

Accommodation and resistance to modernity: a comparison of two contemporary Orthodox Jewish groups.

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Accommodation and Resistance to Modernity: A Comparison of Two Contemporary Orthodox Jewish Groups

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Abstract

This article presents a case study of how two particular religious groups — a modern Orthodox and a Lubavitch Chassidic Jewish community — construct their religious worlds in a modern society. A detailed analysis of the religious teachings that each “traditional” religious group presents to newcomers reveals their distinct solutions to the tensions between modernity and tradition. The analysis highlights their responses to several features of modernity that have been emphasized by secularization theorists as particularly problematic for religion: cultural pluralism and individualism, rationalization, and the changing of women's roles. The modern Orthodox group's teachings reflect their *accommodation* to contemporary conceptions of pluralism, rationalism, and feminism. The Lubavitch teachings, in contrast, demonstrate the community's attempt to *resist* the dominant secular culture and to offer a separate religious alternative. The analysis shows that there are at least two distinct strategies for creating “traditional” religious communities in the modern context.

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