TOLERANCE, MULTICULTURALISM, AND DIVERSITY IN AN AUDACIOUSLY HOSPITABLE MOVEMENT

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Digest

In 2015, the Union of Reform Judaism launched the Audacious Hospitality Initiative. This initiative offered its own model for how to negotiate the demands of diversity within Reform institutions. Audacious Hospitality focuses on ways Reform institutions can welcome, embrace, and serve groups that have traditionally been marginalized within Jewish spaces. In this thesis I articulate the steps the Audacious Hospitality Initiative is currently taking to meet the demands of diversity in Reform Judaism. I also evaluate the merits and shortcomings of Audacious Hospitality as a philosophical model. In order to evaluate the philosophical merits of Audacious Hospitality, I juxtapose the model with a number of other prominent models for negotiating diversity from the world of political philosophy.

The models of tolerance, multiculturalism, the politics of recognition, and the politics of acknowledgment all serve to address these challenges on the global political scale. Nonetheless, each model also raises important questions about how a society should address diversity. These models address issues like navigating moral conflict among diverse groups, apportioning limited resources to meet the diverse and divergent needs of different groups within society, promoting social equity for minorities, and cultivating a sense of belonging or unity within a community despite alterity among groups. Ultimately the thesis argues that Audacious Hospitality would be more effectively able to embrace diversity and promote social equity among all Reform Jews if it adopted a politics of acknowledgment.

Preface

I would like to thank all those who made the completion of this work possible. Particular thanks go to my adviser, Associate Professor of Jewish Thought, Rabbi Dr. Haim Rechnitzer, for guiding me in my research and encouraging me to think outside the box. I would also like to thank the faculty at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion for providing me with the skills needed to ground this work in an understanding of Jewish history, thought, and values. The resources I have received from the Audacious Hospitality Initiative have been invaluable, and I am grateful to have been provided with pilot materials and allowed access to video seminars. I look forward to being an ongoing partner with all those who made it possible for me to produce this work. As I enter the rabbinate, I am excited to advocate for the diverse needs and interests of Reform Jews, and am especially looking forward to serving the individuals the Reform Movement is now choosing to empower in new ways through the Audacious Hospitality Initiative.

Introduction

Today the Reform movement is significantly more diverse than it used to be. As Reform institutions continue to welcome individuals with a more diverse set of identities, values, and lifestyles, our leaders are faced with the challenge of discerning how to meet the needs of a more varied population. The reality of growing diversity in Reform Judaism has been encouraged, in part, by the movement's conscious commitment to engage in outreach and embrace new demographics. For over a decade, movement leaders have likened Reform Judaism to a big tent. The Union of Reform Judaism's president, Rabbi Rick Jacobs, explains the metaphor of the big tent, suggesting: "The key thing is to have the doorways open… Anyone who wants to be a part, they are welcome."[1]

Indeed, in 2015, Rabbi Rick Jacobs launched the Audacious Hospitality Initiative to help address the challenges of "welcoming and incorporating the diversity that is the reality of modern Jewish life" into Reform institutions.[2] Unlike past Reform initiatives that addressed challenges of diversity by focusing on interfaith families, such as Reform Outreach, the Audacious Hospitality Initiative attempts a more far-reaching approach to address the challenges of multiculturalism. Thus, the initiative's focus extends to the following diverse groups within Reform Judaism:

> Jews by choice and those exploring Judaism, Jews of color, Jews who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer, Jews who live with physical, mental, or intellectual disabilities, multiracial families, millennials, the aging Jewish population, Jews who are unaffiliated and uninspired by Jewish communal

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[1] "For New Reform Leader Richard Jacobs, Big Tent Movement Is the Idea." *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, March 22, 2011. https://www.jta.org/2011/03/22/life-religion/for-new-reform-leader-richard-jacobs-big-tent-movement-is-the-idea.

[2] "Audacious Hospitality." URJ, October 5, 2015. https://urj.org/audacioushospitality.

> offerings, and of course, the evolving needs of interfaith and intermarried couples and families.[3]

The Audacious Hospitality Initiative is a project designed to make Reform Jewish institutions more welcoming and to support the needs of these minorities in Reform institutions. The initiative address the challenges of diversity in a variety of ways, including: creating strategies for addressing the needs of minorities in Reform communities; establishing networks of minorities who identify as Reform Jews to help foster a sense of belonging in the Reform Movement; educating Reform Jewish leaders about how to address diversity in their synagogues; providing strategies, resources, and support to Reform Institutions as they address the demands of diversity; cultivating the leadership skills of Reform Jews interested in addressing issues pertaining to diversity, particularly those who identify as minorities; and authoring literature that both raises awareness about the challenges minorities face in Reform Judaism and speaks to the needs and interests of minority groups.

Outside the Reform Movement, on a national scale, questions of how to engage with growing diversity have been the focus of philosophical debate for decades. Exploring the philosophical discourse posed around the ways societies navigate diversity offers a useful framework through which to address Reform Jewish diversity.

This thesis falls roughly into two parts. The first section offers an exploration of leading voices in the contemporary discourse around several models for addressing the demands of diversity. This section begins with a discussion of tolerance and multiculturalism. This discussion offers definitions of each approach and explores the

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[3] Ibid.

different demands and challenges of each model. Then, the section moves to a discussion of the politics of recognition. After defining recognition, the discourse shifts toward examining the conflicting frameworks of individualism and communitarianism. These competing frameworks for understanding the relationship between communities and individuals lead to different answers to the challenges raised around the recognition, representation, and authority of individuals in the context of multiculturalism. This section concludes with an exploration of Jewish reflections on diversity and hospitality.

In the second section the focus shifts to Audacious Hospitality and negotiating diversity in contemporary Reform congregations. This section begins by examining the current challenges the Audacious Hospitality Initiative has identified with regard to diversity and outlining the steps the movement is taking to address those challenges. Next, I put the philosophical frameworks and questions posed in section one in conversation with the model of Audacious Hospitality. This didactic conversation between these models of navigating communal diversity highlight the merits and shortcomings of Audacious Hospitality. Finally, the thesis concludes by offering some new ways Reform congregations can understand and meet the demands of the diversifying populations they serve.

Definitions and Challenges of Tolerance

In tolerance, despite the perception that the values and behaviors of the tolerated are wrong, the tolerator chooses a stance of non-interference. To tolerate is not to accept the other or to attempt to understand and value their way of life. Rather, to tolerate is to refrain from behaving aggressively or actively attempting to eliminate what is perceived

by the tolerant as unsavory behaviors. Tolerance takes place in the gap between responding to the behaviors of others out of a belief that they are so morally abhorrent that they demand interference and not responding to the behaviors of others out of indifference to their behavior. In the words of Israeli philosopher David Heyd, "The concept of toleration must be narrowed down in its philosophical use so as to refer strictly to cases in which restraint in the response to another's belief or action is based on some specifically moral grounds grounds (thus excluding both compromise and indifference)."[4] When someone is tolerant, they believe that the actions of the other are immoral but they also believe that they have a moral obligation not to interfere with those immoral actions for reasons explored further below. Ultimately, tolerance can be understood as the "readiness to bear or suffer what is wrong, despite disagreement."[5]

Historically, tolerance has taken many forms. The American philosopher, John Rawls, suggests that tolerance is the foundation of modern liberalism. He suggests tolerance originally emerged out of the sphere of religion as a way to address competing religious notions of the good. However, over time the category expands to address conflicting beliefs and behaviors in many other non-religious realms of life.[6] In his commentary on Rawls' work, Canadian philosopher Will Kymlicka suggests that early forms of tolerance were directed toward the rights of minority groups. Gradually, Kymlicka continues, group-oriented models of tolerance were largely replaced by models

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[4] David Heyd, "Introduction," In *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, (Princeton University Press, 1998), 4.
[5] Avi Sagi, "Are Toleration and Pluralism Possible in Jewish Religion," In *Jewish Religion After Theology*, translated by Batya Stein, (Boston, Mass: Academic Studies Press, 2009), 6.
[6] Will Kymlicka, "Two Models of Pluralism and Tolerance," In *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, (Princeton University Press, 1998), 81.

of tolerance that recognized individual autonomy and the rights of individual self-expression over that of group rights.[7] This tension between group and individual rights and identity, which is further examined in later chapters, plays a significant role in political discourse around tolerance as well as multiculturalism and many other models of negotiating the demands of diversity.

Of the many ways to navigate difference, tolerance is simultaneously the most pragmatic and the most paradoxical. Tolerance is pragmatic because it allows the tolerators to avoid the cost of interference and conflict without calling them to challenge their perception of the other or compromise their values.[8] At the same time, tolerance is paradoxical insofar as it is born out of a belief that truth and morality are objective and non-relativistic. Yet, by weighing the cost of interference above that of non-interference, the tolerators are implicitly acknowledging the weight the tolerated ascribes to a set of truth claims that conflict with their own beliefs.[9]

Moreover, tolerance is paradoxical because the tolerators are deeply bothered by the tolerated behavior, but rather than trying to eradicate the behavior or help what they perceive as the immoral individual to change, the tolerators tacitly accept the behavior by choosing not to engage with it. Indeed, in some forms of tolerance, the tolerator may even actively ensure protection of other's rights to openly express the values they are

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[7] Ibid., 83

[8] Of course, as articulated further below, there are limits to the pragmatism of tolerance. Tolerance is only pragmatic when the benefits of social harmony that come from tolerance out way the costs of being tolerant. Barbara Herman, "Pluralism and the Community of Moral Judgment." In *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, (Princeton University Press, 1998), 61.

