

# Social relationships and the transition to second-level education

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# Introduction

- Transition from primary to second-level education involves new subjects, different relationships with teachers and new peer group
- Focus of the paper:
  - How do social relationships with significant others (parents, peers, teachers) change over the transition from primary to second-level education?
  - What role do these relationships play in easing the transition process?

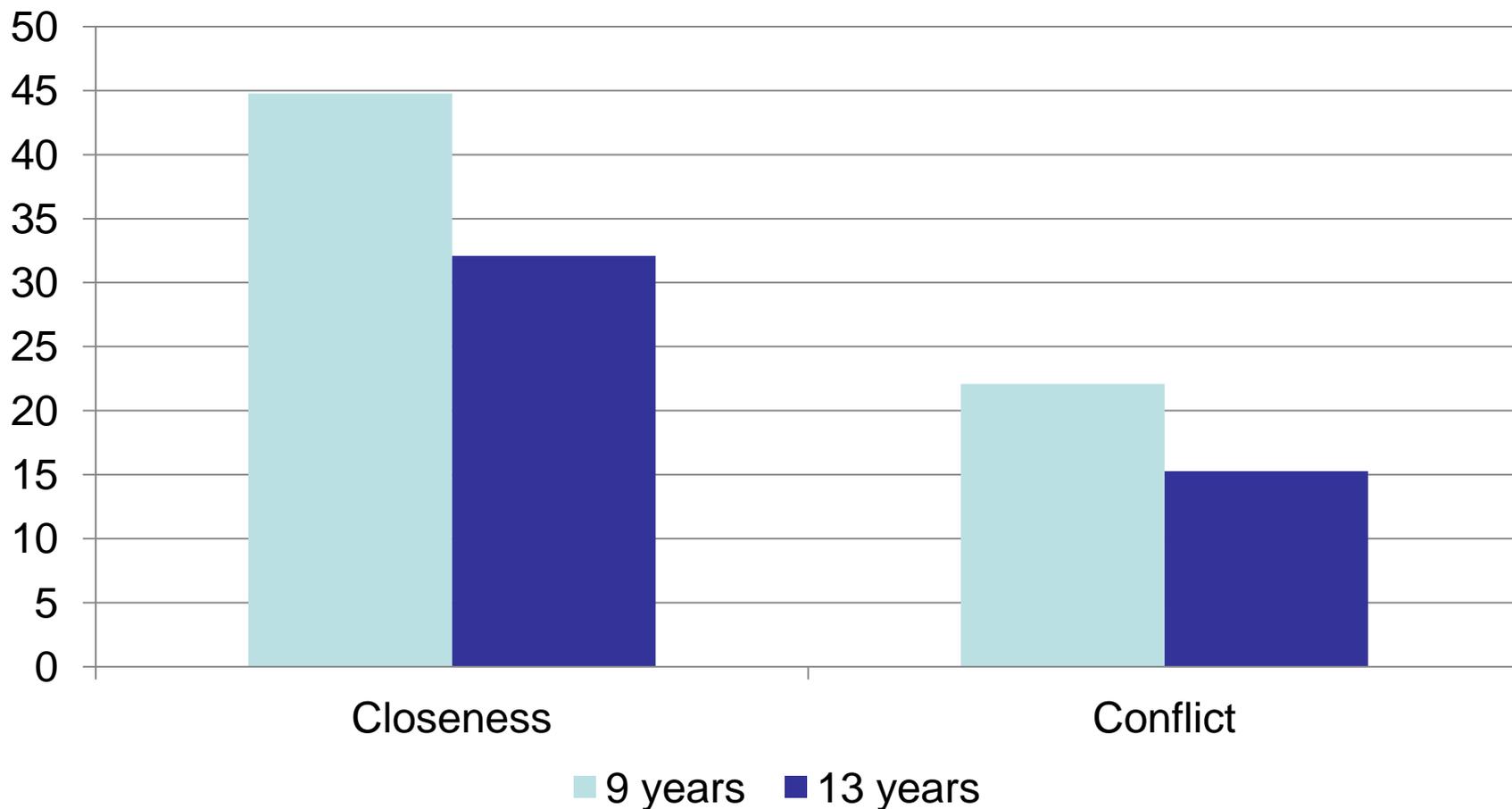


# Previous research on transitions

- Excitement and anxiety in relation to the transition (O'Brien, 2001)
- Apprehension about new peer group, new subjects and larger school v. desire for greater autonomy (Mellor and Delamont, 2011; Hargreaves and Dalton, 2002)
- Importance of parental support (Anderson et al., 2000) and peer groups (Demetriou et al., 2000)
- Dip in motivation over the transition period (Whitby et al., 2006) and importance of teacher support (Smyth et al., 2004)
- But studies rarely look at different kinds of social relationships simultaneously

