Intervention project

Reducing number of early school leavers in Ireland

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Problem definition

- High-level of drop-outs from secondary education in Ireland (16 per cent)
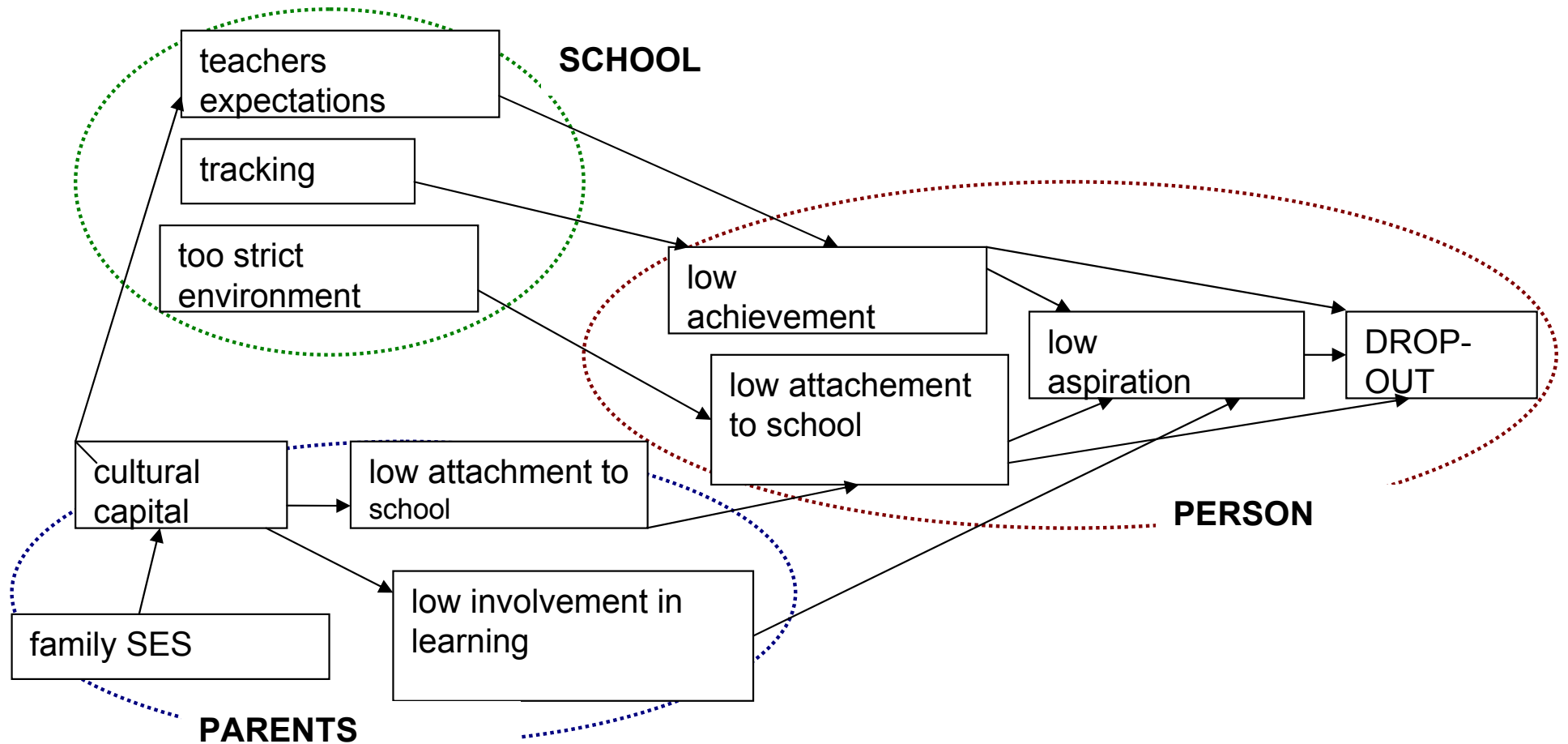
Community needs

Why is it a problem?

- *For individual:*
  - increased risk of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion,
  - increased risk of pathological behavior.

