

University of Groningen - Faculty of Spatial Sciences  
Bachelor Project Human Geography & Planning

# **Queer Place Image: A case study of Berlin.**

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## **Abstract**

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In Berlin, city officials have actively promoted a ‘queer’ place image. They based this on the rich queer history and culture in the city. However, Berlin is currently experiencing growing violence against queers, contradicting the promoted image. Moreover, previous research has established that city officials can have a different city image than other stakeholders, like residents. Collectively, these findings suggest a possible difference in place images between stakeholders in Berlin. This research aims to investigate the degree of this difference, and to see if the residents find the promoted image accurate. Through answering the main research question: *Do residents of Berlin identify with the queer place image that the city carries?* The research consists of a case study on residents in two districts in Berlin, one queer and one conservative district. Quantitative data was collected in the field through street surveying to help answer the research question. The main findings suggest that Berlin’s residents to a large extent agree with the city officials, that Berlin carries a queer image. However, they are not likely to describe the city as queer. The conclusion states that the attributes of a queer city fit into the image of Berlin, but does not make it up in its entirety.

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# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Background

When we as individuals interact with places, we generate our own so-called 'place image'. This place image is made up of '*the collective form of mental perceptions of a place*' (Kavaratzis & Kalandides, 2015, p1373). These perceptions and mental images can be created by the interactions with the physical attributes of a place, but also by networking and community interactions, which are the social attributes of a place (Lynch, 1964; Styliadis et al., 2016). Collectively the attributes are the place identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013)

Although we as individuals make up our place images, there is a collective 'Public Image' of a place, consisting of the overlapping features of each individual's image (Lynch, 1964). This Public Image is something that place stakeholders try to affect, to create the 'ideal' image of a place (Dastgerdi & De Luca, 2019). They attempt to promote tourism, attract talent and encourage economic activities (Dinnie, 2011). This is one of the reasons that place image is often linked to tourism and place branding. However, residents of a place, also make up significant place images. For them, a place can for instance be linked to family and careers, and work as the heart of their social and community interactions and development (Styliadis et al., 2016)

Residents also play a central role in creating the place's identity. Not only is place identity contributing to the *sense of place* for its residents. Residents are the ones making up the local culture of a city, generating the city's personality (Dinnie, 2011). As the residents are the ones communicating and carrying the message of the image in the field (Braun et al., 2013). While researching the match between place image and identity, Peighambari et al. (2016) found that there can be a great difference in how a place is perceived between stakeholders, such as city officials and residents. When studying the city of Luleå (Sweden), they found officials describing the city as sophisticated, while the residents found the city to be rugged (Peighambari et al., 2016).

One European city that has a well-known image is the capital and largest city of Germany, Berlin. In 2019 it was ranked the third best city brand in Europe, and 11<sup>th</sup> worldwide, according to the City Brand Barometer by Saffron-Consultants (2019). City officials prominently present the city as an inclusive, non-discriminative and diverse place (Because.Berlin, 2022). Also, Berlin is known for its gay/lesbian scene and for welcoming queer people to what they describe as '*one of the most open and tolerant cities in the world*' (VisitBerlin, 2022a). Berlin is even prone to 'queer-migration', where queer people deliberately decide to migrate to Berlin due to its queer image (Di Felicianantonio & Gadelha, 2016). However, in an interview with Urbanet, a queer refugee in Berlin stated: '*it's harder for men to publicly display affection [in Berlin]. So far, I have never held a man's hand while walking in Berlin's streets.*' (Cashman & Soto, 2019). Additionally, reports show that Berlin has experienced an increase in violence against queer people in recent years (Martyr, 2019). These findings are contradictory to the image of Berlin that is promoted. And the developments could to a further extent be considered as tendencies to what in recent years has been known as 'Pinkwashing'. This term is used to describe the allegations that Queer 'friendly' promotions are used to derive attention from otherwise homophobic actions (Schulman, 2011).

Lastly, although Berlin is a modern metropolitan it does not only consist of queers and queer-friendly neighbourhoods. There can also be found a varying representation of queers and political standing points throughout the city's districts, from the progressive left to the more traditional conservative visions (Hoppe, 2018; Berliner-Morgenpost, 2021). Keeping this in

mind, can one assume that all residents in Berlin feel represented by such a Queer image that is promoted? And, regardless of them feeling represented, are all residents at ease with living in a presumably queer city?

### 1.2. Research Problem

The motivation for this research is based on the emerging issues with queer-based violence in Berlin (Martyr, 2019), situations as described by the refugee resident (Cashman & Soto, 2019), and the varying composition of Berlins residents as a whole (Berliner-Morgenpost, 2021). Together with the fact that residents' perceptions of place image is underrepresented in research, and their interactions are different from other stakeholders (Stylidis et al., 2016). Therefore this research aims to establish more clarification on how residents in both known queer and conservative districts in Berlin perceive the city, more specifically how they identify with the queer image that Berlin carries, and if they are satisfied with said image. This leads to the main research question:

**Do residents of Berlin identify with the queer place image that the city carries?**

And the following sub-questions:

1. To what extent do residents located in a *queer* district in Berlin find a queer image an accurate representation of the city? And do they prefer an adapted place image of the city?
2. To what extent do residents located in a *conservative* district in Berlin find a queer image an accurate representation of the city? And do they prefer an adapted place image of the city?
3. To what extent do residents in Berlin feel at ease with the queer image of the city?

### 1.3. Thesis structure

This thesis is structured into six chapters. In the coming chapter, chapter two, the theoretical framework is described with an elaboration of the core concepts and hypotheses. Chapter three describes the methods used to answer the research questions. The results and findings of the data collection are presented and discussed in chapter four. Here the research sub-questions are also answered. Furthermore, the findings are compared to additional theory in chapter five, together with a final answer to the main research questions. Reflections on the research and future recommendations are found in chapter six. Finally, references and the different appendices can be found at the end.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

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### 2.1. Theories and Concepts

#### 2.1.1. Place Image

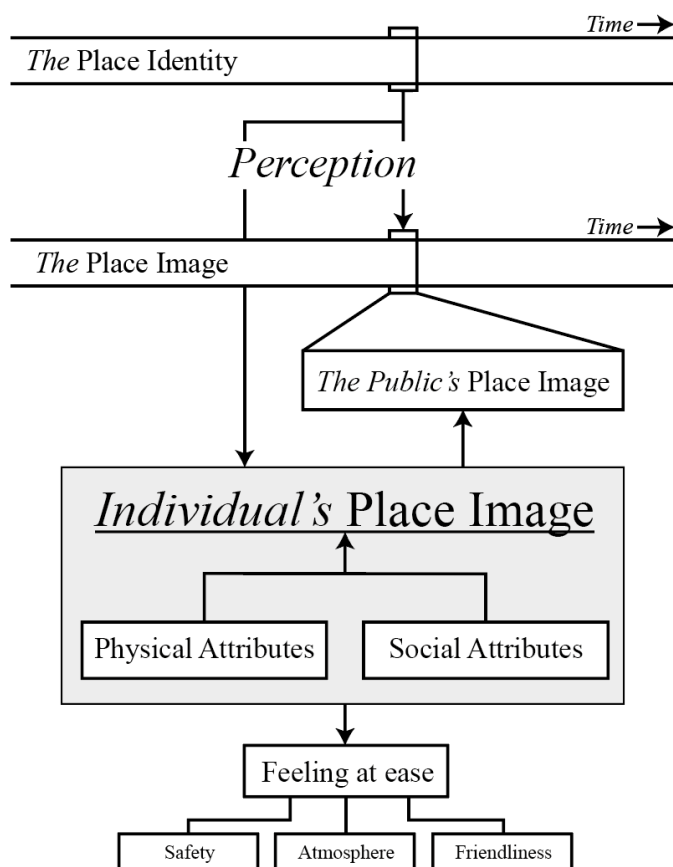
Kavaratzis and Kalandides (2015) present the individual's place image to be a mental image made up of the perceptions and interactions of a place. Lynch (1964) describes the mental image to be made up of physical attributes. More specifically: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. Whilst Styliadis et al. (2016) argue that especially residents' place image includes more social attributes, like the social environment and entertainment opportunities. Based on the different theories, this research refers to the individual's place image as a mental image created by the sum of perceptions and interactions with a place, its physical attributes and/or its social attributes.

