The Marginalized Majority: Media Representation and Lived Experiences of Single Women

Abstract: Singleness is a lived experience common to all humans, regardless of gender, class, ethnicity, or sexual orientation; we all arrive in the world single, and to all intents and purposes, we depart that way as well. And yet, while census figures indicate single women to be the statistical “norm” in North America (and a burgeoning demographic in Japan), it remains a group that largely sees itself as marginalized. What factors contribute to single women’s perception that they need to account for their single status? This talk presents an overview of media/social discourses of female singleness and will share ways that never-married and previously-married single women “make sense” of their social identity across the life course.