 1871–1918* (1998), there are interesting and important observations on the particular subject of the influence of landowners and property owners over the design of the emerging urban environment. Bernhardt shows how influential property owners in certain parts of Berlin completely dominated local politics in the field of construction and planning issues at the end of the nineteenth century. Of particular importance to the present investigation is the conclusion by Bernhardt that without the willingness to invest small funds in tenements that was characteristic of the middle-class norm which prevailed among the majority of property owners in Berlin, then the nineteenth-century town typically built in neighbourhood blocks would never have come into existence. Urban development – not only in towns like Berlin and Stockholm, even though these can be seen as representative for a certain time period – was in fact full of anomalies, unequal power relations, and with inherent, inevitable crisis situations. At the same time, however, it was a successful and complex system where political, social and economic factors contributed towards impressive productivity.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See for Berlin: Stefan Fisch, 'Grundbesitz und Urbanisierung. Entwicklung und Krise der deutschen Terrangesellschaften 1870–1914', in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 15, 1989. Dieter Radicke, 'Der Berliner Bebauungsplan von 1862 und die Entwicklung des Wedding. Zum Verhältnis von Obrigkeitplanung zu privatem Grundeigentum' in: Goerd Peschken, Dieter Radicke, Tilmann J. Heinisch (Eds), *Festschrift Ernst Heinrich*, Berlin 1974. See for Stockholm: Gösta Selling, *Albert Lindhagen and esplanadsystemet*, Stockholm 1970. Gösta Selling, 'Byggnadsbolag in brytningstid', in: *Studier and handlingar rörande Stockholms historia IV*, Stockholm 1975. Hossein Sheiban, *Den ekonomiska staden. Stadsplanering i Stockholm under senare hälften av 1800-talet* (English summary: The Economic Town, Town Planning in Stockholm in the Latter Half of the nineteenth Century) Stockholm 2002. Folke Lindberg, 'Kommunal and privat tomtspekulation in 1880-talets Stockholm', in: *Studier and handlingar rörande Stockholms historia IV* (Studies and Documents on Stockholm's history IV), Stockholm 1975. Georg Mörner, *Ljus and luft. Herman Ygberg, stadsingenjör and stadsplanerare 1844–1917*, Stockholm 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Christoph Bernhardt, *Bauplatz Gross-Berlin. Wohnungsmärkte, Terraingewerbe und Kommunalpolitik im Städtewachstum der Handindustrialisierung 1871–1918*, Berlin 1998.

## The Purpose, Theoretical Framework and Questions of the Study

On the basis of previous research, it is evident that the issue of urban property ownership can be approached in different ways. The property owners were at the cross-section of several lines of development in the nineteenth century, which all can be associated with urban modernisation – whether they were social, legal, political, technological or economic by nature. This has to do with the fact that ownership rights cannot be reduced to a mere legal instrument or the possession of a material object. On the contrary, real estate ownership contributed to a considerable degree to the distribution of social entitlements in nineteenth-century society.<sup>16</sup>

The purpose of the study is to investigate the changed conditions for property ownership in two North European capital towns from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the First World War. The ultimate purpose is to contribute to understanding of the political, social and economic character of dynamic urban growth during industrialism.

The theoretical framework for the investigation associates to the concept of the integration of the economy in societal organisation. In order to understand how the economy functioned in practice, it must be put in its historical context; how economic players and markets were ordered in, and interacted with, social norms, and political and legal structures.

This general theory can be traced back to Karl Polanyi's critical confrontation with market capitalist society in the book *The Great Transformation* from 1944. In recent years, political scientists and housing researchers such as Fred Block and Michael Harloe have given the perspective a stringent formulation: every period in capitalist development creates a special set of social conventions for retaining growth dynamism. In each phase, the relation of the state to the market and to civil society has also been different. This is a question of fundamental social conditions – such as the design of urban development, financial and political mechanisms for production and demand, and the organisation of the labour market. The effectiveness of these social structures for growth is temporally limited. After a dramatic political and economic downturn, forces are mobilised to establish a new social growth structure.<sup>17</sup>

The period addressed by this investigation is that of liberal capitalism, the initial form created by the Industrial Revolution. The market order reached its zenith towards the end of the nineteenth century, after which it began to show signs of deterioration. The dissolution process was hastened by the First World War, and despite attempts to resuscitate the system, it underwent radical change due to the effects of the interwar crisis in the world economy. The growth structure that took over – the post-Fordian or welfare capitalist order, which grew in strength and efficacy in the post-war period – gave not least the state a completely different and prominent distributory role in relation to the market. This new growth structure really

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<sup>16</sup> Hann 1998, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Fred Block, 'Social Policy and Accumulation: A Critique of the New Consensus', in: Martin Rein, Gosta Esping-Andersen and Lee Rainwater (Eds), *Stagnation and Renewal in Social Policy. The Rise and Fall of Policy Regimes*, London 1989, p. 22f. Michael Harloe, *The People's Home? Social Rented Housing in Europe & America*, Oxford/Cambridge Mass 1995, p. 8f.

has its roots in the turn-of-the-century ‘social question’ and the politically heterogeneous social reformist movements around the time of the First World War.<sup>18</sup> Since this book’s investigation period ends shortly after the First World War, the outlines and the emerging design of the social and economic order will be simply shown in accordance with this temporal division.

