

Educational performance and dropout of first-generation students in Russia: the role of parental educational, cultural, and economic capital

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Introduction

- First generation students (FGS) are a disadvantaged group compared to continuous generation students (CGS).
- About 50% of students in the West are FGS.
- Is the disadvantaged position of FGS a universal problem?
- Can poor education occur because of parental capitals?
- Do FGS and CGS benefit differently from parental capitals?

Theory / hypotheses

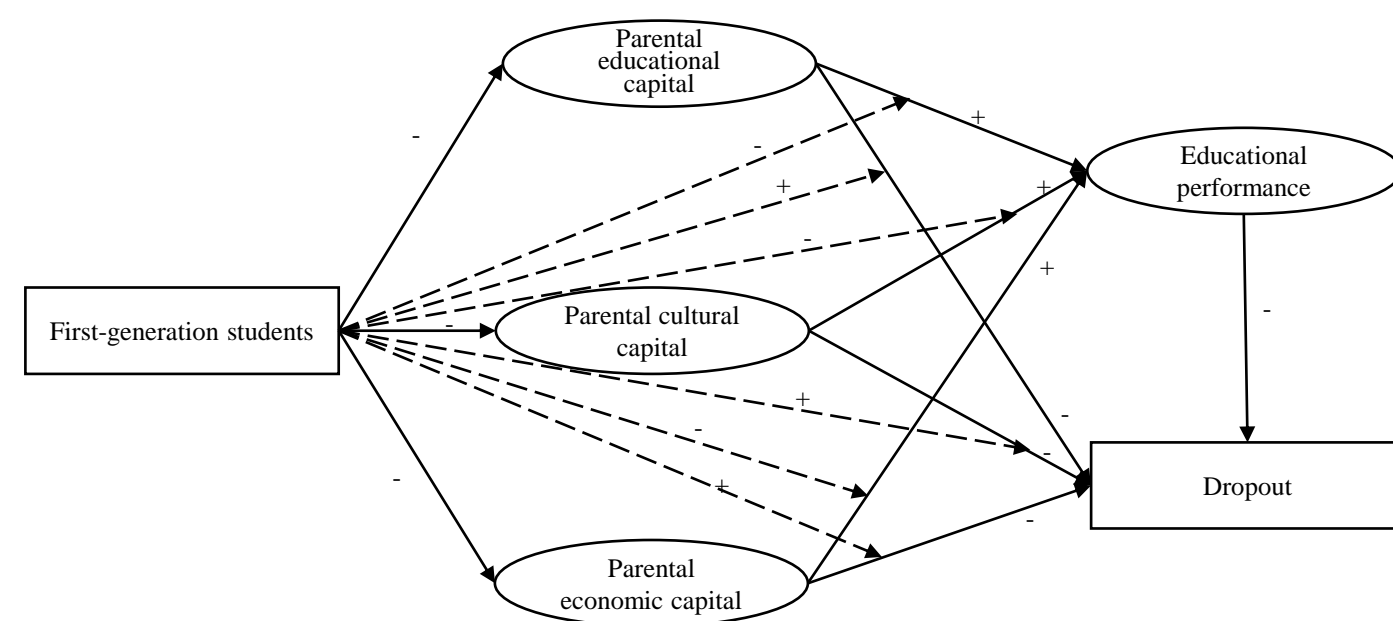


Figure 1 Conceptual model, hypotheses

Data

- The “Trajectories in Education and Careers” (TrEC) study.
- Panel data of 5000 students and their parents.
- Children nested within 213 classes within 196 schools in 43 Russian regions.
- 9 waves from 2012 to 2020.

Measurements

- Dependent variables: educational performance and dropout.
- Independent variables: (parental) educational capital, cultural capital, and economic capital.
- Control variables: grades in school, female, age in 2012, number of siblings.

Methods

- Structural equation modeling / path modeling.
- Adjusted for measurement error for latent variables.