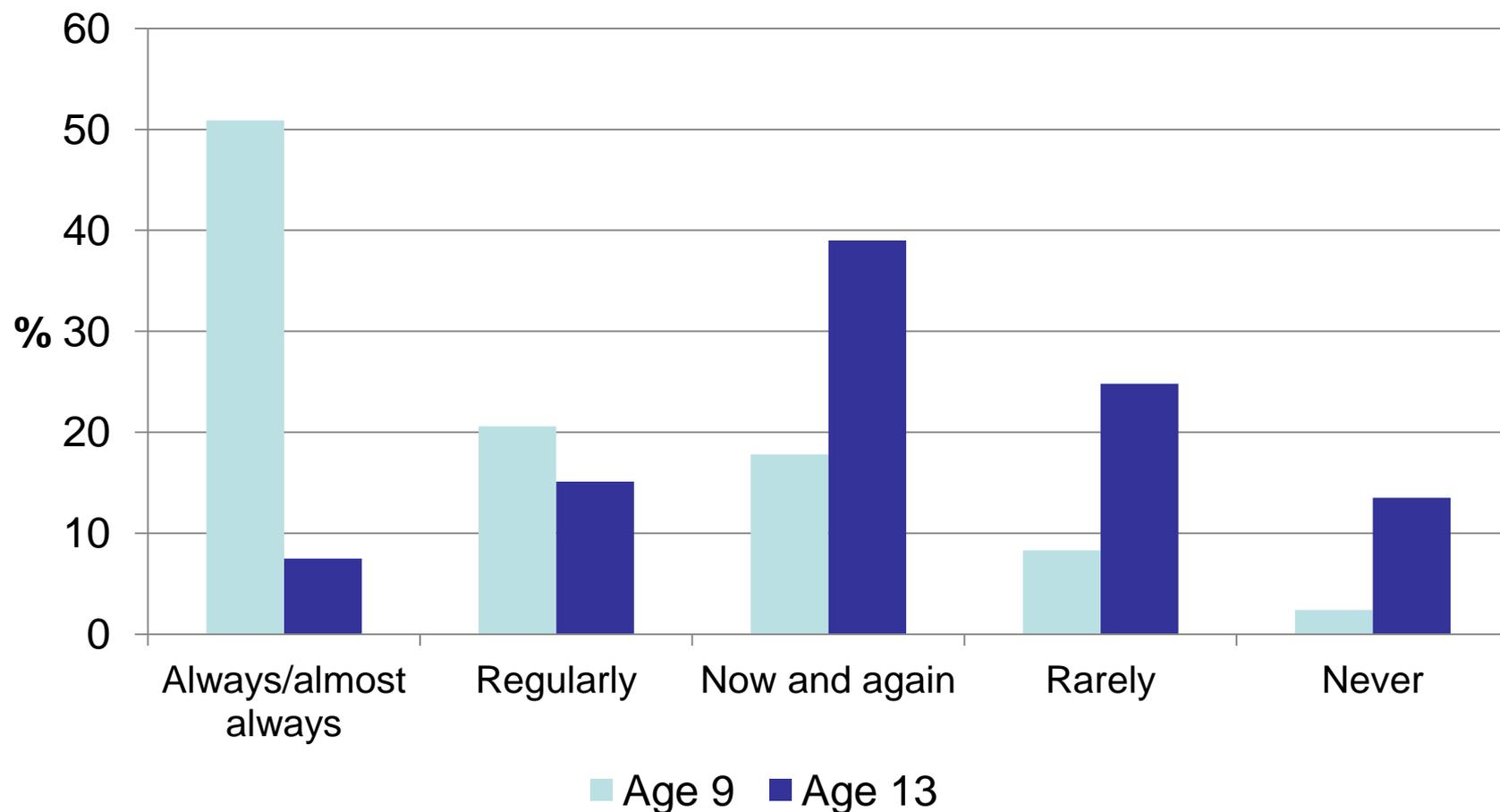


# Relationship with parents (Pianta