Echtner and Ritchie (1991) explain that the place image is affected by psychosocial characteristics. How one feels about the perception. The feelings of friendliness, safety and the atmosphere (or general feeling) of the place. This can again vary per person, you can perceive a city similarly, but it can make you feel different emotions (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). In this research, the feelings are collectively referred to as being *at ease* with the place image.

Furthermore, as the personal image is one individual's experiences, the place image can be described differently by different actors, as they perceive the place and its identity differently. Residents, politicians, tourists, media, literature etc. all together make up *the* place image through history. The image continuously changes and we only experience fragments of it at one certain point in time (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2002). Moreover, the overlapping factors of several individuals' images at one certain point in time can be considered as *the public* place image (Lynch, 1964).

#### 2.1.2. Place Identity

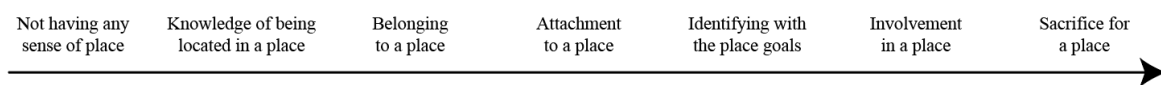
The different attributes that the place image is a perception of can collectively be called the place identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). For the place identity, there is no single stakeholder who determines what it is. It is rather a process affected by (among other things) the image and historical, political, religious and cultural discourses (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013; Govers & Go 2009). One of the controversies of place identity that Kavaratzis and Kalandides (2015) elaborate on is that identity is often seen as 'how one sees oneself'. But they raise the question if a place can 'see itself' in any way, or if it is more how we understand a place to be. One could therefore argue that the identity is not how the place is seen by itself, but merely what it is. The complete description of the Place Image and how it is formed of the Place Identity is illustrated in *Figure 2.1* below.



**Figure 2.1** – The creation of Place Image: Adapted from Czarniawska-Joerges (2002), Kavaratzis and Kalandides (2015), Lynch (1964), Stylidis et al. (2016), Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) and Echtner and Ritchie (1991)

### 2.1.3. Sense of Place

A part of what makes up an individual's perception of a place is their 'sense of place' (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Scannell and Gifford (2010) described the sense of place as the quality of the emotional bond that a group or person forms to a place. Describing it as a multidimensional concept that depends on place (social and physical aspects), psychological processes and persons. Furthermore, Shamai (1991) describes the sense of place to range on a seven-step scale, from 'not having a sense of place' to 'sacrifice for a place' as seen in Figure 2.2.



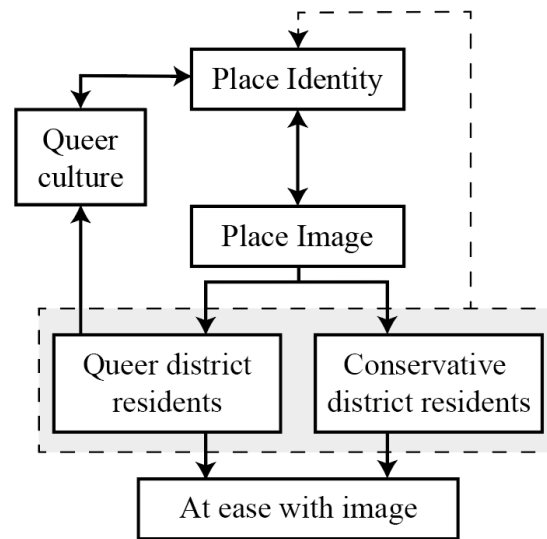
**Figure 2.2** – The seven steps of 'Sense of Place' (Shamai, 1991)

### 2.1.4. Queerness and LGBTQIA+

As this research is based on the involvement and analysis of both academic research and input of Queer and other LGBTQIA+ individuals it is useful to somewhat define what these terms mean. LGBTQIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex and Asexual. The '+' serves as an extension to include any other forms of sexual or gender identity that are not yet included. In this research, however, the term 'Queer' or 'Queerness' will be used as an umbrella term to acknowledge any groups or individuals that identify as anything other than the traditional heterosexual normativity and/or cis-genders. The research is not meant to add or exclude anything to these terms, simply taking them into account and using them to conduct the research and understand the findings.

## 2.2. Conceptual Model

The connection between the various concepts and how these relate to and affect each other is visualised in the conceptual model, *Figure 2.3*. The model shows how Queer culture, is affected by and partly made up of the residents in the queer district, which is a historical, political and cultural discourse and thus also plays a role in the creation of place identity (Govers & Go, 2009). The figure also indicates that residents make up a part of the place's identity as they make up the local culture and the city's personality, a part of what the city is (Dinnie, 2011; Kavartzis & Kalandides, 2015). Furthermore, the residents generate a feeling of ease towards the image (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). In essence how at ease they feel with living in Berlin while it holds the queer place image.



*Figure 2.3 – Conceptual Model*

## 2.3. Hypotheses

Although there might be wide differences in how different groups of stakeholders perceive a city (Peighambari et al., 2016), it is not hypothesized that these differences will be as extreme in Berlin. Since Berlin has one of the longest dating queer histories of any city, dating back to 1897 (VisitBerlin, 2022b). Making the first hypothesis (H1): *No significant difference in perceiving Berlin as Queer between stakeholders.*

Nonetheless, there are thought to be differences, more specifically in the details and the level of importance of said details. Since most research and associations with place image today are linked to tourism and the attraction of economic activity (Stylidis et al. 2016; Dastgerdi & De Luca, 2019). It is therefore hypothesised that (H2): *The promoted queer image is more focused on tourism and specific locations for queers to visit, while the residents are more focused on community and the social aspects, which is on a micro scale less place specific.*

Furthermore, the last hypothesis (H3) is as follows: *Residents in the queer district are expected to identify more closely with the queer image, have less preferred adaptations and be more at ease with the image, compared to the other conservative residents.* This is merely based on their closeness and experience with queer culture and the willingness to be a part of or live alongside said culture. Other residents in the conservative district are not expected to have large problems with the queer image, but give it less importance and thought.



### **3. Methodology**

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#### 3.1. Research Method: Case study with quantitative data

This research consists of a case study of the city of Berlin, and specifically two districts, or Berzirks as they are more accurately called in German. A case study is a flexible method that is well suited for small-scale in-depth research like this thesis (Clifford et al., 2016). It allows the research to be limited to the timeframe of the researcher and study the case in its ‘natural’ context (Yin, 2014; Bassegy, 1999). Furthermore, quantitative data is collected. This data is useful as it allows to investigate a simplified version of reality and can provide numerical explanation to spatial issues (Clifford et al., 2016).

#### 3.2. Data collection

The primary data collection for this research consisted of a street survey to operationalize the concepts in the theoretical framework and establish findings for the research. A survey, found in Appendix A, was created to collect quantitative data. Precedingly, existing literature was searched to capture the understanding of the core concepts needed for the theoretical framework, conducting the research and creating the survey.

The survey was filled out by the author on behalf of the participants through face-to-face questioning and answering. This accommodated the possibility to clarify questions/answers, ensured consistency, coped with different language encounters and for efficiency. The collected data was stored on the personal storage of the author, and not shared with any third parties. The target population for this research was defined as residents in queer and conservative districts of Berlin. Since Berlin has many different configurations of people in its neighbourhoods (Berliner-Morgenpost, 2021), this target reaches two counterparts of the population. A target total of 40 residents in a queer district and 40 in a conservative district were included to establish the population frame. In the end the exact target total in both districts were accomplished, and collected between 17-05-2022 and 22-05-2022. Starting each day at approximately 12:00. The first two surveying days went on till 20:00 and 23:00 in the queer district. The remaining days were spent collecting responses in the conservative district and ended each day at around 19:00.

