

# Survey among Chinese international students in Germany

MA methods class of the Institute of Chinese Studies, Freie Universität  
Berlin

Led by:

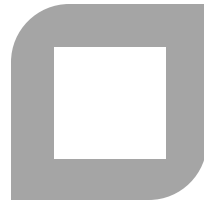
Univ.-Prof. Sabrina Habich-Sobiegalla, PhD

# Outline

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INTRODUCTION



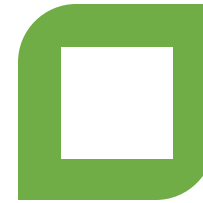
RESEARCH BASE



METHODOLOGY



FINDINGS



CONCLUSION



SOURCES

# Introduction

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- Motivation:
  - Escalating geopolitical tensions have influenced media reports on Chinese migrants, including students and researchers in Germany.  
We aim to understand how negative media portrayals and the overall geopolitical situation is affecting them. Gaining a deeper insight into their motivations and study experiences will present a more nuanced picture.
- Goals:
  - A better understanding of the drivers of Chinese students to study in Germany
  - An insight into the integration of these students in Germany

# Prior research on Chinese international student migration

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- Over 90% of study abroad programs by Chinese students are self-funded (Lan, 2019; Fong 2011)
- Family backgrounds determine the decision to migrate
- The choice of destination is often determined by the income of the family (Fong 2011):
  - Elite and upper-middle class --> USA, Australia, Canada;
  - Middle-class: Europe;
  - Ordinary and low-income: Korea, Japan, Thailand.
- A significant motivation for Chinese students to study abroad comes from their parents who often hold a critical view of China's education system (Lan, 2019).
- Through migration, Chinese citizens ... want to become part of the developed world and make China part of the developed world (Fong 2011).
- For the Chinese government, student migrants have geopolitical value as “grassroots ambassadors” to expand China’s global influence and enhance its national image abroad (Liu, 2021).
- Our study fills two gaps: 1) Focus on Germany; 2) Account for growing geopolitical tensions in Chinese student migrant experiences

# Methodology

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- The survey was created and conducted as part of a proseminar at Freie Universität Berlin.
- A large part of the questions was adapted from the International Student Survey in Europe (Schmidt and Bargel) and combined with prior studies on Chinese student migration.
- The survey was created with the help of the EFS (Enterprise Feedback Suite Survey) program by the company Tivian and completed online by respondents.
- Five 20€ vouchers for the an Asian supermarket were offered as an incentive to complete the questionnaire. The lottery required an email address, but was conducted separately from the anonymous survey.
- The results of this survey are not generalizable as this was a non-random sample. N=478

# Findings

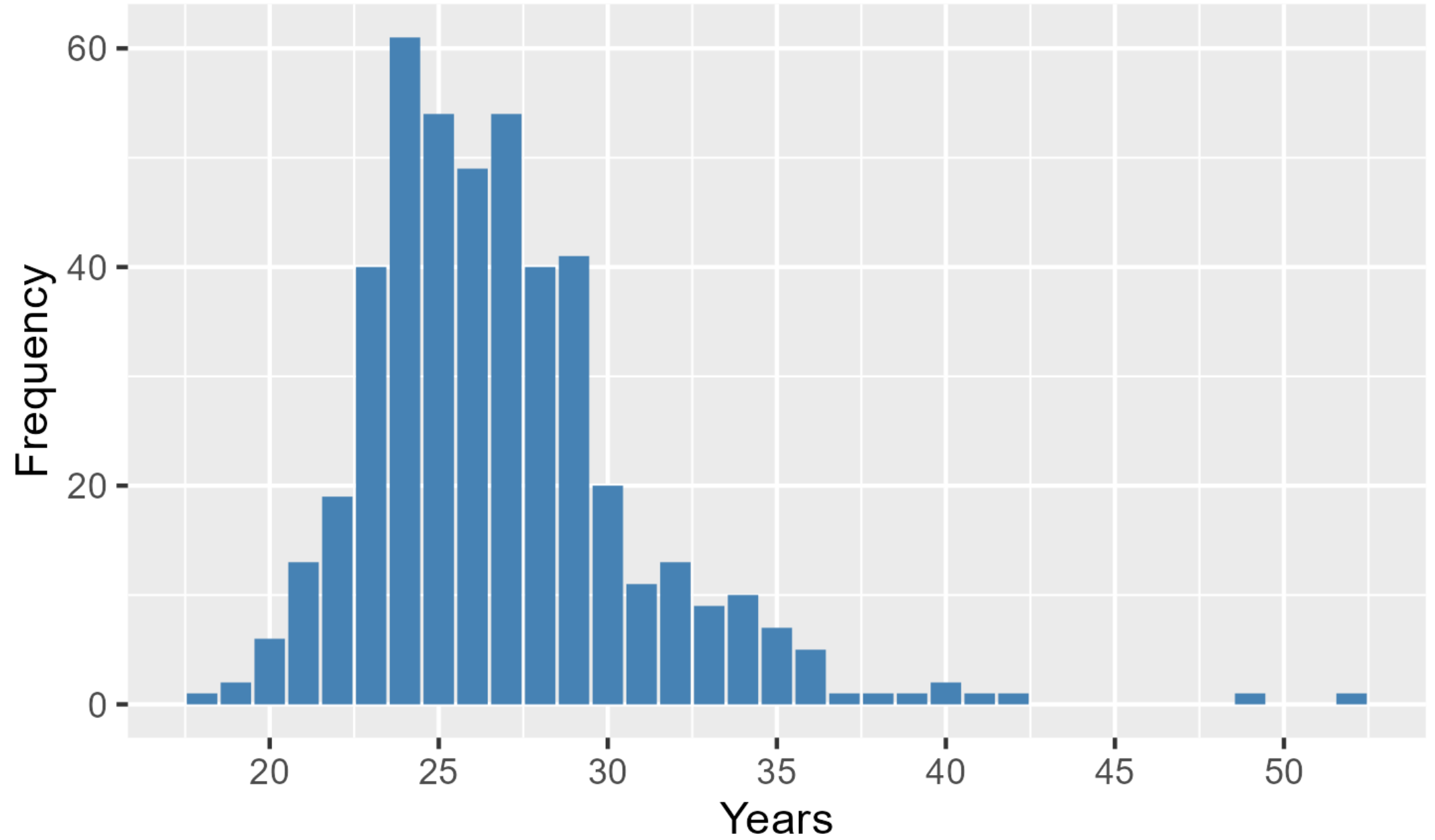
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- The graphs and charts below were created using the R software.