scale)

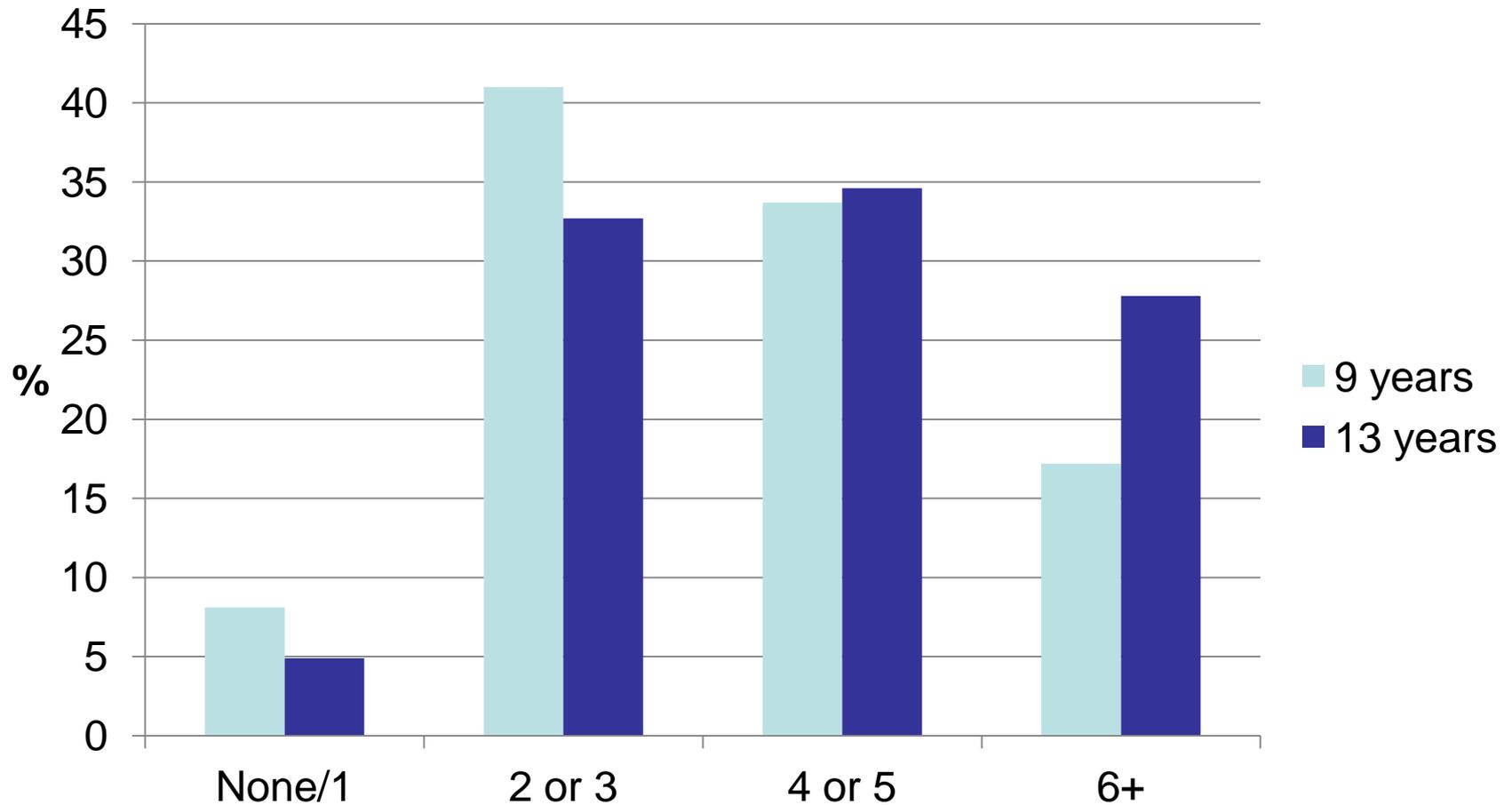




# Frequency of family help with