- *For society:*
  - increased costs in supporting of those who are unemployed,
  - loss of human capital (skilled workers),
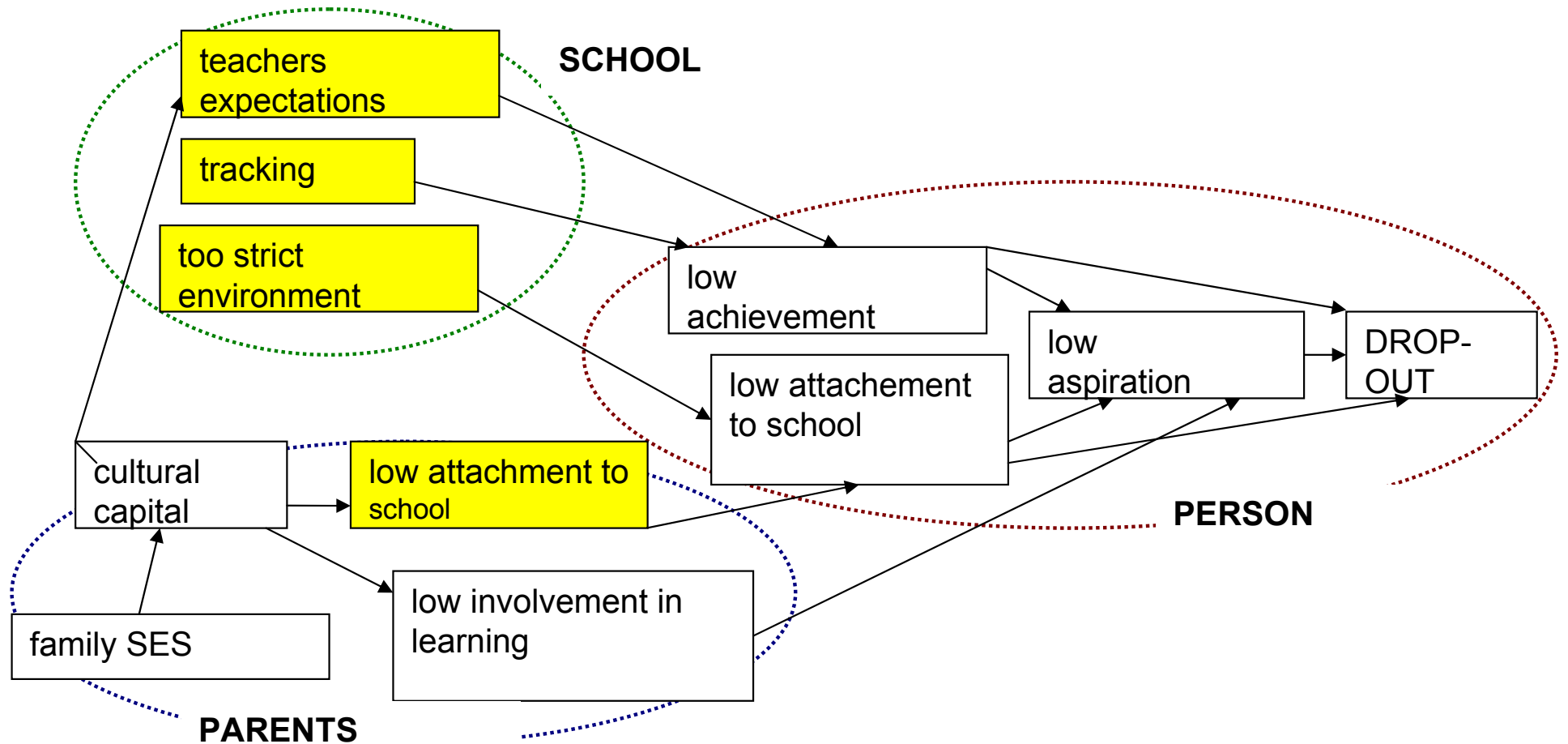 - social pathology.

Target group

- 5 % of secondary schools with the highest level of drop-outs in Ireland

Influential factors

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teachers expectations

SCHOOL

tracking

too strict environment

low achievement

low attachement to school

low aspiration

DROP-OUT

PERSON

cultural capital

low attachment to school

family SES

low involvement in learning

PARENTS

Interventions strategy

- Training program for teachers
    - psychological training (self-fulling prophecy ..),
    - classroom management (disciplinary climate...).

- Outreach to parents
    - introductory meetings, common gatherings, „Olympic games", theater

- Reorganization of schools
    - detracking (same curriculum for every student, extra teaching for the needed)

Desired results

- *Outputs*
    - Higher teachers expectations
    - Higher attachment of parents to school
    - Less strict school environment
    - The same curriculum for every student
- *Outcomes*
    - Reducing level of drop-outs
- *Impact*
    - Continuing in further education

Resources

- Skilled instructors for training program
- Mentors in designing out-reach activities
- Financial funds for out-reach activities
- More teachers

Assumptions

- School matters !

- Coleman et al.: Structure and organization of schools do not have any effect upon achievement – what matters are students' and parents' characteristics

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• School matters !

