

# SCARS OF THE GESTAPO: REMEMBRANCE AND PRIVACY CONCERNS

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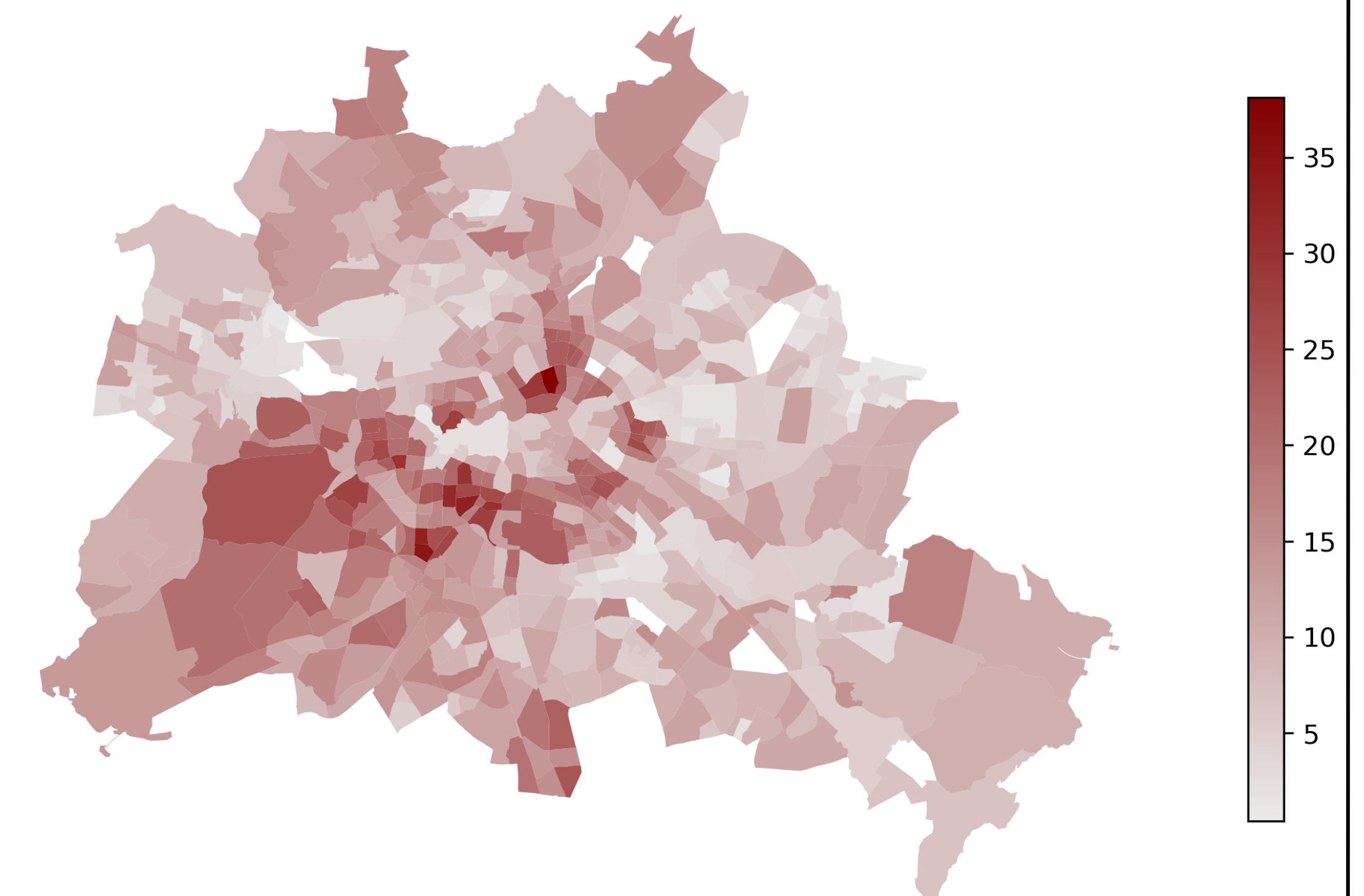
## INTRODUCTION