# Demographics

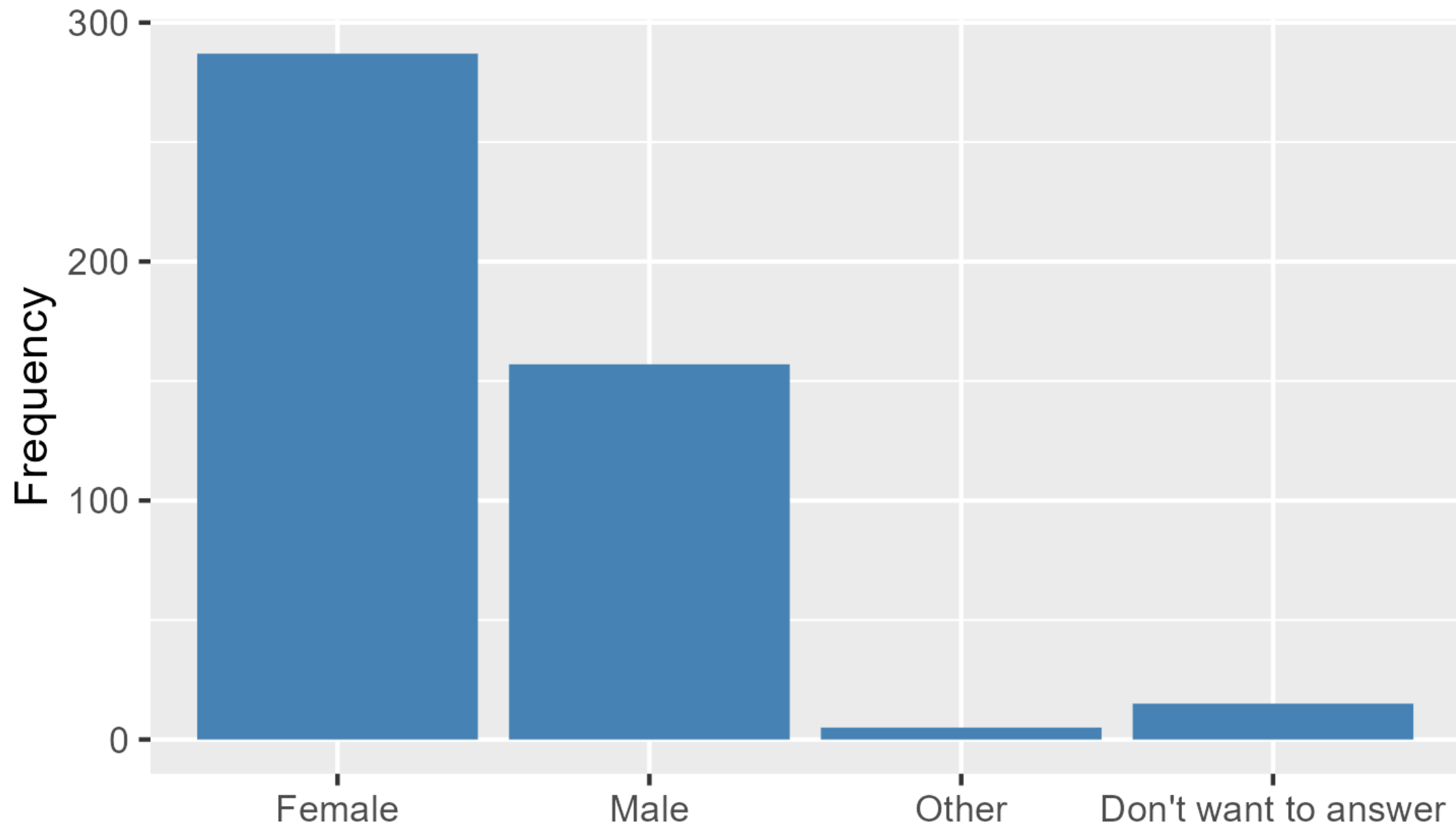


# Age

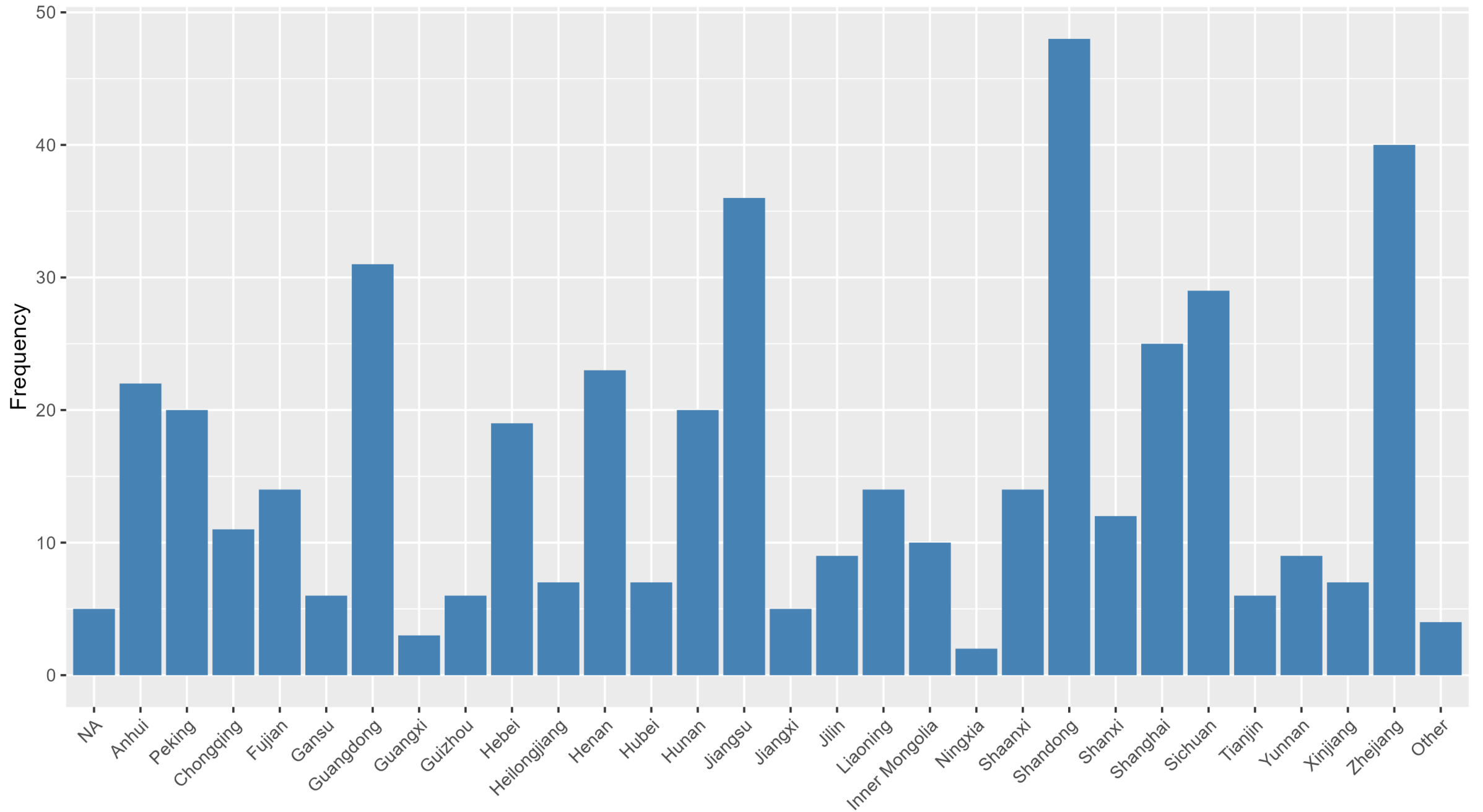




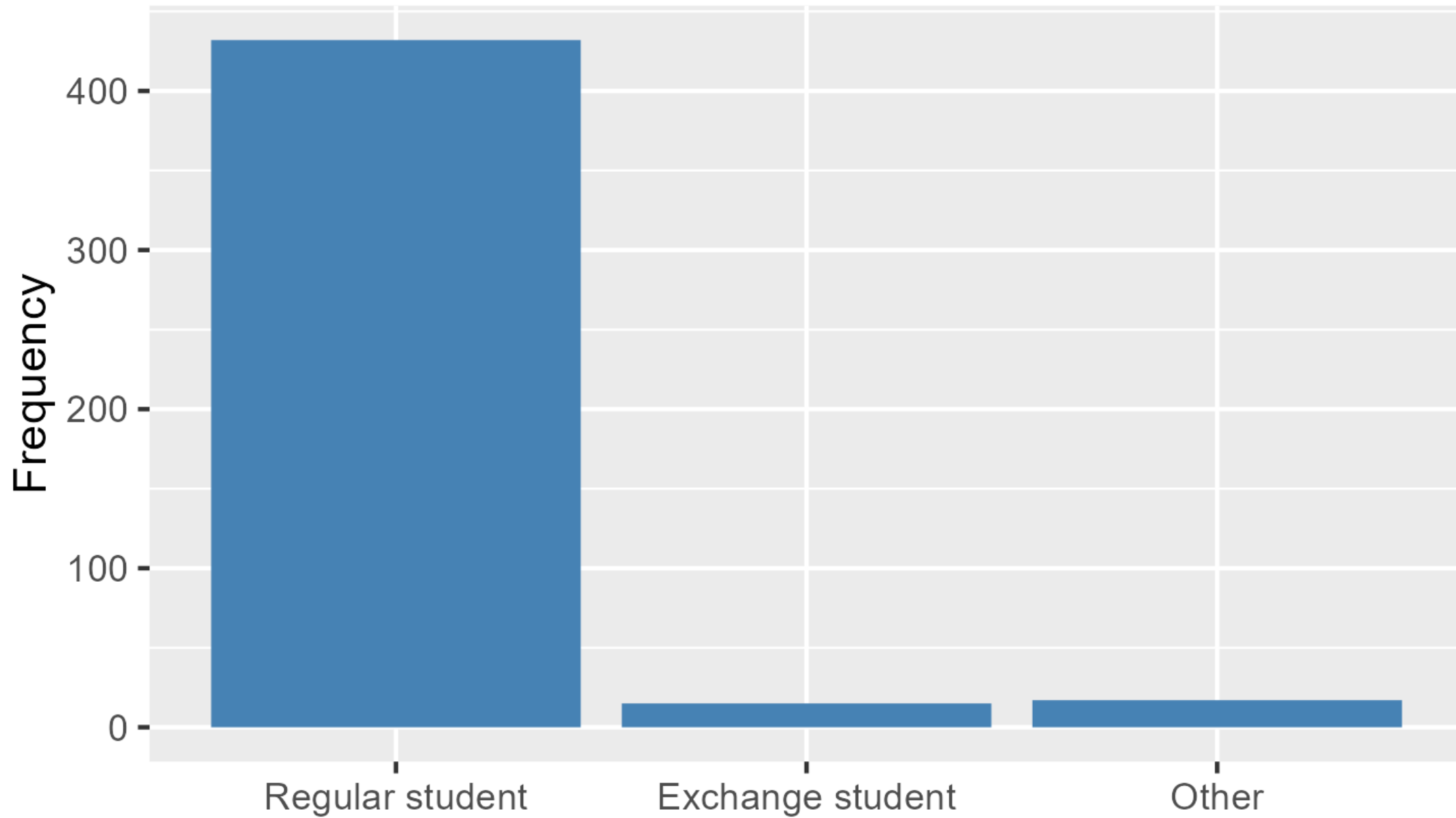
# Gender



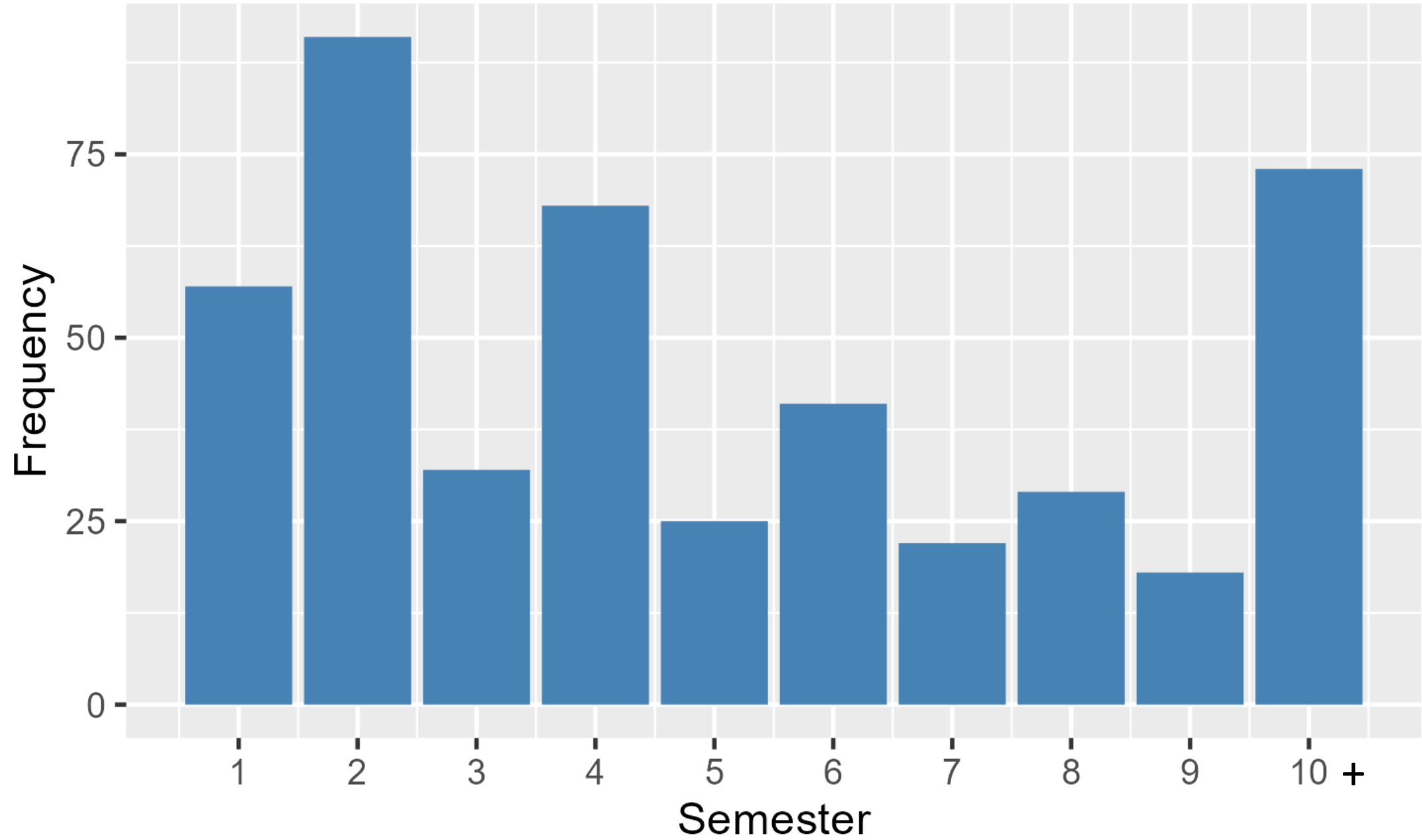
# Province



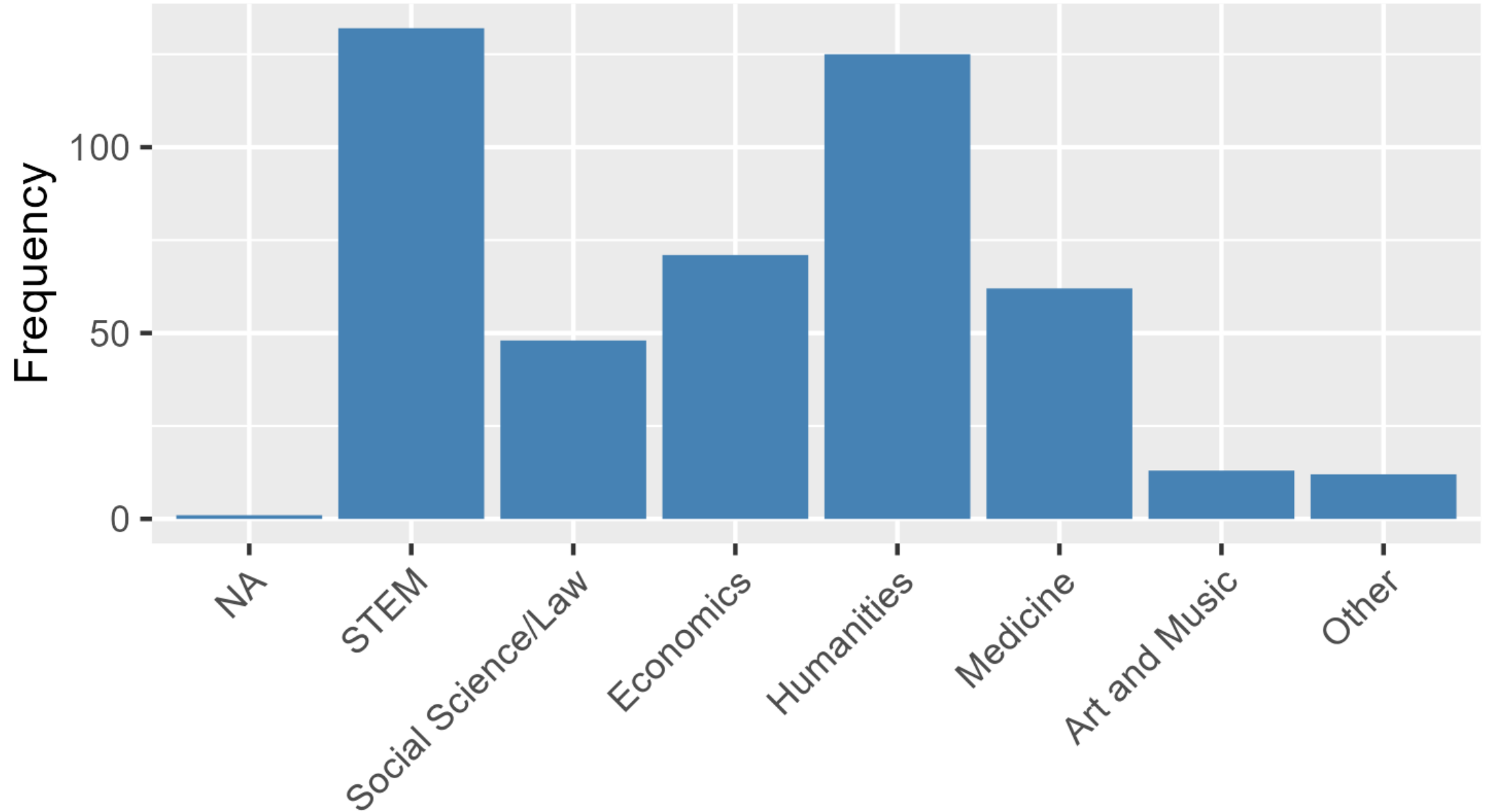
# Regular or exchange student



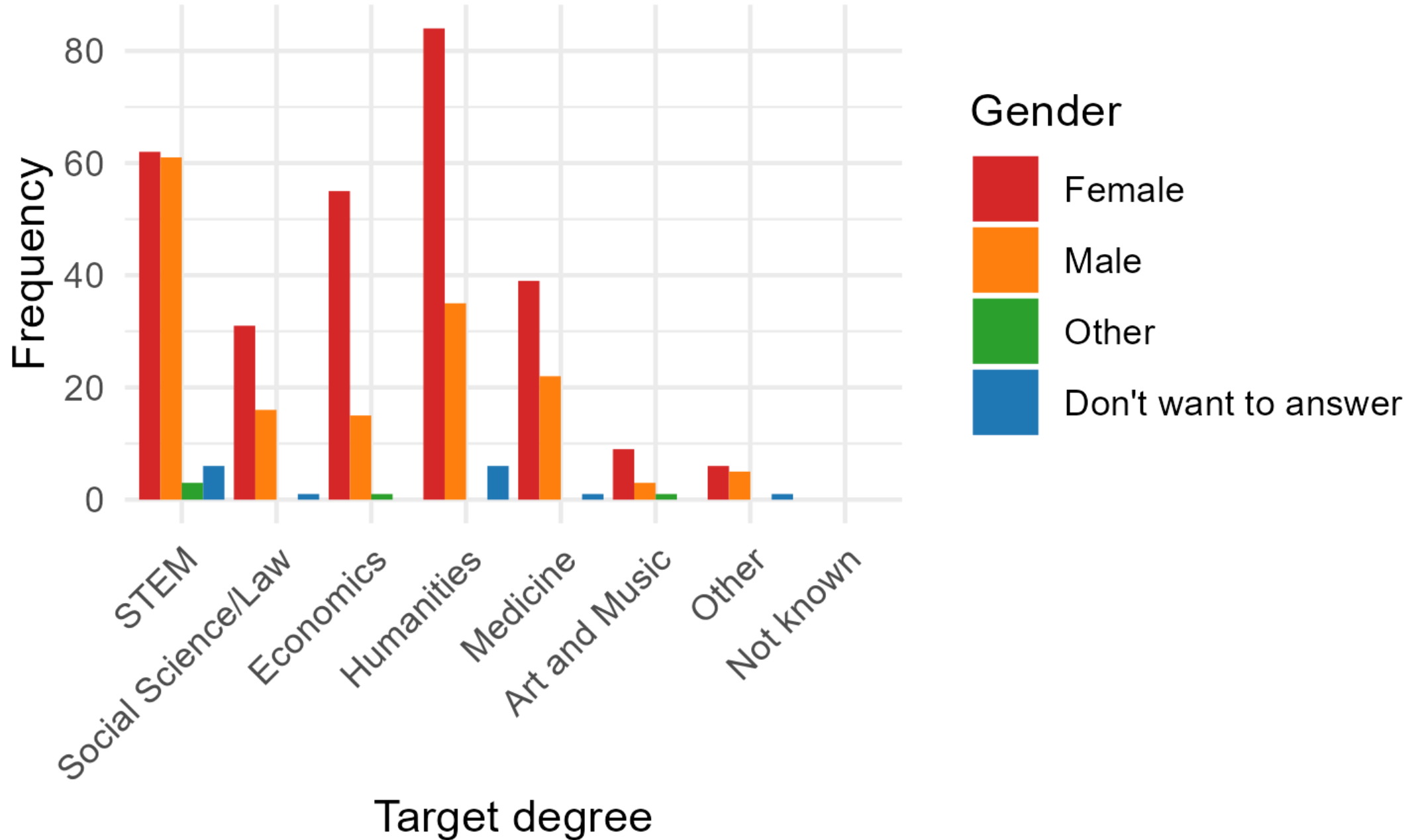
# Number of semesters



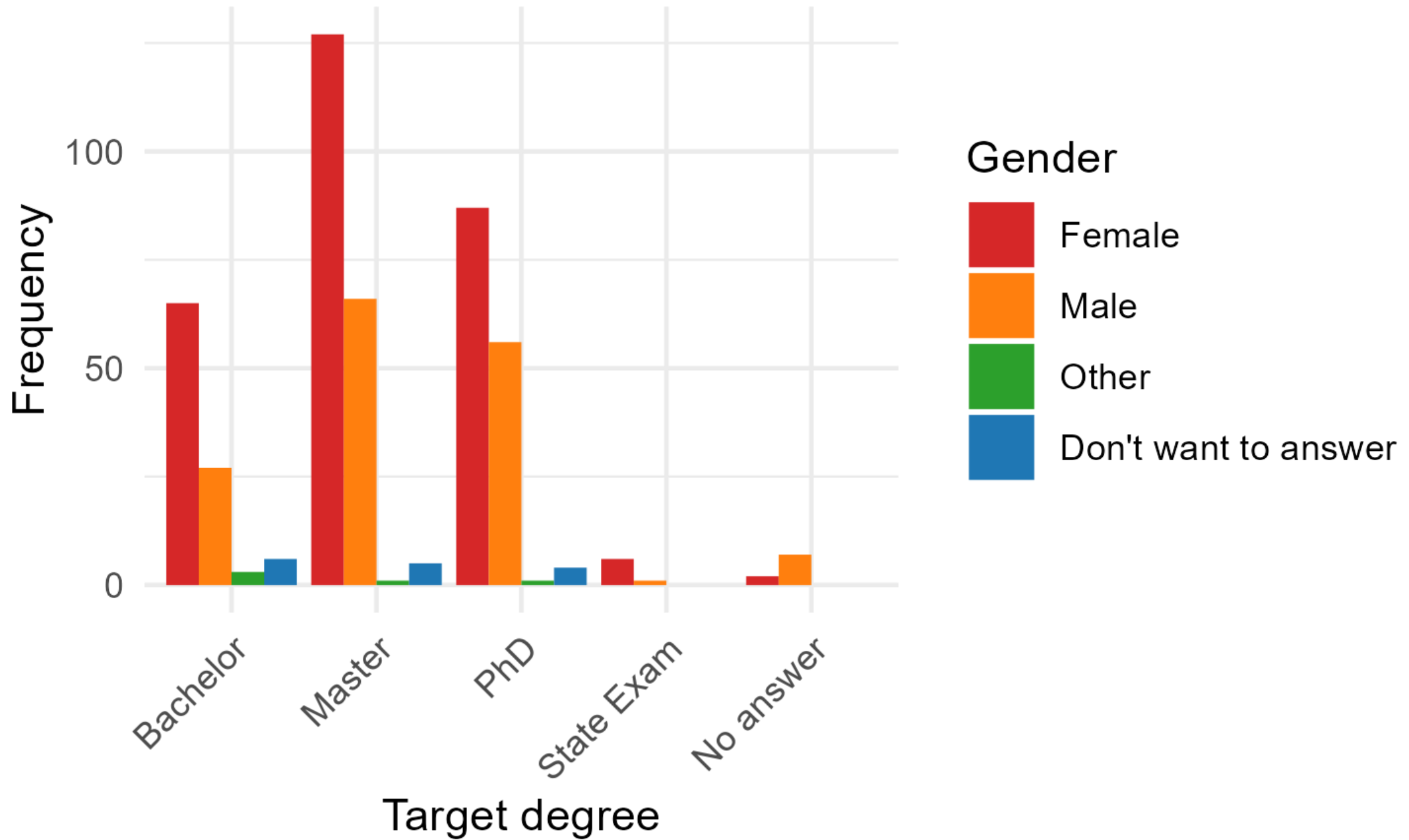
# Subject of study



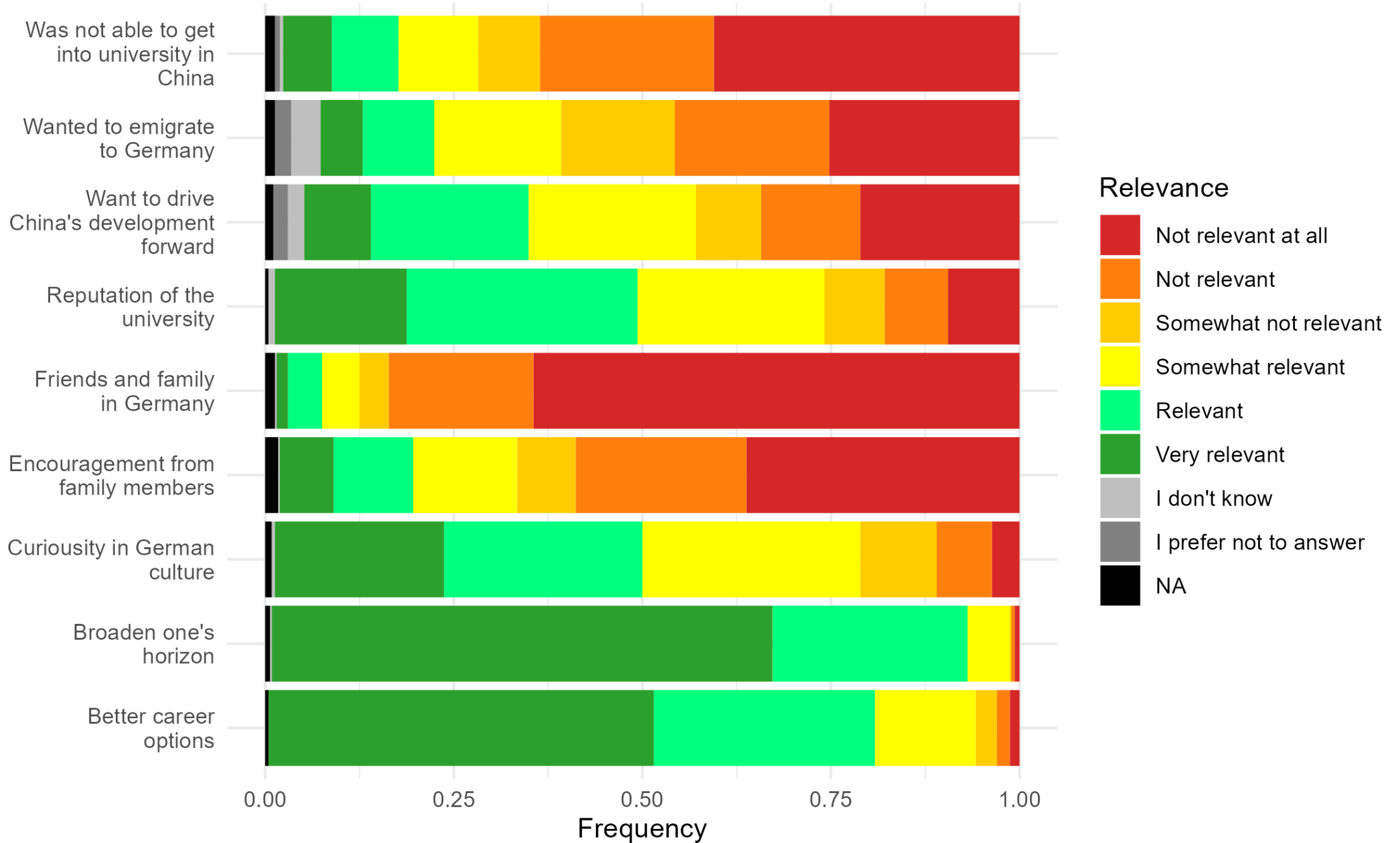
# Subject and gender



# Target degree and gender

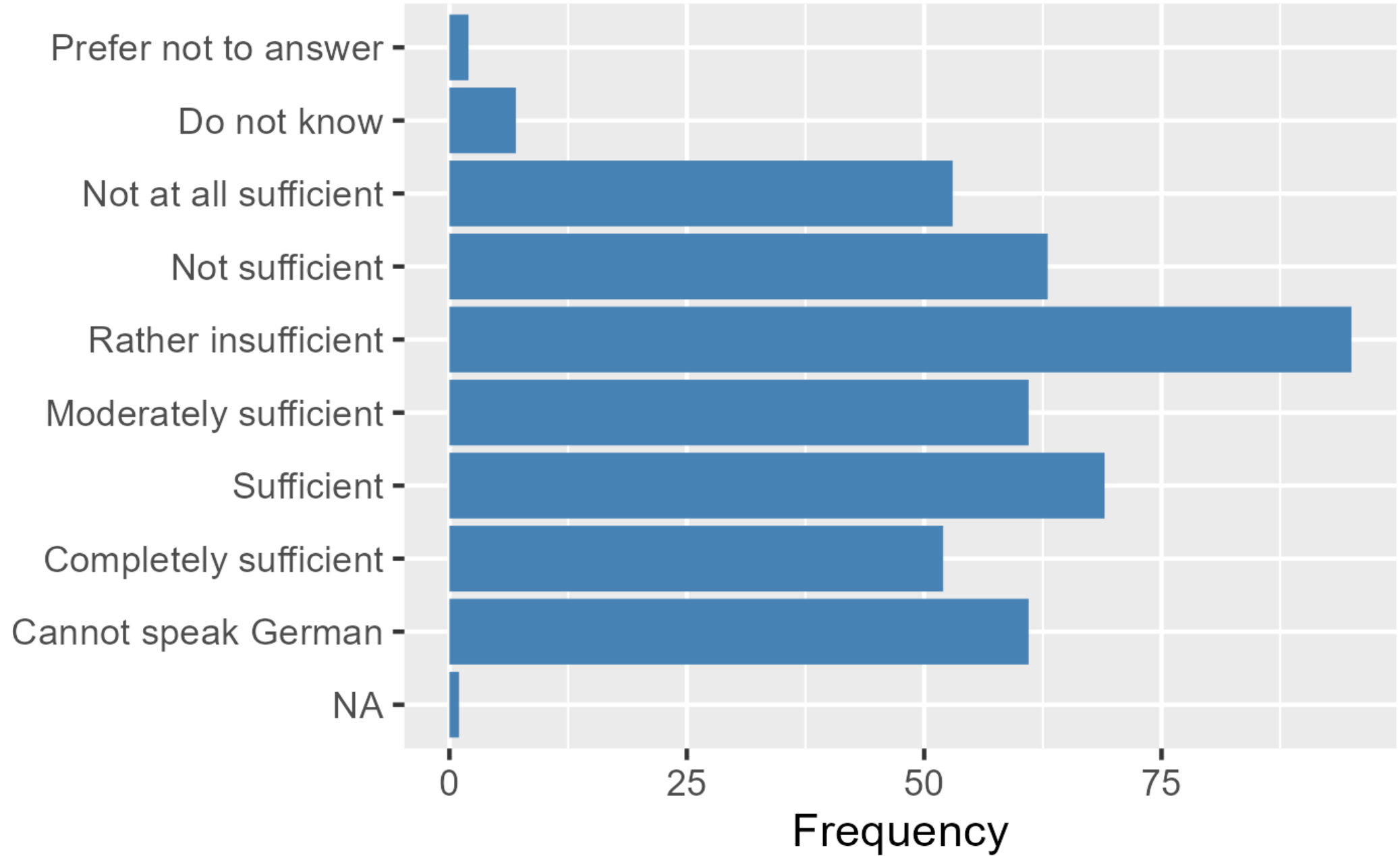