Polanyi himself presented a dark picture of nineteenth-century industrial society. The economic sector had liberated itself from social conditions, and had become the predominant principle behind social organisation, and no longer a regulated instrument subordinated to the public good in general. Society had been forced to adapt to the needs of market mechanisms. The uncontrolled market economy, however, had a devastating effect on the social system, since it dealt not only with produced objects, but also land, labour and people as goods. As a reaction to the utopia of a self-regulating market and the decay of social relations, supervision and control of the economy was reinstated as an act of something approaching societal self-defence.<sup>19</sup>

There are other researchers who do not attribute such predominance to the economic development of the Industrial Revolution. The German semantic historian Reinhart Koselleck has characterised nineteenth-century society as a ‘transitional society’. Certainly, power and influence tended increasingly to be defined in economic terms. However, at the same time, the social development of the age bore traces of both a defunct corporate and class-oriented order, and of an as yet unrealised democratic future, which meant that society was subjected to an intensive transformation process.<sup>20</sup>

This investigation concentrates on an environment which in the author’s opinion was at the centre of the economic and political establishment, flowering and eventual dissolution of the age, namely that of the major industrial town. The study begins with the assumption that the emergence of the urban environment in industrial cities, and above all the housing conditions in such cities, were dependent on the social and legal status and the municipal influence which ownership of property brought in the period in question – but also the assumption that the conditions and significance of property ownership gradually came to change as a consequence of the increasing dominance of the capitalist economy and of the commodities market.

Based on the purpose and theoretical framework of the study, the main research questions can be formulated in the following way: how was property ownership socially and politically integrated in Berlin and in Stockholm during the period in question? What social, political and legal changes did property ownership undergo, and what caused the changes? Were property owners themselves active in the change

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<sup>18</sup> Harloe, 1995, p. 8f. Benny Carlson, *Ouvertyr till folkhemmet. Wagnerska tongångar i förra sekelskiftets Sverige*, Lund 2002, p. 172ff.

<sup>19</sup> Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Boston 1944, pp. 68–76, see also ‘Notes on sources: 6. Selected references to “Societies and Economic Systems”’; (f) Economic systems, as a rule, are embedded in social relations; distribution of material goods is insured by noneconomic motives’, p. 272.

<sup>20</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, Ulrike Spree, Willibald Steinmetz, ‘Drei bürgerliche Welten? Zur vergleichenden Semantik der bürgerlichen Gesellschaften in Deutschland, England und Frankreich’, in: Hans-Jürgen Puhle (Eds), *Bürger in der Gesellschaft der Neuzeit. Wirtschaft – Politik – Kultur*, Göttingen 1991, p. 20.

process, or were they mainly subordinated to developments in other social areas? Finally, what effect did the changed conditions for property ownership have upon the design of the housing market in Berlin and in Stockholm?

### Growing Cities – Berlin and Stockholm Compared

Berlin and Stockholm, then, constitute the comparative context for the study of the changed conditions for property ownership. Based on general characteristics regarding population numbers and area, the comparison may seem unequal. Through the extension of the municipal limits of Berlin in 1861, the town's population increased to over 500,000, and the town's area comprised 5,923 ha. At approximately the same time, the population of Stockholm had barely exceeded 100,000, and the land area amounted to 423 ha. In 1910, Berlin had a population of 2,100,000 (Greater Berlin 3,730,000) and Stockholm's was 305,000.<sup>21</sup> There was a considerable difference in size between towns in the period in question. The choice of towns for the comparative investigation is thus based on other factors.

Berlin and Stockholm belonged to a group of European towns – along with Paris, Copenhagen and Vienna – which from the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War were both capital towns and the most important industrial towns in their respective countries. In addition to early dominance in the textile and clothing industry, and the brewery industry, both towns around the year 1900 accommodated many companies in the new growth sectors, such as electrical engineering, chemistry and machinery production. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, large commercial banks were set up in the capital towns, and the power of finance over industrial companies developed strongly, which also affected urban growth. However, it would be misleading to describe the towns' economic structure purely on the basis of industrial development. During the 1860s and 1870s, the professional sphere in Berlin and in Stockholm still had clearly archaic features, for example with regard to the large groups working in domestic service. Certain sectors did employ many workers, but had been industrialised to only a limited degree. This applied particularly to the construction industry, which right up until the twentieth century was characterised by small-scale operations and traditional craftsmanship. The second largest professional group in Berlin and Stockholm, after industry and craft, was however in the public sphere, state officials and legal personnel. This reflected the towns' central position with regard to the administrative, government and military spheres in each country. The significance of the public sphere would continue to increase throughout the period.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Günter Richter, 'Zwischen Revolution und Reichsgründung (1848–1870)', in: Wolfgang Ribbe (Eds), *Geschichte Berlins. Zweiter Band. Von der Märzrevolution bis zur Gegenwart*, Berlin 1987, p. 662ff. William William-Olsson, *Huvuddragen i Stockholms geografiska utveckling 1850–1930*, Stockholm 1937, p. 53.

<sup>22</sup> Richter 1987, pp. 721–726. Eberhard Schmieder, 'Wirtschaftsgeschichte Berlins im 19/20. Jahrhundert', in: *Heimatchronik Berlin*, Köln 1962, pp. 663–760, especially 732ff. Ingrid Hammarström, *Stockholm i svensk ekonomi 1850–1914* (English summary: Stockholm in the Swedish economy 1850–1914), Stockholm 1970, p. 11f. Lars Nilsson, 'Stockholmarna bor and arbetar 1850–2002', in: Lars Nilsson (Ed.), *Staden på vattnet. Del 2 1850–2002*, Stockholm 2002, pp. 57, 61, 64f., 69, 97f., 101f.

