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# A Courtship After Marriage: Sexuality And Love In Mexican Transnational Families



## Synopsis

From about seven children per woman in 1960, the fertility rate in Mexico has dropped to about 2.6. Such changes are part of a larger transformation explored in this book, a richly detailed ethnographic study of generational and migration-related redefinitions of gender, marriage, and sexuality in rural Mexico and among Mexicans in Atlanta.

## Book Information

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"Beautifully written, rigorously analyzed, and almost novelistic in its nuance and detail, this study of marriage, migration, and fertility puts the people back into demography and makes one of the most powerful contributions to policy-relevant social science that I have seen in a long time."

"A Courtship After Marriage places sex and marriage at the heart of modernity's making. Hirsch's innovative study of marriage-making in transnational Mexican families offers a fascinating look at the opportunities cross-border migration provides for reconstructing gender and rediscovering pleasure. This ambitious, well-crafted book speaks to anthropologists, demographers, and public health specialists, while transcending the divides between them."—Susan Greenhalgh, author of *Under the Medical Gaze: Facts and Fictions of Chronic Pain*

Jennifer Hirsch is one of the new wave in demographic scholars that takes culture seriously. Her book is a model of engaged, policy-relevant scholarship that achieves its warrant through deep contextualization in the everyday experience of its subjects. Beautifully written, rigorously analyzed, and almost novelistic in its nuance and detail, this study of marriage, migration, and fertility puts the people back into

demography and makes one of the most powerful contributions to policy-relevant social science that I have seen in a long time. A work of beauty, sensitivity, and scholarship that sets a new standard for all that follows."#151;Tom Fricke, author of *Himalayan Households: Tamang Demography and Domestic Processes*"In this engagingly written and keenly observed ethnography of Mexican marriages in Atlanta and in small Mexican towns, Jennifer Hirsch brings love, sex and romance to Mexican immigration scholarship, and presents a compelling case for the rise of companionate marriages and ideals of spousal intimacy. This book will appeal to anyone interested in gender studies, immigrant families and the social and cultural contexts of fertility."#151;Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, author of *Domestica: Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*"A groundbreaking study. Gracefully written, yet at the same time rigorously argued, this book reminds us of the poetry and dignity that can be found in ordinary lives and of the dreams and aspirations that sustain human agency even in the face of severe social and economic constraints. This is a major contribution to our understanding of migration, gender, sexuality, and social change in contemporary life and a model for engaged social research at its very best."#151;Richard Parker, author of *Bodies, Pleasures and Passions*"Hirsch has written a superb, insightful, and original study of Mexican migrants and the challenges of marital devotion and separation they face across time and space. Exemplary in its detail and rigor, *Courtship* brings us into the lives of men and women in Georgia and Jalisco, shows us the risks they take to create modern forms of intimacy, and reconceptualizes how we should view sexualized companionship, procreation, and engendered pleasures. This book will become a gold standard ethnography in medical anthropology, public health, and transnational migration studies."#151;Matthew C. Gutmann, author of *The Romance of Democracy: Compliant Defiance in Contemporary Mexico*"Hirsch's engaging analysis of gender relations among immigrant Mexicans in Atlanta and in the Mexican community from which they come, shows how migration affects women's and men's roles, the place of sexuality in building marital intimacy, struggles over contraceptive use, and power relations in the couple. Using detailed ethnographic examples, she examines the trend toward companionate couplehood, and demonstrates both struggles and triumphs as young Mexicans and Mexican-Americans strive to create marriages that combine the strengths of traditional respect-based bonds with the advantages of new relationships built on trust."#151;L.A. Rebhun, author of *The Heart Is Unknown Country: Love in the Changing Economy of Northeast Brazil*

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