homework

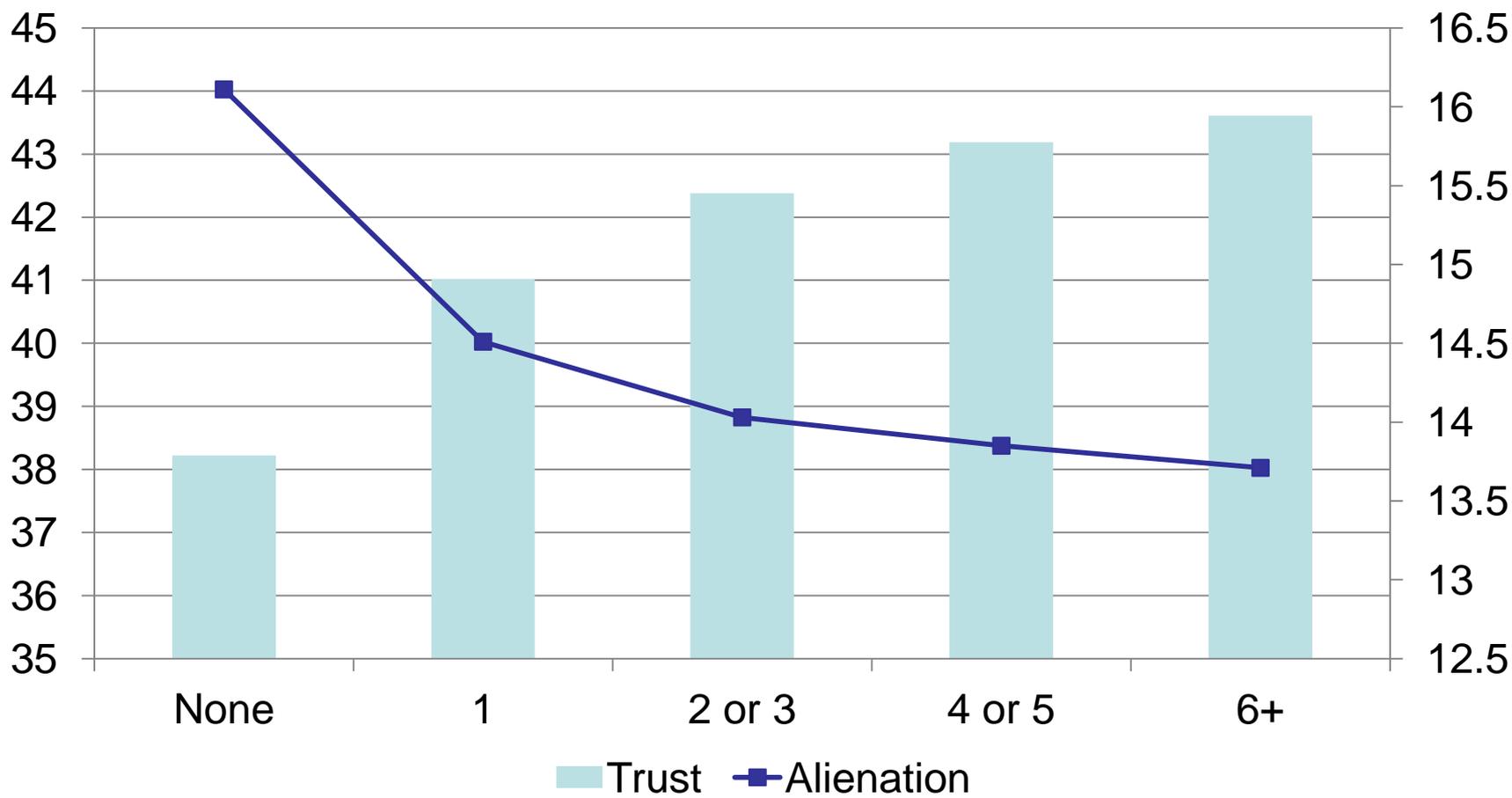


# Number of close friends