What can explain the heterogeneity of tastes for privacy across countries? We hypothesize that remembrance of an authoritarian regime affects privacy concerns, and we leverage Germany's strong culture of Holocaust remembrance to test it. We construct two novel measures of privacy concerns and show that there is a strong causal link between the reminders of the past and privacy concerns today

## CHALLENGES

- Find a homogeneous measure of remembrance
- Privacy concerns are difficult to measure due to sample truncation (Tucker, 2022)
- Asking directly about privacy leads to the privacy paradox (Athey et al., 2017)

Share (%) of blurred houses by sub-neighborhood (LOR), Berlin

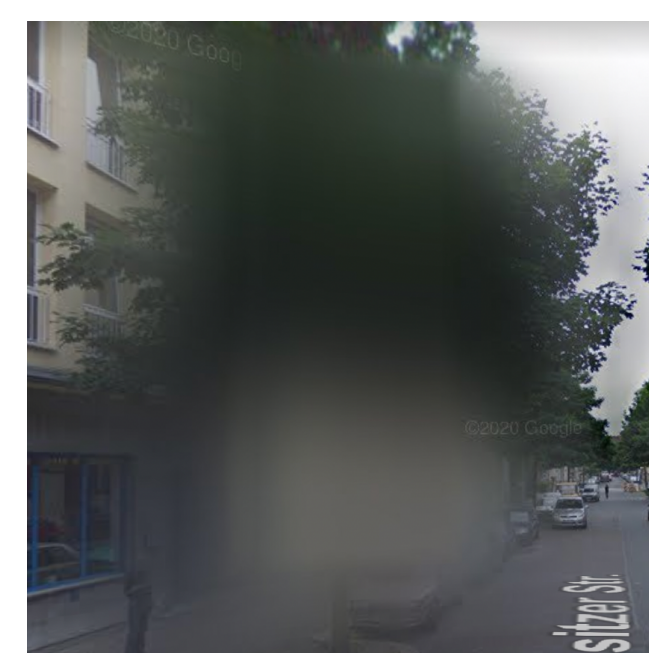


## RESEARCH DESIGN (1)



### MEASURE OF REMEMBRANCE

*Stolpersteine*: plaques on the sidewalk that signal the last free address of a victim of Nazi persecution