#### 3.3. Operationalization

The survey consisted of questions with a binary answer model (e.g. yes/no) and Likert scale questions (e.g. on a scale from 1 till 5 to what degree do you agree with the following statement). At the end of each question, there was given room for elaboration and further questioning if desired. This structure was chosen to get an overall picture and answer to the research question but allowed for more personal and emotional experiences and opinions to be shared that might impact the findings.

The first thematic question asked to the respondent, after the exit question and location characteristics (Question 3 in the survey), was a word association. Aiming at partly answering the first and second research sub-questions. It indicated the initial place image that a respondent had of Berlin, without being biased through the acknowledgement of the queer image. Although they answered the following question (whether or not they agree with Berlin having a ‘queer place image’) with ‘completely agree’, if the word ‘queer’ was not given in their original word association, one might argue that they don’t find this the most accurate place image. Following came a wider description of the research and an explanation of the concept ‘place image’.

Research sub-questions one and two were further answered with survey questions four and five. Whether or not the respondent agreed with the fact that Berlin has a ‘queer place image’ (Question 4) and if they accepted others to perceive Berlin with such an image (Question 5).

These scalar questions indicated their attitude toward the queer image, supplementing each other in the strength of their opinion. These questions firstly identified opinions on a physical tangible topic (city of Berlin), and continuously related it to a more social perspective (opinion about others). In this way, both the physical and social attributes of the place image were covered.

Questions six and seven were used to answer the last research sub-question, to what extent do the residents felt at ease with Berlin’s queer image. Respondents were asked if they felt comfortable and safe living in a city that has a queer image. These questions were requested separately and combined afterwards. *Figure 3.1.* illustrates how the answers were combined, resulting in a three-step scale.

		<b>Feeling Comfortable</b>	
		Yes	No
<b>Feeling Safe</b>	Yes	<i>At ease</i>	<i>Somewhat (not) at ease</i>
	No	<i>Somewhat (not) at ease</i>	<i>Not at ease</i>

*Figure 3.1 – Coding of the ‘at ease’ variable*

Lastly, two questions were more voluntary, as they collected personal information. The residing neighbourhood was collected (Question 8), and the respondent were asked to indicate if they identify as queer or not (Question 9). The purpose of these two questions was to be able to provide a more in-depth analysis and evaluate the representation of the sample. However, in the end only 58 residents responded to question eight and 32 to question nine. This is further discussed in the reflection below.

### 3.4. Sampling strategy

The sampling areas were purposefully chosen and samples were randomly selected within. This is referred to as spatial stratified random sampling. The two districts were identified as the separate strata. This strategy allows to define specific population groups, and still achieve random sampling, which is needed for the statistical analysis (Burt et al., 2009).

Furthermore, timeframes were considered when sampling, since respondents needed to be located in the areas and were not expected to spare time for a survey on their way to work. Therefore, the surveys were mainly collected from mid-day until dinner time. The surveys were collected through street surveying, and participants were recruited on location. The specific locations of the data collection can be found in *Figure 3.2.*

#### *3.4.1. Recruiting of participants in the queer district*

The district of Tempelhof-Schöneberg was chosen as the queer district. The district held the most registered gay marriages, between the period of October 2017 and March 2018 (Hoppe, 2018). This area also holds more left, social-democratic citizens, according to the voting outcomes of the 2021 German national election (Berliner-Morgenpost, 2021). Additionally, Nollendorfplatz and Winterfeldtplatz are located here, which are known for their queer representation and are described as the ‘queer hotspots of Berlin (VisitBerlin, 2022c). Therefore

the respondents were mainly sought out at these two locations, as they also hold both larger public transport stations and several amenities that attract people. Furthermore, in this area, the sampling could also occur later in the evening than the general timeframes, as there is nightlife activity conducted in these locations.

### 3.4.2. Recruiting of participants in the conservative district

Marzahn-Hellersdorf was chosen as the conservative district. Here the second to least number of gay marriages were registered between the period of October 2017 and March 2018 (Hoppe, 2018). In the voting outcomes of the 2021 German national election, the area had a more dominant representation of conservative political views (Berliner-Morgenpost, 2021). The responses were mainly collected in the specific areas of Marzahn-South and Biesdorf-North. Next to hosting the mentioned political view, these specific areas also host several larger public transport stations and economic clusters, such as a shopping centre and street.

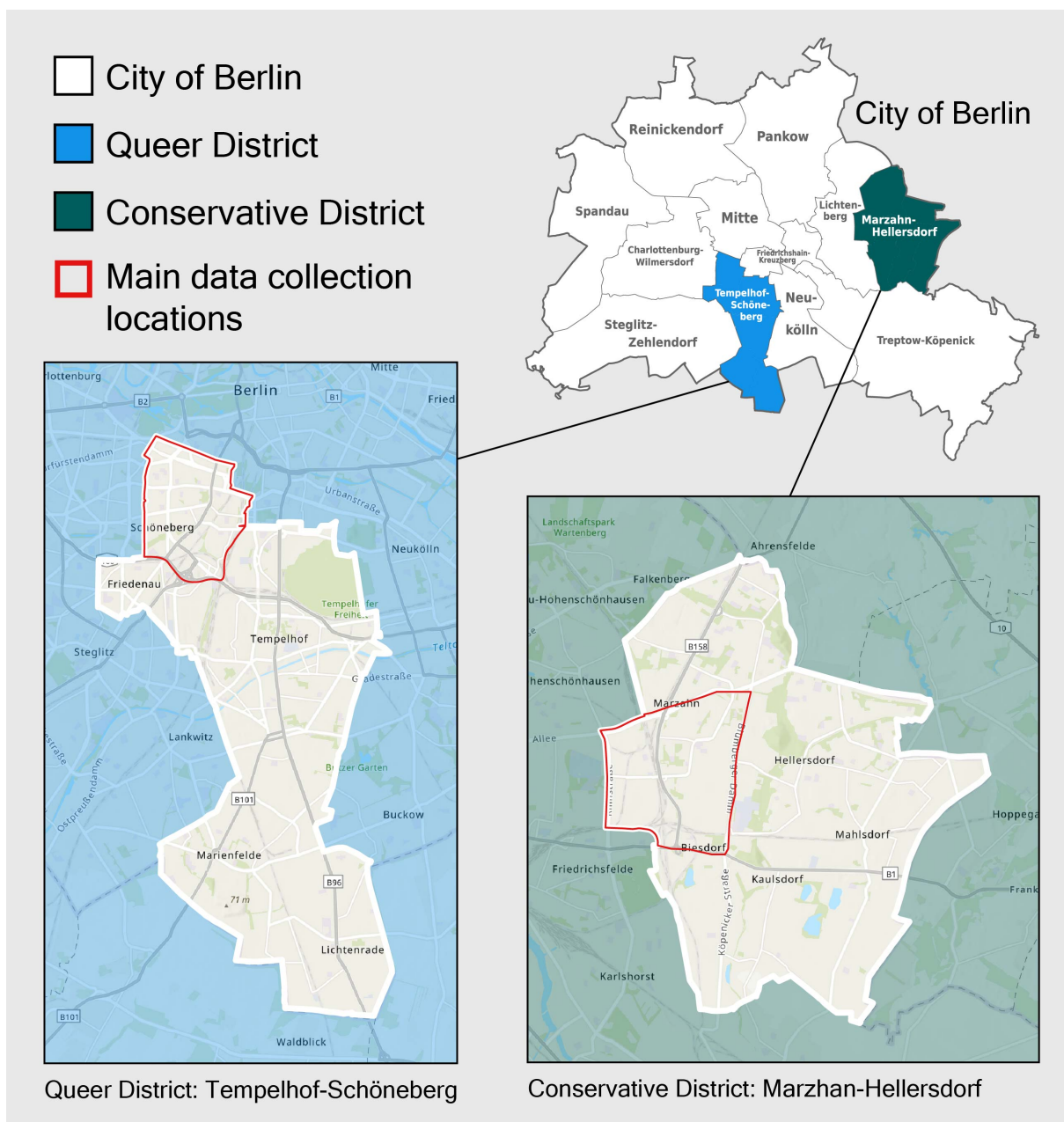


Figure 3.2 – Survey collection areas

### 3.5. Data analysis scheme

Parts of the data was coded to allow analysis. The location characteristic (queer or conservative district) and questions six and seven are binary and were assigned numbers 0 and 1. Furthermore, questions six and seven were combined to create the 'at ease' variable as seen in *Figure 3.1*, and assigned numbers from 1 to 3. The Likert scale questions were coded from 1 (Completely do not agree/accept) to 5 (completely agree/accept). As the data set now consisted of three ordinal variables that have independent cases with two separate sampling groups (location), a Mann-Whitney test deemed suitable and was conducted for the analysis. The only thing to look out for was that the group distributions need to have similar shapes. This turned out to be the case, and the distributions can be seen in Appendix B. The Mann-Whitney tests were carried out in the statistical software SPSS. With these tests, the similarity of the responses in the two districts were tested. One could then see if there is a general overview of the residents or if the responses were place-dependent.