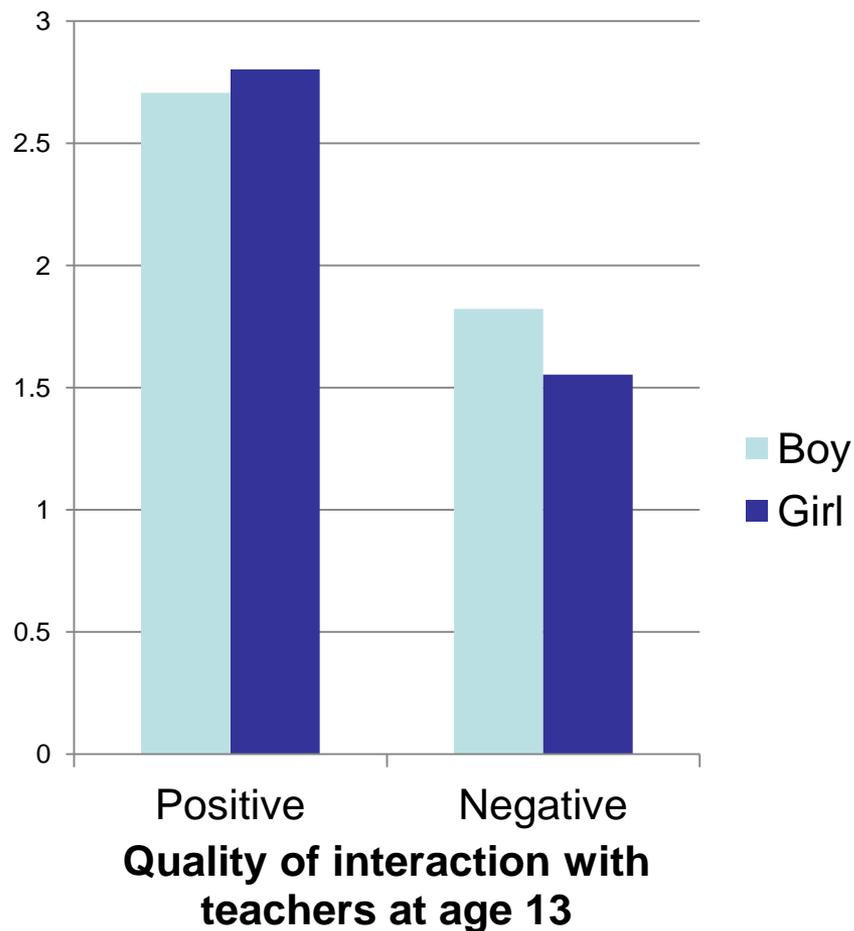
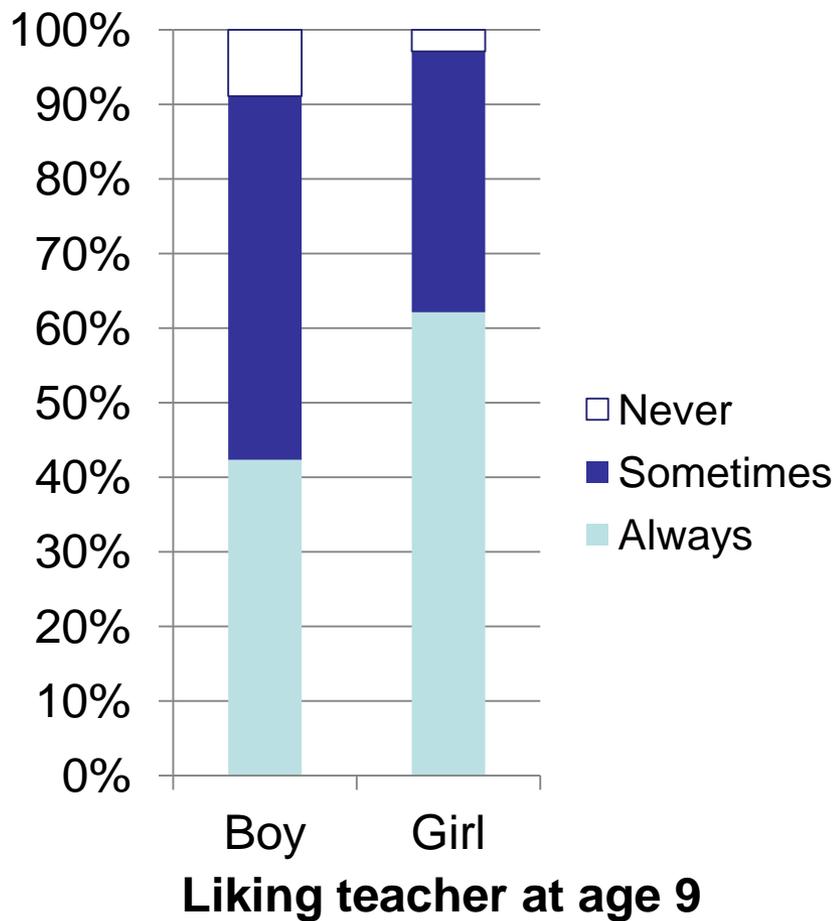


