

UNCOPLED: **HOW OUR SINGLES ARE RESHAPING JEWISH ENGAGEMENT**

ABOUT THE STUDY

UNCOPLED is the third in a series of reports co-authored by **Dr. Steven M. Cohen** and **Dr. Ari Y. Kelman** that examine the changing identity of young Jewish Americans. The series was commissioned by The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies in conjunction with the Reboot Identity project.

METHODOLOGY

UNCOPLED is based on the “*2007 National Survey of American Jews*,” conducted by the marketing and research firm Synovate, Inc. Using a consumer access panel of nearly 1.3 million households, Synovate conducted a mail-back and web administered survey of self-identified Jews across the country between December 20, 2006 and January 28, 2007. The survey yielded 1,828 responses, 1,704 of which were from non-Orthodox households. Responses from Orthodox Jews were not included in this analysis.

CONTEXT

There are more Uncoupled American Jews than ever before. In 1990, 33 percent of non-Orthodox Jews between the ages of 25 and 39 were single. By 2001, that number had jumped to 50 percent. Today, it is likely higher. People are getting married later in life and having children later in life. For adult Jews under 40, singlehood is no longer the isolated exception; it is a socially accepted norm. Study after study reports low engagement among single Jews in institutional Jewish life (synagogues, JCCs, federation giving), meaning that the growing Uncoupled set is a population of extreme significance.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- **The Uncoupled show high levels of pride in being Jewish, comparable to their in-married¹ counterparts.**
 - 67% strongly agree with the statement, “I am proud to be a Jew,” slightly surpassing the 66% of in-married individuals who agree with that statement.
 - 56% identify themselves primarily as Jewish, compared to 63% of the in-married, representing a very small gap.
- **The Uncoupled are eager to engage Jewishly.**
 - They are widely and deeply connected to Jewish friends. 42% report that at least half of their friends are Jewish and that they feel a special connection to people they meet because they are Jewish (62%).
 - 58% agree with the statement “I wish I knew more Jewishly, compared to 54% of in-married individuals who agree with that statement.
 - The Uncoupled read more Jewish-oriented books and than the in-married (30% vs. 26%).
- The pattern is similar for web-based Jewish engagement. 11% of the Uncoupled regularly read Jewish-themed blogs vs. 7% of the in-married.
- **The Uncoupled score sharply lower on measures of communal affiliation than the in-married.**
 - Just 19% belong to a synagogue compared to 51% of the in-married. There are similar patterns for attending a JCC (20% vs. 44%), contributing to a Federation campaign (15% vs. 32%), and volunteering with Jewish organizations (8% vs. 28%).
- **The Uncoupled score sharply lower on measures of ritual involvement than the in-married.**
 - 48% attend High Holiday services, as compared with 64% of in-married young adults. Larger gaps exist with respect to the more demanding practices of attending services monthly (13% vs. 32%), and lighting the Shabbat candles (13% vs. 25%).
- **This dichotomy – high levels of Jewish pride and interest combined with low levels of communal and ritual involvement – makes the Uncoupled population pivotal to the future of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness in the United States.**

¹ Throughout the study the term “in-married” refers to couples in which both partners are Jewish.