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COURTSHIP IN THE BORDERLANDS: HOLLISTIC INTIMATE SPACE CREATION WITHIN COURTSHIP IDEAOLOGIES



By Alejandro Sánchez, *University of Texas-Pan American*

While telling me the story of how she met her husband, Mrs. Aguilar told me “I really feel bad for your generation, they are missing out on falling in love.” She was referring to the courtship practices, or the social regulation and cultural markers between two individuals who create a social relation developing a “relationship.”¹ She was comparing the courtship practices of her generation to that of mine and her statement is reflective of the changes in the cultural environment. From courting, a “relationship” can develop. Its dimensions are defined by the mediation between cultural norms and the agent, and can lead to *noviazgo*, or an explicit relationship describing the accompany of the two individuals to social and recreational activities, or in a conjugational union.² From the elderly lady fragmented views toward the courtship practices, I decided to conduct ethnographic research on cross generational courtship. I analyzed heterosexual courtship processes by focusing on what one of my interviewees calls a *pretendiente* or suitor, who is “someone who beseeches you, for example, someone who likes you...you’re not a couple but you’re also no friends” as stated by Pinky (18). I call the *pretendiente* a courtship system as it outlines the cultural interaction and norms followed by the agents in their courting.

In this essay, I will argue that the *pretendiente* courtship system entitles the agents in courtship process to a mutual interest in each other that is explored through the creation of a holistic intimate space (in terms of social, cultural, and physical space); yet the wide variety of courtship ideologies and values, which can be exclusive while at other times intersect, alter the experience of the individuals in the courtship environment. The courtship process was explored with consideration to the following themes: behavior of the agents, environmental factors, and the duration legitimized through cultural markers, labels, and regulations used to identify the “relationship.”

Within the *pretendiente* courtship system, space is created for the agents to engage in courtship. Edward T. Hall describes the space in terms of physical interaction. He describes the physical space in terms of what he calls *intimate distance* as:

distance between the acts of love and contestation, of protection, and comfort. In the phase with maximum physical contact, the muscles and skin communicate [...] The presence or absence of the sensation of heat created by the body of another body points to the line that separation between intimate space to that which is not.³

Within the first interview I conducted, the female interviewee Laura (19) told me she did not initiate a conversation with someone she is “interested” in (attracted to) because of what her mother and grandmother told her. Laura summarized her family’s advice as, “if they were interested they would come otherwise not.” Her family was entering the intimate space as their advice resonated within Laura altering her interaction with a *pretendiente*. Through this and other interviews were college students mentioned the influence of their parents and family in their decision making within courting, I decided to expand upon Hall’s intimate space to propose a holistic intimate space. Holistic intimate space is defined as the physical, social, and cultural space created by the two agents throughout their courting; it serves to create and define the dynamics of the “relationship” in adherence to the

¹ Gabriela Rodriguez and Benno De Keijzer, *La noche se hizo para los hombres: Sexualidad en los procesos de cortejo entre jóvenes campesinos y campesinas* (D.F., México: Population Council, 2002), 42.

² Rodriguez and De Keijzer, *La noche se hizo*, 42.

³ Edward T. Hall, *La dimensión oculta de la sexualidad* (D.F., México: Siglo XXI, 1994), 143.

courtship ideologies. It is mediated by external variables such as traditions, morals, religion, cultural norms, and media among others that are internalized and negotiated within the agent.

Intimate space is cited by Gabriela Rodriguez and Benno de Keijer in their ethnography *La noche se hizo para los hombres*. The ethnography focuses on three families from rural Puebla, Mexico who are the informants due to their knowledge of courtship patterns occurring cross generationally. The project took an applied approach as in Mexico, 31.6% of the cases gathered of VIH/SIDA are within the ages of twenty to twenty-nine.⁴ Rates, furthermore, are higher among the rural cities than urban ones. The study was conducted for a year and a half in which the researchers would make visit the families twice a week and accompany them in their day to day lives. Doing so established rapport, allowing the researchers eight months after the investigation began to gain insight in the sexual transformations and current sexual practices of the younger generation.⁵ Such information was gathered through focused groups and individual interviews.