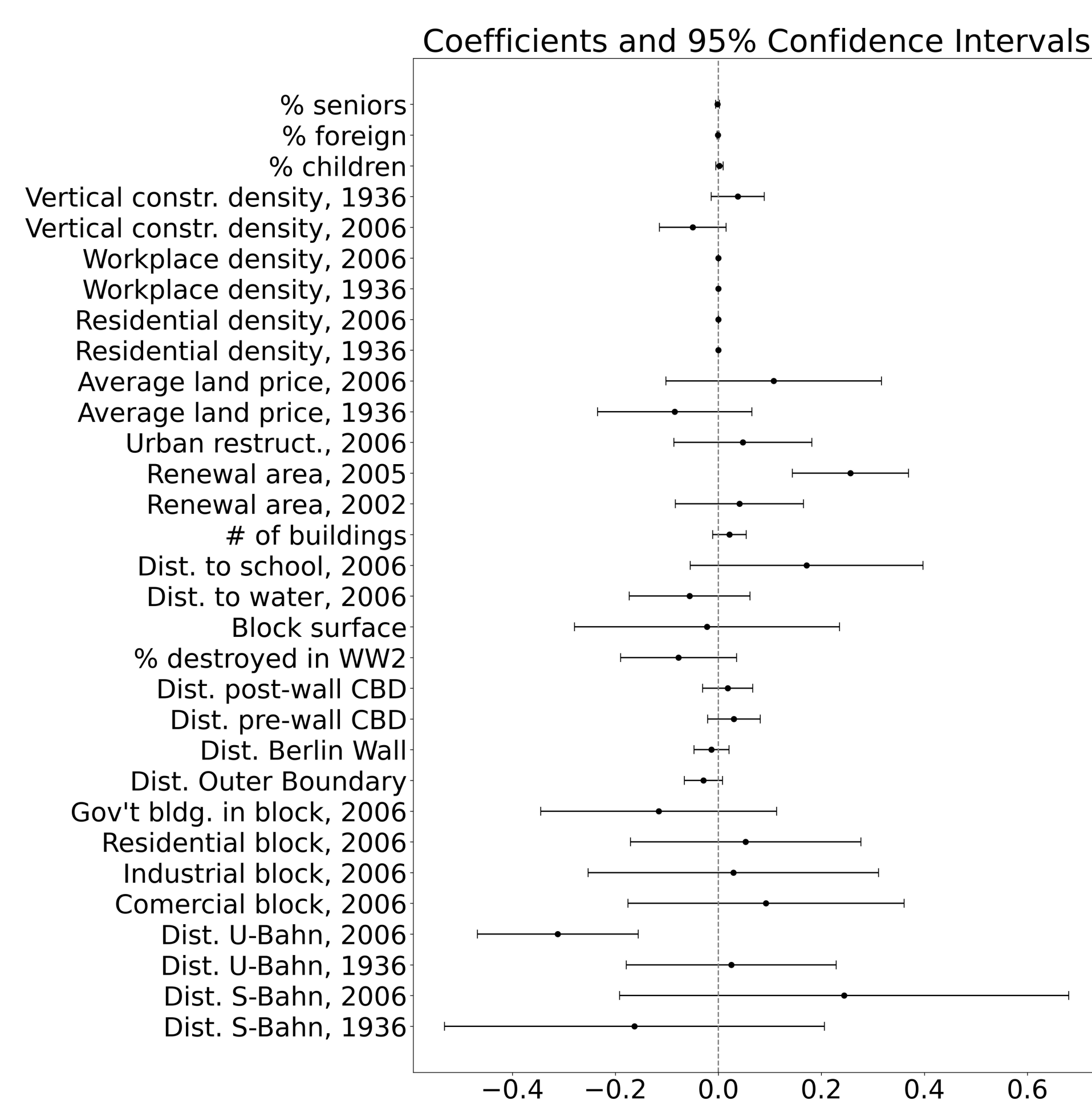


### MEASURE OF PRIVACY CONCERNS

Blurred houses on an online imagery provider

## ENDOGENEITY PROBLEMS

- The plaques' location might be endogenous
- The victims' location might be endogenous

