The aim of this study is to explore determinants of educational aspiration of young people in marginalized urban areas of two different areas in big cities of Sweden. In addition to conventional predictors, i.e. parental resources (economic and cultural capital), and demographic characteristics (such as age, gender, ethnicity and immigration background), we examine the impact of different types of social capital (both within-family and extra-familial), on the educational ambition of these young people. The focus of the study is on those pupils who have a low aspiration for further education, i.e. those who have the highest likelihood to become ‘early school leavers’. The data used in this study were collected during the Spring term 2014, as a part of Reducing Early School Leaving in the EU (RESL.eu) project. We conducted a questionnaire survey among students in the last year of ‘compulsory school’ and first year of ‘secondary school’ in 50 schools in Sweden.

The results indicate that the class background of respondents together with gender and migrant background of young people in this study are the main predictors of their educational ambition. Furthermore, we find that different aspects of within-family and extra-familial social capital influence the educational aspiration of pupils.