# Quality of friendships by no. of friends (13 years)





# Relationships with teachers

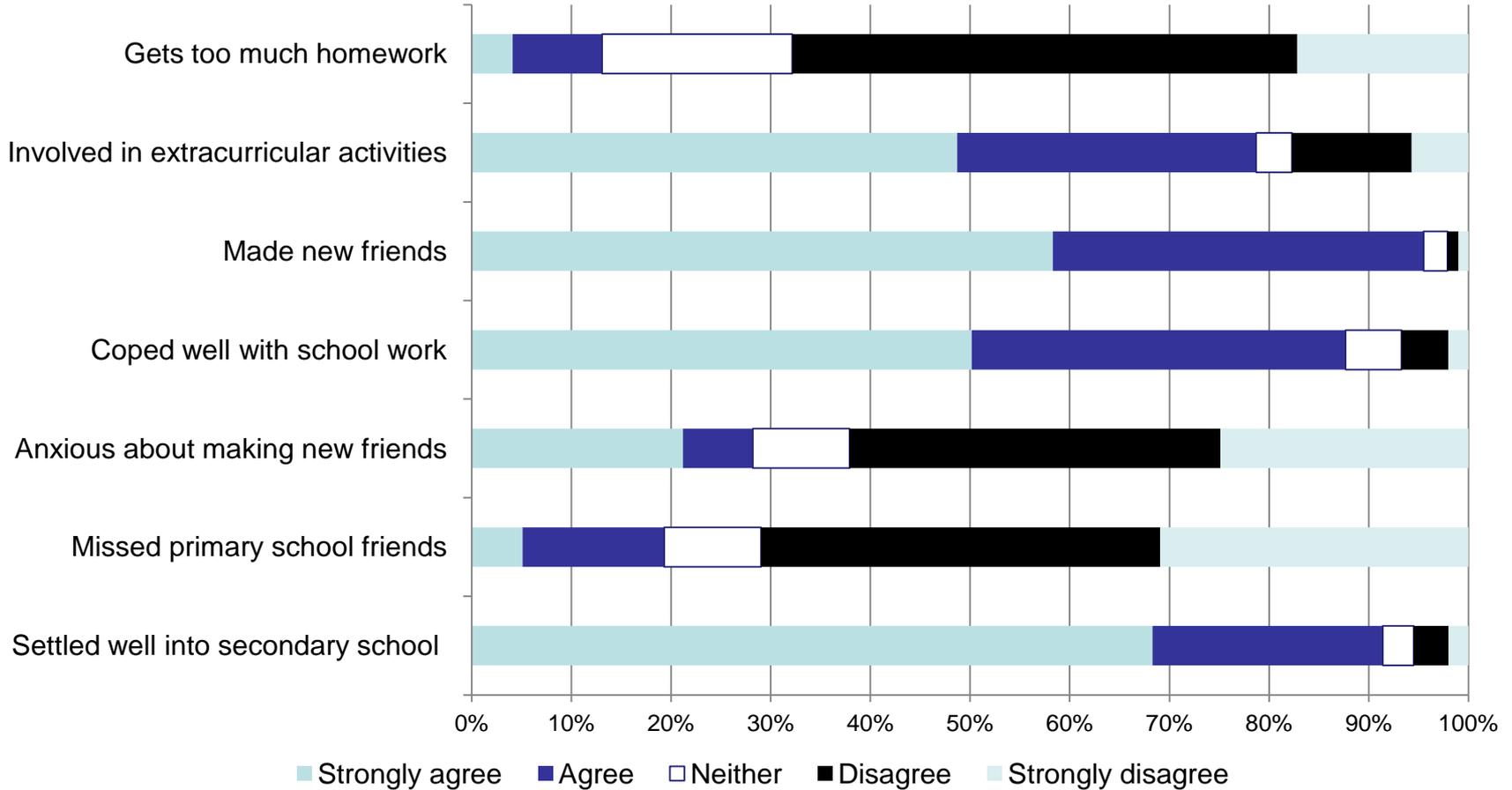




# Analytical approach

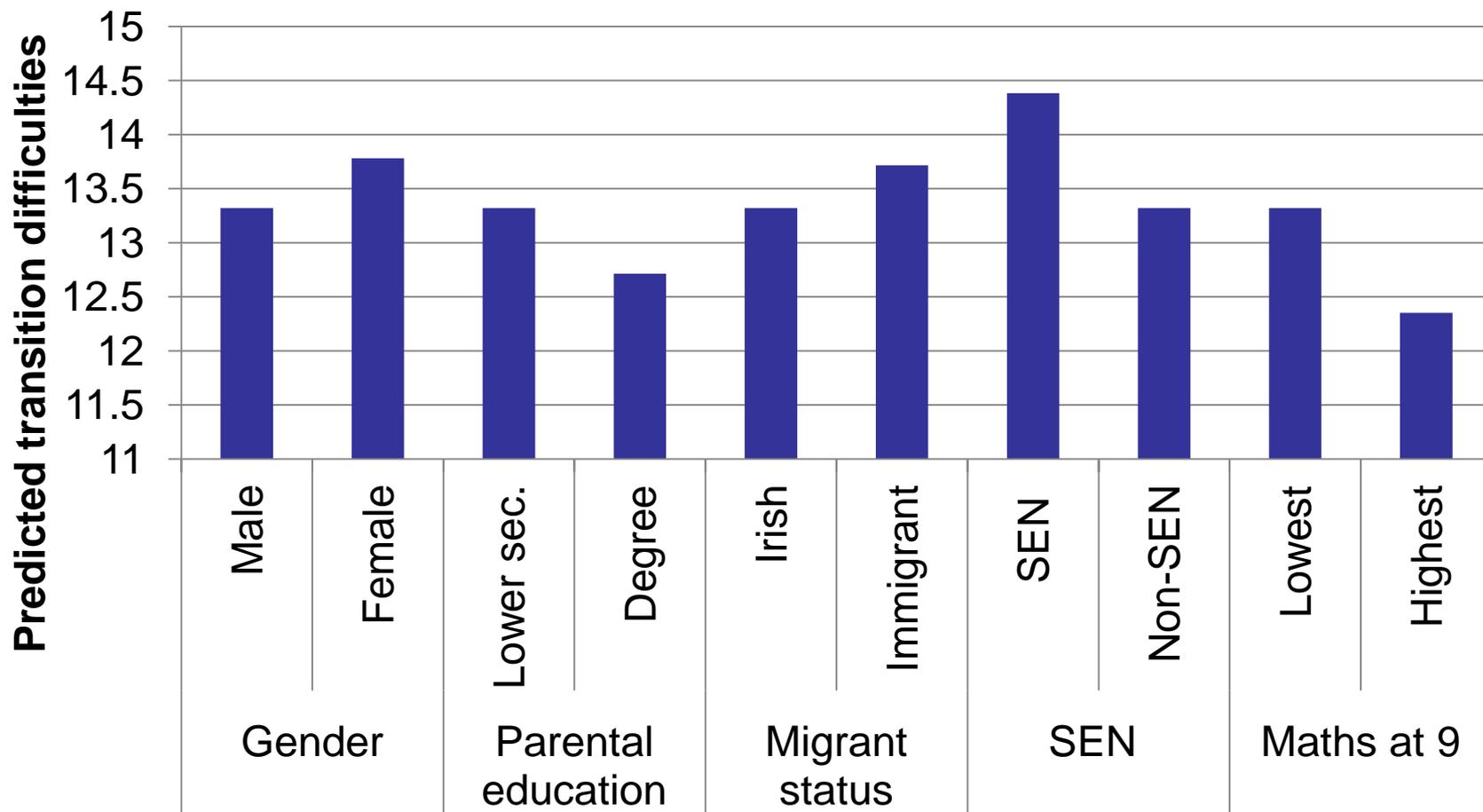
- Multilevel modelling
- Outcome: Transition difficulties (parental account – limitations)
- Parents
  - Relationship with mother (demandingness, responsiveness)
  - Frequency of parents and children talking together
  - Involvement in help with homework and school meetings
- Friends
  - Number of friends at 9
  - Quality of friendships at 13
- Teachers
  - Liking teacher at 9
  - Quality of teacher-student interaction at 13
- Controls: gender, social background, migrant, SEN, illness, prior achievement, SDQ conduct and peer problems (at 9)