My methodology consisted of seven interviews. The criteria used to select the interviewees was based on sharing an established relation with them whether it was a friendship for college students interviewed, or mentorship for the parent and grandparent generation interviewed. In addition, I interviewed my parents. Place of upbringing was in addition part of my criteria, as the interviewees currently live within the border region. Among the upper generations, all of them migrated to the United States from border towns such as Matamoros or Monterrey. Only one interviewee, el señor Jorge (50), was raised in the town of Edinburg. The college student generation was interviewed at the Border Studies Archive found in the library of the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA). The interviews for the upper generations were performed at the interviewee's home. The interviews of the college student generation were exploratory composed of the question: "how did you meet [name of pretendiente]?" Based on their stories shared, the interview became in-depth seeking to understand the interactions during key moments of the courtship process such as the legitimizing of a *noviazgo* in the case of Laura (19), or when first engaging in sexual relations as in the case of Juan (23). For the rest generations, the interviewee were conducted in couples and commenced exploratory, with the same question asked. They became in-depth when I asked what changes they have seen in the courtship patterns with today's generation. The age for UTPA students interviewed is as follow: 18, 19, and 23. For the parent generation the ages were: 47, 50, 54, and 55. The ages for the grandparent generation were: 61 and 69. Ethnographic data was also extracted through informal conversations between friends of mine at the UTPA or at my work also at UTPA.

In addition, observations were performed at three fieldsite visits; one including a confrontation at UTPA with the male partner of the one of the interviewees after my research partner asked her if she was a virgin during her interview. Two fieldsite visits were performed in Downtown McAllen at the following clubs: Tribar, 201, and La Rouge. The clubs appeared the ideal scenario to observe the college student generation as it was mentioned early on the project by fellow college students especially when the research topic was mentioned to them. One those fieldsite visits was conducted on a Thursday when the clubs were not pouring with customers. The second fieldsite visit was conducted on a Saturday when the individuals are literally standing shoulder to shoulder in the bar area and dance floor.

Within the *pretendiente* courtship system and its creation of holistic intimate space, the courtship system follows a cycle of personal views of the agents to interaction between them. The agents and their personal views will initially determine how they will begin courting; later in conjunction with what I call courtship ideologies, the agents then will strategically address one another. The personal views will guide the agent's behavior in the

⁴ Hall, *La dimensión oculta*, 16.

⁵ Ibid, 30.

courtship. The personal views were explored through interviews by the college generation. Among them included “not looking for a relationship right now” as stated by Juan, preventing reliving emotional damage by passed courtship attempts as was the case with Laura, and being independent yet requiring and longing for emotional support as Pinky who said “I did needed the support of a men especially because I’m alone, and I don’t have family with me...only God, but there is something in me that wants somebody.” These views establish the atmosphere for holistic intimate space that does not solidify until contact is made by the agents whether through school, Facebook (among the college student generation), dances, or other form of social and cultural gathering. Within the courting atmosphere that legitimizes and ensures holistic intimate space, courtship ideologies and courtship values make a presence remaining even after the “relationship” has been established.

Two courtship values were encountered aside from the pretendiente system: *honestidad* and *respeto*. *Honestidad* is used to establish the limits of the behavior when courting and justifies it between the agents, while *respeto* serves to create a connection or flow of courtship information and knowledge between the agents and their family. *Honestidad* was mentioned to me by Mario (21) while having lunch at UTPA. Mario believes in the value because by being *honesto*, “you always get an answer when you’re honest.” He also stated the results of being *honesto* as “you always get what you want.” This, he mentions with the agent’s consensus. Mario uses *honesto* so he may receive what he wants whether a kiss, sexual interaction, or a “relationship.” By being honest of his intentions it prevents emotional damage:

Mario: For example, a friend will make a move (a physical advance such as kiss or sexual touch), and they stop talking; how is she gonna feel? How will I feel? I might as well let the girl know and I might get slapped, kicked out, or kissed.

Respeto merges with *honestidad* as the previous quote demonstrates. Mario, carrying for the mental and social well-being of the girl he is *pretendiendo* (wooing), takes her into consideration by giving her decision making power over his desires. Ultimately, she decides whether she concedes to his invitation. Such negotiation is elaborated with el Señor Jorge’s (50) definition of *respeto*:

Señor Jorge: Respect is first loving myself, because if I love myself I will behave with you and will respect you so you don’t get a bad impression of me and you won’t want to talk to me no more.

Both *honestidad* and *respeto* seek to establish an understanding of the boundaries permitted between agents as they decide whether or not to begin a “relationship.” The space generated by the values will be negotiated with variables outside of the intimate physical space (e.g. parents and friends).

