

They use dating services but remain single

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Some single persons are not really out to find a partner for life when they use online dating sites and go to get-togethers for singles.

Lots of single people use dating services, singles clubs and the like. A fair number are looking for a partner in life. But just as often they are only want to meet others and find a community which can take the place of a family. There's no certainty that they want to relinquish their life as a single person.

Sociologist Andreas Henriksson of Sweden's Karlstad University has found this out. He visited singles clubs and participated in activities, including a two-day cruise for singles.

He witnessed various activities such as social games in which the participants were supposed to give each other hugs. Another activity was so-called speed dating.

It became evident that not all the participants were looking for a particular partner. A female passenger on the boat cruise answered as follows when queried by the researcher if she was still uncertain about why she participated:

“No, I don't know myself. Well, I don't know the answer to that, but it wasn't to meet someone in any case.”

Fuzzy concept of singleness

Henriksen considers the concept of being single to be rather unclear. Are you single if you have a loved one but live separately? Not all single activities are open to people of this category.

“Different activities for singles make different demands of participants. Some are open for people who are having relationships as long as they live on their own. Others have narrower definitions of what it means to be single,” he says in a news report from forskning.se.

An example is the single club Filos. Many of its activities are aimed at giving single persons an alternative to a family – a place to meet people on a regular basis outside of working hours.

The head of Filos is sceptical to couples who live apart.

“It's a shame. People need instructions about how to form nuclear families,” said Henriksson, when quoted in Henriksson's doctoral thesis.

One of the women interviewed was unsure whether she can be defined as single. She has contact with a man but doesn't live with him.

“He's something of a lone wolf. He works a lot and doesn't want to move in with me. But he is concerned about my children and relatives. He is with us at Christmas and Easter,” she said.

New kinds of meetings

Other initiatives point much more toward getting people together as couples. Some participants come to get-togethers with clear expectations of sex, even though such attitudes are disliked by other participants.

New ways of match-making have cropped up in Sweden. Some research has been conducted on web-dating, but not much.

“Single activities in a wider perspective are a little more complicated than a match-making tool on the internet. Being single today entails work on your networks of contacts, various relationships and your own self-image,” says Henriksson.

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[Andreas Henriksson: Organising Intimacy. Exploring Heterosexual Singledoms at Swedish Singles Activities, Karlstad University Studies, 2014:54](#) [12]

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February 18, 2015 - 05:36

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