• Coleman et al. : Structure and organization of schools do not have any effect upon achievement – what matters are students' and parents' characteristics

Research design

- Quasi-experiment
- Unit: school

Two groups:

N O X O (5 % schools with highest drop-out)

N O   O (other secondary schools)

Statistical analysis

- Regression-discontinuity design

- Potential threats:
    - History ☑
    - Maturation ☒
    - Testing ☒
    - Instrumentation ☒
    - Mortality ☒
    - Regression ☑

Advantages

- Cheap

- Relatively ethical in contrast to randomized design

- Access to data (data from central register, no need for data collecting, not time and money consuming)

Limitations

- Intervention only at the school level
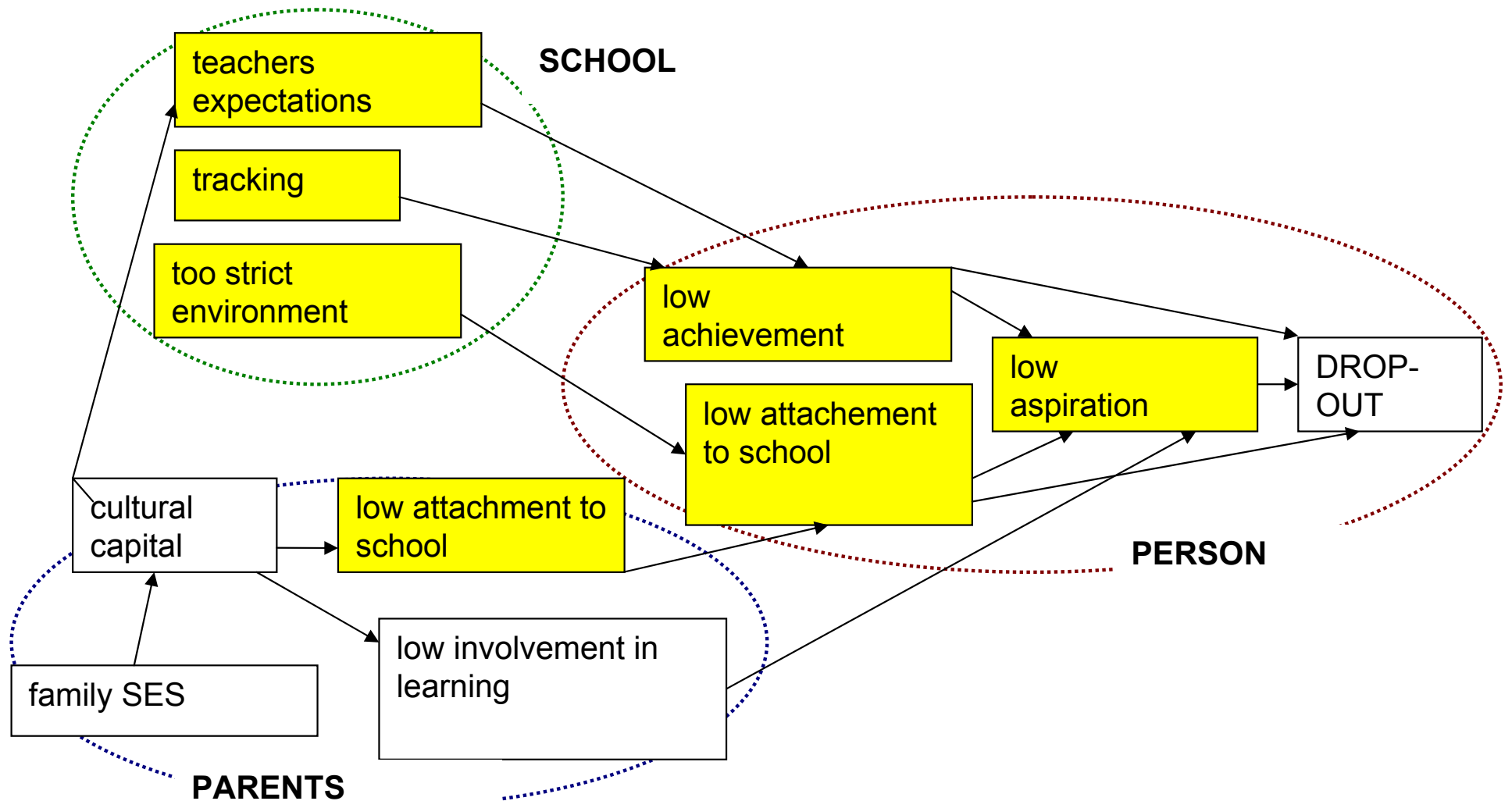- Impact not measured

Open questions

- Multi-level design?

- If individual level included, how to contact persons later?

Possible interventions at individual level

- Counselor
- Special instruction in study skills and knowledge for students
- Assistance for the homework
- Extra-curricular activities
- Common breakfast
- …….

Influential factors

Thank you
for your attention

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Critical friends are more than welcome!