Working alongside courtship values in the pretendiente system are the different courtship ideologies. These ideologies define the attitudes of the agents, the dimensions within they can function, and reflection toward the events within courtship such as the first date or kiss.⁶ In the college student generation, three ideologies were identified: *especial* (special), *traditional rant*, *attraction*, and *liking*. The first two ideologies make allusion to “traditional” courtship practices while the latter differentiates between physical attraction to emotional attraction. Within the parent generation, the following ideologies were identified: *puercospine* (porcupine), and *agase pa’ca* (come over). *Agase pa’ca* ideology places an emphasis on the family and the interaction between agents, while *puercospine* ideology focuses on the discovery of qualities between the agents. In the grandparent generation, the following ideology was identified: *coincidiendo* (concurring). It focuses on having a consensus in core beliefs. I will now elaborate on the different ideologies for the remaining of the ethnography.

⁶ John Gerring, “Ideology: A Definitional Analysis,” *Political Research Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (December 1997): 958, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/448995>

Especial uses “traditional” courtship practices as a reference to create social and emotional capital. The social capital is derived from the sharing of how the agents met within the social circle of the individual. Emotional capital is created by the sense of personal satisfaction from the reiteration of actions and appreciation of the opposing courtship agent. The ideology was derived from Pinky (18) who believes:

Pinky: Now in days people don’t talk much on the phone... and how many say that is something of the old times, when they would write letters, like that is something very nice. I want something like that something special, something different.

Special would not be satisfied by telling Pinky she was the most beautiful girl in the universe, since Pinky acknowledges she is not. The complements do not create a capital for the *pretendiente*. Instead, as Pinky says, “it will take time (variation still exists as she acknowledges).” Ricardo (19), her *pretendiente*, converse with her through Facebook, and during the past Valentine’s Day proposed Pinky to be his girlfriend. Pinky, Ricardo, and some of their friends attended Club Havana, a nightclub commonly known for playing salsa and other Latin America sounds. The singer called Ricardo to the stage. He hesitated for a few second staying at the far end of the stage, but later shook his hand as he got on stage. The singer emphasized his “niervos, (nervousness)” and mentioned his “great heart.” Ricardo began by saying he was thankful to god for the love of his life, and called her on to stage. Pinky arrived to the stage with her hands covering her mouth of the surprise. The singer helped her on stage, Pinky still surprised, hugs him. They embrace and kiss.

The event certified the courtship process beyond the *pretendiente* stage into the *noviazgo* (couple). To reiterate, Rodriguez and Keijzer define *noviazgo* as a “social relation explicitly agreed by the two individuals accompanied with recreational and social activity where loving and sentimental emotions are expressed through word and physical contact.” Before Ricardo’s request, for example, a kiss on the lips was not permitted because “a mi no me gusta hacer eso (I don’t like to do that).” Doing so would create uncertainty in terms of the identity of the relationship because a kiss is permitted in a *noviazgo* although not among friends. For Pinky, kissing outside of the *noviazgo*, even if the other is her *pretendiente* is not an option.

In the case of Laura (19), the identity of the “relationship” with her *pretendiente*, Carlos (20) entered a borderland.⁷ Laura’s initial restrain in confirming the status of her “relationship” was enabled as she waited for Carlos to make the request to enter the *noviazgo* stage. She was acting upon the expected courtship behavior her mother and grandmother instructed her on; if they [the suitor] was interested he would come to them otherwise not. The expectance on the men to initiate and finalize the courtship is part of ideology: *traditional rant*. The ideology derives from the title of an article found in the Panorama; the University’s magazine. Andrea de la Vega, the writer of the article “Bitch Rant,” speaks of how:

as a women, I’m entitled to tell you [men] to how much that behavior really needs to stop. Right now... There’s only so much of the chasing that the women is willing to do until she becomes irritated, you know. After a while, it becomes tedious. But we do it anyway, don’t we.⁸

Station’s research that surveyed for features of Mexican and Mexican-American families explains the reasoning behind the previous quote.⁹ The male will initiate the courtship pattern, a belief Pinky’s response parallels when friends asked about Ricardo and their “relationship.” They were asking if he had asked her to his *novia* yet; Pinky

⁷ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza / La Frontera*, 4th ed. (San Francisco, Calif.: Aunt Lute Books, 2012), 25.