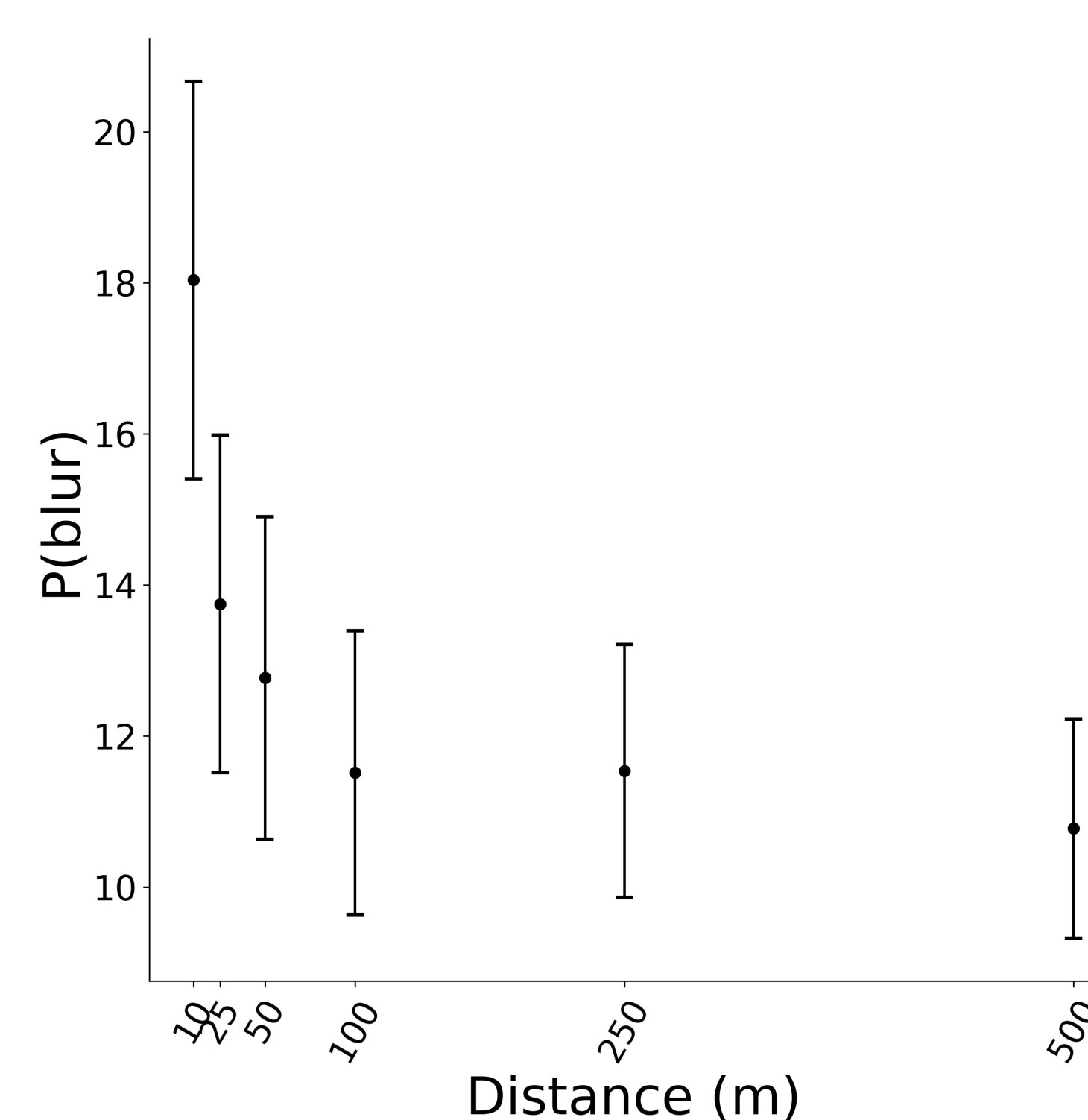


## SOLUTIONS

1. Plaques only need authorization from the local government and from victims' relatives, who usually live in the Americas or Israel
2. Berlin changed dramatically during the 20th century: not the same people living since 1930s
3. Balance test: once we control for victims' location, the plaques are as good as random

## RESULTS

- Localized effect: probability of blurring goes from 11% to 18% when first plaque is located within 10 meters of the house
- Similar effect when analyzing the share of blurred houses per block
- Smaller effect of estimated plaques seen at the workplace based on data and gravity equation from Ahlfeldt et al. (2015)



	% Blurred
# <i>Stolpersteine</i> at home	0.179*** (0.0290)
# <i>Stolpersteine</i> at work	0.0333** (0.0118)
Observations	10,041
R-squared	0.164
Errors	CI. District
Fixed Effects	Neighborhood

## RESEARCH DESIGN (2)

- Experimental survey: subjects were asked about their knowledge of different monuments
- The treatment group was exposed to a reminder of the Holocaust: a *Stolpersteine*
- Privacy concerns measure: time spent on a final consent form, solves the privacy paradox
- Test for results driven by anxiety: number of clicks (Hernandez et al., 2014)
- Recollection of responses in progress (November 2023)

## SUMMARY

- We use detailed street-level imagery information from Berlin to measure an origin for German privacy concerns
- We find a causal effect of memorials on privacy concerns
  - *Stolpersteine* + blurring: First non-truncated privacy concerns measure
  - *Stolpersteine* + time at consent form: Avoid privacy paradox
- More *Stolpersteine* at workplace & residency block leads to up to twice more blurred houses
- Localized effect: concentrated at *Stolpersteine* less than 10 meters away



## REFERENCES

Ahlfeldt, G. M., Redding, S. J., Sturm, D. M., & Wolf, N. (2015) The Economics of Density: Evidence from the Berlin Wall. *Econometrica*, 83(6):2127–2189, 2015  
 Athey, S., Catalini, C., & Tucker, C. (2017) The digital privacy paradox: Small money, small costs, small talk. *Technical report, National Bureau of Economic Research*, 2017  
 Hernandez, J., Paredes, P., Roseway, A., & Czerwinski, M. (2014). Under pressure: sensing stress of computer users. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human factors in computing systems* (pp. 51-60).  
 Tucker, C. (2022) The Economics of Privacy: An Agenda. *University of Chicago Press*, October 2022. URL <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c14781>