[9] Sagi, "Are Toleration and Pluralism Possible in Jewish Religion," 6; Moshe Halbertal, "Autonomy, Toleration, and Group Rights: A Response to Will Kymlicka," In *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, (Princeton University Press, 1998), 112.

tolerating. Israeli philosopher, Avi Sagi, suggests tolerance appears in two distinct forms. "Negative tolerance" is the most basic form of non-interference; it neither forbids the actions of others nor forces its own way of life on others.[10] In contrast, "positive tolerance" refers to instances of tolerance in which non-interference is deemed insufficient and accordingly "[obligations are imposed] on the tolerant person to ensure continued protection of the tolerated position by means of legislation or through other ways."[11] In contexts of positive tolerance, this paradox is even more pronounced, as tolerance may manifest in the tolerators actively working to protect and defend the right of the tolerated to practice the behaviors they find abhorrent.

Even in the face of this paradox, there are a variety of different motivations that lead people to adopt a stance of tolerance. For some, tolerance is generated from a sense of paternalism or moral superiority. In these contexts, tolerance can be a tool employed to affirm the tolerant group's moral superiority. For example, when Thomas Aquinas argued for a stance of tolerance toward Jews over forced conversion, he did so with the aim of instrumentalizing the Jewish community's lesser status as a symbol of Christian superiority.[12] Similarly, those who come to tolerance through paternalistic superiority often justify tolerance by labeling the tolerated as ignorant or simple-minded. This justification allows the tolerators to circumvent the paradox of tolerance because tolerance becomes a way to accommodate those who are incapable of understanding truth.[13] Paternalistic tolerators are not condoning the tolerated behavior; they are merely

[10] Sagi, "Are Toleration and Pluralism Possible in Jewish Religion," 11.
[11] Ibid.,11.
[12] Ibid., 8.
[13] Ibid.,9.

choosing not to punish those who are too feeble-minded to understand that their behaviors are errant.

In other instances, people adopt a stance of tolerance when intolerant ideals are inherent to their worldview, but they need to coexist with those who do not share their lifestyle. In these cases, intolerance toward specific behaviors or values may be so ingrained in the larger system of beliefs and practices that make up a group's identity that they cannot completely divorce themselves from intolerance without undermining their way of life.[14] In Israeli philosopher Alon Harel's analysis of this phenomenon, he explores the example of Orthodox Judaism. He suggests that in many respects a non-feminist and anti-homosexual outlook are an inherent part of the coherent system of Orthodox Judaism and comprise an integral part of an Orthodox Jew's worldview.[15] Because of this worldview, he suggests that Orthodox communities are not capable of tolerating feminism or homosexuality among other Orthodox Jews. [16] Yet, in contexts where they live in close proximity to those who are not Orthodox, for example in the State of Israel, they may tolerate the feminism or homosexuality in others in the society for the sake of coexistence.

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[14] Alon Harel, "The Boundaries of Justifiable Tolerance: A Liberal Perspective." In *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, (Princeton University Press, 1998) 117.
[15] Alon Harel, "The Boundaries of Justifiable Tolerance: A Liberal Perspective," 116.
[16] Many other Jewish thinkers' work challenges Harel's claim that non-feminism and anti-homosexuality are integral to the Orthodox Jewish worldview. For example, in her work *Engendering Judaism*, Rachel Adler claims that there is space within the traditional hermeneutics of halakhic interpretation to re-engender Halakah and make more space for women and LGBTQ individuals. Rachel Adler, *Engendering Judaism: An Inclusive Theology and Ethics*. 1st edition. Boston: Beacon Press, 1999. 21-59.

Another reason why someone may adopt a stance of tolerance is that they believe everyone is entitled to certain human rights regardless of his or her values and practices, and that they have a moral obligation to protect those human rights even if they do not agree with how others choose to use them. In these circumstances, ideals like the value of free expression, or the belief that individuals should have the autonomy to pursue their desired life path, may be valued over challenging the distasteful behaviors of others. Consequently, these values may lead people to tolerate behaviors they find immoral. In the United States, for example, belief in the First Amendment's protection of the right to freely exercise one's religious practices without interference leads many Americans to tolerate views and practices they believe are harmful and wrong. For instance, this may manifest in the toleration of those who choose not to vaccinate their children or those who refrain from saying the words "one nation under God" during a public recitation of the pledge of allegiance. Ultimately, in these circumstances, people can justify tolerance despite its paradoxes. Tolerance allows people to overcome the contradiction between their value of universal rights and their frustration with what they perceive to be the immoral actions of others by putting a greater emphasis on the former. As discussed further below, this form of tolerance may be particularly fragile because it only works when the tolerated action do not undermine the rights of everyone else in society. For example, if refusal to vaccinate one's children means that the rest of the community's choice to get vaccinated are undermine, they may not be as tolerant because they feel their basic right to protect their health is being attacked. Thus, this form of tolerance only works when the tolerated behavior does not pose a threat to the rights of others.

The final circumstance that theorists suggest may lead to a stance of tolerance is when groups fear that interaction with other cultures will threaten the hegemony of their own culture. Within this paradigm, tolerance is a way to strike a delicate balance between competing fears. On the one hand, majority groups may be drawn to tolerate minorities for fear that minority groups who feel oppressed will join together, revolt, and destabilize the state. On the other hand, majority groups fear that growing recognition will lead to more authority or public self-expression of minority groups, which could challenge or change pre-established societal norms.[17] Likewise, all cultures may fear that tolerance may expand exposure to conflicting lifestyles that will threaten their exclusive control over the values their progeny, and lure future generations away from their heritage.[18] Additionally, all cultures may harbor concerns about how tolerance will threaten their ability to define how their society will look in the future.[19] In response to these fears, groups may choose tolerance because tolerance encourages coexistence with limited integration and allows groups to continue to delegitimize one another privately

Tolerance is important and effective because it offers an alternative to violence and a path to coexistence for those with a variety of different concerns and worldviews, from the paternalists to those whose worldview holds inherent intolerances, and from those committed to the universal rights to those who fear cultural erasure. Despite these benefits of tolerance, tolerance is a very fragile stance riddled with challenges.

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[17] Ibid., 118-119.

[18] This may be the case for a majority group looking at exposure to minority cultures, minorities looking at exposure to majority culture, or in a circumstance where there is no majority, just different cultures afraid of the influence of one another regardless of their size or the scope of their authority.

[19] Ibid., 118-119; Herman, "Pluralism and the Community of Moral Judgment," 60.

One of the challenges of tolerance that makes it so fragile is that it may rely on moral inconsistency, or what some thinkers refer to as "moral weakness."[20] Tolerance exists as an alternative to actively challenging the immoral behaviors of others. However, there are many circumstances where the highest moral action would be to combat and eliminate immorality. In these instances, ignoring or tolerating the immoral behaviors of others, even for the sake of coexistence between groups, would be morally reprehensible. For example, there were many instances when Europeans who did not identify as Nazi sympathizers passively tolerated the actions of their compatriots for the sake of coexistence. Their choice to tolerate immorality, even for the sake of promoting peace between their community and the Nazis, was morally reprehensible.

This example is not meant to suggest that moral laxity is inherent in tolerance, nor that tolerance is never the actual moral high ground. Tolerance may be beneficial to a society when it promotes coexistence and allows people to see themselves as part of a unified community with those they otherwise disagree with.[21] However, one challenge of tolerance is that by keeping moral qualms in check, tolerance can easily become a justification for oppression and injustice.[22] For example, in the context of United States history there were many Northerners who morally opposed the practices of slavery in the southern half of the country, yet they tolerated the practice of oppression for the sake of coexistence and national unity. Ultimately, by not challenging the oppressive behavior they reinforced it's legitimacy and allowed it to continue.

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[20] Sagi, "Are Toleration and Pluralism Possible in Jewish Religion," 7.
[21] T.M. Scanlon, "The Difficulty of Tolerance," In *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, (Princeton University Press, 1998), 231.
[22] Herman, "Pluralism and the Community of Moral Judgment," 61.

Another complication inherent in tolerance is the challenge intolerance poses to tolerance. If a society demands that groups tolerate one another, that demand may be inherently intolerant of certain ways of life.[23] In many circumstances, intolerance is part of a coherent way of life and composes an integral part of a group's identity. For example, the Klu Klux Klan is a group built on the fundamental principle of intolerance of non-white members of society. To demand tolerance from the Klu Klux Klan is to be intolerant of the fact that their identity and core values revolve around the practice of intolerance. In contrast, when a society does not require intolerant groups to be tolerant they perpetuate intolerance by allowing the group's intolerance to persist and to continue to victimize those they do not tolerate.[24] Ultimately, intolerance poses another difficult paradox for tolerance that may make widespread tolerance an untenable foundation for coexistence in most societies.

A final somewhat subjective challenge of tolerance is that it does not engender understanding of difference; it merely demands a lack of retaliation against difference. As Barbara Herman argues, people perpetuate tolerance by ascribing immorality to values and behaviors they do not understand.[25] For Herman, this is problematic because she believes a society with a wealth of different cultures and competing values needs a foundation of mutual respect in order to function and maintain stability. Herman's personal value judgment is that tolerance lacks the depth and necessary foundation to meet the complex moral demands of a society with many conflicting cultures.

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[23] Harel, "The Boundaries of Justifiable Tolerance: A Liberal Perspective," 116-117.
[24] Ibid., 121.
[25]Herman, "Pluralism and the Community of Moral Judgment," 64-66.