# Motivation for studying abroad

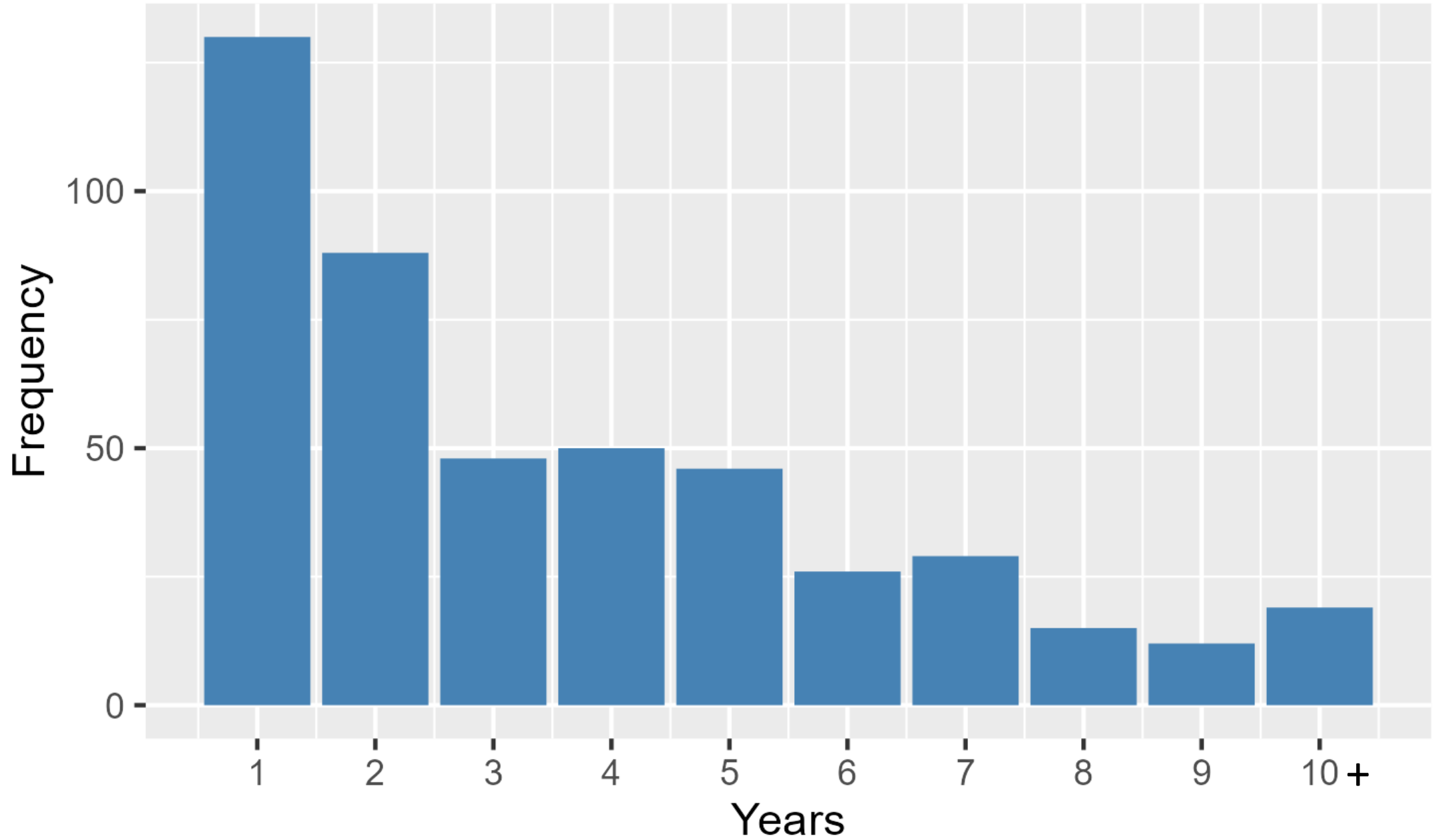




# German language skills



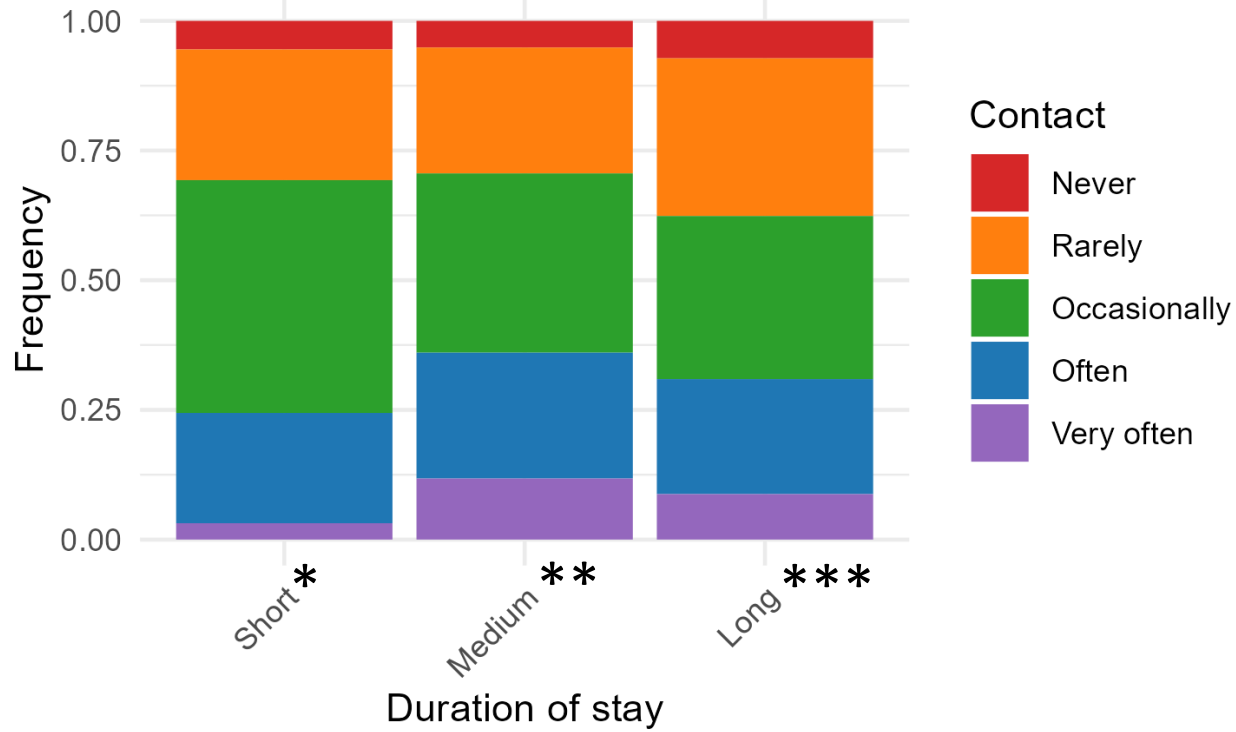
# Duration of stay in Germany



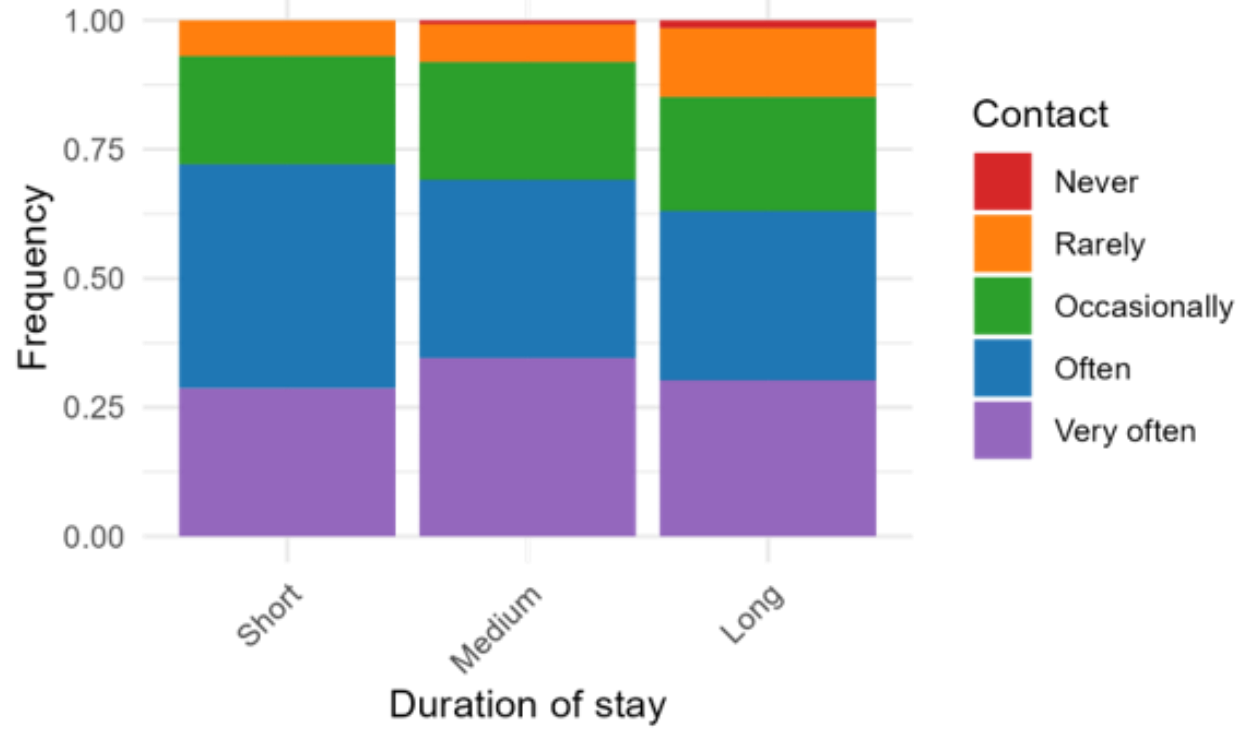
# Integration



### Contact with German students



### Contact with Chinese students

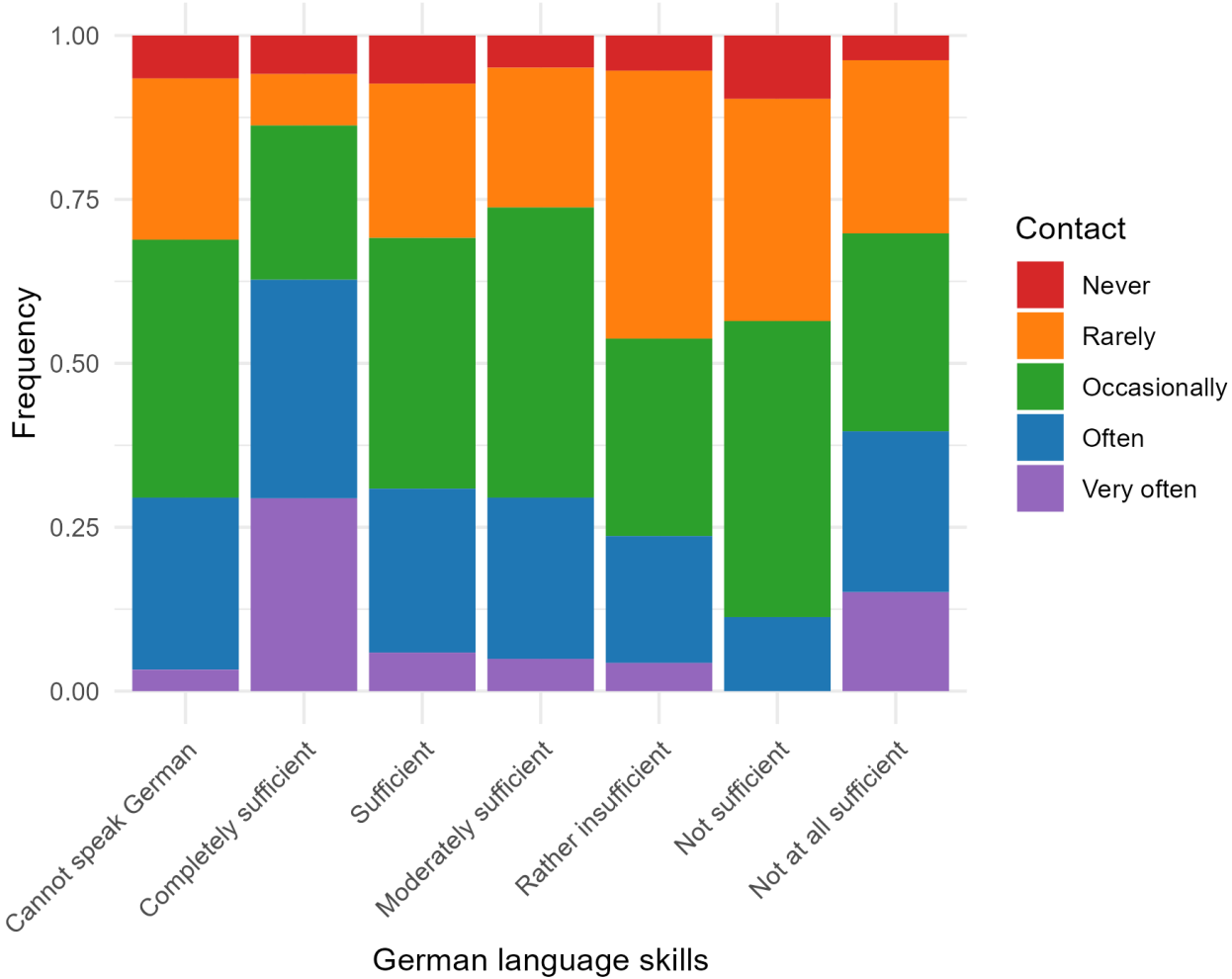


\*1 year

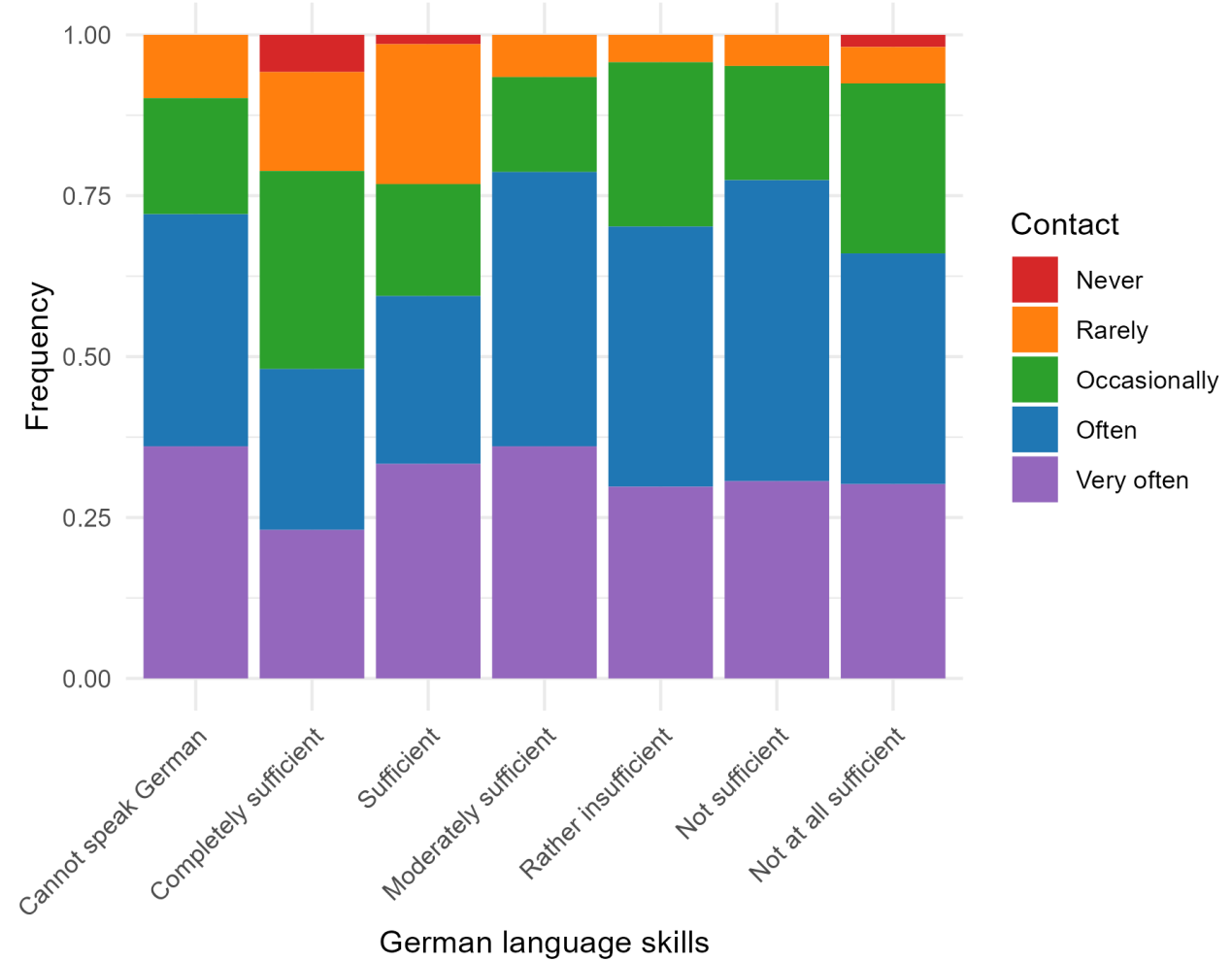
\*\*2-3 years

\*\*\* 4+ years

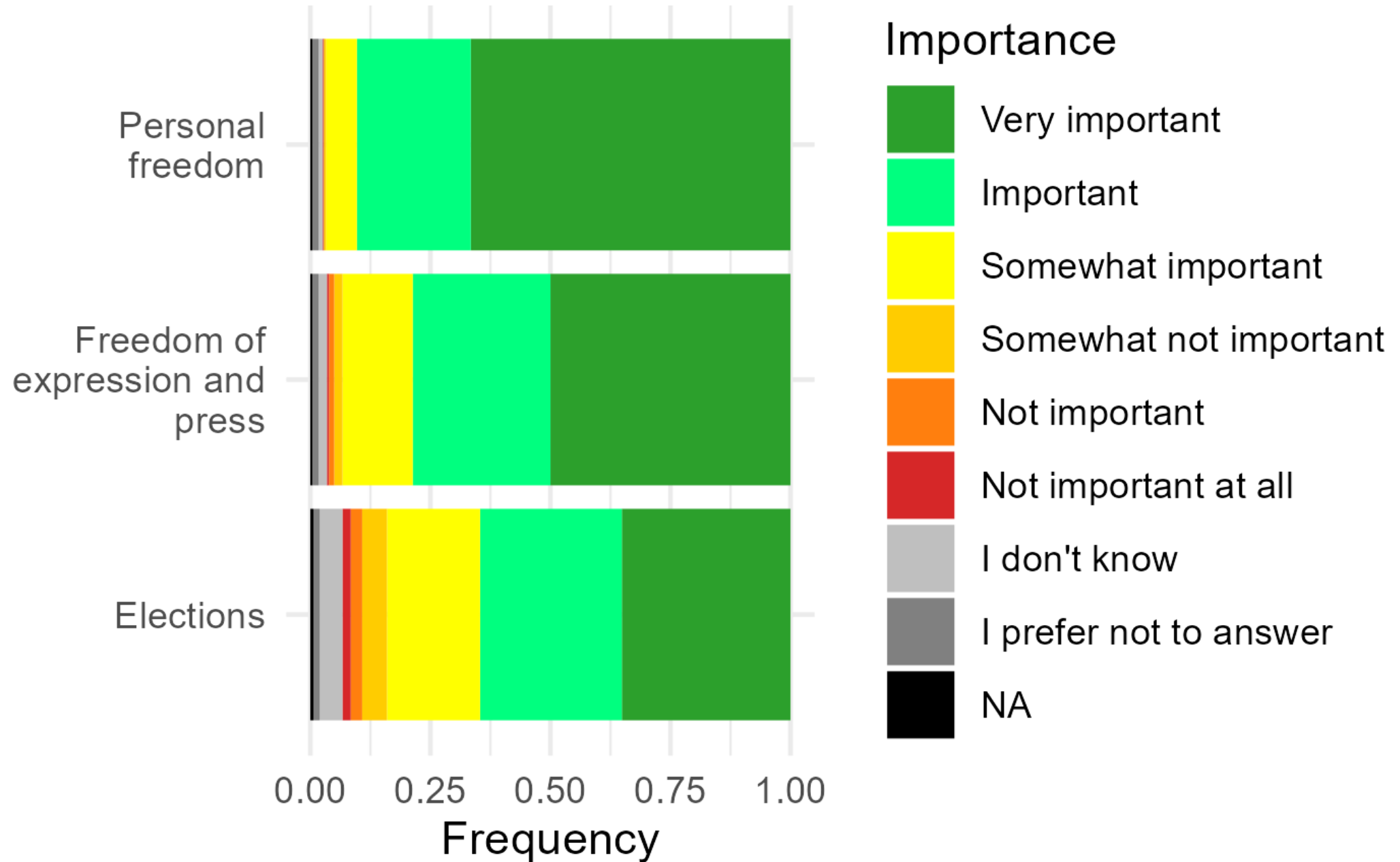
Contact with German students



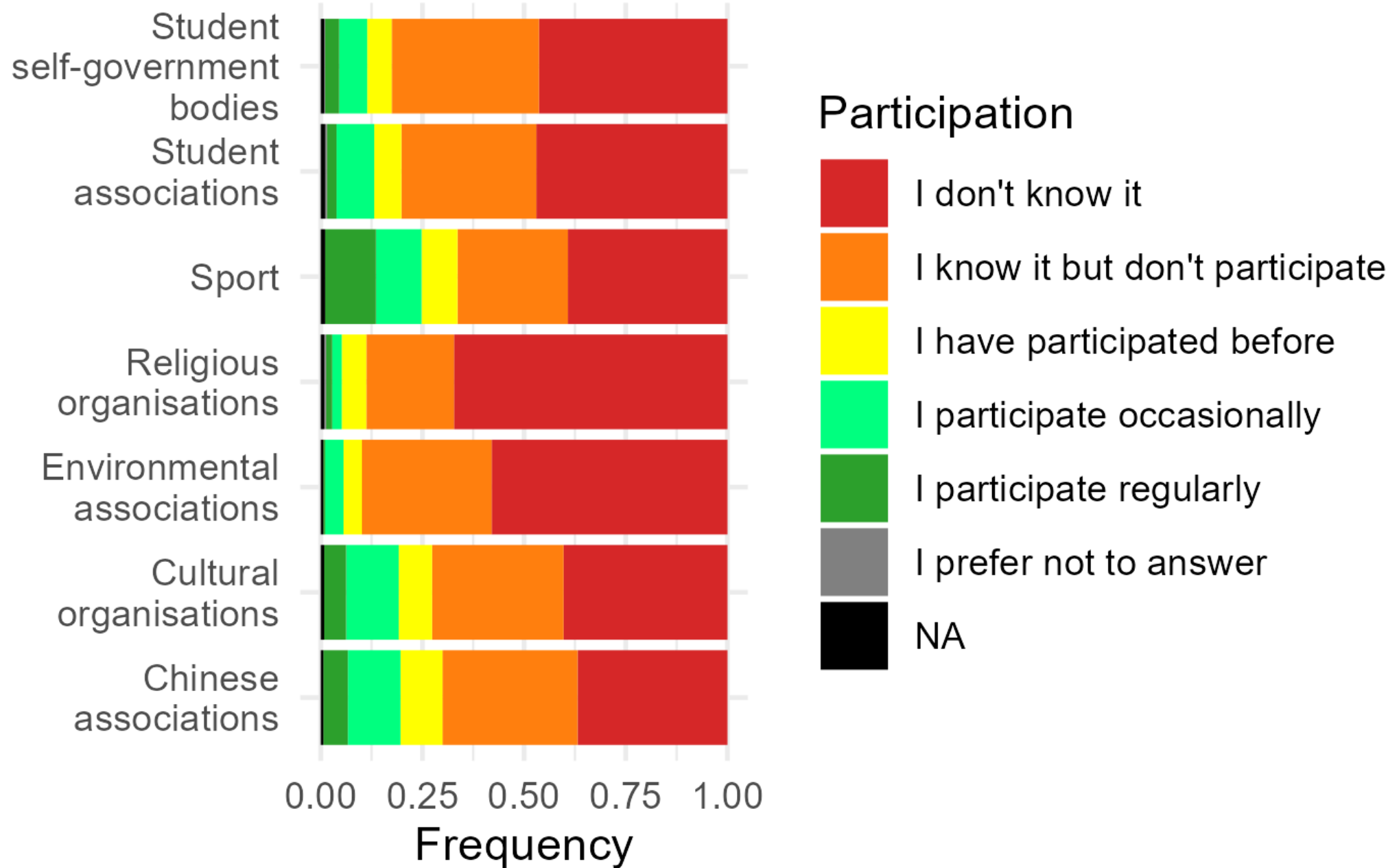
Contact with Chinese students