Analytic strategy

Main analysis:

- Step 1: Inequality in capital or selection?
- Step 2: Explaining the FGS-effect by differences in capital.
- Step 3: Differential capital effects for FGS and CGS.

Additional analysis:

- Step 1: Separate latent variables for parental educational capital.
- Step 2: Primary and secondary parental effects.
- Step 3: Primary and secondary parental effects with educational capitals separately.

Descriptive results: 46% of students are FGS

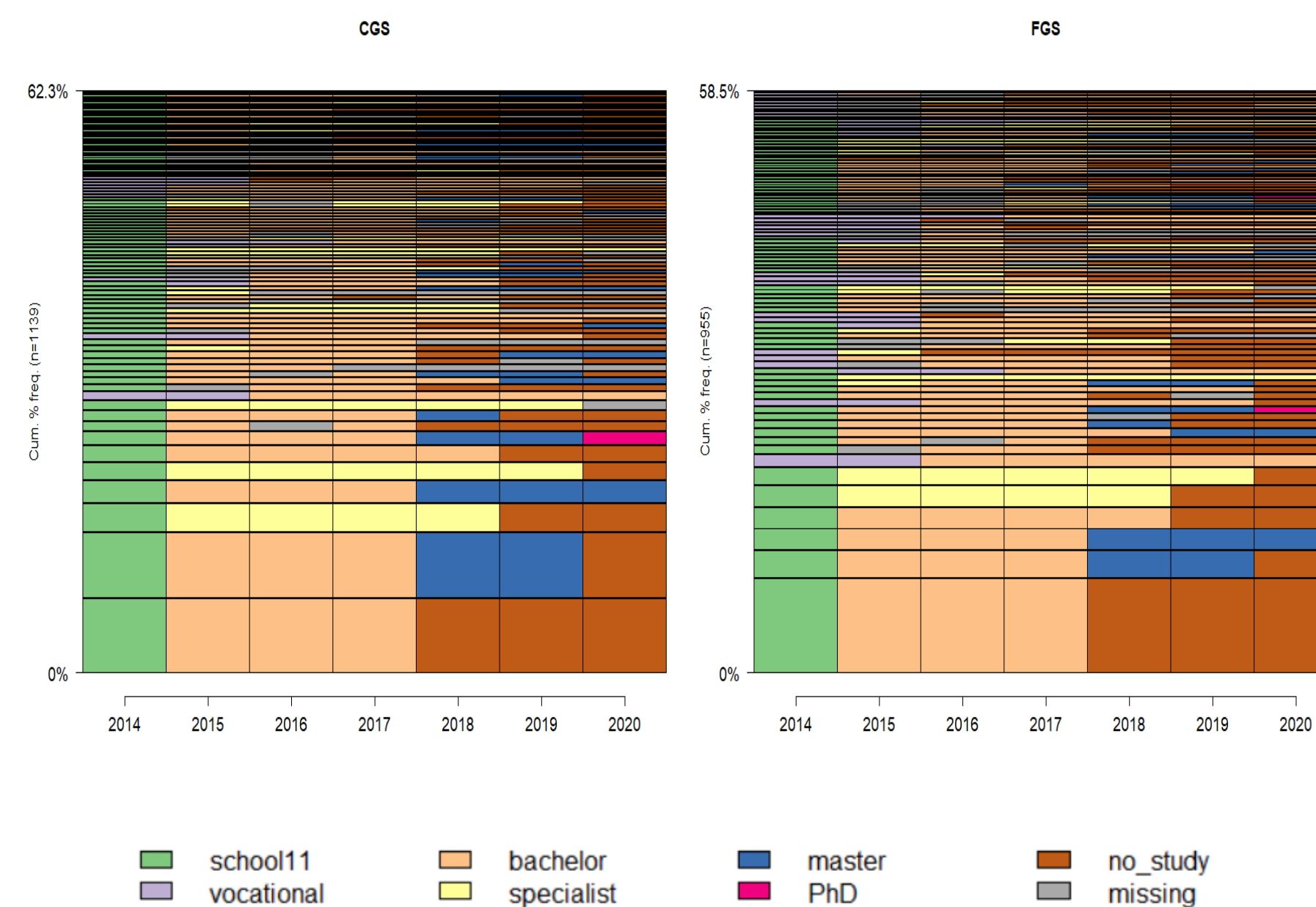


Figure 2 Sequence frequency plots for CGS and FGS

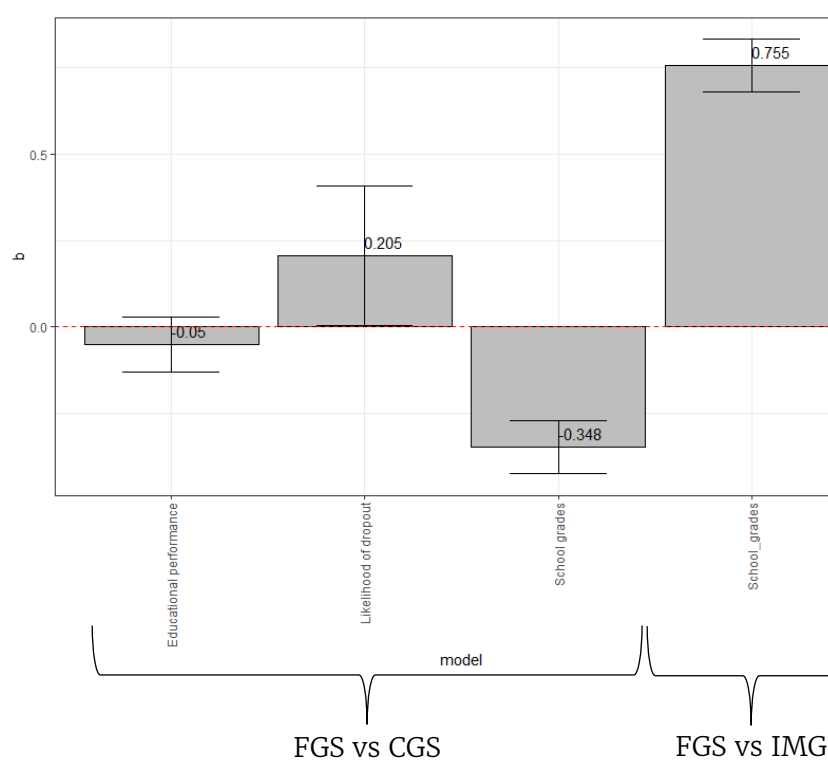


Figure 3 Differences between FGS vs CGS, and FGS vs IMG

Results: Mediation? Moderation? – NEITHER!

