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Progressives and Purists: A Study of Religiosity in a Canadian-Jewish Community

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Brief Summary of Results

The purpose of this study is to measure religiosity in the Windsor-Jewish community and surrounding area. The study explores adherence to traditional beliefs and the practice of various rituals. The researcher interviewed 50 members of the Jewish community. The average age of participants was 62.31 years with individuals ranging in age from their early 20s to late 80s. It is required that all participants be at least 18 years of age as of the date of the interview. The interviews took place in early 2019 and the average interview took about 45-50 minutes to complete. The participants who took part in the study each received an \$18 gift card. The interview consisted of 25 questions measuring eight indicators of religiosity, including belief in G-d, prayers, shabbat, temple/synagogue life, holydays and holidays, kosher laws, commandments, death and afterlife. A capstone question on what motivates religiosity was also asked. This research project was conducted under the auspices of Assumption University and received ethics clearance from the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. The funding for this research project was provided by the Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chair in Religion and Conflict at Assumption University.

In brief, the results revealed that the community has a fairly strong belief in G-d or a Supreme Being. The community did not appear to have a strong prayer routine and temple/synagogue life. About two-thirds of participants did not have any limitations on activities during the Sabbath. The major holidays were observed with a strong majority of participants celebrating Passover and commemorating Yom Kippur. The level of adherence to kosher laws is mixed with a plurality of participants avoiding pork and mixing meat and dairy. The participant community was divided on the importance of the 613 commandments with a plurality indicating that they commandments were somewhat important. A majority of participants do not believe in the resurrection of the body, but opinions seem somewhat warmer to the idea of the immortality of the soul. The belief in an afterlife is mixed. Overall, many participants noted that their religiosity is motivated by their upbringing.