Developments and events in Berlin and Stockholm had effects not merely in local politics but also in national politics. The towns shared the characteristic of having been urbanised and industrialised at a relatively late date, which also influenced their self-perception. As late as 1893, German publishers were reluctant to compare Berlin with for example Paris. Such a comparison, wrote the author Paul Lindenberg, for example, would be presumptuous, since Berlin was non-representative and backward.<sup>23</sup> It was not until after the beginning of the twentieth century that it became customary to speak of Berlin as a 'metropolis'. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were four towns in Europe which were characterised as a metropolis – London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin.<sup>24</sup> Berlin was something of a latecomer to this circle of European cities. Its late flowering created a kind of imbalance between the town's physical growth – an imbalance which could find expression in quite drastic needs for reshaping – and its social and economic structure.<sup>25</sup>

When Stockholm's development accelerated in earnest in the 1860s and 70s, special attention was directed towards the Prussian capital, partly from a feeling of kinship due to its equally late development. It is true that Prussia previously had long been an exemplar for Sweden and Swedish towns – not least in connection with the Prussian municipal reform of 1808 – but it was originally as a consequence of urbanisation and industrialisation that interest in constructional development and town planning became predominant. In 1866, in his report on a street regulation plan for Stockholm, Albert Lindhagen wrote 'Berlin, with which the town of Stockholm does not completely lack comparison'. To Lindhagen, the comparison lay above all in the expected population increase, which in Stockholm led to the establishment of a regulatory plan and an expansion plan.<sup>26</sup>

As capital towns, Berlin and Stockholm also became reference centres for municipal politics and administration, and attracted special attention from state authorities and decision-makers. There was considerable pressure for the capital towns to take a leading position for example in the fields of technical innovation, infrastructure and construction development. The disadvantage of this attention was that municipal autonomy was constantly under threat of restriction, and there were often conflicts over state and municipal jurisdiction in towns.

The basis of the comparative context is thus the function of the towns as capitals and the concentration of economic and political power and cultural influence; it is the towns' representative character with regard to urbanity, modernity and industrial development and the fact that the complexity and problems of urban growth arose in the urban area itself in a way that was noted by contemporaries to a greater degree than with respect to other towns in each country. In this period, Berlin and Stockholm were also by far the largest and most important tenement towns in Germany and Sweden, another important motive for my investigation.

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<sup>23</sup> Paul Lindenberg, *Berlin als Kleinstadt*, 5. Auflage, Berlin 1893, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Clemens Zimmermann, *Die Zeit der Metropolen. Urbanisierung und Grossstadt-entwicklung*, Frankfurt am Main 1996, pp. 32–38.

<sup>25</sup> Karl Scheffler, *Berlin. Ein Stadtschicksal*, Berlin 1910, 117ff. Walther Rathenau, 'Die schönste Stadt der Welt', in: *Nachgelassene Schriften*, Bd. 2, Berlin 1928, p. 260ff.

<sup>26</sup> *Utlåtande med förslag till gatureglering i Stockholm af komiterade* (Statement with proposal for street regulation in Stockholm from committee members), Stockholm 1867, p. 6.

However, even though the towns underwent similar structural development processes, they were not in mutual contact in the field of urban development. Influence was mainly in one direction. Stockholm looked at Berlin, gained impressions, tried to imitate, or rejected.

In the nineteenth century, tenement developments in Berlin, Paris and Vienna also provided models for Stockholm. The tenements affected all aspects of the housing industry, such as type of construction, investment objects and forms of housing. The spread of tenements in the Stockholm city districts was the very essence of urban development dynamism. The banker Johan Henrik Palme wrote in 1893 that it was the intensive construction of mass tenements in Stockholm in the 1880s and 1890s which ‘we have to thank for Stockholm, also to outward appearances, in a short time being transformed into a city’.<sup>27</sup> However, it was more common for the negative consequences to be noted, and in this respect parallels were drawn with developments in Berlin. When an extreme housing shortage hit Stockholm in the 1870s, representatives of house-seekers in a letter to His Majesty’s Government, blamed the situation on the shortcomings of the building ordinance. Its repeal was demanded, lest it lead to ‘the same consequences here as have occurred in Berlin, whose building ordinance this ordinance mimics’.<sup>28</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, debaters and housing reformists expressed their regrets that housing conditions in Stockholm had been so characterised by ‘the age of the Berlin disease’, and that the building statutes of 1874 permitted five and six storey buildings – ‘the barrack-like architecture that emerged from Germany’s bombastic triumphant pride’ – and intensive land use, which in turn had resulted in rising land prices, property speculation and rent rises.<sup>29</sup>

To municipal politicians, industrialists, bankers, social reformers and intellectuals in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Stockholm, developments in other European cities were highly important for their own orientation. Alongside Copenhagen – which was often considered an unequivocally positive exemplar, a ‘municipal utopia’ – German towns generally took a vanguard position as models of efficient municipal governance. This was mainly due to their geographical proximity to Sweden, but also to the perceived similarity of characteristics with regard to society, history and mentality.<sup>30</sup> In addition, German towns demonstrated modern planning ideas and exemplary financial administration, and they were considered as strongholds of local patriotism and civic virtue. For Stockholm’s part, major German cities were repeatedly referred to ‘with regard to methods of building and housing conditions’ as objects of comparison.<sup>31</sup> Not least the housing question was a frequent

<sup>27</sup> Johan Henrik Palme, ‘Om byggnadsverksamheten och bostadsförhållandena i Stockholm’ (On construction operations and housing conditions in Stockholm), speech made at the meeting of the National Economic Association on 26 Oct. 1893, Stockholm 1893, p. 105.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted from Folke Lindberg, *Växande stad. Stockholms stadsfullmäktige 1862–1900* (Growing town. Stockholm city council 1862–1900), Stockholm 1980, p. 419.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from: Yngve Larsson, *På marsch mot demokratin. Från hundraårig skala till allmän rösträtt (1900–1920)* (Marching Towards Democracy. From 100-grade Scale To Universal Suffrage), Stockholm 1967, p. 43.