In contrast to Herman's others claim that tolerance is built on the foundation of mutual respect. For example, Scanlon suggests that respect is foundational to tolerance because without basic respect for others there would be no shared sense of mutual belonging to society and no social unity to privilege over combating immorality.[26] For Scanlon, tolerance is fundamentally the choice to privilege social unity over the desire to express one's disgust with others' behaviors, so without respect and a shared sense of belonging tolerance cannot exist. Similarly, David Heyd argues that tolerance is a subcategory of respect.[27] Heyd suggests that the perceptual shift required from disgust with a behavior to toleration of a person, a shift he calls personalization, is actually the process of coming to respect the humanity of the person being tolerated and to focus on that respect above all else.[28]

Nonetheless, both Scanlon and Heyd's arguments fail to account for Herman's critique that respect and other more morally grounded orientations toward difference require a level of understanding of the other that tolerance does no engender. The type of respect Scanlon and Heyd suggest is essential to tolerance is one Herman deconstructs. Herman suggests that people often think they are treating others with respect based on how they would want to be treated in a given circumstance. However, true respect demands more than just good will toward the other. Respect also demands a full understanding of another culture's values and the precepts that govern the other's worldview.[29] True respect is such that one is not merely treating others the way they

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[26] Scanlon, "The Difficulty of Tolerance," 231.
[27] Heyd, "Introduction," 12.
[28] Ibid., 11.
[29] Herman, "Pluralism and the Community of Moral Judgment," 64-65.

themselves would like to be treated in a given situation, but rather the way *the other* wishes to be treated. Thus, insofar as tolerance fails to engender understanding, it also fails to promote meaningful respect of difference.

While Herman writes about the challenges of tolerance, her critiques of tolerance and her advocacy for mutual respect are almost identical to those put forth by advocates of multiculturalism, the philosophy explored in the next section. For those who are true supporters of tolerance, Herman's argument is uncompelling because it is rooted in moral relativism. Unlike multiculturalism, tolerance does not challenge the belief many communities hold that morality is objective and universal.

Ultimately, tolerance is a model of negotiating the challenges of diversity, which allows individuals and groups with conflicting values to coexist while maintaining the belief that the differences reflected in the other's behaviors and beliefs are immoral. tolerance is valuable insofar as it encourages civility in circumstances which might otherwise lead to violence and conflict. However, tolerance poses many ethical challenges as a model for negotiating relationships among individuals with different cultures and values.

Definitions and Challenges of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism and tolerance are ways to allow groups with separate and conflicting values, identities, and behaviors to coexist. Multiculturalism is a model of negotiating differences in which a society recognizes the presence of groups with different values, and attempts to provide each group with equal treatment and equal respect. Multiculturalism focuses on the recognition, affirmation, and accommodation of

the many differences between groups.[30] Beyond non-discrimination, multiculturalism strives to cultivates a culture of mutual understanding and respect for difference.[31] This explanation begins with the historical and political phenomena of multiculturalism and then moves into a discussion of its moral implications and critiques.

Philosophically, Israeli philosopher Joseph Raz suggests that multiculturalism often begins with a change in a society's self-perception. This change moves away from the prevailing notions of majority and minority toward an understanding of society as "a plurality of cultural groups."[32] In practice, he suggests this move toward multiculturalism manifests in a rejection of assimilationist practices toward greater affirmation of diversity. Similarly, Israeli sociologists Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Yochanan Peres suggest that multiculturalism begins "when socio-cultural groups become recognized as permanent and legitimate actors and their specific interests become embedded in the legal organization of the social order."[33] British political theorist Bhikhu Parekh offers similar claims about this shift toward multiculturalism. Parekh suggests that when a society calls itself multicultural it is signifying the acceptance of the following beliefs: " its traditional culture should not be given pride of place, that the minority cultures are equal central to its identity, that they should be respected and even cherished and not encouraged to disappear over time, and that the ethnic minorities consist not of individuals but of

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[30] Joseph Raz, "Multiculturalism," *Ratio Juris* vol. 11, no. 3 (1998): 197; Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 16.
[31] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys,*16.;
[32] Raz, "Multiculturalism." 197.
[33] Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Yochanan Peres, "The Configuration of Multiculturalism." In *Is Israel One: Religion, Nationalism, and Multiculturalism Confounded*, (Brill, 2005), 4.

organized communities entitled to make collective claims."[34] Despite embracing these beliefs, Parekh insists that multiculturalism "is not about minorities…Multiculturalism is about the proper terms of relationship between different cultural communities. The norms governing their respective claims, including the principles of justice, cannot be derived from one culture alone but through open dialogue between them."[35] Ultimately, the work of these thinkers is evidence that multiculturalism offers an approach to difference that embraces diversity and tries to fully recognize and integrate the voices of diverse groups into the political and social fabric of a society.

While most theorists of multiculturalism broadly agree on the nature of multiculturalism, they offer diverse and divergent opinions about multiculturalism's origins. Raz argues that multiculturalism is a new word, first appearing in the 1950s, that is being used to signify an age-old phenomenon of unity among diverse groups.[36] In defense of this argument, Raz points to examples of coexistence and unity of diverse groups in pre-modern Europe.[37] Despite his belief that multiculturalism has these pre-modern foundations, Raz also seeks to explain the growing popularity of multiculturalism in contemporary times. He attributes the growing popularity of multiculturalism to countries reflecting on the harmful elements of nationalism witnessed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[38] Ultimately, Raz sees multiculturalism today as a way for these

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[34] Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, (Harvard University Press, 2002) 6.
[35] Ibid., 13.
[36] Raz, "Multiculturalism," 194
[37] Ibid., 195.
[38] Ibid.,194.

countries to meet the perceived ethical and political demands that are born out of reflection about the painful pitfalls of earlier manifestations of nationalism.[39]

In contrast to Raz, Ben-Rafael and Peres suggest that multiculturalism is a uniquely post-modern phenomenon.[40] They suggest that multiculturalism cannot exist without the foundation of certain post-modern values like relativism and cultural assessment.[41] Kymlicka also defends the conclusion that multiculturalism is a more contemporary phenomena.[42] He points to several origins of multiculturalism in today's world. On a national level, Kymlicka suggests that countries tend to come to multiculturalism as an amenable solution in the face of potential ethnic conflict after minorities begin to mobilize and threaten the existing social or political structure.[43] However, Kymlicka's work is much more focused on the international climate that has led to a rise in multiculturalism, and he does little to defend this claim. Kymlicka's claim is more extensively and compellingly defended in Parekh's work. Parekh traces the birth of multiculturalism to the 1960s and 1970s as a response to more outspoken minority demands for recognition and equality.[44] Ultimately, The definitions and understanding of

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[39]Ibid., 197.
[40]Ben-Rafael and Perez, "The Configuration of Multiculturalism," 5.
[41] Ibid.,5.
[42] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 19.
[43]Ibid., 3, 8-9.
[44] In the United States these demands were made first by African Americans in the civil rights movement and were later followed by similar demands from other minority groups like "Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, native peoples, some sections of non-European immigrants, and others."[44] In the late 1960s, multiculturalism began to take form in Israel in response to Sephardic and Mizrachi demands.[44] In 1960s Great Britain, these demands came from immigrants from South Asia and an array of Afro-Caribbean groups. In Australia, he locates the shift toward multiculturalism in the 1970s as precipitated by the refusal of Asian immigrants to assimilate. In Germany, he traces the earliest shifts toward multiculturalism to demands of Turkish migrants in the 1970s. Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism,*5.

multiculturalism explored in this paper may be less connected to any one of the aforementioned theories about the historical origins of multiculturalism as it is grounded in the shift toward the systematic study of multiculturalism in philosophy in the 1990s.[45]

On an international level, Kymlicka suggests intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and a wide variety of NGOs, have shifted international political and legal discourse toward multiculturalism.[46] Multiculturalism has come to be understood as "a morally progressive extension of existing human rights norms" through shifts in international law and in the international political discourse promoted by these international organizations.[47] Today these international organizations encourage multiculturalism as best practice for negotiating difference in contrast to policies of oppressive, assimilationist, or homogenizing approaches toward diversity.[48]

Despite divergent understandings of the origin of the phenomenon of multiculturalism, there is consensus about the pre-conditions that allow a society to embrace multiculturalism. These necessary preconditions include minority groups with "viable" cultures.[49] If non-hegemonic cultures have lost their vitality and relevance to those who once belonged to them, it is unlikely that greater recognition and the policies of multiculturalism can revive them.[50] Multiculturalism also requires economic or social structures that force diverse groups to interact with one another and make it difficult for

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[45] "Multiculturalism | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy." https://www.iep.utm.edu/multicul/#H1.
[46] Ibid., 3-4.
[47] Ibid.,6.
[48] Ibid.,4.
[49] Raz, "Multiculturalism," 198.
[50] Ibid., 198.

groups to remain siloed by their differences.[51] Multiculturalism is unlikely to succeed if the structure of a society is such that minorities can remain invisible. These groups must be viable and present enough that "no one any-more can have the dream or delusion that minorities will disappear."[52]