### 3.6. Ethics

Not only can the sampling technique come with personal and informal practices, but considering that this research aims to capture people's opinions and sexual preferences, ethical considerations are important. Before answering any questions, the interviewees were informed that their contribution was completely voluntary and anonymous, and they only had to answer the questions that they were comfortable with. Whilst collecting responses ethical rules amongst conduct were followed, for instance respecting the respondents' wishes, acting politely and preparing for emotions. The data collection followed the European code of conduct for research integrity and the University of Groningen guidelines for academic integrity. The collected data did not include any identifiable information, and raw data was not shared with any other parties than the author and supervisor. Furthermore, considering the COVID-19 pandemic some health and safety measures were taken. The governmental measures and guidelines were followed and any interactions that could contribute to the spreading of the virus were avoided.

### 3.7. Reflection on collected data

A total 26 queer district respondents and 32 conservative district respondents answered where they reside, visualized per Bezirk/district in *Figure 3.3* and *Figure 3.4* below. Although not all respondents were residing in the collection areas, these areas are most prominently represented. Additionally, the survey included an exit question to ensure that all survey respondents had a strong connection to the district in which they were located. Collectively, a large part of Berlin is represented by the sample, but many with only few cases. However, this is not unexpected as the research is a case study based on the specific districts.

Though not all surveys were collected in the same language, the sampling technique ensured considerably valid answers in all cases. However, the term 'queer' proved not to be as widely known among German-speaking respondents in the conservative district as initially expected. The need for clarifications could have influenced the response of a resident startled by their unfamiliarity with the concept. Something that should preferably be avoided with survey collection. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that there were few cases of confusion around the question whether respondents felt safe with living in a city that carries a queer image. Some respondents implied they did not feel safe living in Berlin as a city in general. Not necessarily reacting to safety in a city carrying a queer image. Possibly influencing the validity of this variable. Be that as it may, all questions, and the occasional explanation, were kept as consistent as possible.

The last question of the survey ‘How would you describe your sexual orientation?’ was only asked in the queer district. Due to the expected location of queers, the nature of the conservative district, and the aspiration to prevent insulting respondents. Out of the 32 given answers 20 respondents indicated that they identified as something other than heterosexual, in this research collectively described as ‘queer’. Though this sample category is not distinguished, it is considered as a successfully added value. Considering the research focuses on queer culture and is based on queer experiences, it is only logical to include queers.



*Figure 3.3 – Number of queer district respondents per Bezirk/District in Berlin*

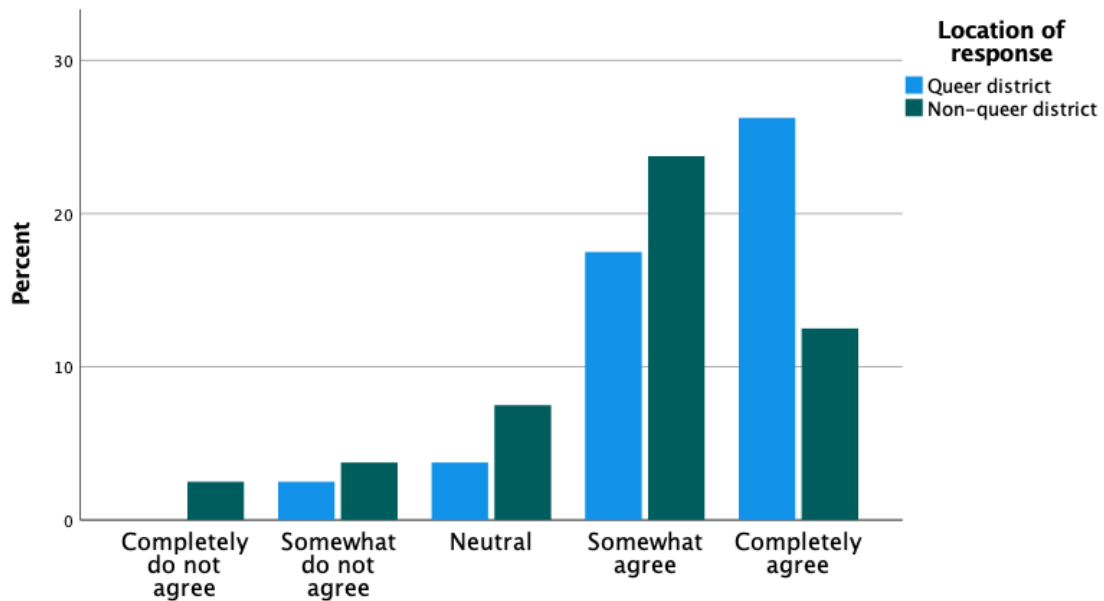


*Figure 3.4 – Number of conservative district respondents per Bezirk/District in Berlin*



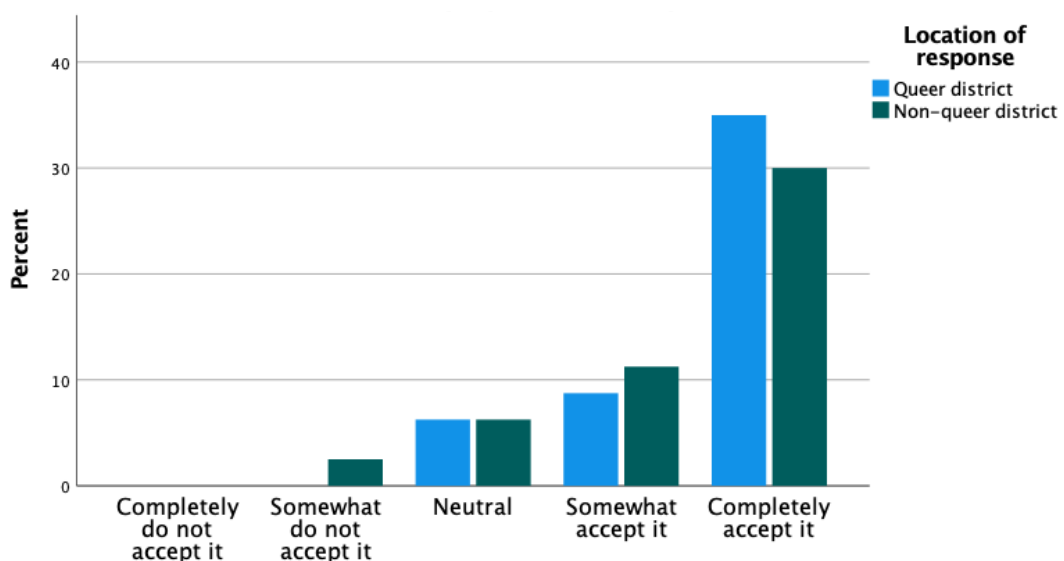
4.1.2. The residents' attitude towards the queer image

The statistical findings of residents' degree of agreement with Berlin carrying a queer image and to what extent they accept that other people perceive Berlin as a 'queer city' are visualised in *Figure 4.2* and *Figure 4.3* respectively.



