

## Background

- When we lack curiosity about another person, we may be more likely to rely on what we *think* we already know about them, drawing on societal stereotypes and our own assumptions.<sup>4</sup>
- Understanding how individuals' **interpersonal curiosity** (i.e., desire to know about the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others) may differ based on the target of curiosity could offer insight into one way by which stereotypes are maintained and, therefore, how they might be dismantled.
- However, to our knowledge, potential intra-individual differences in interpersonal curiosity have yet to be explored.

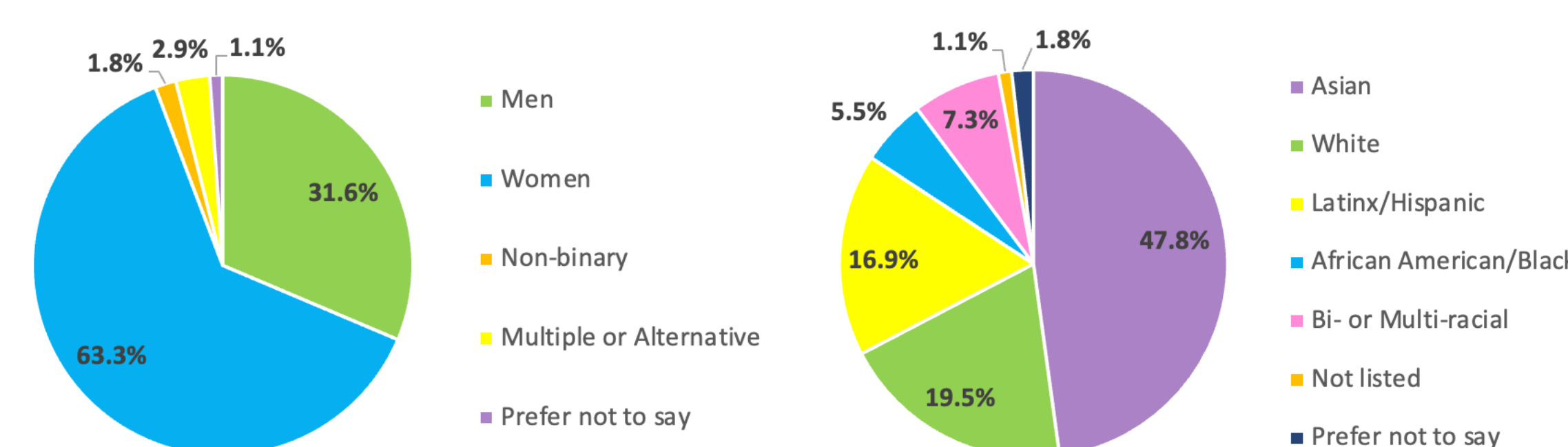
### Aims of the Present Study

- Explore possible intra-individual variation in interpersonal curiosity by examining differences in the frequencies with which college students report asking about the thoughts and feelings of others who they perceive as coming from backgrounds "similar" to and "different" from their own.
- Assess whether individuals with greater trait interpersonal curiosity ask about the thoughts and feelings of others more often to determine whether the question-asking behaviors in *Aim 1* reflect participants' interpersonal curiosity.

## Methods

### Participants

- Participants included 278 college students ( $M_{age} = 19.68$  years;  $SD_{age} = 1.24$  years) from New York City.



### Procedure

- Participants completed a Qualtrics survey as part of a broader study of interpersonal curiosity and gender ideology.
- Measures:**
  - Interpersonal curiosity was measured via the *social curiosity* dimension of the Five-Dimensional Curiosity Scale Revised (5DCR)<sup>2</sup>, which includes "overt" (e.g., question-asking) and "covert" (e.g., listening to conversations) subscales