Politically, the conditions that are most accommodating to multiculturalism are democracy and liberalism. Democracies tend to be conducive to multiculturalism because they limits the ability of elites to ignore the voices of minority groups.[53] Moreover, it offers individuals the ability to join together and speak out politically in ways that amplify their voices.[54] Liberalism is particularly conducive to multiculturalism because it rests on a belief in the values of freedom, equality, and human dignity.[55] When a society values freedom and equality, there is more space for those who feel marginalized to fight for equal treatment, equal cultural recognition, and freedom of self-determination. While multiculturalism is theoretically possible without the grounding of liberalism, "liberal multiculturalism" is the only form of multiculturalism that has been successfully practiced.[56] Despite the fact that liberal multiculturalism has proven to be the only sustainable form of multiculturalism, Kymlica uses the term "liberal multiculturalism" instead of "multiculturalism" to make a moral distinction. "liberal multiculturalism" is the multiculturalism he advocates for, one grounded in the moral values of freedom, equity, and dignity for all. In contrast, he suggests: "There are many examples around the

[51] Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism,*7.
[52] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 111.
[53] Ibid.,8,110.
[54] Ibid., 110.
[55] Ibid., 53; Raz, "Multiculturalism," 54.
[56] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 108.

world in which the language of multiculturalism and minority rights is invoked by local elites to perpetuate gender and caste inequalities, or to legitimize unjust cultural practices and traditions."[57] In his use of the term liberal multiculturalism he offers his own value judgment about the moral value of liberalism over illiberalism. Ultimately, liberal multiculturalism is distinguished by grounding in the aforementioned liberal values. It is a political attitude governed by the aim of "fostering and encouraging the prosperity, cultural and material, of cultural groups, and respecting their identity."[58]

While expressions of liberal multiculturalism have a shared foundation in liberal values, liberal multiculturalism manifests differently in different contexts. Nonetheless, some core aims undergird liberal multicultural policy in most communities. The first is that policies tend to treat distinct groups in a highly differentiated manner. As Kymlicka explains:

> Any attempt to articulate liberal multiculturalism as if it were purely a matter of generic minority rights is doomed to failure. The logic of liberal multiculturalism cannot be captured in the form 'all minorities have a right to X' or 'all persons belonging to minorities have a right to X'. Different types of minorities have fought for, and gained, different types of minority rights, and this group-differentiated targeting is key both to understanding the challenges involved in adopting liberal multiculturalism and to evaluating its successes and limitations to date.[59]

In other words, in order to afford each group the proper recognition, support, and accommodations they need, liberal multiculturalism focuses on the distinct needs of each group.

Policies promoting liberal multiculturalism tend to serve two distinct functions. First, they provide recognition to all groups, and particularly to those who were

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[57] Ibid., 6.
[58] Raz, "Multiculturalism," 197.
[59] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 79.

previously perceived as minorities. Second, they address systemic inequalities and perceived past injustices. On a national level, governments offer greater recognition to minorities by ensuring that all customs and practices of different groups are recognized and protected by law.[60] This legal protection is also supported by creating policies which ensure that both public and major private institutions do not undermine or jeopardize a group's rites to practice its traditions.[61]

Cultures are also offered recognition through changing educational policy and committing to teaching a more extensive array of histories and cultures in schools. Often in monocultural education, schools teach one dominant narrative of history which supports and sustains only the dominant culture.[62] In order to provide equal recognition to all groups, liberal multiculturalism must deconstruct monocultural education and replace it with an education that promotes understanding across diverse groups and acknowledges competing historical narratives. Raz argues that multiculturalism can still have space for individual cultures to self-educate their youth. Nonetheless, he suggests there should be measures in place to ensure that all students are required to learn about the history and culture of every major group in the country.[63] Raz's work advocates that liberal multiculturalism demands reimagining the aim of historical and cultural education. Kymlicka adds to this discourse in his insistence that education of non-dominant languages is also an important element of liberal multicultural education.[64]

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[60] Raz, "Multiculturalism," 198.
[61] Ibid., 198.
[62] Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism,* 225-226.
[63] Raz, "Multiculturalism,"198.
[64] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 66.

Adding to Raz's thought, Parekh suggests that education is always fundamentally a tool to sustain community. However, insofar as multiculturalism reimagines the boundaries and nature of the community, multicultural education becomes a tool to sustain the newly reconstructed multicultural society.[65] In order to achieve this goal, Parekh offers that the model of education must not teach minority histories separately, because this maintains the dynamic of a majority and minority culture. Instead, there should be a unified curriculum that integrates all groups historical narratives, and events of cultural significance must be integrated into one curriculum.[66] As Raz concludes, the aim of multicultural education should be to cultivate "an attitude of respect" for all cultures.[67]

In addition to these and many other forms of policy reform that promote equal recognition of all groups, liberal multiculturalism also offers policies that address past systemic inequalities. The most significant ways governments aim to rectify past inequalities are through redistributing resources. As Kymlicka explains, the motivation for these redistribution policies stems from an understanding that the previous hierarchical system not only served to recognize one identity above all others, but it also built "public institutions around that identity, so that it becomes a source of economic opportunity, political power, and social prestige."[68] "Liberal multiculturalism," he continues, "has the same aspiration to link identities and interests."[69] Nonetheless, it aims

[65] Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism,* 225.
[66] Ibid., 229.
[67] Ibid., 198.
[68] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 81.
[69] Ibid., 81.

to distribute resources in a way that affords all cultures the same economic, political, and social opportunities.

By redistributing resources, governments acknowledge that the previous economic and social order afforded privileges to the dominant minority that kept other groups from achieving social mobility. Raz argues:

> It is crucial to break the link between poverty, under-education and ethnicity. So long as certain ethnic groups are so overwhelmingly over-represented among the poor, ill-educated, unskilled and semiskilled workers the possibilities of cultivating respect for their cultural identity, even the possibility of members of the group being able to have self-respect and to feel pride in their cultures are greatly undermined.[70]

Thus, successful liberal multiculturalism cannot focus solely on the present and on recognizing all groups as equal; societies have to address historical inequality and understand the roles these past inequalities play in contemporary groups' self-perception and access to resources. Likewise, in addition to redistributing economic resources, governments also have to enact policies to dismantle systems that privilege those who were part of a dominant culture. These policies can also work to recognize and serve the needs of minorities who have experienced discrimination but who, as a whole, have not been severely economically disadvantaged, like LGBTQ individuals.[71]

In practice, governments have worked to distribute resources and level the playing field for all groups by offering public funding for cultural institutions.[72] Similarly, governments have worked to reapportion the use of public space so that the use of public space and the laws governing public spaces can better accommodate the needs of all

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[70] Raz, "Multiculturalism,"198.
[71] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 82.
[72] Raz, "Multiculturalism,"198.

cultures.[73] By changing the laws surrounding the function and governance of public land and publicly funding the cultural needs of a wide array of groups, the government can make recompense for past inequality. In particular, these policies make amends for times where governments seized lands or resources from minorities for the sake of nation-building and promoting a dominant culture. Furthermore, these policies allow the government to ensure that resources are distributed based on the actual needs of a community and not on dominant cultural values or even by group population size. These measures guarantee ensure that vulnerable minorities may still have thriving cultural institutions whose existence is as essential to the collective identity of the society as those who were privileged with access to more support and resources in the past.

Liberal multiculturalism has many merits. First, liberal multiculturalism is less likely than tolerance to lead to minority oppression. Liberal multiculturalism offers members of non-dominant cultural groups security from those who disagree with their beliefs by adopting policies that recognize and protect the rights of minorities to exist and to express their culture and values. Moreover, multiculturalism creates a society where all groups are equally valued, and where diversity is supported as an integral part of the collective culture. Ultimately, multiculturalism engenders shared respect that offers groups a more comprehensive sense of belonging and security than tolerance can offer. Through its policies, multiculturalism aims to exclude violence as well as social, political, or economic oppression justified by an appeal to the alterity of the oppressed.

The second merit of multiculturalism is that it offers communities a way to address their past injustices and make restitution for establishing and perpetuating

[73] Ibid., 198.

inequality. In the name of nation-building and promoting dominant cultures, nations have committed unforgivable atrocities from genocide and slavery to colonialism and political subjugation. Nothing can entirely make amends for these calamities. Yet, liberal multiculturalism confronts these failures and strives to reconstruct society in a way that prevents them from being repeated. Moreover, liberal multiculturalism works to correct the social, political, and economic imbalances these failures of the past have perpetuated which continue to impact the lives of people in the present. Accordingly, liberal multiculturalism has the power to offer resources and social mobility to those who would otherwise remain disenfranchised.

A third significant benefit of liberal multiculturalism is that it addresses systemic inequality without destroying pre-existing socio-political and economic structures. Kymlicka's work suggests that in most circumstances, particularly those with some pre-existing foundation of liberalism, embracing liberal multiculturalism proves to be a relatively low-cost and undemanding endeavor.[74] Of course, in redistributing resources and offering minorities greater recognition, those who benefit most from hegemonic power structures may find themselves sharing power and resources in unprecedented ways, which may seem limiting to those at the top. Yet liberal multiculturalism strives to provide needed support and recognition to all groups, including those who were historically dominant. When faced with minorities who are dissatisfied with the status quo who could potentially threaten or undermine the dominant way of life, societies can embrace multiculturalism as a way to meet their demands without undermining the dominant culture or restructuring the whole society. Liberal multiculturalism does not

[74] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 21.

strive to undermine the dominant culture; it merely serves to uplift other cultures alongside the dominant culture.