*Figure 4.2* – Bar chart: To what degree do residents agree with Berlin having a queer place image?

Only two respondents completely do not agree with the statement that Berlin carries a queer place image, none of these in the queer district. In general, the queer-district respondents are more (strongly) agreeing with the statement compared to the conservative district. In total 80% of the whole sample agrees that Berlin does carry a queer place image, and many respondents expressed approval of queerness while answering.



*Figure 4.3* – Bar chart: To what extent do residents accept others to perceive Berlin as queer?

No single respondent in neither the queer nor the conservative district was completely not accepting other people to perceive the city as queer. Only two respondents in the conservative district did somewhat not accept it. Approximately the same number of respondents were neutral here as with the previous question. Noticeably, the sample is somewhat more accepting of others perceiving Berlin (85%) as queer than they agree with it themselves.

#### 4.1.3. Mann-Whitney test

Ranks				
	Location of response	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
To what degree do you agree with the statement that Berlin has the image of being a 'queer city'?	Queer district	40	46.83	1873.00
	Non-queer district	40	34.17	1367.00
	Total	80		
To what extent do you accept that other people perceive Berlin as a queer city?	Queer district	40	42.68	1707.00
	Non-queer district	40	38.33	1533.00
	Total	80		

**Table 4.4** – Ranks: Residents' attitude Towards the image

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>		
	To what degree do you agree with the statement that Berlin has the image of being a 'queer city'?	To what extent do you accept that other people perceive Berlin as a queer city?
Mann-Whitney U	547.000	713.000
Wilcoxon W	1367.000	1533.000
Z	-2.610	-.990
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.322

a. Grouping Variable: Location of response

**Table 4.5** – Test statistics: Residents' attitude towards the image

The Mann-Whitney test is used to analyse the relationship between the attitudes towards the queer image and the location. With both variables, the ranking of the queer district is higher, as seen in *Table 4.4*. Due to the way the variable is coded, a higher ranking would suggest that the residents in the queer district have a more positive attitude towards the queer image. Nonetheless, *Table 4.5* shows only the test of the agreement variable is significant ( $P < 5\%$ ). We can therefore say that the residents' degree of agreement on Berlin carrying a queer image is not equal in the two different districts. And, that there is no statistically significant difference in the degree of acceptance of others finding Berlin queer among residents in the different districts.

#### 4.1.4 Discussion

A respondent that completely agreed that Berlin had a queer image stated: *'It has changed, Berlin was not always queer, but now I would say it is'*, this implies that, although it is visible today, the historical queer culture of Berlin might not always have been as prominent as initially thought. Nevertheless, another respondent added: *'a lot of people who do not fit in [elsewhere] come here, because it is very accepting'*, adding to the image's current manifestation and reinforces the fact about queer migration to Berlin (Di Felicianantonio & Gadelha, 2016). Yet, notions of less supporting attitudes were also mentioned. When asking if a respondent accepted others to find Berlin queer they reacted with: *'Way too much is done about it, who cares, you do what you want, that is not for anyone to judge'*. This moderately embraces an accepting culture but undermines its visibility. More so, a 'somewhat not accepting' respondent was rather hesitant and said: *'I am not fond of it [queerness], I mean I do not go shouting on the street who or what I like, so they shouldn't either'* which clearly demonstrates a disapproving opinion. Another interesting remark was made by a queer respondent. They responded with 'neutral' when asked if they accept others finding Berlin queer and added *'for me it depends if they themselves are queer, if they are not queer, then I don't think they preserve the right to judge if a city is queer or not'*. Suggesting that an image promoted for queers by queers is more authentic, which could be linked to Pinkwashing.



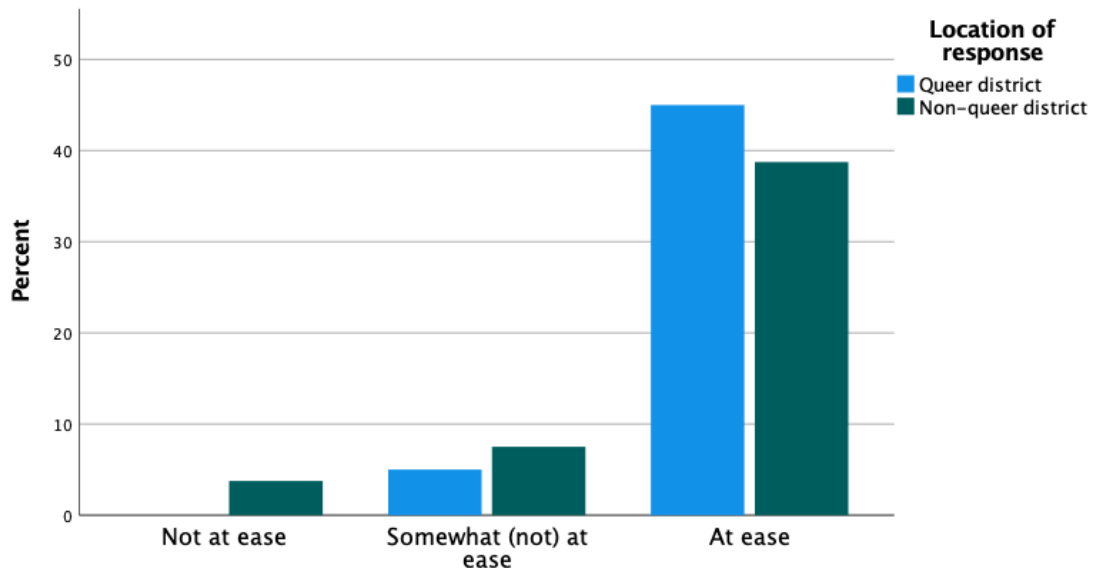
Although different notions have been quoted by the respondents, in general, the residents agree that the queer image is an accurate representation. More so in the queer than the conservative district, as confirmed by the statistical analysis (Partly accepting H3). Furthermore, they to a high degree accept others finding Berlin queer, rather equally in both districts. This suggests that neither group prefers an adapted image. Basically answering the first two research sub-questions. However, the word association implies that the queer image might carry less prominence among the residents. Especially considering the unfamiliarity with the word itself amongst conservative residents. But also queer district residents are not likely to initially describe the city as ‘queer’, emphasised by the modest mentioning of the word. Yet, contrastingly they do describe a queer-friendly and attractive environment. Even directly quoted by one respondent, and highlighted through the use of other descriptive words that can be associated with queerness. Altogether, this proposes that the queer image (or its attributes) is a social attribute in itself contributing to the psychosocial characteristics as described by Styliadis et al. (2016) and Echtner and Ritchie (1991). Thus, fitting into the image, but not making it up in its entirety.

#### 4.2. The residents’ feelings of ease with the image

##### 4.2.1. Separate variables – comfort and safety

Before looking at the combination of the comfort and safety variable, they are shortly presented separately. Prominently the major majority (96,5%) of the sample do feel comfortable with living in a city that carries a queer image. Still, a large majority of 83.8% state they feel safe. Though, a larger group (13) did not feel safe.

##### 4.2.2. Combined ‘at ease’ variable and Mann-Whitney test



**Figure 4.6** – Bar chart: Residents’ feeling of ease with the queer image

The variables were combined as seen in *Figure 3.1*, and the results are visualized in *Figure 4.6* above. Only three respondents from the conservative district do not feel at ease with the queer image. And again the large majority of both groups are feeling at ease.

As mentioned, a Mann-Whitney test was conducted for this variable as well. The ranks table, *Table 4.7*, shows slightly higher ranks for the queer district, implicating that these residents are slightly more at ease with the image. However, *Table 4.8* show us the result of the test, which is not significant. Based on this test we conclude that the populations in both districts feel similarly at ease with the queer image of Berlin.