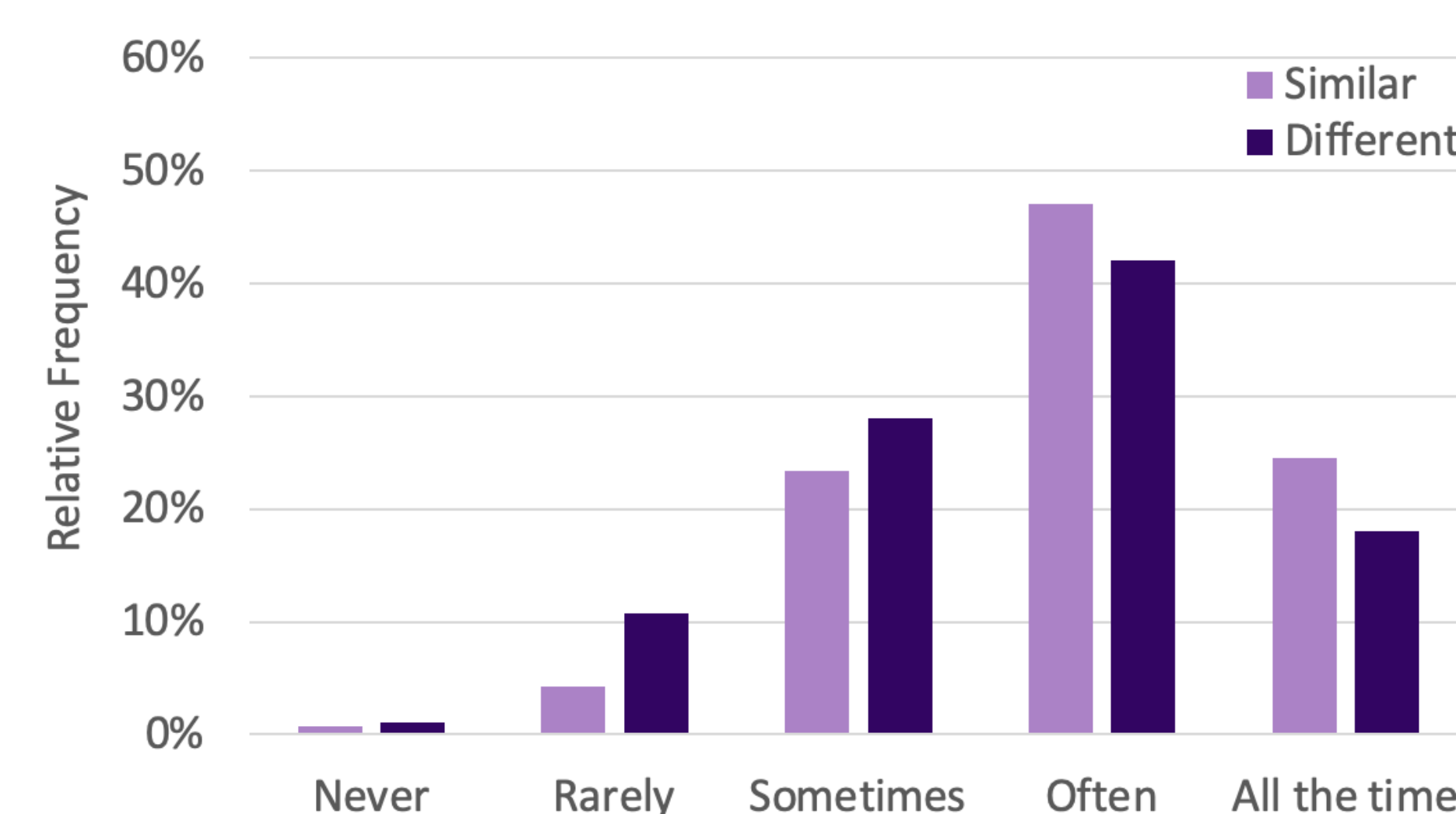
- Responses to two, 5-point Likert scale questions [options ranging from "never" to "all the time"]:
  - "When you're with someone who has a *similar* background to you, how often do you ask about their thoughts and feelings?"
  - "When you're with someone who has a *different* background from you, how often do you ask about their thoughts and feelings?"
- The means of participants' responses to the two above questions were calculated to create an average frequency rating
- Social curiosity scores (total, overt, and covert) were recoded into "high" [at or above the mean] and "low" [below the mean].