# How important do you regard the following institutions for society?



# Participation in institutions



# Critical participation

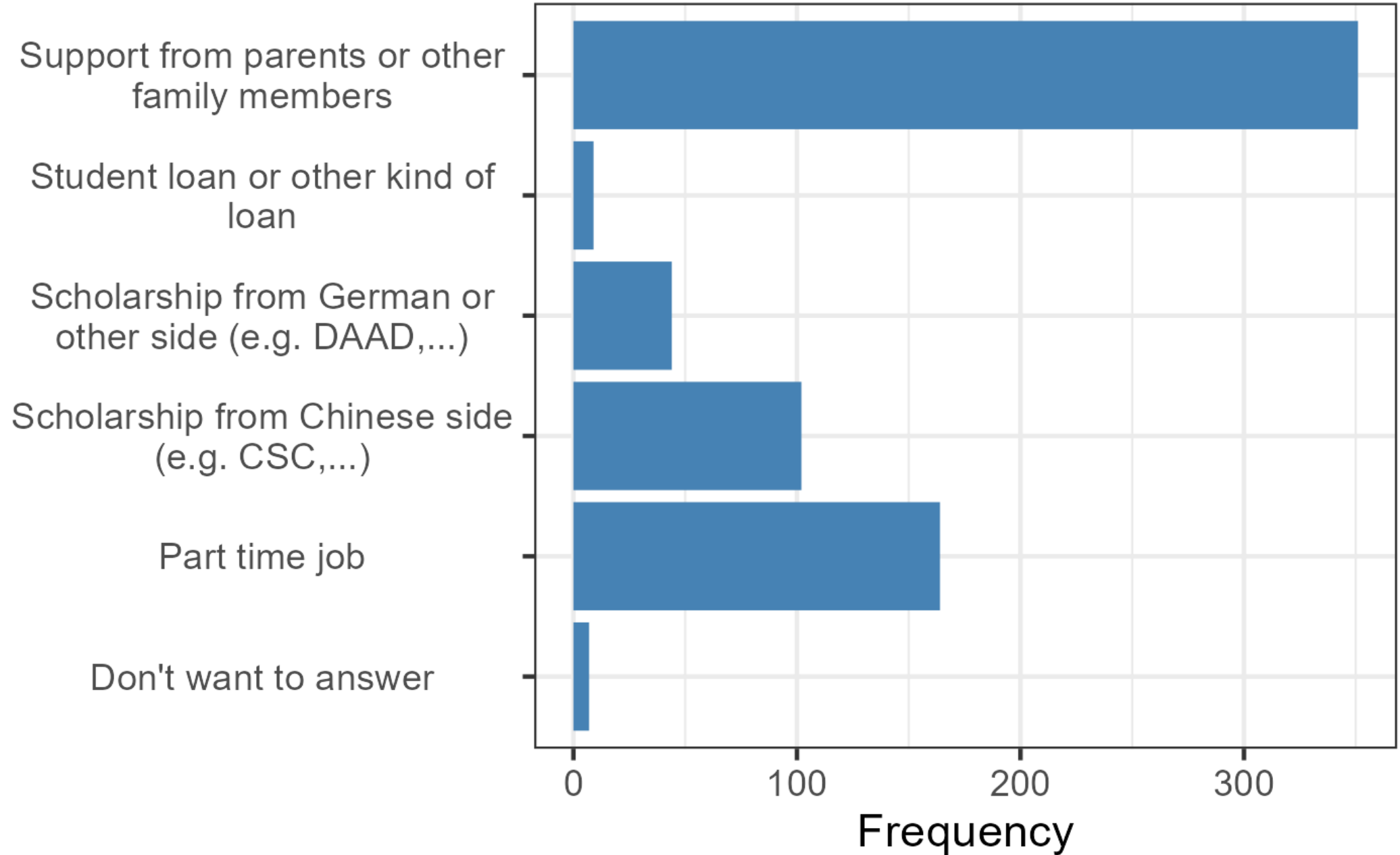




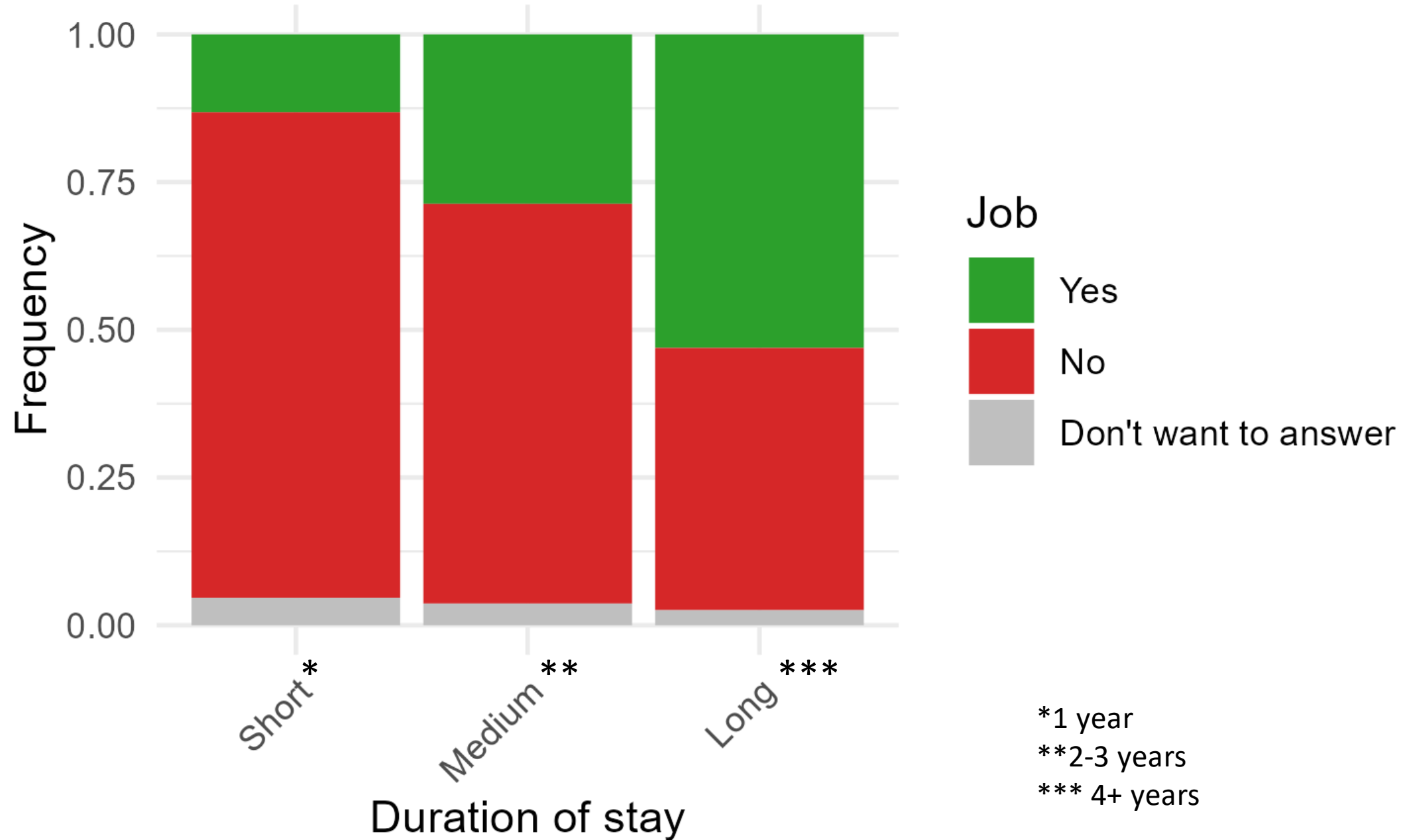
# Finances



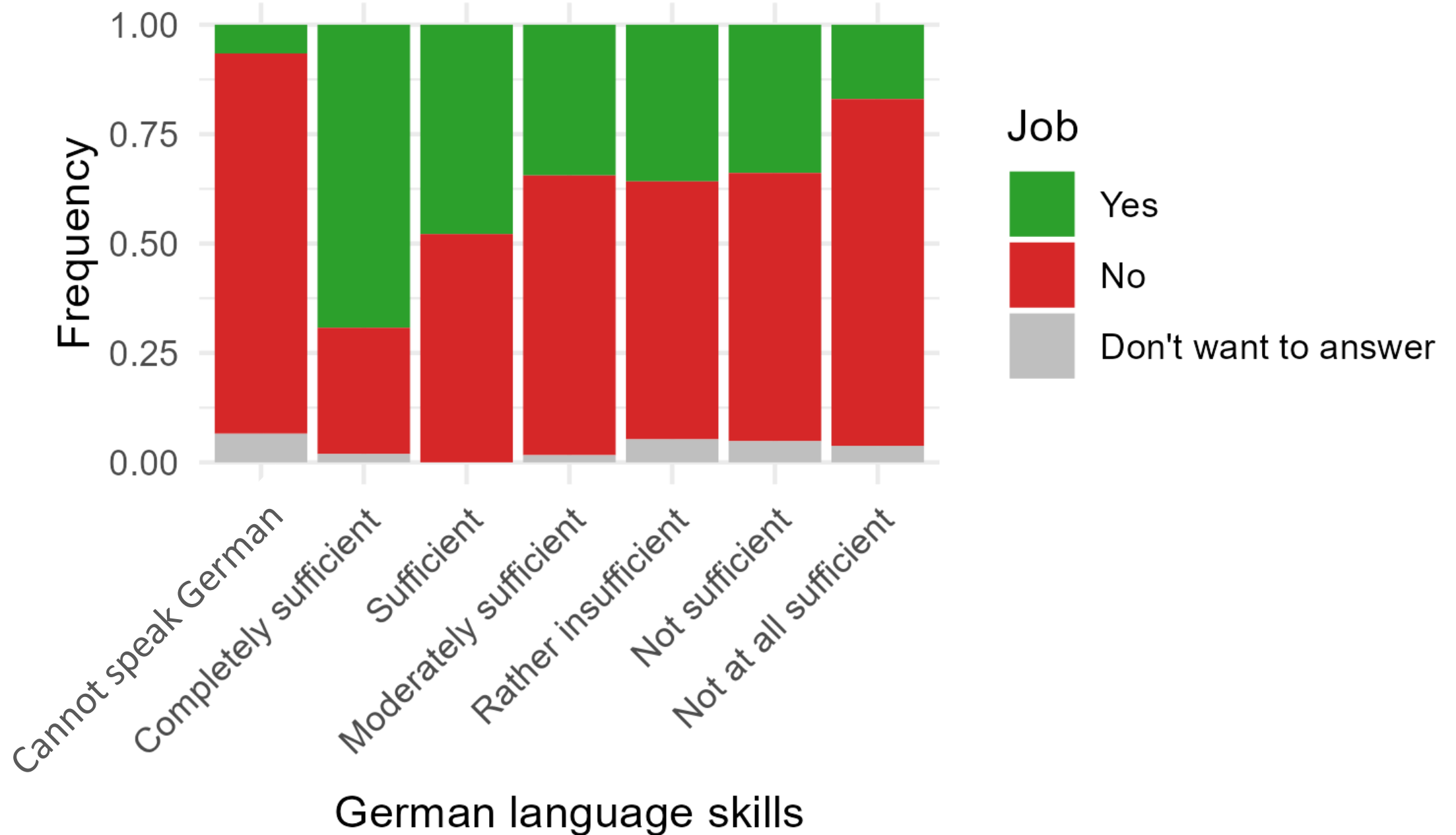
# Source of funding



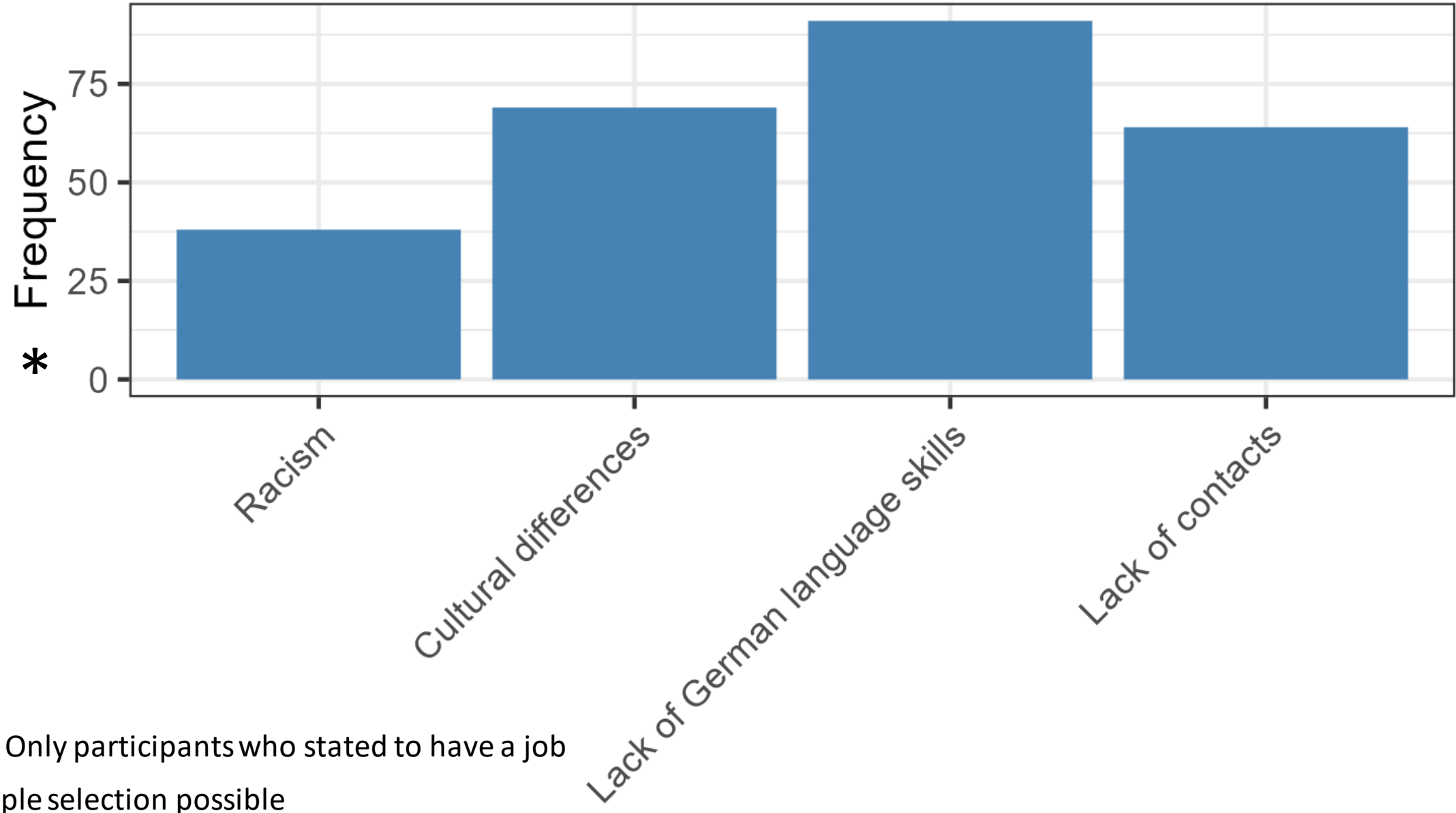
# Job and duration of stay



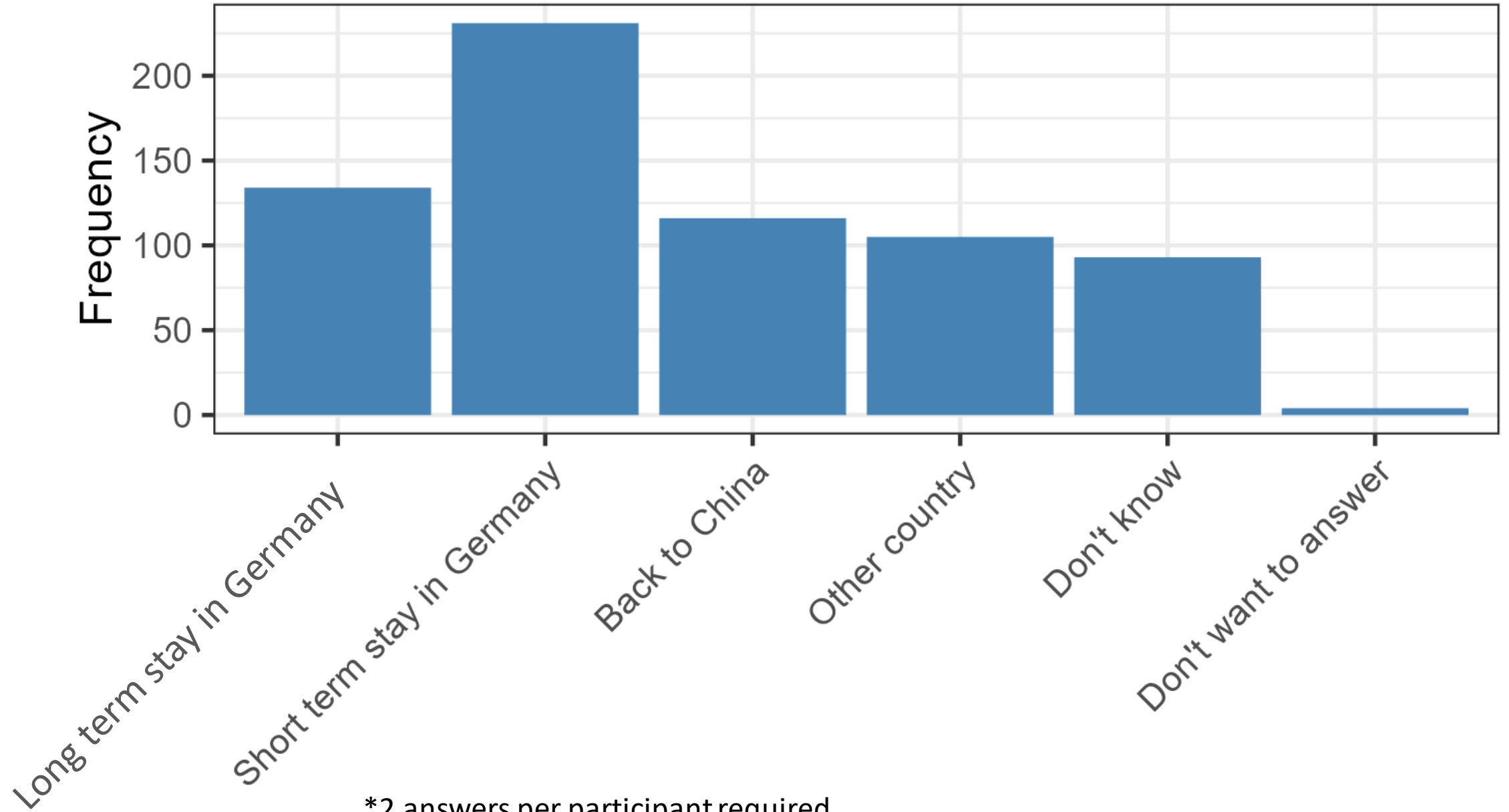
# Job and German language skills



# Difficulties with the job search \*\*



# Plans for the future \*

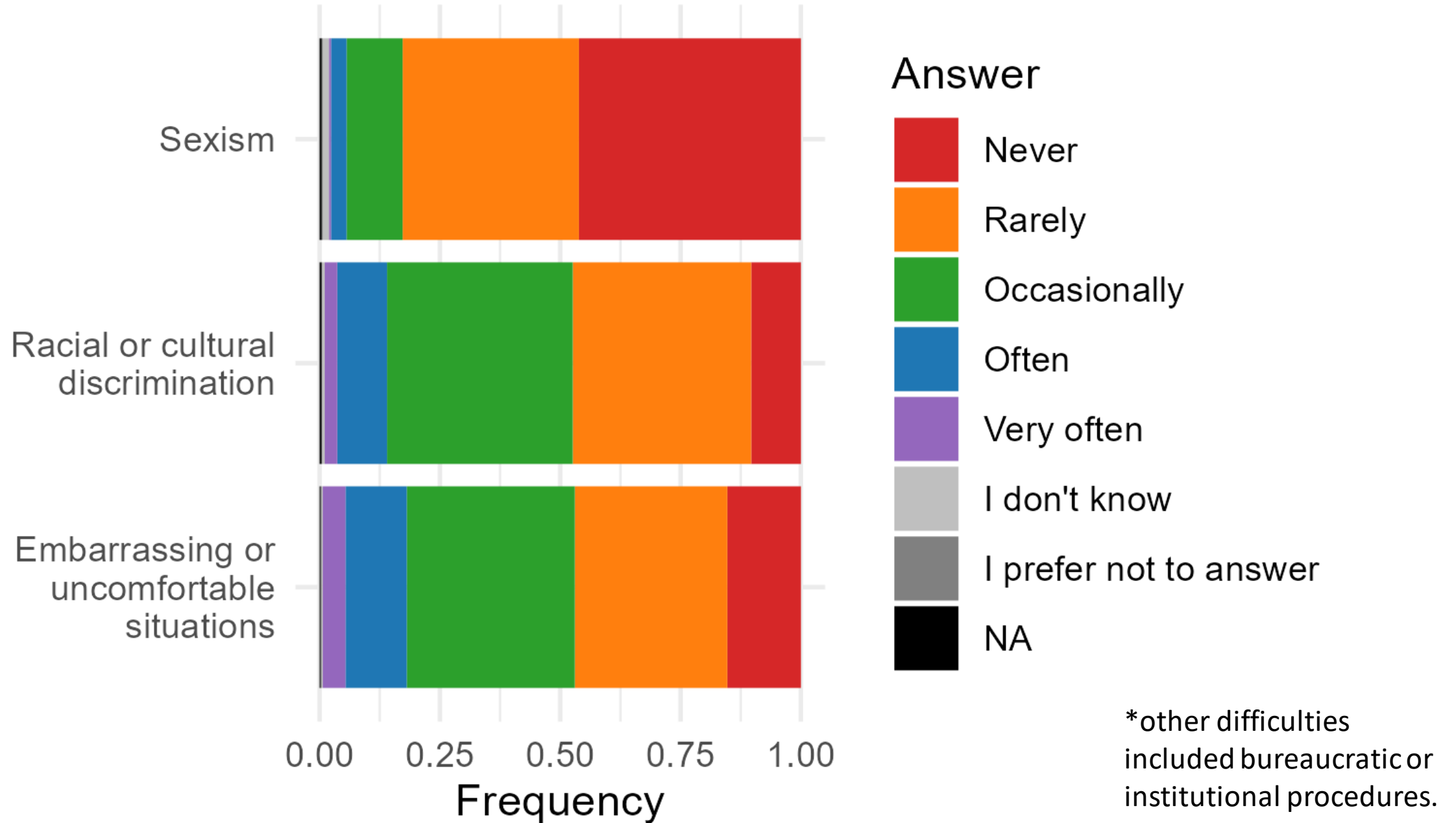


\*2 answers per participant required