<sup>30</sup> Larsson 1967, p. 115.

<sup>31</sup> Johan Henrik Palme, *Stockholms bostadsfråga. En undersökning* (Stockholm’s Housing question. A Report), Stockholm 1903, p. 11.

topic of comparison among contemporaries. Since all major European towns were affected by similar problems; by rising land values, swings in the building industry and a growing working-class influx, it was natural to present housing questions and solutions to them in a comparative way.

Stockholm property owners' special interest in Berlin began at an early date. Ever since its inception in the 1870s, Stockholm Property Owners' Association had kept abreast with developments in German municipal and housing legislation in general, and with Berlin's development and the activities of the town's property owners' organisations in particular. From 1878, the board members of *Verein Berliner Grundbesitzer von 1865* were engaged as correspondence members. At the same time, the Stockholm association began to subscribe to the Berlin property owners' trade journal, *Das Grundeigentum*.<sup>32</sup> The initially somewhat diffuse activity goals of Stockholm Property Owners' Association and the sporadic nature of its forays into municipal issues may be attributed to the nationwide vacuum in which the association operated, and which the association itself identified as a handicap. Instead, the association put its faith in its ability eventually to operate as successfully as 'similar associations in other large towns in Europe have already done for many years'.<sup>33</sup> Many of the study visits that influential board members in the Stockholm association undertook around the year 1900 went to the German capital, so that the members could learn how one 'managed and rented out ... in a true metropolis'.<sup>34</sup>

In the years preceding the First World War, Stockholm Property Owners' Association was part of the network of property owners' associations in European towns, a network which was maintained by the central German Property Owners' Federation. In May 1912, for example, the then secretary of the property owners' association, the lawyer John Dondorff, visited the international property owners' congress in Berlin. In the report which he submitted to the association upon his return, it could be seen that it was not the common issues – such as for example the right of domicile, comparative housing statistics and housing legislation, and facilities for real credit – that above all had aroused his enthusiasm, but rather the respect and high esteem which property ownership had earned him in Berlin. Dondorff was impressed by the 'general understanding for property owners' interests and ambitions, which could be noted among both authorities and persons of prominent social status'. In Berlin, it was understood that work to benefit property owners was of the utmost importance to society.<sup>35</sup>

## **Comparative Method and Urban History**

This study is designed as a coordinated comparison with a marked kinship between the objects investigated as regards both chronology and thematics. The methodological challenge has comprised achieving a union between, on the one

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<sup>32</sup> Stockholm Property Owners' Association (henceforth: SFF) board minutes 29.4, 28.10, 28.11, 30.11 1878.

<sup>33</sup> SFF annual report for fiscal year 1877.

<sup>34</sup> SFF general meeting minutes 14.11 1896. Appended to travel account by J.H Granholm.

<sup>35</sup> SFF annual report for fiscal year 1912.

hand, source material which in some sections had ‘run wild’ and therefore was previously unprocessed; and on the other hand, a presentation synthesised in order to make the comparison possible in practice. At the same time, this variation of interpretative levels has been stimulating to the work process, in that it has offered a possibility to allow the investigation to move between detailed and down-to-earth development in urban life and more general process overviews.

However, comparison is not a *single* method, but has been applied in several different ways to obtain answers to highly diverse questions. Comparison aims above all, however, to seek the causes, differences and similarities in an investigative theme addressing a broader common context. To Marc Bloch, comparison meant both an expansion and a more single-minded application of the instrument for historical understanding and explanation.<sup>36</sup>

In historical sociology, comparison has been given several scientific definitions. The method has been used to try theories and to test general explanatory models, and to contrast different national and regional contexts, in seeking to identify motives behind and causes of historical processes. Historical sociology and social history have however been criticised for exaggerated tendencies towards generalisation. Historians have need of a broad context for their investigations. This is such a comprehensive characteristic of the work method that it cannot be regarded as an interpretive approach, but it is in fact the main instrument in a historical presentation. There is often an additional need for players, intentions and actions.<sup>37</sup>

The German historian Helmut Kaelble has made an inventory of comparative social historical and cultural historical studies published in the last two decades above all in Germany, but also in the United Kingdom and the USA. Based on these studies, he has divided the comparative methodology into different categories: the analytical, the enlightening or assessing, the comprehending and the identity-seeking comparison.<sup>38</sup> What Kaelble wished to underline was that true methodological renewal means more than that one knows what one is *doing* when comparing – i.e. honing the instruments already at hand – at least as important is the *pre-methodological* issue of the intentions and knowledge goals of the comparison.

By Kaelble’s definition, the present study is an *analytical comparison*. The purpose of this approach is to explain and characterise ‘certain set societal structures, institutions, mentalities, debates, events and decisions based on their historical

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<sup>36</sup> Marc Bloch, ‘Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes’ (1928), in: M. Bloch, *Mélanges historiques* Bd 1, Paris 1983, p. 17. For a methodological discussion of the use of comparison in historical sociology and social history, see for example: A.A. van den Braembussche, ‘Historical Explanation and Comparative Method: Towards a Theory of the History of Society’, in: *History and Theory*, Vol. 28, Issue 1, February 1989. Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, ‘The uses of comparative history in macrosocial inquiry’, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol 22, 1978. Charles Tilly, *Big structures, large processes, huge comparisons*, New York 1984. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (Eds), *Geschichte im Vergleich*, Frankfurt a.M. 1996.