⁸ Andrea De la Vega, “Bitch Rant,” *Panorama*, 2014, 32

⁹ Ross D. Station, “A Comparison of Mexican and Mexican-American Families,” *The Family Coordinator* 21, no. 3 (July 1972): 327, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/582878>.

genuinely replied saying “if he does that’s good, if he doesn’t well.” A *noviazgo* is not initiated until the man asks the female to be his *novia*.¹⁰

With Laura, while the courting with Carlos began before they were “*novios*” as they attended social sites together such as the movies, she still became frustrated because “we are hanging out, we are going on dates, and you are not asking me out.” By indirectly requesting to be “asked out,” Laura was inviting Carlos to formalize their “relationship” and enter the *noviazgo* stage. It should be noted though, that among the college generation the terms *dating* and *going out* are interchangeable. Both can be understood within the system of *pretendiente*. *Noviazgo* though, is not always interchangeable with the previous terms; in other words, two individuals *dating* and *going out* are not necessarily *novios*. I will now explore the ideologies *liking* and *attraction*, which explain some motives to transition from the *pretendiente* stage to the *novios* stage.

Liking explains an emotional attraction in the opposite agent creating a curiosity that will cause the agent to refrain or “take it easy” in terms of sexual activity. *Attraction* focuses on the physical attraction of the opposite party; it may lead to sexual activity, after which in the case of Juan (23) will cause him to “feel like I got to the climax of whatever the relationship will be.” The two ideologies were acquired from his interview where his “relationship” with Maria (21) was discussed. The two meet while at work, Juan initiated the courtship one day when he needed a charger for his phone. After he asked Maria for one, she told him she did not have one with her at the time, but she did in her car. Maria went for it, action that Juan interpreted as a possible interest on him through her effort. According to Juan, he got “smart” since she would be leaving work at three and him at four. Using the phone as an excuse to communicate beyond work, Juan continued the courtship pattern inviting her to “hang out,” and go watch a movie. “Hang out” is a social gathering where the individuals attending are understood as being friends and courting may not be initial purpose of the gathering. While the social gathering can be created with the purpose of courting the individual invited, it does not necessarily fall under the *pretendiente* system. It should be noted though that through “hanging out,” the individuals can transcend into the *pretendiente* system.

Eventually, Maria invited him over to his house; Juan would decline the offer because Maria’s brother would be home as well. The invitation can be interpreted as an invitation for sexual activity. Juan later engages in the similar request when “I was actually home for the weekend by myself, and I was like hey what the hell I should invite her over.” With Maria, Juan expresses attraction. He does not want to enter the *noviazgo* stage because “both [of us] think the same way and don’t really want a relationship.” The following quote from Juan expresses how he would behave if he *liked* a girl and felt an emotional attraction:

Juan: I think if I would like a girl, I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t want to move that fast into like having sex with her and then as opposed to somebody I’m attracted to like its physical attraction.

If Juan likes a girl, he would want to get to know her and “take her out (could be interpreted as going out)” and would allow him to see the girl “in a girlfriend kind of way” or determine for him whether he desires to enter the *noviazgo* stage.

Attraction is also witness in the physical interactions between individuals dancing in the clubs located in Downtown McAllen. The ideology though, takes on the form of *pichoneo*, or as Pinky describes as similar to twerking, an act in which the women “shakes” her buttocks in the air as she bends forward. *Pichoneo* is characterized with the men approaching the women from behind, imitating the sexual position “doggy style”. Pinky describes two components to *pichoneo*: the collision of the bodies and the form of dance used to facilitate which Pinky labels as “sex with

¹⁰ Station, “A Comparison of Mexican and Mexican-American Families.”

rhythm.” The following excerpt from my fieldnote taken while attending the club La Rouge in Downtown McAllen depicts the social process and biomechanics involved in *pichoneando*:

A waitress, sporting army cameo underwear and a matching cameo shirt, was serving drinks for a table. One of the men from the table began dancing next to her to the rhythm of the song, the genre was salsa. She joined him dancing, but in her place. As they were dancing, the space between the lessened until the waitress turned around and leans a bit forward extending her buttocks out. The lower part of her body approached his pelvic area making contact; as they made contact the motion of her body has heavily focused on the swaying on her hips as she “grinded” with his crotch. In the meantime the man had his hands out and in the air almost as if a celebratory gesture. He continued to place an emphasis in his pelvic area as he bends his knee and leans backwards in contrast to the woman who is leaning forward. Once intimate physical space was accomplished, the man surrounded the hips of the woman with his forearm. He did not grip the lower part of her hips as other men in the club did. The women in the meantime was moving her hips side to side adding sensuality by bending slightly over and lowering herself to the floor. The men had his arms extending out straight with the forearms surrounding her hips. At times her eyes would wander out to the club. The two stopped, and the man signaled a phone with his hands, signifying he wanted her cell phone number. She gestured that he couldn’t, but the man was insistent that he wanted to call her.

