Gibson, Margaret A. Patricia Gándara, and Jill Peterson Koyama, eds. *School Connections: U.S. Mexican Youth, Peers, and School Achievement.* New York: Teachers College Press, 2004. 224pp. ISBN 0807744379, $21.95.

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Can working-class Latino students generate social capital for one other? The answer is "Yes!" *School Connections* offers studies that either sparkle with positive results, or offer confirming negative evidence. The editors begin with an orientation chapter that restates the educational plight of Latinos. In chapter 2, Ricardo Stanton-Salazar provides the theorizing. He critiques older models of social capital (social integration and status attainment models), which do not integrate the political and economic factors that make all the difference in social relations. For him, social capital consists of the networks that facilitate an individual's access to resources and interpersonal support in the quest for success. Numerous studies have found in school settings that greater social capital provides greater likelihood that a student will succeed. Patricia Gándara (*Over the Ivy Walls: The Educational Mobility of Low Income Chicanos,* State University of New York Press, 1995), among others, found that some working-class Latinos achieve more, thanks to social capital acquired from middle-class peers. How can working-class Latinos create their own social capital? Chapter 3 begins to offer an answer by describing Latino high schoolers' aspirations. It turns out that mainstream peer-pressure dynamics don't match the three Latino patterns. First, there is an early direct pressure, especially for ninth grade Latino boys, to participate in risky small group behavior. A subsequent diffused pressure is to conform to general school norms. The most important third pressure is *to belong* to the school world. Belonging makes school achievement an imperative for Mexican-descent students.

Chapter 4 deals with not belonging. English language development classes should be safe havens for students to acquire confidence in their second language, but when boys "act out," these classrooms become raucous sites of non-learning. What accounts for the boys' misdeeds and the girls' support? It is claimed that young Latinas are moral gatekeepers without keys. These girls feel complicity for the boys' antics, but not control. Thus, they cannot challenge the boys. As for the boys, they practice forms of "working-class masculinity at odds with classroom learning" (p. 75). In learning how to be men, Latino boys must deal with schoolyard models of masculinity, ranging from "being cool" to "gangster-like." These models demand a lowered level of academic equality, but have real enticements. Boys earn membership to their clique—and they get the girls. The foil for these male roles is the *schoolboy*, a term of derision used to rein in diligent students. The studious are teased for submitting to the classroom order, for "thinking more" about

school knowledge and about themselves, and for "looking ridiculous," i.e. putting social distance between themselves and the cool students.

In contrast to the stylish gangster-attired student, chapter 5 discusses real gang members. Diego Vigil employs his multiple marginality framework to describe the four percent of Latino children whose lives are filled with much trauma and little family support. Belonging still pertains. For these pre-teens, the gang becomes the family. The gang provides supportive adopted kin who demand reciprocity. The beginner emulates the street elite. He performs gang rituals that submerge his identity because the gang requires absolute commitment. Adolescent bonding solidifies this truly alternate culture. In this world, schools are just buildings. In response, school leaders should understand why street socialization occurs, and attempt to develop personal contact with the gang member who still attends school. Most importantly, the school should co-opt gang values: loyalty, respect, egalitarianism, and kin-like friendship. These are commendable principles in their wholesome form.

In contrast, chapter 7 provides an uplifting story in a school of 1200 upper-middle class White and 600 working-class Latinos where segregation is severe. The inner campus is off-limits to Latinos, who withdraw to the margins. Geography is the metaphor for the school's curricular, social, and scholastic patterns, with foreseeable outcomes: 64% of Whites complete college admission requirements, compared to 20% of Latinos. However, migrant students flourish! Among the most at-risk (ninth-graders with a 1.8 GPA), only 13% of Whites and 11% of Latinos graduate, while 47% of migrants graduate. Why? Migrant students have a safe space: their own club. With adults who initiate caring relationships, these Mexican students generate scholastic identities, they freely voice their college dreams, and work together to this end. Their club is a home within an unwelcoming school. These marginalized students create their own social capital—as a family!

Reinforcing this key idea, chapter 8 describes a school that gets all of its students admitted to top colleges. This is not an exclusive school, but a non-profit school for all students willing to commit to a rigorous program. Again, the normal students describe the school as a family. They giggle, procrastinate, and at times even cheat because they don't want to fail. But they aren't afraid of bad grades rather they fear genuine adolescent horror of not belonging. The school achieves spectacularly by sustaining a space that allows all its adolescents to build a scholastic family.

Adolescents need to belong. School leaders can draw on the deeply engrained Latino values of family loyalty, respect, and kin-like friendship, to create safe spaces for kin-like caring relationships with Latino adolescents. In response, the students will generate Latino identities that are school-oriented and form scholastic families. *School Connections* shows us how high schools can put together family-like engines of social capital formation for its least privileged students.