<sup>37</sup> Jürgen Kocka, ‘The Uses of Comparative History’, in: Ragnar Björk and Karl Molin (Eds), *Societies Made Up of History. Essays in Historiography, Intellectual History, Professionalization, Historical Social Theory & Proto-Industrialization*, Stockholm 1996, p. 205f.

<sup>38</sup> Hartmut Kaelble, *Der historische Vergleich. Eine Einführung zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt a.M./New York 1999, pp. 48–78.

circumstances'. The historical context is thus an integral part of the actual analysis.<sup>39</sup> Historical research need not therefore be purely narrative in its presentation. It is rather a question of striking a balance between structural analysis and hermeneutics. The comparison can still work from typologies, and can break up the chronology and have a theoretical emphasis. There is really no other possible approach – since comparison is a highly 'constructed' method. Everything is questioned: selection, level of abstraction, thematic scope and relation between primary material and literature.<sup>40</sup> It has been my ambition to focus on closeness to the sources and the unique aspect of the historical events as the characteristic of the *historical* comparison. If the aim is to retain these characteristic traits, then the objects of comparison are few – often two.

Another important factor in the choice of comparative method has been the possibility to open the way for research in other national contexts which can help to examine the historical process from several perspectives. In this, comparison can also contribute to throwing light on phenomena and developmental patterns which have been hidden from or overlooked by individual historical accounts.

Analytical comparison is thus primarily concerned with contrasting different societies. Kaelble has however indicated the occurrence of a kind of methodological intermediate category which aims to investigate the transfer of ideas and action strategies from one society to another, a category he has called *transfer analysis*.<sup>41</sup> The transfer analytical technique plays a certain role in this investigation – to which one might subscribe in accordance with the reception history outlined above – however, it is not consistently applied, but subordinated to the analytical comparison.

In historical research in recent years, there has been no shortage of contrastive comparisons of events, processes or social groups in different national contexts. The starting point has been that political systems and political cultures address similar problems in different ways, with another distribution of roles between players and institutions, and with differing outcomes. In particular, based on this perspective, the modernisation process in Germany and Sweden in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been the object of a research project continuing over several years.<sup>42</sup>

Less frequently the comparative context has been provided by single local communities or towns. One prior study has been Madeleine Hurd's *Public Spheres, Public Mores, and Democracy* (2000), which investigates the emergence of political opinion formation in the liberal middle-class public sphere, based on the temperance movement and world of associations in Hamburg and Stockholm in 1870–1914. Hurd's investigation aims expressly to transcend historiographical barriers and to link the past of Germany and that of Sweden in a greater European historical context. The analysis of the development of different political cultures in Hamburg and Stockholm becomes an instrument for questioning the frameworks for national historical accounts, and in particular the generally accepted picture of the

<sup>39</sup> Kaelble 1999, pp. 49–55.

<sup>40</sup> Kocka 1996, p. 206f.

<sup>41</sup> Kaelble 1999, p. 21.

<sup>42</sup> Alexandra Bänsch and Bernd Henningsen (Eds), *Die kulturelle Konstruktion von Gemeinschaften: Schweden und Deutschland im Modernisierungsprozess*, Baden-Baden 2001.

dark and troublesome, and the light and victorious roads to the nations' democratisation.<sup>43</sup>

Unlike Hurd, the investigation wished to utilise the ambition of urban history to allow cities and local communities to constitute the main context for the investigation. The British expert on Germany, James Sheehan, has noted that the observations of historians at national political level can certainly reflect, but just as often obscure, the picture of political life. At local level, political elections, action strategies and shifting alliances, and strivings for legitimacy are revealed in a far more concrete way.<sup>44</sup> Local administration and politics have their own constitutive significance and importance to how society works. Political dominance can ultimately be secured at local level – just as the local level can constitute the arena for the most immediate challenges to the dominant political system. Several researchers have previously argued that studies of local societies, and in particular growing towns, could contribute to a more comprehensive political concept in historical research, particularly if these investigations were to adopt a comparative perspective.<sup>45</sup>

In urban historical research, the demands and needs for comparative research have recurred in the manner of a mantra.<sup>46</sup> In a powerful plea for the autonomy of urban history, above all with relation to social history, Richard Rodger has written that without comparative investigations, the urban dimension risks disappearing. Urban history is not merely the fundamental components of the town, but above all an analysis of their interaction with and relations to each other in a unique spatial environment – *the interaction of the urban fabric with the social fabric*. Without a comparative, contrastive perspective, this distinction tends to be obscured.<sup>47</sup>

## Source Material and Delimitation

In a historical investigation, there is a close connection between material and method. An analytical comparison entails not only the task of acquiring knowledge of the research status in the field to be study and of forming a picture of the 'inner

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<sup>43</sup> Madeleine Hurd, *Public Spheres, Public Mores, and Democracy. Hamburg and Stockholm 1870–1914*, Ann Arbor 2000, p. 15. See also Norman Davies, *Europe. A History*, Oxford 1996, p. 811, footnote 22, p. 1152.

<sup>44</sup> Deborah Neill and Lisa M. Todd, "'Local History as Total History'", a symposium held at the Munk Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto, 25 February 2002', in: *German History*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 2002, p. 373f.

<sup>45</sup> George Steinmetz, 'Regulating the Social'. *The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany*, Princeton 1993, p. 149. Thord Strömberg, 'Kommentarer till Stadshistoriska dagar 25–26/11 1993', in: Lars Nilsson and Kjell Östberg (Eds), *Kommunerna and lokalpolitiken. Rapport från en konferens om modern lokalpolitisk historia*, Stockholm 1995, p. 242.