Ranks				
	Location of response	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
To what extent do residents feel at ease with living in a 'queer city'?	Queer district	40	43.15	1726.00
	Non-queer district	40	37.85	1514.00
	Total	80		

**Table 4.7** – Ranks: Residents' feeling of ease with the image

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
	To what extent do residents feel at ease with living in a 'queer city'?
Mann-Whitney U	694.000
Wilcoxon W	1514.000
Z	-1.592
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.111

a. Grouping Variable: Location of response

**Table 4.8** – Test statistics: Residents' feeling of ease with the image

#### 4.2.3 Discussion

It was hypothesised that the closeness to the queer culture would make the queer district respondents more at ease with the image. However, the analysis found that residents of Berlin are largely at ease with the queer image, regardless of district (Partly rejecting H3). This degree of similarity could be considerably surprising. But it is perhaps this distance that enables said similarity. Because, the ones that would be expected to be less at ease are not confronted as much with the queer culture. Nor do they experience it as much, causing less friction.

Though, the final research sub-question is now answered, the implications made by a queer respondent should be considered. They were 'somewhat (not) at ease' with the image and implied that queerness is an attribute for safety, and not the other way around. They stated that it depended on whether the security forces were queer-friendly or not. If they weren't, then no, they didn't feel at ease. Regardless of whether the city has a queer image or not. '*We are getting there, but we are not quite there yet*' they said about Berlin. The feeling of ease with the place itself and the place image can thus be considered to be different.

## 5. Conclusion

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This research investigated the residents' image of Berlin and their attitudes and thoughts towards the queer place image of the city. City officials have promoted a queer-friendly image based on a rich queer history in Berlin (VisitBerlin, 2022a; VisitBerlin, 2022b). However, there have also been cases that contradict this promoted image. For instance, concerns shared by queer refugees and the increasing violence against members of the queer community (Cashman & Soto, 2019; Martyr, 2019). The findings suggest that even though these concerns might be real, residents to a large extent find the queer image an accurate representation. Nonetheless, the issues and difficulties of the queer community did not seem to be recognized by the vast majority of the respondents. Implying that although the image is perhaps not used to derive attention from homophobic actions, which would be Pinkwashing (Schulman, 2011), there is a lack of awareness.

Contradictory to what Peighambari et al. (2016) found in Luleå, stakeholders in Berlin seem to be on the same page (Accepting H1). However, one thing to keep in mind is the suggestions made by Dinnie (2011); City officials promote a certain image to attract economic activity. If this is the motive for the promotion of a queer Berlin is not completely certain. They do however promote specific locations. On the contrary, the findings suggest that residents in Berlin are, as hypothesised, more focused on the community and social aspects (Accepting H2). They describe the city as multicultural, diverse and free, sketching an image that allows for queers and queer culture to exist freely. Suggesting that a similar perception of an image still allows for the underlying understanding/motives to vary between stakeholders.

Furthermore, based on the varying description given between the resident groups, one could question the difference in the sense of place to Berlin between the residents. As the sense of place is the quality of the emotional bond to a place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Especially, considering the materialistic descriptions given by the conservative district respondents. Compared to a more emotional description, which could suggest a stronger emotional bond, given by the queer district respondents. Whether or not this makes one group's perception more representable than the other is not guaranteed, but should be acknowledged. However, it is also excessive to assume that the image should be similar for the whole city. As indeed the social setting (a social attribute) composes part of the image (Stylidis et al., 2016), and varying political views logically construct different social settings. Suggesting reasoning to why city officials do indeed promote specific locations. Though this can lead to misconceptions for both residents as for queer migrants and tourists.

Ultimately, when concluding if the residents of Berlin identify with the queer place image that the city carries, the following can be said: residents acknowledge the queer image as an accurate representation, and are at ease with it, but are more closely identified with the attributes of the queer image than the image itself.

## **6. Reflection on the Research and Future Recommendations**

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The research method proved to be a fitting solution to answer the research question. The case study with quantitative data provided a general wider overview, of otherwise confined research. The research did however come with limitations. For instance, only one queer and one conservative district were investigated, which also were central and peripheral respectively. By including more districts with varying configurations, covering more of the middle ground, future research could give a more cumulative representation. The research also saw similar attributes between queerness and the initial description of Berlin. However, the enabling factor was not established. Does queerness enable the diverse attributes of Berlin or is it the other way around? Or are they perhaps complementary? This could be investigated in the future, with a mixed-method approach that include in-depth interviews with queer stakeholders.

A qualitative method could also contribute to a deeper understanding of peoples feeling of ease with the image. Respondents were rather quick to answer yes/no on whether they were comfortable or felt safe with the image. But some of the quotes were already more loaded, giving notions of underlying feelings. If in-depth interviews were conducted these feelings could be investigated more thoroughly.

Furthermore, this thesis mainly sought to explore attitudes towards an arguably established image, without thoroughly investigating the elementary place image of Berlins residents. Since existing studies have established the uniqueness of residents' place images, a deeper analysis of the initial image would be recommended. Not only to serve as a better overview in itself, but also to improve explicit research like this one.

Lastly, even though the findings suggest wide acceptance of queerness, the contradictions are not discredited. Though the disapproving stances counted for less than 5%, no more is needed for queer-based violence to exist and increase. Nor for queers to feel the need to be hesitant in expressing themselves.

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## Appendices

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### Appendix A – Survey

#### English

1. Location of survey collection (*Indicator to be filled in by author*)
  - a. Queer district
  - b. Conservative district

‘Hi my name is Bob; I am a student from the Netherlands at the Humboldt-University here in Berlin. I am currently conducting a neighbourhood survey for my research project and was wondering if I could ask you a few questions? The participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. If there are any specific questions you would rather not answer that is completely fine. Also, your answers will be deleted after they have been analysed and only non-individual results of my research will be presented to my university. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.’

#### *-Agreement to participate-*

‘Thank you. I have two short questions at first and then I will explain a bit more about my research before continuing with the rest of the questions.’

2. Do you work, live or spend a significant amount of time in this neighbourhood?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

*If ‘No’: I am sorry but my research requires respondents to be strongly connected to this neighbourhood. Thank you for wanting to participate.*

3. What are the words that come to mind when you think of Berlin?
  - 3a. Could you perhaps give *X* more words? (*To reach minimum of 3 words*)

‘Thank you. My research is more specifically focused on the place image of Berlin. With place image I mean the thoughts, associations and images that one makes up in one’s head based on the interactions and experiences one has with a place.’

4. To what degree do you agree with the statement that Berlin has the image of being a ‘queer city’?
  - a. Completely do not agree
  - b. Somewhat do not agree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Somewhat agree
  - e. Completely agree
5. To what extent do you accept that other people perceive Berlin as a queer city?
  - a. Completely do not accept it
  - b. Somewhat do not accept it
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Somewhat accept it
  - e. Completely accept it
6. Are you comfortable with living in a city that has the image of being a ‘queer city’?

- a. Yes
- b. No

7. Do you feel safe with living in a city that has the image of being a 'queer city'?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

'Thank you for answering my questions so far. Lastly, I have two more questions that would be appreciated if you would answer but if you do not want to that is also completely fine.'

8. What is your zip code? – 'This is only needed for me to get a geographical overview of the responses, to be able to compare different districts and answers.'
9. How would you describe your sexual orientation? – 'This is only to get a more in depth analysis of the responses and the ability to compare different populations.'

'Thank you very much for participating in my research, it is greatly appreciated. That were all my questions. If you have any questions for me, feel free to ask.'

*German*

1. Ort der Erhebung (vom Verfasser auszufüllender Indikator)
- a. Stadtteil Queer
  - b. Nicht-Queer-Stadtteil

Hallo, mein Name ist Bob; ich bin ein Student aus den Niederlanden an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Ich führe gerade eine Nachbarschaftsbefragung für mein Forschungsprojekt durch und habe mich gefragt, ob ich Ihnen ein paar Fragen stellen kann? Die Teilnahme ist völlig freiwillig und selbstverständlich anonym. Möchten Sie bestimmte Fragen nicht beantworten, ist das völlig in Ordnung. Ihre Antworten werden nicht gespeichert und nach der Auswertung gelöscht. Lediglich die Ergebnisse meiner Forschung werden an meiner Universität weitergegeben. Ich würde mich sehr über Ihre Teilnahme freuen.