It was later informed to me that the waitress was paid to do engage in such behavior. It would explain why she was habitually looking out into the crowd. The physical space and courtship conducted in the clubs in Downtown McAllen could be mediated by social-cultural forces not present. As previously mentioned with holistic intimate space, the space created during *pichoneo* could have influences by family traditions for example or other cultural norms placed by the family. Such indirect presence of the family can be encountered in the clubs. However, a direct physical presence of the family is highly unlikely. For the courtship practices of the parent generation, a physical family presence was mentioned one that altered the behavior of the agents.

The physical presence of the family creates fragments in how the agents act with each other as they took into consideration the family. The courtship ideology, called *agase pa’ca* (come closer), is represented by the conscious attention paid to social interactions in front of family members. The ideology was introduced by el Senor Jorge (50) and la Senora Esme (47). The two met when the la Senora Esme, at the time twelve, accompanied her sister on a date because her parents would not let her go alone. The sister and her date, knowing la Senora Esme was *chiflada* (spoiled), invited el Senor Jorge so he may distract her allowing them to enjoy their date. The two later carried on their friendship during the summers and wrote *cartas* (letters) to each other when la Senora Esme returned to Monterrey. The family exercised hierarchical control over the agents. El senor Jorge, after his graduation, decided to take a trip to Monterrey. The purpose of his trip was not to visit la Senora Esme, as he did not know where she lived. Surprisingly though, he informed me he arrived outside her home in the morning. The family greeted him, but la Senora’s Esme’s brother did not allow her to talk to him. La senora Esme spoke of his reasoning: “no the girls can’t, they can’t have a boyfriend, they can’t go out, they can’t say badwords.”

As the courting continued, later in letters and when they went on the bicycle to the park or for *raspas* (snow cones), el senor Jorge ventured to speak to the mother of la senora Esme. He said he wanted to wait till la senora Esme had more age for her to be his *novia*. La senora Esme’s mother said not till she was 15, a few more months were needed till she turned that age. Later though, el senor Jorge could not wait and defied the control of the hierarchy:

Senor Jorge: I can't wait one more day, against you, and against everything, against everything I have to go against, she is my girlfriend.

The challenge was accepted since the mother approve of him and “liked” him as la senora Esme described. The oldest brother however did not approve. Nevertheless, as the “relationship” had entered into a *noviazgo*, both describe that “in front of the family you don't let him grab your hand.” Agency within the holistic intimate space was regained though, as when the family left, he would tell la senora Esme to “agase pa' ca (come closer)” shortening the intimate physical space within their relationship.

When establishing capital for their relationship, the agents will explore the holistic intimate space; the exploration process can be characterized in some cases by the unexpected qualities of the agents. My father described the process through an analogy at the end of his interview. When one is in a “relationship,” it is similar to the porcupine when they are seeking warmth from the cold. They slowly join together to feed of each other's body heat. As they get close, their spines will sting each other. However, the porcupine arrange themselves so that they can continue getting close and not sacrifice their comfort. In terms of courting and “relationships,” my father referred to how one might discover qualities from the partner that can surprise the opposite party off guard; yet they can be overseen fostering and strengthening the holistic intimate space between them. The previous analogy describes the ideology, *puercospine*, which focuses on a trial and error search in within the agents.

My father approached my mother at a dance (after having seen her at the maquiladoras they both worked at), one where she was waiting for her dance partner to arrive. He never arrived, and my mother danced with my father for a while. Then, some of my mother's friends left early leaving my mother alone when returning home. Accompanying my mother, my father took a bus with her. Before my mom, got off the bus, my father got hold of her hand, saying he would not let go unless she agreed to be his *novia*. It can be stated that my parents had not cultivated any intimate social space before as my mother did not approve of my father's presence when he sat next to her in the maquiladora's cafeteria. Without the creation of any holistic intimate space, my father ventured to enter the *noviazgo* stage after a brief time frame within the *pretendiente* stage. Furthermore, his method of courtship could have been questioned due to its physical force. My mother agreed though since she would have been late home, making my grandmother upset, something she did not want to do. Besides, she was not expecting to see him at the maquiladoras were they worked, which proved contrary.