<sup>46</sup> Ingrid Hammarström, 'Lokalhistorien – organisation and aktuella uppgifter' (Local history – organisation and current details), in Knud Prange (Ed.), *Nordens naere fortid. Lokalsamfundene i de seneste 100 år. Nordisk seminar i lokalhistorie. Rapport nr. 1*, Copenhagen 1979, p. 10f. See also Jan Eyvind Myhre, 'The Nordic Countries', in: Richard Rodger (Ed.), *European Urban History. Prospect and Retrospect*, Leicester 1993, p. 170ff.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Rodger, 'Introduction – Theory, practice and European History', in: Rodger 1993, p. 3, 10.

heterogeneity' – that is, one must read double the amount of literature as in preparing for other investigations – but one should also provide work input on intensive primary investigations.

The principal empirical section consists throughout the investigation of the urban property owners' organisations own material, in the form of meeting- and congress minutes, journals, reports, petitions, letters and collections of newspaper cuttings. These categories of material have then been supplemented with official publications, such as City Council minutes, shorthand transcripts of assembly debates, parliamentary publications and parliamentary papers. The source situation has been far from ideal; however, historians seldom find themselves with uniform sources in a comparative study.

However, the choice of carrying out a comparative investigation is partly based on the primary material available. Through the entire period, Stockholm Property Owners' Association was an organisation that collected material and corresponded with a broad foreign contact network. The archive contains material from the 1870s and on, which includes statutes, petitions, membership registers and other material, above all from property owners' associations in Berlin and Copenhagen – but also from Hamburg and Kristiania (now Oslo). The reason for the organisation's strong commitment to international connections has already been briefly mentioned: the Stockholm association was for a long time the only alliance for urban property owners in Sweden, and its ambitions to play a major role for the town could best be fulfilled by seeking inspiration and exemplars from the major towns on the continent, which were considered more advanced in their development.

It is the *organised* property owners who have provided the bulk of the information used in the investigation. The due question is how representative of urban property owners the organised property owners may in general be regarded. The due answer is that it is only through association operations and the debates that took place within organisations and with public bodies that opinions, standpoints and action alternatives can be monitored by a latter-day inquirer. Even though far from every property owner was an association member, property owners' organisations in Berlin and Stockholm had an influential function for the whole social group. Within the alliances there were close connections with municipal authorities, and the associations' commitment and strivings to wield influence on different issues could seldom be reduced to involve only members, but influenced the interests of all property owners.

Another important question must be posed in this context. Can property owners be distinguished as a category? Were there not property owners who at the same pursued a profession and who considered themselves rather to belong to a professionally-determined social or economic grouping? At a basic level, one should distinguish between different types of property owners in the towns. There were the traditional property owners who had not overseen the construction of a property primarily to earn money from it, but to pursue their profession in the building or to live in it themselves. Another group was what was known as 'persons of independent means', who lived on interest revenue and the return on real estate. A third group comprised landlords and small contractors by profession, who on the basis of mortgage loans operated on a commercial housing market. The demarcations between the different categories were however not quite this clear, and could overlap, or property owners

could use their properties for different purposes at different times and under different economic conditions. The German housing researcher Clemens Zimmermann, in his study of the origins of housing policy in nineteenth-century Germany, has written that property owner groups can usually be distinguished through the fact that the non-commercial property owners were seldom active in property owners' organisations. Back has made a similar general division of property owners in Swedish towns in the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>48</sup>

Property owners' municipal influence was at its greatest at times when property owners with tenancy operations as their main source of income, property owners who used real estate as a capital investment object, and non-commercial property owners, perceived a common threat. For example, it could be a question of taxes and fees or special fiscal supplements on real estate which might increase the economic burden on property owners. It was very difficult for municipal authorities to implement political initiatives in the face of the massive stonewalling which could result from property owners' actions.

An objection to Zimmermann's categorisation must however, be raised. It is notable that the alliances founded in Berlin and Stockholm around 1870 to promote and safeguard the interests of property owners were not founded purely for the benefit of commercial landlords. In the first decades of operation, property ownership in itself was the primary motive for joint action. The property owners' associations belonged as civic alliances to a general movement to form associations and a sphere of organisations in which interest in legislation, economics and municipal autonomy took precedence over issues concerning the tenancy sector. It was not until the 1880s that housing market issues became the central focus for the organised property owners.

Although many themes associated with urban growth and municipal politics will be addressed in the investigation, there are a vast number of other, albeit highly interesting areas and problem issues, which have not been touched upon. These include for example questions concerning communications and infrastructure. This applies also to tax issues, which although dealt with in the study, undoubtedly require a more concentrated analysis. For the sake of clarity, the development of taxation, like the issue of the system of credit facilities and funding of urban properties, has not been treated as a delimited area of investigation in this study, and therefore no claims to having comprehensively dealt with it are made. The issue is one of general interest to those attempting to understand and explain the economy in practice in its historical context, that is to say how economic players were ordered in political and legal structures and normative social perceptions, which has already been mentioned in stating the aim of this study.

Neither is this investigation primarily a study of the development and possible resolution of the housing question in Berlin and Stockholm during the period. The housing question will be treated from the property owners' perspective, but does not provide an exhaustive presentation of the different political, state or municipal actions in this field. The housing issue in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is now a well researched field, and for those wishing to further explore the topic, there is ample literature concerning both Berlin and Stockholm.

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<sup>48</sup> Clemens Zimmermann, *Von der Wohnungsfrage zur Wohnungspolitik. Die Reformbewegung in Deutschland 1845–1914*, Göttingen 1991, p. 189. Back 1967, p. 102f.