Parekh argues that liberal multiculturalism not only presents an unthreatening demand to the dominant culture, but it also ensures its stability in the face of the serious threats posed by growing diversity. He suggests that "the greater and deeper the diversity in a society, the greater the unity and cohesion it requires to hold itself together and nurture its diversity."[75] If a society is able to embrace diversity through multiculturalism, it can promote a greater sense of unity and societal belonging among diverse groups.[76] As Raz explains, one of the barriers to unity is that individuals have to identify with the collective society, which is only something they will do if they feel the society is respecting and serving their needs. For example, he suggests, "A political society which does not respect gays, or Christians, or black people, cannot expect that those it fails to respect will identify with it, and it does not deserve their allegiance."[77] When a society provides groups with recognition and support it increases the likelihood that they will identify with the broader society and feel a sense of unity with those the society recognizes and supports even if they hold different cultures and values. Fostering this sense of unity will, in turn, strengthen the society and allow members of dominant cultures to feel secure in their culture and unthreatened by diversity.[78]

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[75] Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism,*196.
[76] Ibid., 196.
[77] Raz, "Multiculturalism," 204.
[78] One challenge Parekh and Raz do not address here are situations when the dominant culture is built on being threatened by or not accepting diversity. In those contexts, the fact that minority cultures are receiving greater recognition and feel a greater sense of belonging may feel threatening to the dominant culture.

Another benefit of liberal multiculturalism is that is its orientation toward cultures. Many theorists argue that culture is an integral part of human nature and that it is important to order society in a way that protects cultures and the rights of groups rather than focusing solely on the rights of individuals. Enumerating the ways culture is constitutive of identity, Raz writes:

> People's prosperity and dignity derive their concrete forms from the shared social meanings in the societies in which they live…People's well-being consists in their success in valuable relationships and activities. Their social and other skills to engage in activities and pursue relationships derive from their own cultures, and their sense of their own dignity is bound up with their sense of themselves as members of certain cultures.[79]

Accordingly, Raz suggests that multiculturalism is critical because, unlike tolerance and other models of negotiating difference, it recognizes and affirms the significance of culture.

Parekh shares Raz's view that multiculturalism has merit because it focuses on culture. However, he challenges the belief that culture is part of human nature. Parekh suggests that human nature is hard to define beyond biology and that the discourse around what is inherent to human nature is often ahistorical and unnuanced.[80] For Parekh, one of the great atrocities of past centuries was the way particular cultural values were assumed to be universal then projected onto the rest of the world and used to cast other cultures in an immoral light. For Parekh, the only way to correct this injustice is to have a social order that recognizes cultural diversity and discerns morality through cross-cultural dialogue.[81] He believes that there is no single universal morality, counter to the

[79] Raz, "Multiculturalism," 200.
[80] Parekh, Rethinking Multiculturalism, 120-123
[81] Ibid., 128.

assumptions of his intellectual predecessors whose work was used to justify false liberal enlightenment beliefs about universal morality.[82] Nonetheless, through a universal cross-cultural dialogue that takes the values of each culture seriously, people can discern certain moral values that are almost universal.[83] One of the most foundational of these values, Parekh argues, is the belief that human beings, and by extension, the things they create, have worth and should be respected.[84] Culture, as one of the most significant human constructs, has worth, and it is only moral, in most circumstances, to respect the worth and dignity of the different cultural claims made by diverse groups of people.[85] Thus, Parekh's work illustrates that through its focus on culture, multiculturalism can correct the harmful legal, political, and social structures of the past. Moreover, multiculturalism can create a climate of cross-cultural moral discourse which Parekh believes will lead to a more just system of morality that appropriately affirms cultural diversity.

While Parekh believes that multiculturalism offers a potential solution to the universalization of particular conceptions of morality, others are less convinced. This is a topic of great contention between Raz and Parekh's work. Raz suggests that one of the most significant challenges of multiculturalism is that it may not be able to address the dichotomy between universalism and particularism.[86] Raz's claims are based in a Kantian

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[82] Ibid., 136
[83] Ibid., 128-129.
[84] Ibid., 130.
[85] Parekh still claims that no moral value is completely universal and with a compelling defense of their actions a culture may still justify rejecting the value of other cultures or choosing to disrespect and undermine other cultures. Ibib.,122-123,133, 136.
[86] Raz, "Multiculturalism," 194.

notion that there are universally discernable ethics. Parekh refutes Raz's claim extensively, arguing that Raz is too "trapped" in his own liberal commitments. He continues by saying that Raz's theory of multiculturalism is incomplete and unproductive because it requires all cultures to respect "the values inherent in his thinned down liberalism."[87] Ironically, this debate between scholars of multiculturalism serves to illustrate one of the most significant challenges of multiculturalism. Namely, it can seem nearly impossible to come to conclusions about morality when a community aims to derive consensus among people whose beliefs are grounded in conflicting values. Nonetheless, in many contexts it may be possible to agree on particular policies collectively even though individual groups justify the importance of those policies with conflicting moral arguments. This idea is explored more in the next section in the debate between individualism and communitarianism.

Another challenge of multiculturalism is the paradox of the role liberal values play in shaping how multiculturalism is practiced. On the one hand, research has shown that multiculturalism needs liberal commitments and structures, like democracy, in order to thrive.[88] On the other hand, as is evident in Parekh's critique of Raz, if the project of multiculturalism is too deeply rooted in liberalism or if it privileges liberal values and conceptions of morality over others, then it will likely fail to offer proper recognition and support to non-liberal cultures. As Raz's work insists, if people see everyone as themselves it is not real multiculturalism, so in order to truly commit to recognition it has to be done on their terms. [89] However, this may demand that a democratic society which

[87] Parekh, Rethinking Multiculturalism, 96.
[88] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 8.
[89] Raz, "Multiculturalism," 194.

values equality openly recognizes and supports communities that do not believe in equality and devalue or oppress the voices of some of its members.

An additional challenge of multiculturalism is the barrier of the perceived cost multiculturalism will have on a society. Even though multiculturalism may be a low-cost way for dominant cultures to achieve stability in the face of minority discord, people are often unmoved or threatened by appeals to change the status quo.[90] The call to embrace multiculturalism often relies on a rational and moral appeal to liberal values, but according to Kymlicka, these appeals are often insufficient to overcome the realistic and sensible concerns about what a dominant culture will have to lose or sacrifice for the sake of multiculturalism.[91] In Kymlicka's view, the risks of multiculturalism are contextual, but there are plenty of legitimate reasons why societies would be concerned about embracing multiculturalism. He suggests:

> Multiculturalism not only challenges people's traditional understandings of their cultural and political identity, but also has potential implications for processes of democratization, economic development, respect for human rights, and even for geo-political security. Liberal multiculturalism, in some times and places, can be a high-risk choice. It is these implications, and not simply an irrational attachment to premodern identities, which underpins much of the opposition to liberal multiculturalism in post-colonial and post-communist states.[92]

The threat of multiculturalism will be most palpable in societies dominated by a culture whose values include maintaining exclusive control over truth claims and political authority, or where power hierarchies and social structures are particularly unrepresentative of the country's demographics. Nonetheless, multiculturalism in all circumstances comes with the challenge of making significant demands on a dominant

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[90] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 20
[91] Ibid., 21.
[92] Ibid., 12.

culture to embrace change, relinquish cultural and political hegemony, and to risk loss and security threats for the sake of equality.

A final challenge of multiculturalism is discerning what values and practices count as integral parts of a group's culture. There are many complications with regards to discerning what elements are part of a culture. First, there is the issue of collective identity. Collective identity is ultimately a matter of individual self-perception of who they are as individuals and to which groups they belong. The extensive scholarship around collective identity affirms that members of the same group often understand and express their shared identity in different ways.[93] The multivalent nature of collective identity poses complications for defining the nature and parameters of a culture because different members of the group may not be in consensus about the nature of the identity they share.

A second complication is that within one group or identity there may be subgroups with different and even conflicting needs. In this case, the society has to discern whether it will recognize subgroups and which subgroups it will recognize. The challenge of negotiating what defines a group and who speaks for a group's needs and values can be a complicated process.

A third complication is the fact that cultures evolve and change over time.[94] This dynamism means that a multicultural society has to be nimble and able to address changes in groups' needs as they arise. Kymlicka offers that only a relationship- and dialogic-based model within and between groups will help overcome these challenges.[95]

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[93] Ben-Rafael and Perez, "The Configuration of Multiculturalism," 7.
[94] Ibid., 7.
[95]Ibid.,7; Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*,

Ultimately, Multiculturalism strives to negotiate diversity through recognition and support of groups at the cultural level. This model addresses differences with mindfulness of past inequality and systemic injustice. In turn it aims to level the playing-field for all groups without privileging the truth claims, values, or practices of any culture. Nonetheless, there are a number of challenges with implementing multiculturalism and discerning how to discern what behaviors are ethical in a society committed to the equality and support of groups with conflicting values and needs.

Definitions and Challenges of the Politics of Recognition

One of the primary debates around how to functionally meet the challenges of diversity has to do with how communities should navigate recognition. Within the context of multiculturalism societies use recognition as an important tool for creating social equity. Nonetheless, the importance of the political nature of recognition and its efficacy as a tool to promote social equity has relevance even outside of the model of multiculturalism in many other models for navigating diversity.[96] The following will define the politics of recognition and unpack the contemporary discourse in support of using recognition as a tool to promote social equity as well as some critiques of this practice.