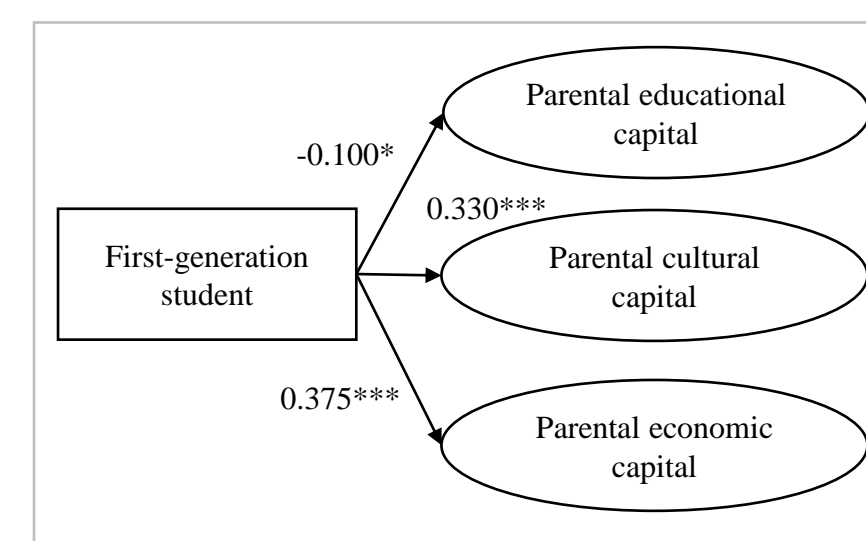


Figure 4 FGS vs IMG

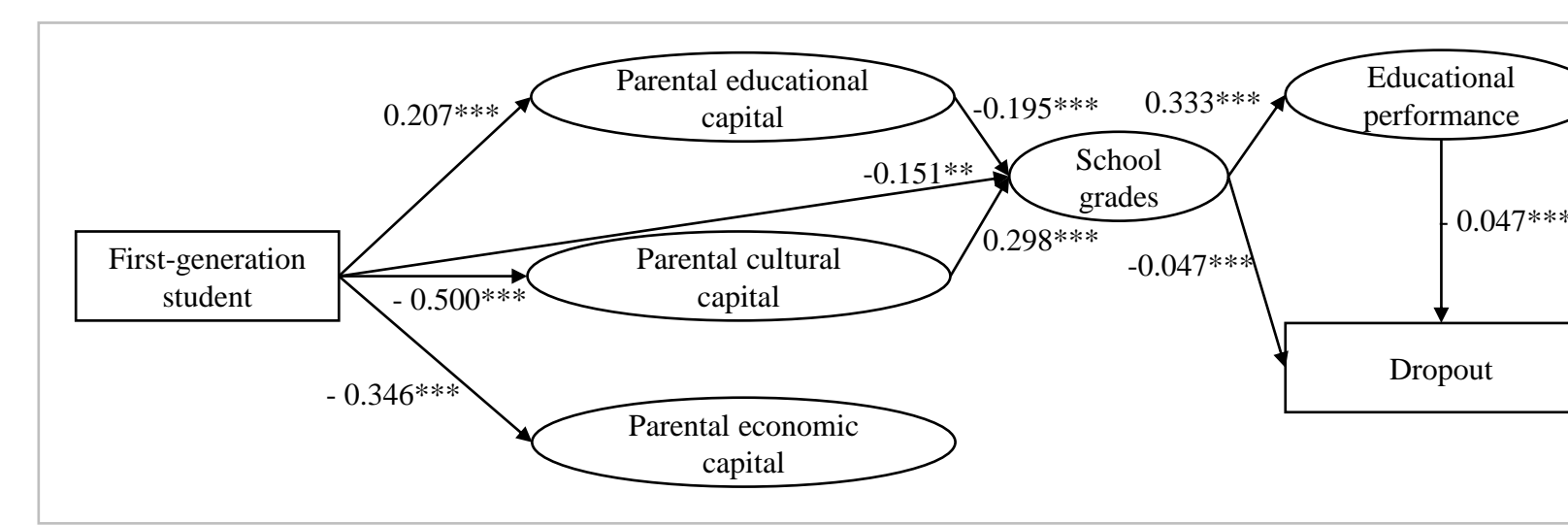


Figure 5 FGS vs CGS. Controlled for grades

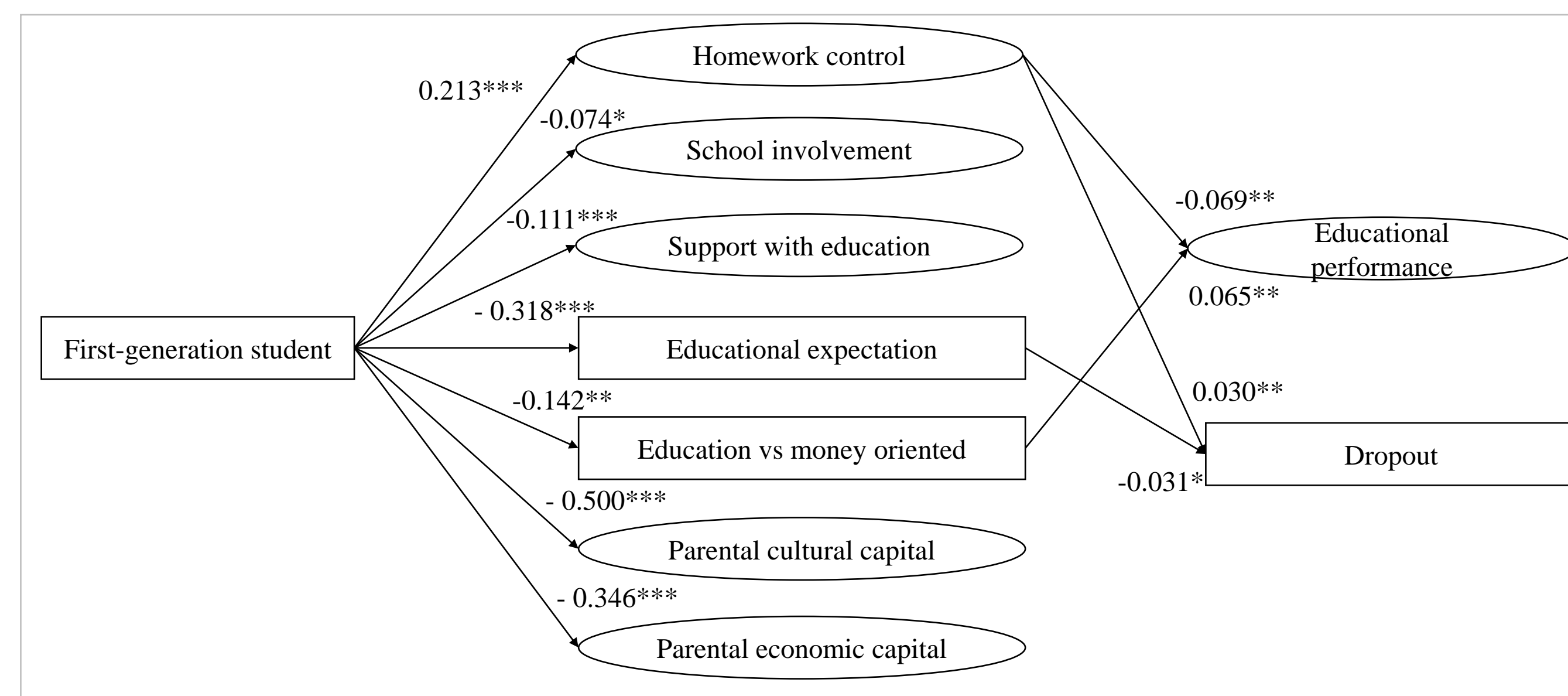


Figure 6 Separate capitals and NOT controlled for grades

Notes: SEM. Significant effects are black arrowed, non-significant – are not shown

Conclusion

Disadvantaged group?

- FGS do not have lower educational performance compared to CGS, but they have higher probability of dropout.
- FGS come from less affluent families with low cultural capital, but they have more educational capital compared to CGS.

Selective group?

- FGS have higher school grades than people who are not enrolled to a university.
- FGS have more cultural and economic capital and less educational capital than people that are not enrolled to a university and have no parents with higher education.

Mediation?

- No.

Moderation?

- No.

Discussion

- FGS in Russia are in a less disadvantaged position compared to FGS in other countries. This can be explained by a strong selection that occurs after the 9th grade in Russian secondary school and before university enrollment. Probably, the most motivated people go to universities.
- Parents of FGS are more involved in homework controlling, which can indicate a reverse causality: parents are reacting on low educational performance of their children and more actively controlling for their homework.
- Parents have an effect on students' educational outcomes, but mostly via cognitive ability mechanisms (primary parental effects).