

## **Language Usage, Social Capital, and School Completion among Immigrants and Native-Born Ethnic Groups\***

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*Objective.* We examine the effects of ethnicity, generational status, duration in the United States, language usage, and social capital on high school completion. We compare recent immigrants (those in the United States five years or less), long-term immigrants (those in the United States six or more years), and native-born persons with at least one foreign-born parent (second generation) to native-born persons of native parentage. *Methods.* We analyze data from High School and Beyond (HSB), a multiwave panel survey that interviewed a nationally representative sample of high school students in 1980 and followed them subsequently. We analyze the probability of dropping out with logit regression. *Results.* We find that, after controlling for other factors, ethnicity has little effect on the likelihood of someone's dropping out of high school. Immigrants are more likely to be high school dropouts than are native-born persons of native parentage. This is true to a greater extent for recent immigrants than for longer-term immigrants in the United States. School completion for second-generation persons is not significantly different from that of native-born persons of native parentage. Social capital turns out to be highly important in the model, and its inclusion reduces the effect of other measures. In addition, parental monitoring can create a buffer against low socioeconomic status (SES). The magnitude of the adverse effect of low SES is reduced for students whose parents monitor their schoolwork.