The preeminent theorist of "the politics of recognition" was Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor. Taylor's work argues that a person's identity, "a person's understanding of who they are, of their fundamental defining characteristics as a human

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[96] Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism,* 3.

being," is shaped by the recognition or misrecognition of others.[97] Taylor suggests that recognition is essential in shaping identity because human life is fundamentally dialogical in nature.[98] The dialogical character of human existence means that our identities are deeply socially constructed and we can never fully define ourselves outside of our dialogic relationships with others.[99] Accordingly, he views recognition as "a vital human need," and non-recognition or misrecognition as harmful and oppressive. [100]

In Taylor's work, he suggests that recognition comes from two spheres of life, the private sphere and the public sphere. Private recognition, that which comes from a person's intimate bonds, is essential in shaping and affirming individual identity. However, because we explore recognition as a means of addressing the challenges of diversity and social equity, we are more concerned with recognition in the public sphere, or political recognition. The demand for equal recognition goes hand in hand with other elements of dismantling social hierarchies, like advocating for equal rights and entitlements for all citizens. However, the politics of recognition move beyond these more materially focused "politics of redistribution" toward "securing equal respect and esteem for the diverse identities borne by members of pluralistic societies."[101]

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[97] Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25.
[98] Ibid., 32.
[99] Ibid., 32-34.
[100] Ibid., 25-26; "In Taylor's view, misrecognition can potentially be a form of oppression and helps to create self-hating images in those who are misrecognized. Bearing this in mind, recognition is a vital human need because the relation between recognition and identity (the way people understand who they are) is relatively strong; hence, misrecognition or non-recognition may have a serious harmful effect on individuals" Luis Cordeiro Rodrigues, "Multiculturalism," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
[101] Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition*, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003), 2.

The move for equality in civil rights or voting rights further strives to elevate universal shared humanity and argue that every person deserves respect and dignity. Accordingly, these claims demand that society eliminate discrimination by granting everyone exactly the same rights. In contrast, the demand for equal recognition often demands a great deal of differentiation in treatment.[102] Recognition is not one size fits all because each person wishes to be recognized and affirmed in their particularities, not merely in the elements of their identity that are universal. Thus, there are times where these two divergent pushes for equality can conflict, especially when equality means blindness to difference.

Furthermore, Taylor's work implies that blindness to difference is an illusion and societies that claim blindness to difference for the sake of equality are generally recognizing and affirming some identities at the expense of recognition of others. This is a topic of major concern for the Audacious Hospitality initiative with regards to race. In the past many congregations have argued that they are "colorblind" or that they "do not see color, they just see people."[103] They have used this language to suggest that they do not discriminate between congregants based on race and to fight off accusations of racism. However, Audacious Hospitality suggests that racial colorblindness is a barrier for acknowledging the ways congregational policies implicitly reflect racial prejudice and affirms some people's identities, cultures, and experiences over others.[104] Likewise, it invalidates the experiences of people of color by suggesting that everyone's experiences

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[102] Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," 39.

[103] Union of Reform Judaism. "Audacious Hospitality Jews of Color Educational Resource Module Pilot," 2017. 26.

[104] Ibid., 27.

are the same and that there is nothing valuable to see in the differences between racial groups. Additionally, "it invalidates people of color's experiences with racism" without acknowledging the way that these individuals often experience prejudice and alienation in Jewish spaces.

While Taylor's work does not mention the context of Reform Judaism, Taylor an analysis of this phenomena more broadly, and explains the challenges of misrecognition. He suggests that a lack of recognition "negates identity by forcing people into a homogeneous mold that is untrue to them" and suppresses them by forcing them to take on an "alien form."[105] In contrast, a model of equality that takes into account the need for recognition would give all people the opportunity to "ask" and "tell" and allow each individual to claim, define, and be recognized in their own identity. It would be capable of celebrating individual differences rather than treating everyone the same.

Just as Taylor argues recognition is important for individuals, he also suggests that there is a need for equal recognition at the level of culture. Taylor believes that cultures also have the need to define their identities and be recognized and affirmed in their distinctions. Political theorist Amy Guttmann offers that to have full and equal recognition, beyond the respect of a person's unique identity at the individual level, there needs to be recognition at the cultural level, including "respect for those activities, practices, and ways of viewing the world that are particularly valued by, or associated with, members of disadvantaged groups."[106] Effective cultural recognition takes place

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[105] Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," 43.

[106] Amy Guttmann, "Introduction," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994), 8.

through enacting policies that both protect cultures and allow for their public expression, like those of multiculturalism. However, in addition to recognition through policy, many believe cultures also need to be recognized on a symbolic level with practices like incorporating minority symbols into a country's flag.[107]

Nonetheless, just as at the individual level, recognition is not one size fits all at the cultural level. Accordingly, German philosopher Jurgen Habermas suggests the most effective strategies for recognition of a group often come from a democratic practice where groups are allowed to voice "which traditions they want to perpetuate and which they want to discontinue, how they want to deal with their history, with one another, with nature, and so on."[108] Unlike Taylor, Habermas argues that societies should not strive to protect and preserve a culture's existence in perpetuity, because this denies the culture the ability to be reflexive and transform or reject elements of itself over time.[109] Alternatively, he advocates for a constitutional democracy with two layers of culture: an overarching political culture marked by respect for each culture's rights, and a level of individual culture where cultures are largely allowed to author the laws and values that govern them as long as they are in dialogue with the overarching political culture.[110] While there will certainly be places where these cultures will conflict, through a democratic process they are each given a voice with which to articulate their values and needs rather than assuming that everyone shares the same values and recognition needs as

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[107] Luis Cordeiro Rodrigues, "Multiculturalism," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
[108] Jurgen Habermas, "Taylor's 'Politics of Recognition'" in Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994), 125.
[109] Ibid.,131.
[110] Habermas does not offer this example himself, yet the model he suggests may be exemplified in the relationship between Orthodox Jews and the broader pluralistic state in Israel. Ibid., 128-135.

the majority culture. Ultimately, whether cultural recognition manifests through Habermas' models or others, whether through political, symbolic, or other channels, it serves to reject inherited social stigmas and discrimination of minority groups and allows them to reclaim their identities in positive and affirmative ways.

Despite widespread positive reception of Taylor's theory of the politics of recognition, there are those who critique and disagree with his work. Ghanaian-American philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah critiques Taylor's work on the grounds that political recognition compels individuals to stick to the publicly recognized "scripts" of a given identity and to define the identity for themselves. As Appiah explains, collective identities provide us with scripts, or "narratives that people can use in shaping their life plans and in telling their life stories."[111] The work of recognition is to take these scripts and reclaim them affirmatively. Appiah agrees with Taylor that historically unbalanced recognition has meant that the scripts of minority identities have held negative connotations and have disempowered many minorities, instilling them with negative self-worth. Thus, he agrees that there is a need to change the status quo and combat the negative connotations of these scripts. Nonetheless, he fears that political recognition limits people to the models of identity performance that are recognized in the scripts. As Appiah explains, within the recognition of scripts there is a certain pressure for people to adhere to the tightly scripted norms of their respective identities in order to perform the identities in a way that will be recognized and affirmed. Each individual is compelled to take the perspective that "the story—my story—should cohere in the way appropriate by

[111] Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social Reproduction" in Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994), 160.

the standards made available in my culture to a person of my identity."[112] He continues, "The politics of recognition requires that one's skin color, one's sexual body, should be acknowledged politically in ways that make it hard for those who want to treat their skin and their sexual body as personal dimensions of the self. And personal means not secret, but not too tightly scripted." [113]

Appiah's concern is that the politics of recognition does not do enough to allow people to transcend these scripts and privilege the elements of their identity by which they wish to be identified over those that fit neatly into the norms of the pre-ascribed scripts that govern the external perception of their identities. After all, if identity is discursively constructed, people will still be limited and unable to express themselves authentically if the world responds to them through the generic script ascribed to their identities. If each individual does not perceive him/herself as authentically aligning with every element of the script, or they want to highlight different elements of their identity than the scripts ordain, Taylor's politics of recognition still leaves them lacking autonomy of self-expression. Moreover, these scripts and Taylor's work rarely acknowledge intersectionality and have few responses to how society should recognize those who have multiple intersecting identities when the scripts conflict. Ultimately, Appiah recognizes that political recognition may be a necessary stepping stone to equality, but he cautions that we not allow our pursuit of recognition to replace one "tyranny" with another by limiting people to tightly scripted identities.[114]

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[112]Ibid., 160.
[113] Ibid., 163.
[114] Ibid., 163.

American political scientist Patchen Markell champions another important critique of Taylor's thought in his work *Bound by Recognition*. Markell argues that Taylor's portrayal of recognition does not grasp the full depth of the problems of social and political inequality.[115] Markell suggests that Taylor is concerned with the surface of these problems, the level where people are misrecognized and ascribe false or negative images to others. Markell insists that in reality, the images ascribed to others have very little to do with the others themselves and much more to do with the desire of those recognizing them to maintain authority, autonomy, and power.[116] According to Markell, the images ascribed to others through the act of misrecognition "sustain and are sustained by unjust social arrangements."[117] Thus he suggests Taylor's work falls short of addressing the true issue of recognition, which is not the psychological burden misrecognition places on the individual. Rather, the true problem is that misrecognition and alterity are used as tools for "social and political subordination."[118] Markell argues that focusing on recognition does not do anything to address the deeper systems of injustice and inequality. Misrecognition is merely a tool; the real problem is the way people aim to have power over one another and use tools like misrecognition to maintain the lack of socio-political equity.