During the week that followed, my father kissed my mom, but “it was too rough.” The courtship of my parents displayed unwelcomed transitions (from my mom's perspective; holistic intimate space had been initiated by my father yet my mother was hesitant to expand it). Intimate social space had not been nurtured, justifying my mother's uncertainty towards him. Nevertheless, the creation of a holistic intimate space allows for the agents to consume the socio-emotional capital deriving from their mutual interest found within *pretendiente*.

In the last ideology, *coincidiendo*, acquired from Doña lichita (61) and Don Juan (69) from the grandparent generation, socio-economical capital is a must if the agents are going to contemplate entering the *noviazgo* stage. The agent's beliefs and their various perspectives establishes a common link between the two. The link establishes security, confidence, and trust in each other if the two were to enter the *pretendiente* stage, or in the words of Don Juan, “and you looked at the person if you two concurred in your way of thinking, well then there was no problem because you were ahead in concurring.” Although Don Juan repeated himself, the second time he used concurring could be understood as the request to be *novios*. Before Don Juan asked Doña Lichita to be his *novia*, both meet in a quinceñera. They attempted dancing, but rather talked since they could not dance. The rhythm of their bodies did not coincide. Under such circumstances, the initiation of intimate physical space could be said to have failed in the dance floor, however social intimate space was established through conversation. In

their conversation, they began asking questions about each other; the questions as Doña Lichita states “questions having nothing to do with falling in love.” Through their genuine probing, Don Juan found out Doña Lichita worked. In a similar attempt to that of Juan who “so I got smart,” he said he wanted to continue seeing her, if he could see her when she gets out of work. The following week in their meetings, both would talk about their families specifically about their parents and their brothers, their inclinations such as choice of movies and dance. Once an *amistad* (friendship) was created, Don Juan asked Doña Lichita to be his *novia* his choice of words being:

Don Juan: I told her if she liked the way I was, or how I expressed myself, because back then you were accustomed to that.

The choice of words represents the importance in being accepted due to one personality and qualities.

Within *coincidiendo*, *honestidad* interplays in the agent’s decision as they decided which aspects of themselves they present to the opposite agent. The degree of honesty in the agents will not necessarily affect the decision to become *novios* at the time but the repercussions can be felt later. Resurfacing, the perceptions placed forth during the early courtship stages play a role in the present, as following excerpt from the interview revealed:

Doña Lichita: Because before he said he liked comedy movies, and he liked cowboy movies, [and] of war, and I did not like them. But I would say to him if he liked comedies and musicals. Yes, yes, and then it resulted he liked the movies, he liked more was of war and cowboys which till this day he still likes.

The following quote displays how in *coincidiendo* and in their creation of holistic intimate space, the agents play a game of perceptions delegating their interests and dislikes and those of the agent they are courting.

The game of perceptions can be encountered in other ideologies that form intersections among each other. Under these intersections, the ideologies are faced with the creation of borders created by the agents of courtship. To aide in the analysis of the courtship borders is the proposed term, holistic intimate space. By placing holistic intimate space as the lens of inquiry, the intersecting ideologies are expanded upon with the three spaces being physical, social, and cultural. In the case of Juan’s ideologies liking and attraction, the three spaces are vital as courtship borders are transcended from the latter ideologies mentioned. Juan for example, stated he would not date, or like, a girl who dressed what he considered provocative. By provocative he was referring to the short length of shorts a girlfriend of a friend of had worn. The instance displays when the physical space serves as courtship border based on social and cultural forces. In a parallel example, Laura’s interview ended with benign ambivalence towards her virginity regardless of traditional catholic teachings. Such instance exhibits the social and cultural spaces placing courtship borders that are transcended based on a contemplated physical space. Both examples, illustrates instances when intersecting ideologies seek to overcome courtship borders thus contesting them. The contestation is visible with the reappropriation of *respeto* by the younger generations. In the case of sexuality involved in *attraction* and *pichoneo*, the cultural norms of the older generations heavily opposed it as their courtship patterns included minimal contact in public. The intimate physical space created between the older generations through their strolls around the cities’ plaza after mass could not compare to that of the college generation today while “grinding” in the clubs who according to Pinky with Pichoneo, is “dance with sex.” The changes have been deemed by the older generations as a loss of *respeto* within the “relationship.” The values, morals, traditions, and practices of our past families, us, and of our future children are creating diverse courtship experiences as witness with the multiple ideologies presented. Courtship borderlands are being created requiring further attention and research.

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