## Results

### Aim 1

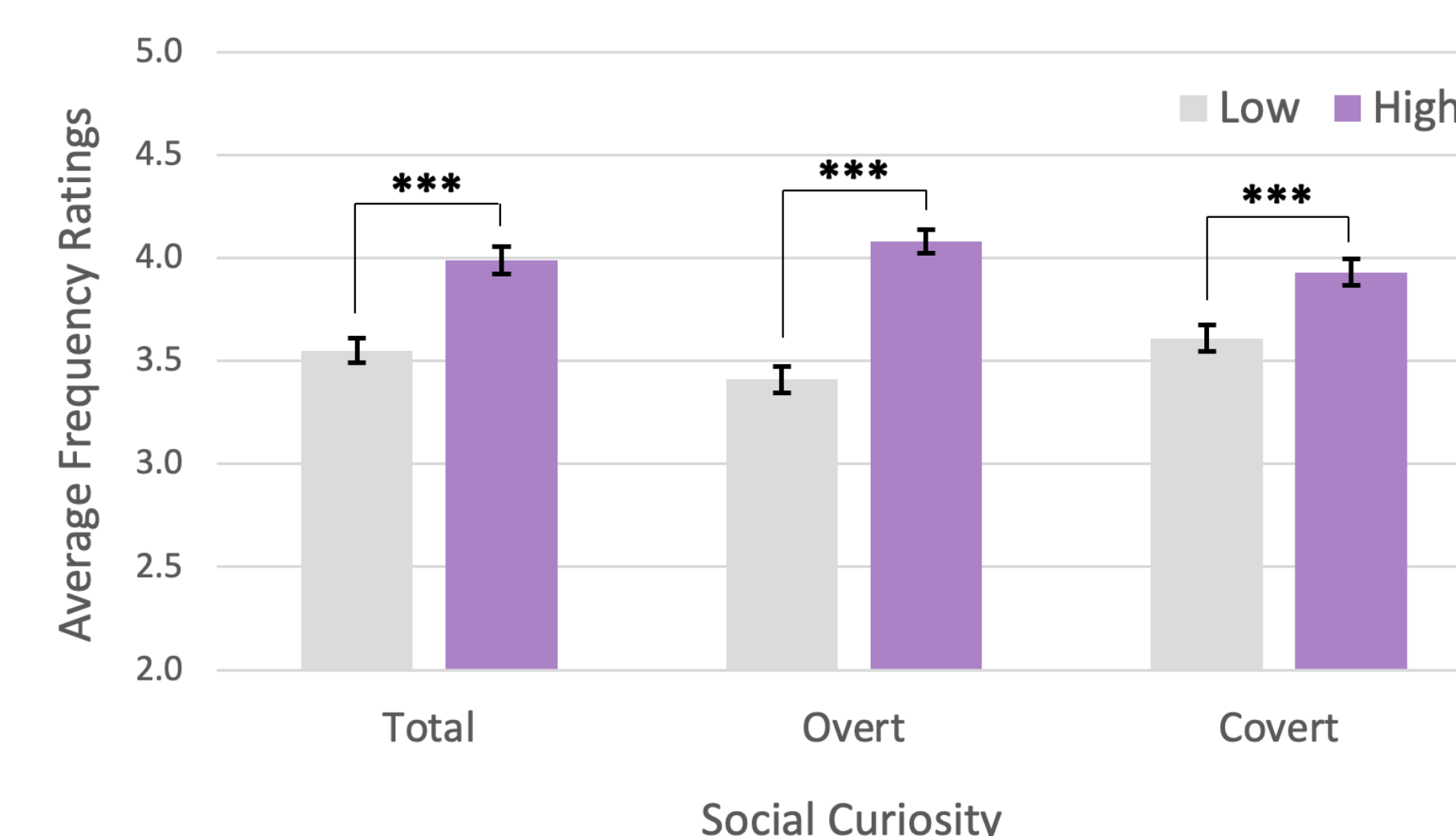
- Results from a Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed a significant difference between the frequencies with which participants reported asking about the thoughts and feelings of others they perceived as having similar ( $M = 3.90$ ) and different ( $M = 3.65$ ) backgrounds,  $Z = 4.717$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r = .283$ .

**Figure 1.** Frequency distribution of how often participants reported asking about the thoughts and feelings of others from "similar" and "different" backgrounds, respectively.



### Aim 2

**Figure 2.** Means of the average frequency ratings (reflecting how often participants reported asking about the thoughts and feelings of others) across participants who had high and low scores on the social curiosity measure and its overt and covert subscales.



**Table 1.** Results from Mann-Whitney U tests assessing possible differences in the average frequency with which participants who had high/low levels of social curiosity (total and in terms of the *overt* and *covert* subscales) asked others about their thoughts and feelings.

		N	Mean rank	U	Z	p	r
<b>Social Curiosity</b>	High	146	161.91	6364.00	5.011	<.001***	.301
	Low	132	114.71				
<i>Overt Social Curiosity</i>	High	153	170.11	4.879.50	7.200	<.001***	.432
	Low	125	102.04				
<i>Covert Social Curiosity</i>	High	145	156.29	7208.00	3.727	<.001***	.224
	Low	133	121.20				

## Discussion

- Aim 1* findings suggest that college students ask about the thoughts and feelings of others from "similar" backgrounds more often than those of others from "different" backgrounds.
- Aim 2* results reveal a significant relation between the frequency with which college students report asking about the thoughts and feelings of others and their interpersonal curiosity.
- Taken together, these findings suggest that college students ask about the thoughts and feelings of others who they perceive as having a similar background more frequently, and that this increased question-asking may reflect, at least in part, differences in individuals' interpersonal curiosity about others they perceive as similar and different.
- Using the novel approach of examining intra-individual differences in interpersonal curiosity, this study is the first to suggest that the extent to which people are interpersonally curious may vary based on the *target* of curiosity.
- Future research should examine possible ties to stereotyping and social connection.

## References

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