Through Markell's understanding of the underlying causes of recognition, one could argue that Taylor's work actually perpetuates social inequality rather than combating it. After all, when a group demands proper recognition, they reaffirm the

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[115] Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition*, 4.
[116] Ibid., 5.
[117] Ibid., 5.
[118] Ibid., 5.

sovereign agency of groups in power to do the recognizing.[119] This reinforces unequal power structures and the reliance of groups who are not recognized or misrecognized on those who doing the recognizing. Those doing the recognizing still have power over those who are recognized. To reinforce this point, Markell critiques the discourse style perpetuated by the politics of recognition. Recognition is about what "*we*- speaking, in the voice of universality, for the 'larger society'- ought to extend to *them*."[120] This orientation suggests that recognition is in the "exclusive province" of certain groups. Moreover, it allows "people who are able to identify relatively unproblematically with the 'larger society' and its institutions…to set the terms under which any exchange of recognition with less powerful and more vulnerable others will occur, making their own desires and needs into nonnegotiable terms." This reinforces the alterity and lack of belonging of those groups who are asking for recognition. [121]

Instead of the politics of recognition, Markell suggests that we should be pursuing a politics of acknowledgment. Markell's conception of a politics of acknowledgement is an abstract concept and he fails to offer many practical illustrations for how the model can be utilized in society. Nonetheless, the politics of acknowledgment illustrates some important theoretical ways to move past the shortfalls Markell identifies in the politics of recognition. The politics of acknowledgment moves away from recognizing identity toward an acknowledgment of others as agents and co-participants in the participating in the same political body.[122]

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[119] Ibid.,5.
[120] Ibid., 6.
[121] Ibid.,6.
[122] Ibid., 178.

Another element of the politics of acknowledgment is that it shifts from the outward focus of recognition's distributive justice lens toward an inward focus that looks critically at the ways privilege and inequality operate in society. [123] In Markell's words within the scope of the politics of acknowledgment, "Democratic justice does not require that all people be known and respected as who they really are. It requires, instead, that no one be reduced to any characterization of his or her identity for the sake of someone else's achievement of a sense of sovereignty or invulnerability."[124]

One example of this difference that Markell offers is that in the politics of recognition, recognition is a good that a just society distributes equally to all individuals and groups. So, in order to be just toward LGBTQIA individuals, society must distribute recognition of their identity to them in the same way it offers recognition to heterosexual individuals. Thus, recognition would mean things like legalizing same sex marriage or adding literature to school curriculums that portrays LGBTQIA individuals positively.[125]

In contrast, the politics of acknowledgment moves away from identity and the idea of distribution. Instead, this model looks at the ways in which forces of privilege and subordination cause people to feel like they have a lack of recognition.[126] Next, it might make changes like educating the public towards a messier and more complicated understanding of sexual orientation and desire than can be achieved through the politics of recognition, "decoupling [the] distribution of various socioeconomic resources from

[123] Ibid., 178-179.
[124]Ibid.,7.
[125] Ibid., 181.
[126] Ibid., 182.

marital status," and "cultivating a more widespread acceptance of the vulnerability involved in sexual life."[127]

These changes are fundamentally different than those demanded by the politics of recognition because they are not about affirming or welcoming the identities of the acknowledger or those being acknowledged. They are about acknowledging the historical and contemporary socio-political causes of structural inequality, subordination, and privilege. Likewise, they are about acknowledging that identity is messier and more difficult to classify than the politics of recognition allows it to be. In the politics of acknowledgment, "Agents must always be working to unmake their formulations of identity as soon as they have made them, if not sooner."[128]

Ultimately, the politics of acknowledgment looks to address systemic inequality but it does not maintain a naïve or utopian vision that all systemic inequality and political privilege can be dismantled. Rather, a key part of acknowledgment means understanding that tension may be inseparable from political functioning in a society made up of diverse agents with diverse needs. The politics of acknowledgment "refuses to offer a recipe for political redemption. It takes seriously the idea of the openness of the future, treating democratic politics as a perpetually incomplete and provisional task rather than a form that can be achieved once and for all."[129] Nonetheless, it moves past the more superficial focus on identity found in the politics of recognition in the hopes of acknowledging the agency and active participation of everyone in society. Moreover, it works to level the playing field for all of these agents by dismantling systems of privilege and inequality. It

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[127] Ibid., 182.
[128]Ibid., 184.
[129] Ibid., 183.

does so not with the naivete of believing it can perfectly create social equality, but with the hope that a critical inward look at the structures of inequality in society will further the cause of socio-political equity more effectively than focusing on recognition and identity.

Both Taylor's model of recognition and Markel's model of acknowledgment are strategies to meet Multiculturalism's demands that we accept that different people from different backgrounds have different needs and that all cultures and values cannot be affirmed in the same way. Another challenge related to multiculturalism is determining the level at which recognition or acknowledgment should be afforded. There are two distinct schools of thought on this matter: individualism and communitarianism.[130]

Individualism posits that the individual is the most basic unit a society can interact with and offer rights. Moreover, individualists believe that there is an ethical imperative to address the needs and rights of individuals above those of groups or that of the common good. In contrast, communitarians believe that because individuals are socially constructed by their communities, the community is the most basic unit of society. Likewise, they believe that societies have an ethical imperative to grant rights and address collective needs at the communal level. Unpacking the conflicting ontological assumptions and the moral implications of each of these schools of thought will give us another frame through which we can understand how to meet the demands of diversity.

[130] These schools of thought are often presented in a binary, but in reality, there are a diverse set of thinkers that make up each school of thought, many of whom have theories that fall in between these two poles.

Individualism finds its origin in liberalism as articulated through the work of scholars like German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and American philosopher John Rawls (1921-2002).[131] This line of thought begins with the notion of the individual as a rational independent agent capable of moral decision making. As Israeli political philosophers Shlomo Avineri and Avner De-Shalit explain, individualists think "in terms of the priority of the self over its aims. Individualists begin with the idea of the "unencumbered self." [132] This conception of the self suggests that:

> To identify any characteristics as *my* aims, ambitions, desires, and so on, is always to imply some subject 'me' standing behind them, at a certain distance, and the shape of this 'me' must be given prior to any of the aims or attributes I bear…no role or commitment could define me so completely that I could not understand myself without it. No project could be so essential that turning away from it would call into question the person I am.[133]

Because an individual is not socially constructed by its ends, the focus of individualists is not on the ends an unencumbered self chooses. Rather, individualism focuses on the importance of individual freedom and each person's capacity to freely and rationally choose his/her own ends.[134]

According to individualism, because the primary unit in society is the individual, a just society's aim is to protect the rights of individuals and to allow them to pursue their own values. In order to protect individual freedom, individualists suggest that a just

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[131] Shlomo Avineri, and Avner De-Shalit, eds. *Communitarianism and Individualism*, (Oxford England; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1.
[132] It should be noted that while Michael Sandel writes extensively about Kant, Rawls, and the ideals of individualism he himself is a communitarian writing about these ideals for the sake of refuting them.
[133] Michael Sandel "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self," in Shlomo Avineri, and Avner De-Shalit, eds. *Communitarianism and Individualism*, 18-19.
[134] Ibid.,18-19.

society should not be focused on promoting the common good, because that would involve promoting particular values and ends in ways that might limit individual choice.[135] Afterall, the highest good for individualists is allowing individuals to choose and pursue what values and ends they personally believe to be right. Ultimately, individualists fear that pursuit of the common good will lead to totalitarianism and intolerance toward certain morally legitimate choices if those choices are not perceived as beneficial for the greater public good.[136] As illustrated in Appiah's work, individualists may also challenge the concept of recognition because they fear that recognition limits individuals to expressing their identities in the ways that are recognized or in the ways the group collectively understands itself rather than giving the individual the freedom to choose how they wish to express their own identities.

In contrast to individualist thought, communitarians see the individual as "constituted by the community of which they are a part."[137] They maintain that the individualist ontology of the self is baseless because it misunderstands the idea of the self as something independent of its social bonds. In contrast, communitarians believe that the community is the primary unit of society and that people cannot fully separate themselves from their communities.

For communitarians, communities are not seen as something optional that people voluntary participate in if it proves to be mutually beneficial. This is a common understanding of communities through the lens of individualism put forward by thinkers

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[135] Ibid.,13.
[136]"Introduction," in Shlomo Avineri, and Avner De-Shalit, *Communitarianism and Individualism*, 9
[137]Ibid., 3.

like David Gauthier. Gauthier argues that individuals are independent and autonomous and they derive their morality rationally and through their own independent conceptions of the good. Although he is not an individualist, Gauthier believes that choosing to be part of a community is still essential for individuals because community provides economic and emotional benefits that people cannot acquire in isolation. He argues: "Although social affective relationships are essential to the liberal individual, there are no essential social relationships." [138] However, communitarians would go beyond Gauthier's utilitarian idea of community and his understanding that people are capable of freely choosing the communities they associate with and are shaped by. Communitarians believe that our social attachments are integral to who we are and that more often than not we are born into them or acquire them naturally without any choice.[139] Moreover, they believe that our communities deeply shape our values and our desired ends. Thus, for a communitarian, it is a fallacy to talk about individuals making an autonomous choice without understanding the communities they are part of and how their aims and values correspond or respond to the cultures that shape them.[140]

Beyond understanding communities as non-elective and inherently constitutive of each individual, communitarians also believe community is intrinsically valuable.[141] For a communitarian, community is a moral good, and "a desired level of human

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[138] David Gauthier, "The Liberal Individual," in Shlomo Avineri, and Avner De-Shalit, eds. *Communitarianism and Individualism*, 155.
[139] Introduction," in Shlomo Avineri, and Avner De-Shalit, *Communitarianism and Individualism*, 3.
[140] Charles Taylor, "Atomism," in Shlomo Avineri, and Avner De-Shalit, eds. *Communitarianism and Individualism*, 35-35.
[141] Introduction," in Shlomo Avineri, and Avner De-Shalit, *Communitarianism and Individualism*, 4.

relationship."[142] The inherent moral good of community is that it fulfils a basic human need by cultivating a sense of belonging and membership. Additionally, communitarians believe that community is valuable because it promotes the common good and unites people so that they may meet their collective needs.