A word or two needs to be added on the choice of period. The investigation deals with the time from the 1860s to 1923. The starting point has been the foundation of property owners' organisations between 1865 and 1870 and the economic and construction boom which Berlin and Stockholm experienced in the 1860s and 1870s. In the wake of the Franco-Prussian War and the unification of Germany in 1871, social change and the urbanisation process in both cities undoubtedly entered a more intensive phase.

The reason why the period has been extended a few years after the end of the First World War is simply the desire to follow the developments until the abolition of the Rent Control Act in Stockholm in 1923. Also to Berlin's property owners, the events of 1923 were of crucial importance. Firstly, hyperinflation completely overturned the economic fundamentals of real estate – and secondly, that was the year when the last of the three comprehensive national laws for tenancy protection and rent control came into force. Had the investigation ended with the foundation of the Weimar Republic, then the full effect to the housing market of the political and legal developments – developments which nevertheless began in the Imperial era – would have had to be excluded from the overall picture. This is the reason for non-adherence to a delimited and well-known era in both Swedish and German history.

### **Terms and Translations**

It is difficult for those wishing to compare qualitative differences to find a neutral language. This is a dilemma which becomes more noticeable in dealing with comparisons across language barriers. Reinhart Koselleck, somewhat rhetorically, has called for 'meta-language' for historical science, which might depict developments and differences between different nations without the need to use the equivocal and portentous terms which are the main instruments of contemporary players, as well as historians.<sup>49</sup> Without becoming too involved in philology, the reasoning in this investigation as regards use of certain central terms is given below.

The terms *liberal* and *liberalism* occurred in different compound forms in the study. The main themes in the development addressed have to do with the transition between two dominant liberal currents – nineteenth-century traditional liberalism and the social liberalism of the early twentieth century. Understanding of the older liberal conception of society has to a significant degree being characterised by social liberal critique and opposition. Traditional liberalism has been regarded as a purely economist view of society, in which the private market was kept free from state and political intervention. Expressions such as 'laissez-faire' and 'Manchester liberalism' have gained something of a pejorative meaning. There is therefore a risk of focusing on a purely oppositional perspective of traditional liberalism without attempting to understand it in its historical context.

The history of nineteenth-century liberalism coincides only partly with the formation of liberal parties. That is called 'traditional liberalism' – or 'economic liberalism' – including general support for economic freedom, as civic equality and the concept of social progress. Among traditional liberals, there was a tendency to see

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<sup>49</sup> Koselleck 1991, p. 21f.

a division of society into an economic and political sphere. This did not mean that the economy and politics had nothing to do with one another, nor that politics and the state might not intervene and regulate certain parts of the economy. The political sphere could affect the economy and the market above all through two channels: legislation and the constitution. The task of the constitutional state was to protect professional freedoms and to create security for the individual on condition that this was not detrimental to the public good; but without intervening for social reorganisation of property ownership. Traditional liberalism then attributed greater importance to the state's *function* than to its *form*. The constitutional state was the state of property owners. Most property owners in the nineteenth century supported this liberalism, both in Berlin and Stockholm, which however did not preclude differences of opinion within property owner groups in both towns, for example on the issue of how far they should support strivings for equality in the political arena. This investigation however deals mainly with the municipal level, where the distinction between the political and the economic sphere was perceived as above all a necessity. Without overly anticipating the empirical investigations and findings in this work, one can say that the wealthy middle class and the middle class with industrial interests were influential in the towns' administrations. The characteristics of municipal autonomy in the nineteenth century – power through taxpaying, unsalaried honorary office and support for thrift and self-help – came to be part of traditional liberal values regarding economic development. Municipal autonomy became an important component in the liberal view of society, not least due to the administrative character of self-governance, and administration as an intermediary between the law and the economically active individual. Administrative civil servants and officials in both state and municipal service also came to play an interesting and dynamic role in the development of liberalism in both German and Swedish towns in the nineteenth century.<sup>50</sup>

Another clarification deals with the German terms *bürgerlich*, *Bürgerlichkeit* and *Bürgertum* when applied to Swedish conditions. If this work had exclusively dealt with conditions in Germany, then the investigation of necessity would have complied with established bourgeoisie research.<sup>51</sup> However, since neither the English term *petty bourgeois* nor the corresponding Swedish term *borgerlig* are self-evident collective historical or analytical terms, the choice of translation requires some comments.

The classical criterion of 'petty bourgeoisie' in Europe – and especially in Germany – has been education and ownership (*Bildung und Besitz*) as the crucial demarcation upwards with the nobility and with the 'people' in a broad sense

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<sup>50</sup> Dirk Blasius, 'Bürgerliches Recht und bürgerliche Identität. Zu einem Problemzusammenhang in der deutschen Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts', in: Helmut Berding/Kurt Düwell/Lothar Gall/Wolfgang J. Mommsen/Hans-Ulrich Wehler (Eds), *Vom Staat des Ancien Regime zu modernen Parteistaat. Festschrift für Theodor Schieder zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, Munich/Wien 1978, pp. 213–219. T. Nilsson 1994, pp. 273, 277.

<sup>51</sup> For an overview, see for example Lothar Gall, 'Stadt und Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Ein Problemaufriss', in: Lothar Gall (Eds), *Stadt und Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert*, Munich 1990. Jürgen Kocka, 'Bürgertum und bürgerliche Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert. Europäische Entwicklungen und deutsche Eigenarten', in: Jürgen Kocka (Ed.), *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert*. Band IN, Munich 1988.

downwards.<sup>52</sup> Recent historical research however – even in Sweden – has however often refrained from analysis of these basic characteristics, focusing instead on the social group’s culture and lifestyle, social norms and mentality. ‘Middle-class virtues’ have been studied as an ideal for nineteenth-century social change and in order to put social issues in a scientific context.