-Zustimmung zur Teilnahme-

Vielen Dank. Ich habe zunächst zwei kurze Fragen an Sie. Im Anschluss werde ich dann etwas mehr über meine Forschung berichten, bevor ich mit den restlichen Fragen fortfahre.

2. Arbeiten Sie in diesem Viertel, wohnen Sie hier oder verbringen Sie hier viel Zeit?
- Ja
  - Nein

*Wenn 'Nein': Es tut mir leid, aber meine Forschung erfordert, dass die Befragten einen starken Bezug zu diesem Viertel haben. Trotzdem danke, dass Sie teilnehmen wollen.*

3. Welche Worte fallen Ihnen ein, wenn Sie an Berlin denken?

- 3a. Könnten Sie vielleicht X weitere Wörter nennen?



‘Vielen Dank. Meine Forschung konzentriert sich speziell auf das Ortsbild von Berlin. Mit Ortsbild meine ich konkret Gedanken, Assoziationen und Bilder, die man an einem Ort gemacht hat, basierend auf Interaktionen und Erfahrungen.

4. Inwieweit stimmen Sie der Aussage zu, dass Berlin das Image einer 'Queer City' hat?
  - a. Ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu
  - b. Ich stimme eher nicht zu
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Ich stimme eher zu
  - e. Ich stimme voll und ganz zu
  
5. Inwieweit akzeptieren Sie, dass andere Menschen Berlin als eine queere Stadt wahrnehmen?
  - a. Ich akzeptiere es überhaupt nicht
  - b. Ich akzeptiere es eher nicht
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Ich akzeptiere es einigermaßen
  - e. Ich akzeptiere es voll und ganz
  
6. Fühlen Sie sich wohl damit, in einer Stadt zu leben, die das Image einer 'Queer City' hat?
  - a. Ja
  - b. Nein
  
7. Fühlst du dich sicher, wenn du in einer Stadt lebst, die das Image einer 'Queer City' hat?
  - a. Ja
  - b. Nein

‘Ich danke Ihnen für die Beantwortung meiner bisherigen Fragen. Zum Schluss hätte ich noch zwei weitere Fragen an Sie, die Sie freiwillig beantworten können.’

8. Wie lautet Ihre Postleitzahl? – 'Ich benötige diese Angabe, um verschiedene Stadtteile und Antworten geographisch aufzubereiten und vergleichen zu können.'
  
9. Wie würden Sie Ihre sexuelle Orientierung beschreiben? – Die Frage zielt darauf ab, eine genauere Analyse der Antworten zu ermöglichen und die Bewohnerschaft miteinander vergleichen zu können.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme an meiner Untersuchung. Ich weiß das sehr zu schätzen. Sollten Sie noch Fragen an mich haben, können Sie diese gerne stellen.

## Appendix B – Statistical Tables

### Descriptive Statistics / Frequency tables

#### Frequency residing neighbourhood of respondents

		Location of response		Total
		Queer district	Non-queer district	
Residing Neighbourhood	Mitte	4	1	5
	Tempelhof-Schöneberg	10	0	10
	Pankow	3	1	4
	Marzhan-Hellersdorf	0	19	19
	Lichtenberg	0	7	7
	Neukölln	2	2	4
	Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg	4	1	5
	Treptow-Köpenick	0	1	1
	Steglitz-Zehlendorf	1	0	1
Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf	2	0	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>58</b>	

#### Frequency of associated words per location

What words come to mind when you think of Berlin?	Location of response		Total
	Queer district	Non-queer district	
Acceptance	1	0	1
Alex	0	5	5
Antisocial	0	1	1
Beautiful	1	0	1
Beer	0	1	1
Berliner-Luft	0	1	1
Big	9	9	18
Brandenburger Tor	0	4	4
Brothers	0	1	1
Busy	1	4	5
Capital	0	6	6
Chaotic	1	0	1
Chill	1	0	1
Chubby	1	0	1
City	1	5	6
Clubs	1	0	1
Colourful	7	0	7
Constrained	0	1	1
Construction	0	2	2
Culture	0	1	1
Decline	1	0	1
Destroyed	0	1	1
Dirty	6	10	16
Diverse	6	2	8
Döner	0	1	1
Evening	0	1	1
Events	0	1	1
Everything	0	1	1
Expensive	4	1	5
Falafel	1	0	1
Family	2	0	2
Fast	1	0	1
Filthy	0	1	1
Free	8	2	10
Friends	1	0	1
Full	1	3	4
Green	9	8	17
Happy	1	0	1
Helene Fischer	0	1	1
Hipster	1	0	1
History	3	0	3
Hollow	1	0	1
Home	3	5	8
International	1	0	1
JFK	0	1	1
Loud	7	2	9
Love	1	1	2
Morning-Mood	1	0	1
Multicultural	3	3	6
Old	0	1	1
Olympia	0	1	1
Open	2	0	2
Openness	2	0	2
Own	1	1	2
Party	1	2	3
People	0	4	4
Politics	1	0	1
Progressive	1	0	1
Pulsive	1	0	1
Punctual	1	0	1
Queer	3	0	3
Raw	1	0	1
Residents	2	0	2
Restless	1	1	2
S-Bhan	0	1	1
Safe	1	0	1
Sexy	2	0	2
Siegessäule	0	1	1
Smell	0	2	2
Sneakers	1	0	1
Stress	0	1	1
Summer	1	0	1
Techno	5	0	5
Tolerant	2	0	2
Tourism	2	3	5
Trendy	1	0	1
Troublesome	0	1	1
TV-tower	0	8	8
Ugly	1	1	2
Underway	0	1	1
Unreal	0	1	1
Urban	1	0	1
Vibe	0	1	1
Village	0	1	1
Wall	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>240</b>

Descriptive statistics: To what degree do residents agree with Berlin having a queer place image?

		Location of response			
		Queer district	Non-queer district	Total	
To what degree do you agree with the statement that Berlin has the image of being a 'queer city'?	Completely do not agree	Count	0	2	2
		% within Location of response	0.0%	5.0%	2.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	2.5%	2.5%
	Somewhat do not agree	Count	2	3	5
		% within Location of response	5.0%	7.5%	6.3%
		% of Total	2.5%	3.8%	6.3%
	Neutral	Count	3	6	9
		% within Location of response	7.5%	15.0%	11.3%
		% of Total	3.8%	7.5%	11.3%
	Somewhat agree	Count	14	19	33
		% within Location of response	35.0%	47.5%	41.3%
		% of Total	17.5%	23.8%	41.3%
	Completely agree	Count	21	10	31
		% within Location of response	52.5%	25.0%	38.8%
		% of Total	26.3%	12.5%	38.8%
Total	Count	40	40	80	
	% within Location of response	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	

Descriptive statistics: To what extent do residents accept others to perceive Berlin as queer?