# Life in Germany

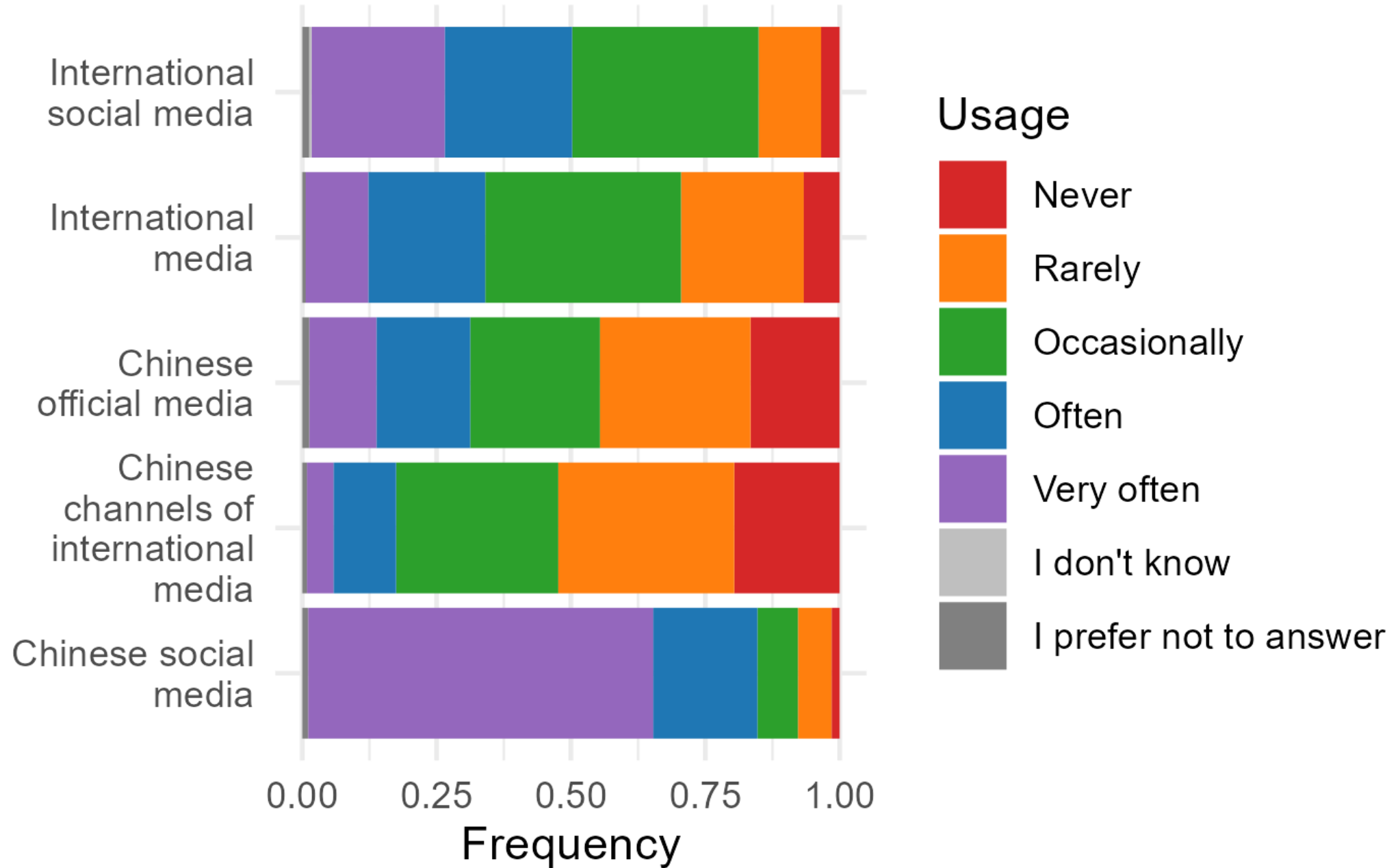


# Difficulties\*

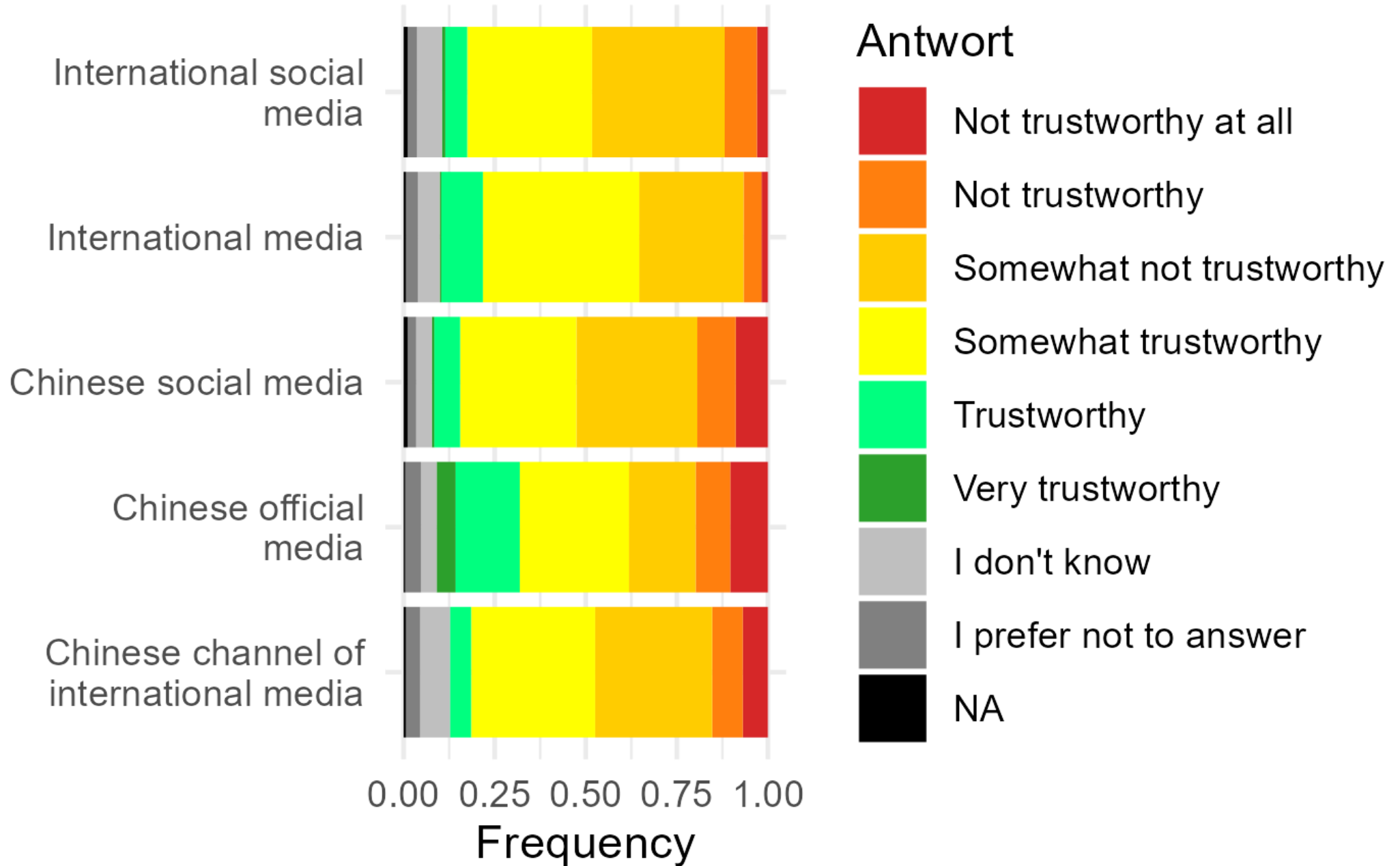




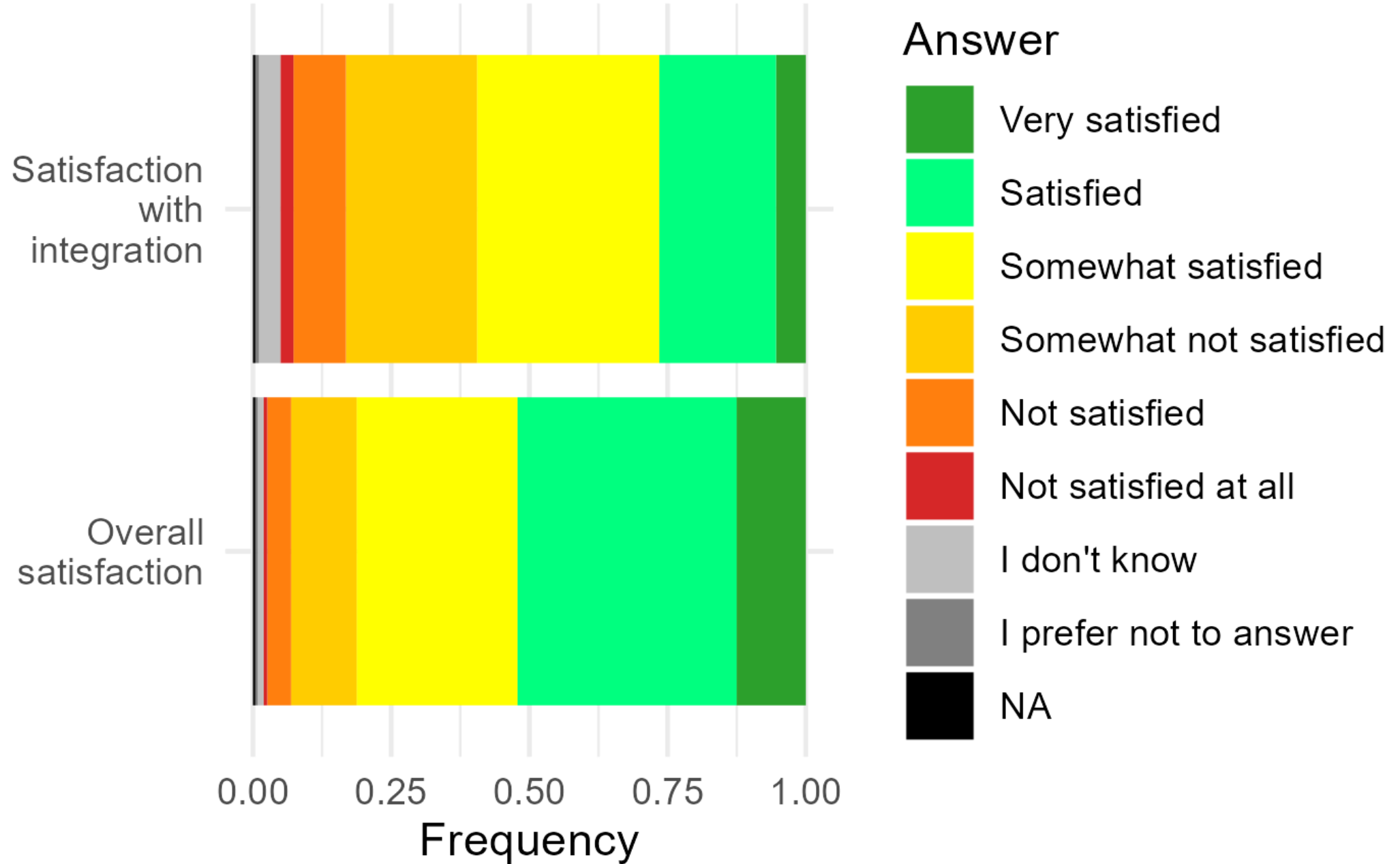
# Media usage



# Trustworthiness of media

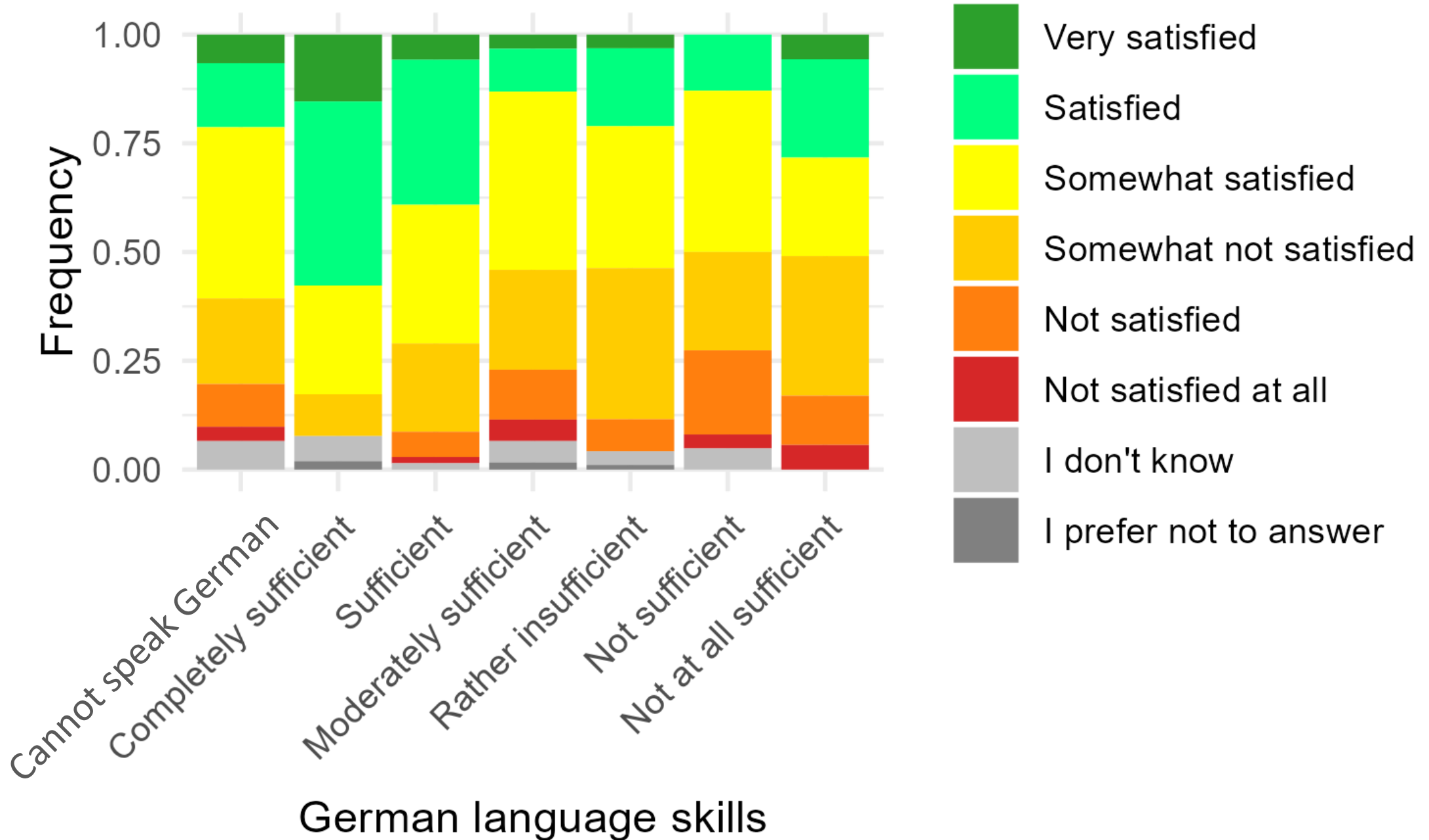


# Satisfaction

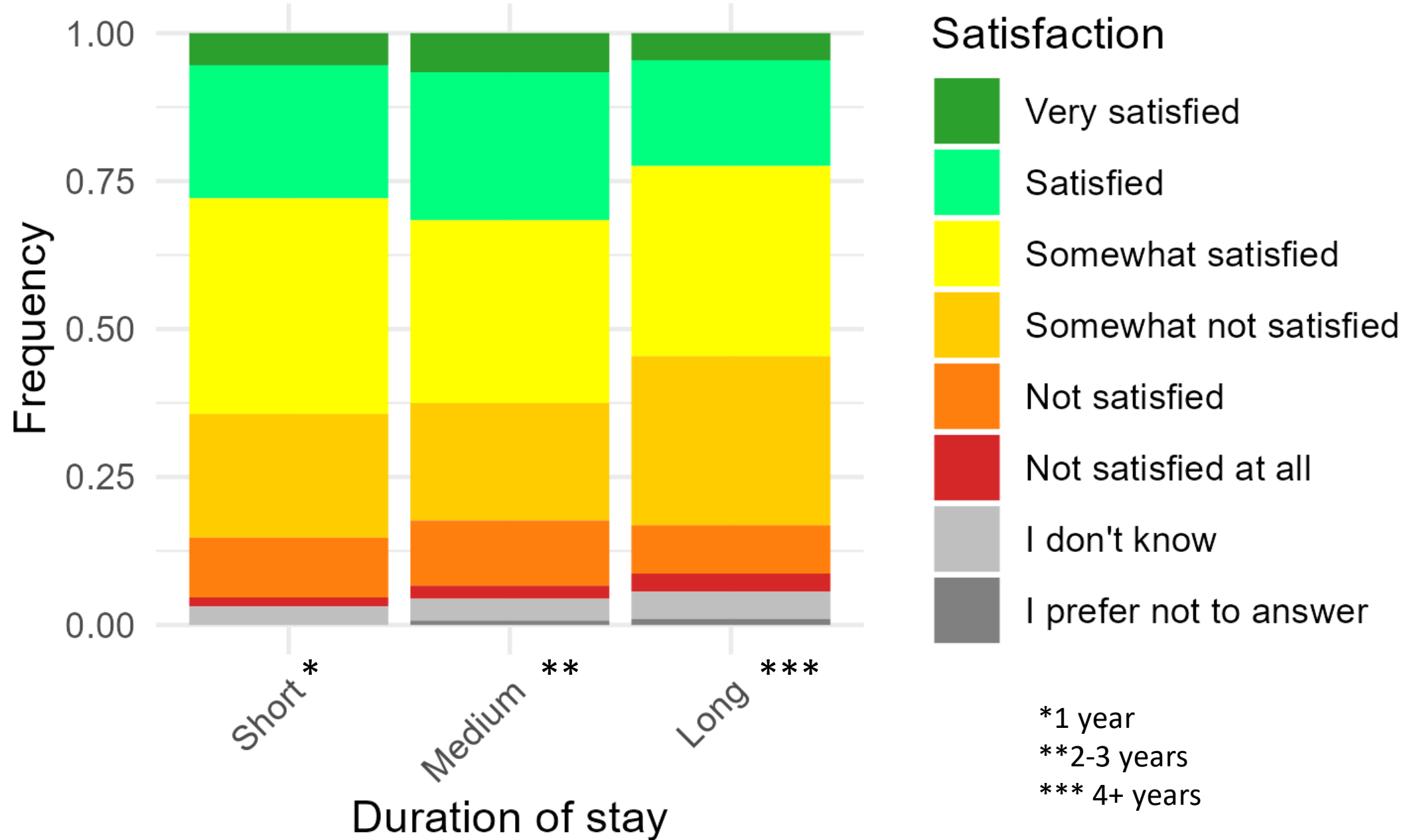


# Satisfaction with integration

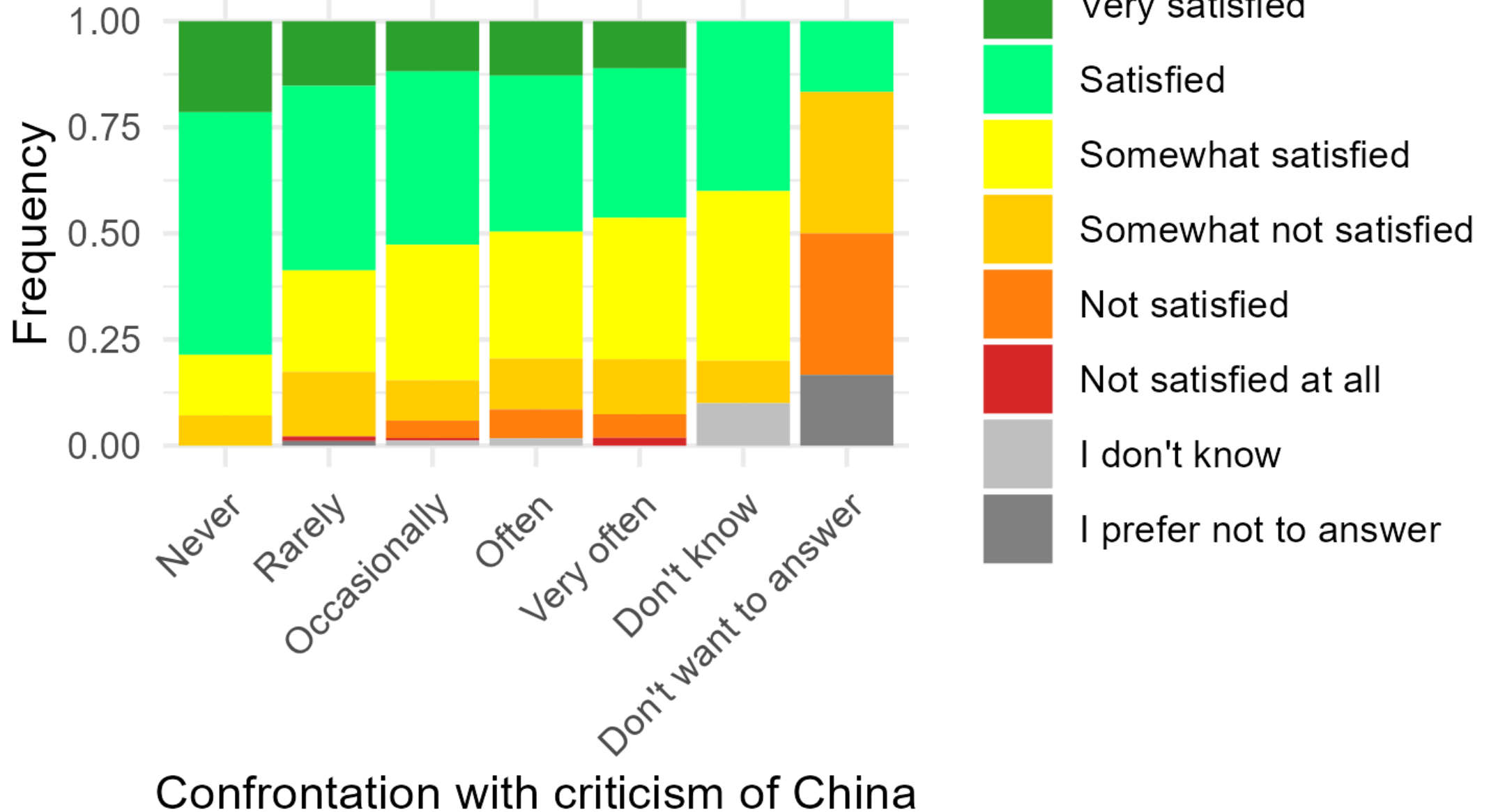
## Satisfaction



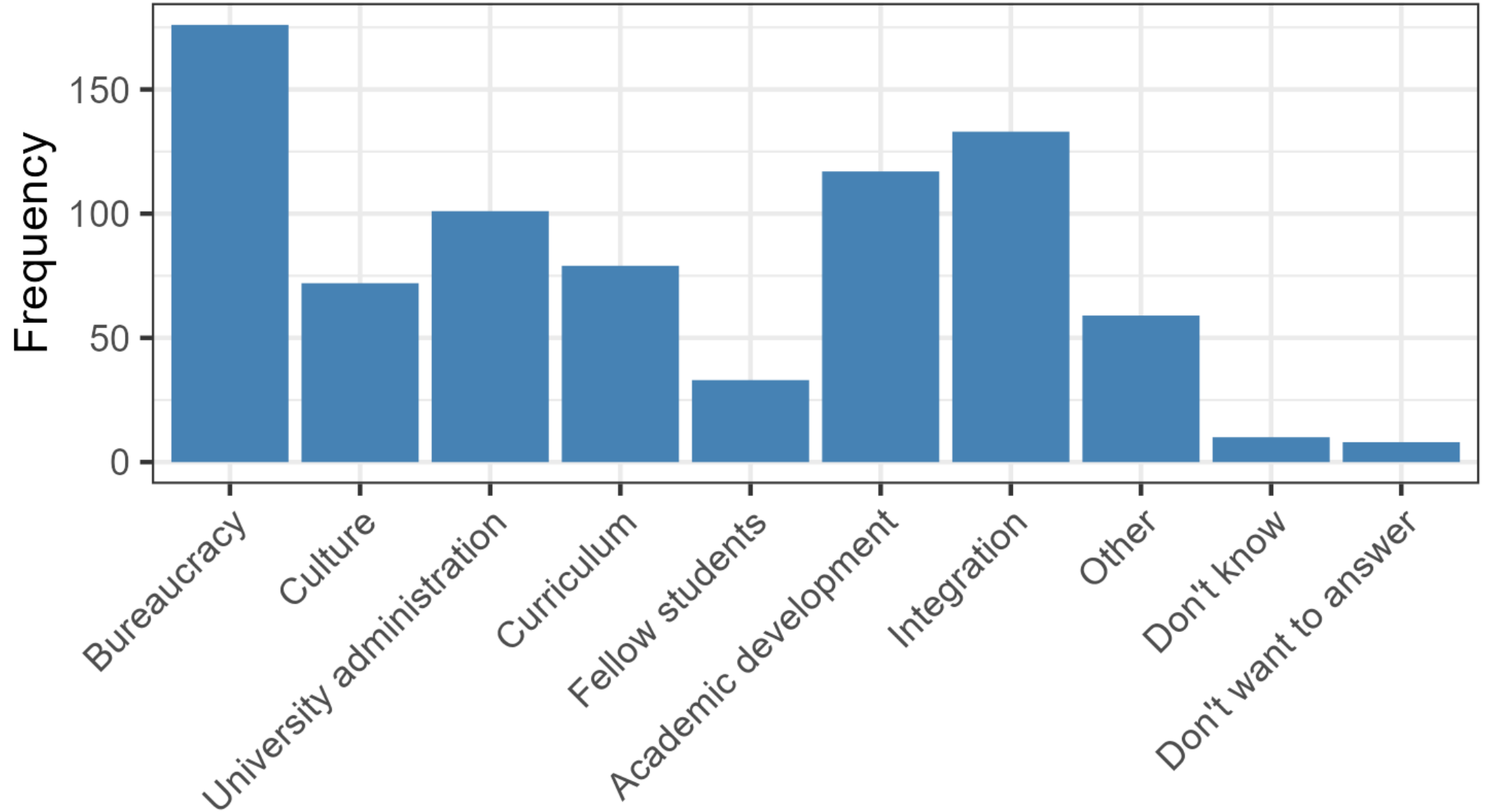
# Satisfaction with Integration



# Satisfaction and confrontation with criticism of China



# Reasons for dissatisfaction



# Conclusion

- Chinese student migrants in Germany form a diverse and varied community, rather than a homogenous group.
- Unsurprisingly, a majority of our participants come from the east coast of China.
- Notably, there is a significant representation of female students in STEM subjects.
- The motivation to study abroad appears to be highly individualistic among our participants.
- An interesting finding is the positive correlation between the duration of their stay and their interactions with both German and Chinese students - this connection grows exponentially over time.
- Similarly, proficiency in the German language is linked to increased interactions with Germans, indicating that language skills play a pivotal role in fostering social connections.
- It is surprising to note that personal freedom and freedom of speech are highly valued by individuals coming from a state known for censorship.
- However, it is worth mentioning that, in terms of defending these rights, most participants are not inclined towards more forceful actions.



# Conclusion

- Furthermore, in line with the integration of Chinese students, employment prospects improve with the duration of their stay in Germany, as well as with their proficiency in the German language.
- Regrettably, a concerning issue persists as Chinese migrants face a strong racial bias in German society and job market.
- Moreover, the satisfaction with their level of integration among Chinese students appears to be heavily influenced by their language skills, increasing with time spent in Germany. Nonetheless, this satisfaction declines among those who stay for an extended period, possibly due to higher self-expectations as they settle in the country.

# Sources

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