In nineteenth-century Germany, the term *bürgerlich*, or *Bürgertum* to denote the social group, had overlapping meanings. This group included a broad middle class comprising merchants, manufacturers and tradesman, but also doctors, lawyers, administrative officials and engineers. The term in addition had strong – and primary – urban connotations. The petty bourgeoisie were the traditional defenders of urban freedoms and were those who pursued urban professions. In the course of the nineteenth century, another sense was added – that of the ‘citizen’ – *Staatsbürger* (in French, ‘citoyen’) – invoking the cohesion of the nation state.<sup>53</sup>

Alongside its character as a potent moral collective term, it was also a political concept. The basic idea however was something considered apolitical, namely unification around the legal order and its main principles: equality before the law, freedom of trade, freedom of property, contractual freedom and the right of inheritance. It was through unification around the legal order that both traditional liberalism and the petty bourgeoisie in Germany, heterogeneous as they were, could find unity.<sup>54</sup>

In late nineteenth-century Sweden, no unifying force that was even remotely similar lay behind parallel terms such as ‘borgerlig’ or ‘borgerlighet’. When the term was used it often demonstrated intimate familiarity with contemporary German conditions, and more particularly with the universal strivings of the petty bourgeoisie, as when Gustav Cassel wrote in his work, *Socialpolitik* (1902), that ‘social democracy [...] works [...] to raise the worker from the social status of the proletariat to that of the ‘borgare’ (bourgeois), thereby to make ‘borgardömet’ (the bourgeoisie) general’.<sup>55</sup>

The more protective and protectionist meanings of the term, which above all were applicable to German towns and urban trades, did not exist in Swedish towns in the late nineteenth century. In practice, there was certainly a petty bourgeoisie in Stockholm – in the sense of a broad professional middle class with liberal ideas – but there was no *Bürgertum* concept. Before 1914, the Swedish term ‘borgerlig’ was used only sporadically in Stockholm. As Madeleine Hurd has shown, there was no petty bourgeois identity among either moderate or radical liberals in Stockholm before the First World War. In comparison with German towns, Stockholm and other Swedish towns were less bound to a traditional corporate order. Few craftsmen could invoke the ‘good old days’ as something unifying and giving identity. The middle class had not been forced through the same long-drawn-out, but at the same time formative,

<sup>52</sup> Kocka 1988, p. 11ff. Lehnert 1994, p. 32.

<sup>53</sup> Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ‘Das Bürgertum – Phönix aus der Asche’ in: H-U Wehler, *Umbruch und Kontinuität. Essays zum 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich 2000, p. 177f. Kocka 1988, p. 11ff. Gall 1990, p. 5ff. Manfred Riedel, ‘Bürger’, in: *GG*. Band 1, Stuttgart 1972, p. 700.

<sup>54</sup> James J. Sheehan, ‘Wie bürgerlich war der deutsche Liberalismus?’, in: Dieter Langewiesche (Ed.), *Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich*, Göttingen 1988, p. 40.

<sup>55</sup> Quote filed under the entry ‘borgare’ in SAOB (Swedish Academy Dictionary), B 3939.

struggle against an influential agrarian élite that had taken place in Germany. And the introduction of the political franchise had not brought the urban liberal middle class into conflict with a massive and politically empowered social democracy.<sup>56</sup>

## The Design of the Study

The study is divided into three thematic sections, each comprising three chapters.

The first section deals with property owners and municipal politics beginning by addressing the property owners' positions and obligations towards the town in the establishment of municipal self-governance in the nineteenth century (Chapter 1). Chapter 2 then turns to the associations and association network to which property owners' organisations belonged, and the importance of these associations in municipal politics, from the inception of property owners' organisations in around 1870 to the years around 1900. The first section ends with a study of the property owners' role and actions in municipal politics from the turn of the century to the First World War and the great pressure for change to which they were exposed due to the increased demands for municipal democratisation (Chapter 3).

The second section of the investigation is about the urban development process, and above all housing production in the period. The regulatory and legislative measures that set the framework for the construction industry are initially presented, and the players and role divisions in urban housing production are examined (Chapter 4). Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the large tenement building. Firstly, the economic conditions associated with the emergence of the tenement building and the property owners' increasing debt burden is examined. Then the spotlight is turned on the design of tenement buildings and how the term *Mietkaserne* (German) and *hyreskasern* (Swedish), meaning large substandard tenement block, became a campaign slogan of the land reform movement around 1900 in both towns in its struggle to change living environments and housing conditions.

The third section is devoted to relations and legislation on the housing market. Chapter 7 deals with the everyday aspects and civil law side of the housing market, in the form of tenancy agreements, the meaning of the landlord's lien and the blacklisting by property owners' associations of undesirable tenants. After that, the new housing legislations are presented, one introduced in Berlin in 1900, and the other in Stockholm in 1907. Special attention to how the legal situation on the housing market came to be dealt with as a 'social' question is given (Chapter 8). Finally in the third section, housing legislation during the First World War is investigated, how state and municipal intervention took place in both towns, the outcome of the increase in intervention by the authorities and how property owners defended their legal and social positions (Chapter 9). The study ends with a summary in which the different perspectives are interwoven and the results and findings of the main investigation questions are discussed.

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<sup>56</sup> Madeleine Hurd, 'Education, Morality, and the Politics of Class in Hamburg and Stockholm 1870–1914', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 31, Nr. 4, 1996, p. 639f. Hurd 2000, pp. 108, 255. See also Tom Ericsson, *Mellan arbete and kapital. Småborgerligheten i Sverige 1850–1914*, Umeå 1988, p. 53.