		Location of response			
		Queer district	Non-queer district	Total	
To what extent do you accept that other people perceive Berlin as a queer city?	Somewhat do not accept it	Count	0	2	2
		% within Location of response	0.0%	5.0%	2.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	2.5%	2.5%
	Neutral	Count	5	5	10
		% within Location of response	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%
		% of Total	6.3%	6.3%	12.5%
	Somewhat accept it	Count	7	9	16
		% within Location of response	17.5%	22.5%	20.0%
		% of Total	8.8%	11.3%	20.0%
	Completely accept it	Count	28	24	52
		% within Location of response	70.0%	60.0%	65.0%
		% of Total	35.0%	30.0%	65.0%
	Total	Count	40	40	80
		% within Location of response	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

## Descriptive statistics: Residents' feeling of comfort with the queer image

		Location of response			
		Queer district	Non-queer district	Total	
Are you comfortable with living in a city that has the image of being a queer city?	Yes	Count	40	37	77
		% within Location of response	100.0%	92.5%	96.3%
		% of Total	50.0%	46.3%	96.3%
	No	Count	0	3	3
		% within Location of response	0.0%	7.5%	3.8%
		% of Total	0.0%	3.8%	3.8%
Total	Count	40	40	80	
	% within Location of response	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	

## Descriptive statistics: Residents' feeling of safety with the queer image

		Location of response			
		Queer district	Non-queer district	Total	
Do you feel safe with living in a city that has the image fo being a queer city?	Yes	Count	36	31	67
		% within Location of response	90.0%	77.5%	83.8%
		% of Total	45.0%	38.8%	83.8%
	No	Count	4	9	13
		% within Location of response	10.0%	22.5%	16.3%
		% of Total	5.0%	11.3%	16.3%
Total	Count	40	40	80	
	% within Location of response	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	

## Descriptive statistics: Residents' feeling of ease with the queer image

		Location of response			
		Queer district	Non-queer district	Total	
To what extend do residents feel at ease with living in a 'queer city'?	Not at ease	Count	0	3	3
		% within Location of response	0.0%	7.5%	3.8%
		% of Total	0.0%	3.8%	3.8%
	Somewhat (not) at ease	Count	4	6	10
		% within Location of response	10.0%	15.0%	12.5%
		% of Total	5.0%	7.5%	12.5%
	At ease	Count	36	31	67
		% within Location of response	90.0%	77.5%	83.8%
		% of Total	45.0%	38.8%	83.8%
Total	Count	40	40	80	
	% within Location of response	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	

## Queers agreeing with image

To what degree do you agree with the statement that Berlin has the image of being a 'queer city'?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat do not agree	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Neutral	1	5.0	5.0	10.0
	Somewhat agree	4	20.0	20.0	30.0
	Completely agree	14	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

## Queers accepting image

To what extent do you accept that other people perceive Berlin as a queer city?

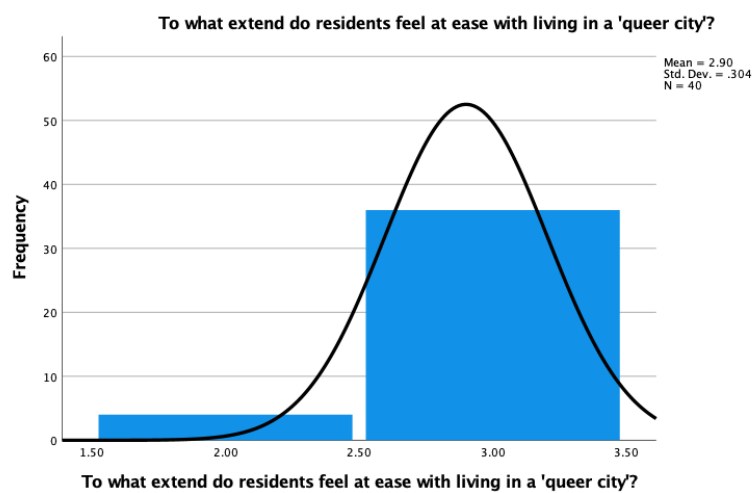
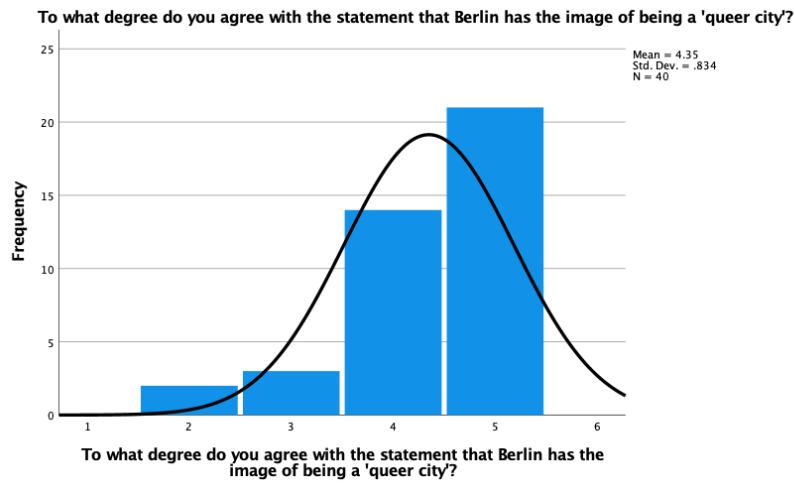
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	3	15.0	15.0	15.0
	Somewhat accept it	3	15.0	15.0	30.0
	Completely accept it	14	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

## Queers feeling at ease with image

To what extent do residents feel at ease with living in a 'queer city'?

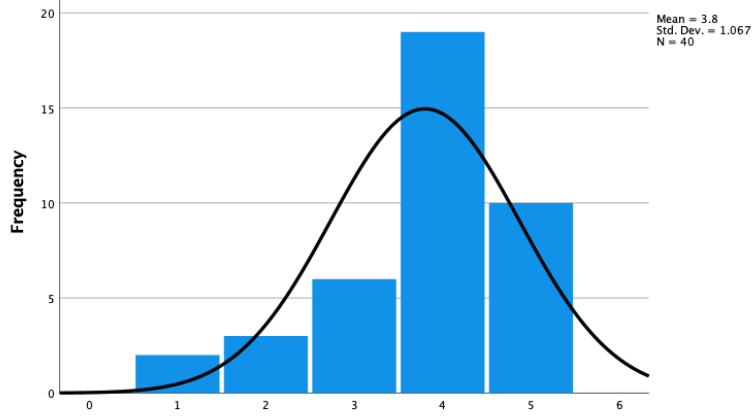
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat (not) at ease	3	15.0	15.0	15.0
	At ease	17	85.0	85.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

*Distribution of variables*  
Queer district variables:



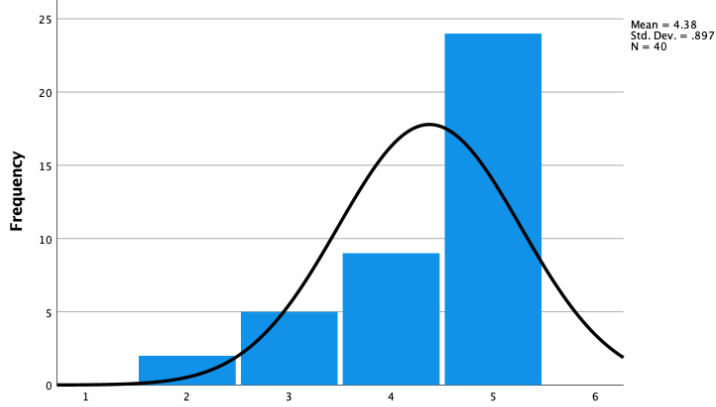
Conservative district variables

To what degree do you agree with the statement that Berlin has the image of being a 'queer city'?



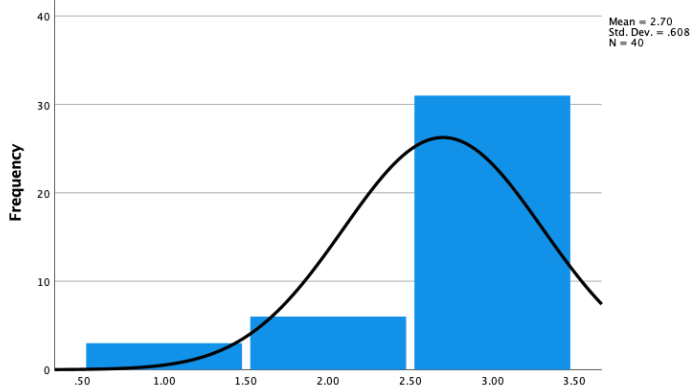
To what degree do you agree with the statement that Berlin has the image of being a 'queer city'?

To what extent do you accept that other people perceive Berlin as a queer city?



To what extent do you accept that other people perceive Berlin as a queer city?

To what extent do residents feel at ease with living in a 'queer city'?



To what extent do residents feel at ease with living in a 'queer city'?