# Transition difficulties



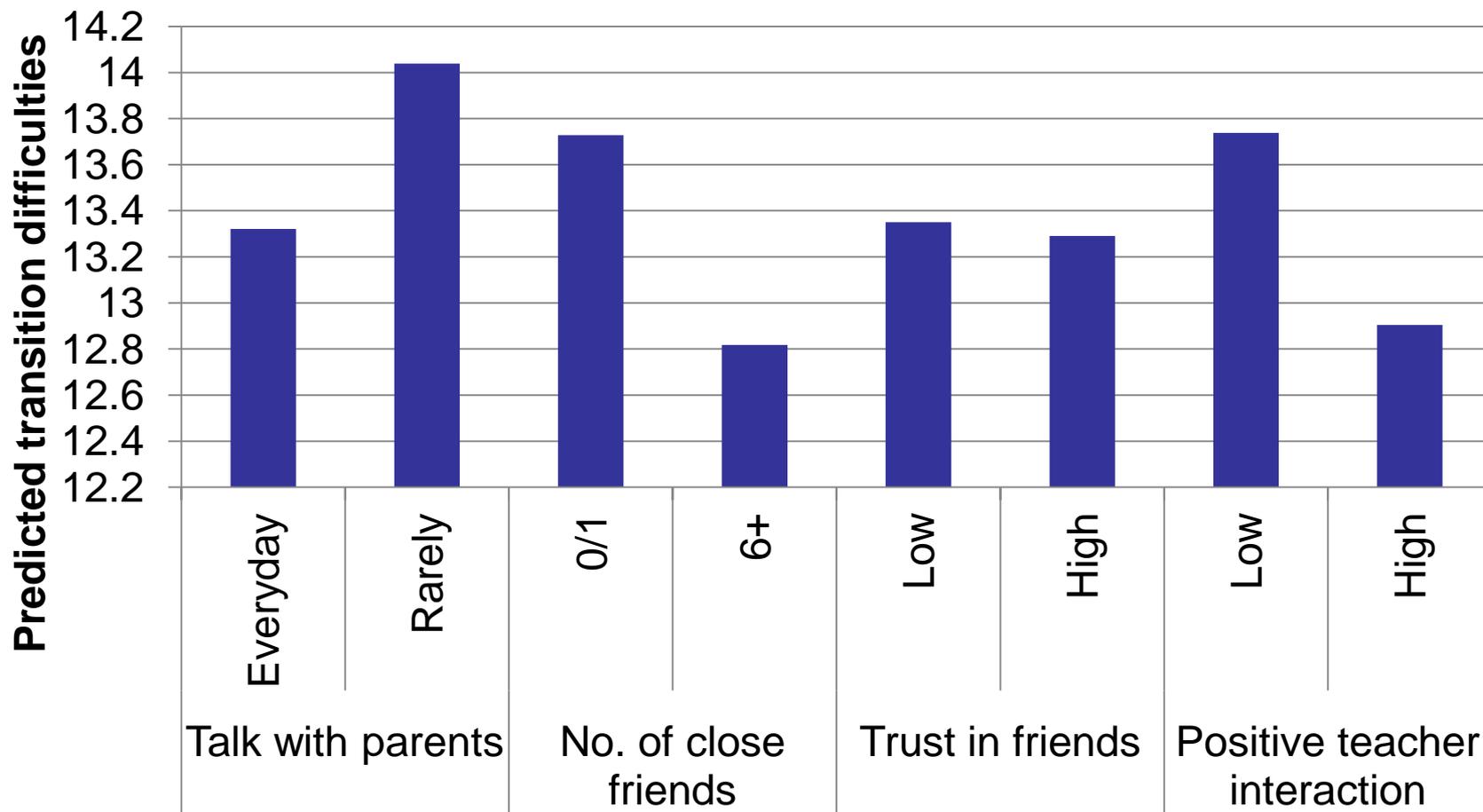


# Transition difficulties and background





# Transition difficulties and relationships





# Parental involvement in education

- Help with homework: fewer transition difficulties among those who rarely/never received help – academic preparedness
- Attendance at parent-teacher meetings (age 9) and school-based events (13) are associated with fewer difficulties



# Conclusions

- Marked changes in the nature of social relationships with significant others between 9 and 13 years of age
- Social differentiation in experience of transition process
- Greater difficulties for young people with SEN
- Relationships play a protective role in easing the transition to second-level education
- Implications for policy development: importance of school climate, parental involvement, peer relationships