The fundamentally divergent ways individualists and communitarians understand the nature of the individual open them up to different understandings of how rights and recognition should be afforded within a society. For individualists, rights should be granted individually, not communally. The benefit of individual rights is that they allow the individual the freedom to define their own ends without being confined by the limits of their community of origin or any other community. While individualism is not necessarily in opposition to the politics of recognition, many individualists do not see recognition as an essential responsibility of a government. Many individualists come to the libertarian conclusion that the job of government is to ensure basic freedoms and rights but not to promote any particular values or to define or protect the common good.[143] From this perspective, recognition may be a way for the government to unnecessarily overstep their appropriate boundaries and responsibilities. Nonetheless, if there were to be some form of politics of recognition in society, individualists would insist that people not be defined by their identities in a limiting way. After all, they believe that a sense of self and moral commitments transcends their "belonging" in any identity group, so recognition of any particular identity is of limited importance. Ultimately, individualists are most concerned with protecting rights that ensure individual

[142] Ibid., 6.
[143] Ibid., 9.

freedom and beyond that other forms of recognition or communal rights are often seen as intrusions on the rights of individuals.

In contrast, communitarians tend to privilege rights and recognition at the communal level over individual rights. In particular, communitarians are concerned with issues like preserving the rights of minority communities to self-govern or otherwise uphold their values without being subject to the cultural hegemony of other cultures.[144] In this respect, multiculturalism is a fundamentally communitarian model because it privileges the rights of communities and acknowledges a political need for recognition and protection of diverse communities. In response to the individualist argument for limited government outside of defending individual rights, communitarians argue that without some governmental support and recognition, many cultures will be undermined and fall apart.[145] Thus, political recognition is important to communitarians because recognition and political support preserve communities and can ensure their prolonged existence.

This is not to say that communitarians do not believe in any individual rights. Many individual rights that are essential to liberalism, and advocated for by individualists, are also important to communitarians because these rights work to protect the common good.[146] Nonetheless, individualists are critical of the extent to which communitarians privilege the rights of the community over that of the individual, because they believe that communitarians will advocate for policies that limit individuals'

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[144]Ibid., 8-9.
[145] Will Kymlicka, "Liberal Individualism and Neutrality," in Shlomo Avineri, and Avner De-Shalit, eds, *Communitarianism and Individualism*, 170.
[146] "Introduction," in Shlomo Avineri, and Avner De-Shalit, *Communitarianism and Individualism*, 8.

abilities to critique and challenge communal norms.[147] However, Michael Sandel argues that, despite the seemingly irreconcilable differences between individualists and communitarians, they are ultimately likely to advocate for many of the same policies, while justifying their political choices with conflicting moral arguments.[148]

On the other hand, there are some communitarians whose beliefs lead to the promotion of exclusionary practices that individualists would not condone. For example, Michael Walzer suggests that an essential element of community is that there is a division between communal members and non-members. Within a community, the members are morally responsible to and for one another, and they work together to meet their common needs.[149] However, non-members are not entitled to the same benefits and protections as community members; nor are they morally responsible to the community in the same way as members.[150]

Walzer would argue, for example, that although non-members may "participate freely in the exchange of goods, they have no part in those goods that are shared. They are cut off from the communal provisions of security and welfare. Even those aspects of security and welfare that are, like public health, collectively distributed are not guaranteed to non-members."[151] Despite this belief, Walzer does not believe that communities are free of any moral responsibility to non-members. He believes that there is a moral obligation to follow the principle of "mutual aid," which suggests that non-

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[147] Ibid., 10.
[148] Ibid., 9.
[149] Michael Walzer, "Membership," in Shlomo Avineri, and Avner De-Shalit, eds, *Communitarianism and Individualism*, 64-65.
[150] Ibid., 65.
[151] Ibid., 66.

members are entitled to assistance when they have an urgent need and the risk or cost of assisting is relatively low.[152] Even though Walzer does not advocate that a community turn their back on non-members in need, he recognizes that caring for non-members can be a significant burden on the community. He suggests that a community should have the right to decide their own size and character, which means they should have the right to choose which strangers they grant membership and may deny membership to others.[153] Moreover, in certain circumstances, Walzer suggests they may have the right to expel non-members.[154]

All of these principles, which Walzer understands as part of a communitarian understanding of morality, conflict with the principles of individualism. For example, depending on which securities an individual is denied because of non-member status, they may not have the freedom to pursue their desired ends. If they are denied the right to work, the right to receive medical care, or the right to move freely throughout a territory, they will be particularly limited in the opportunities they can pursue and the lifestyle they will be allowed to live.

Despite the places where Walzer's work conflicts with individualists, there are other cases where he is just as troubled as an individualist about the limits of non-membership. Walzer argues that stateless individuals or refugees are particularly vulnerable in this system and that it may be immoral to deny them membership. In his

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[152] Ibid., 68.
[153] Ibid., 66.
[154] Walzer is very cautious about the idea of expelling those who have made a home in the territory of a community so this model of expulsion may be ethical at the level of a club or even a family if members can find community elsewhere, but if people are truly stateless, like refugees he is cautious to condone expelling them. Ibid., 69-84.

words, "The denial of membership is always the first of a long train of abuses. There is no way to break the train, so we must deny the rightfulness of the denial."[155] After all, denying these individuals membership denies them the essential "security, wealth, honour, office, and power – that communal life makes possible."[156] Yet, Walzer maintains that, generally, communities should have the right to be closed to those they do not want to be members, especially if they have the capacity to find community elsewhere. Thus, Walzer is ok with policies that limit people's freedom to pursue the lives they want as long as they are not completely denied the right to community. Needless to say, this belief is a point of contention and division where communitarian policy and individualist policy conflict.

Judaism and Diversity

Section two offers an analysis of Audacious Hospitality in the context of other models of negotiating societal diversity, like tolerance and multiculturalism. In addition to this analysis, the study of Audacious Hospitality would be incomplete without examining the ways diversity and hospitality have historically been understood in Judaism. However, the connection between Audacious Hospitality and earlier Jewish ways of understanding and approaching diversity is limited. After all, many of the forms of diversity Audacious Hospitality is concerned with rest on modern conceptions of identity. Moreover, the challenges of un-affiliation or alienation from Jewish community

[155] Ibid., 84.
[156] Ibid., 84.

that Audacious Hospitality works to combat are relatively new phenomena in Jewish history. Almost everything about Audacious Hospitality, from the way it understands diversity to the way it addresses un-affiliation and alienation, are shaped in part by the unique circumstances of modern post-emancipation liberal Judaism, particularly in the context of North America.

The following explores how Judaism has historically understood the categories of diversity that the Audacious Hospitality initiative is currently most concerned with: race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability.

Race

Today, modern scholars of race suggest that race is an "unstable and 'decentered' complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle."[157] Some elements of racial identity are based on social interpretations of pseudo-biographical, phenotypical or physiognomic characteristics. Yet, the same characteristics are often conferred upon different racial meanings in different socio-historical contexts.[158] Within Judaism, as within most peoples, "Racial categories and the meaning of race are given concrete expression by the specific social relations and historical context in which they

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[157] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s, 2nd Edition* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 9-10.

[158] For example, in the United States, individuals who descend from the ancestral line of slaves brought to the United States from the content of Africa are generally identified racially as "black" despite a wide range of phenotypical diversity. Nonetheless, a person considered "black" in America may not be considered "black" in Brazil, where the racial categorization system is different. "One of the most striking consequences of the Brazilian system of racial identification is that parents and children and even brothers and sisters are frequently accepted as representatives of quite opposite racial types." Marvin Harris, Patterns of Race in the Americas (New York: Norton, 1964), 5.

are embedded. Racial meanings have varied tremendously over time and between different societies."[159] This variance in racial meaning across different Jewish contexts throughout history makes it difficult to paint a portrait of Jewish treatment of internal racial diversity.

There are almost no mentions of racial diversity in ancient Jewish sources. One possible exception is the word *kush/kushit* which describes Moses' wife (Num 12:1), and the prophet Zephaniah's father (Zeph 1:1). However, it is hard to discern whether this term is a reference to a geographic place of origin or to skin color.[160] Nonetheless, these biblical references, as well as archeological evidence such as ancient Israelite seals depicting "negro heads," suggest that there was some phenotypical diversity in ancient Israelite society.[161]

Historically, from antiquity onward, those members of Jewish communities with starkly different phenotypical features, or those who were racially *other*, often entered the community through slavery. There are examples of Jews as slave owners, particularly of slaves from Africa, dating back to the Greco-Roman period.[162] However, it was not until the seventh century, and the Islamic conquest of the Levant, Arabian Peninsula, and North Africa, that slave ownership became a pervasive part of Jewish culture.[163]

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[159] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States,*4.
[160] There are other instances where the term is used that generally refer to other people who are outsiders, not Israelites or those integrated into the tribe of Israel. David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 38-39.
[161] Ibid., 39.
[162] Ibid., 131; 237.
[163] Ibid., 133-138.

It was a common custom, required by Jewish law and upheld in many Jewish communities, that male slaves would be circumcised upon being purchased by a Jew.[164] The laws of circumcision and conversion as preserved in the *Shulchan Aruch*, include the requirement to circumcise all slaves and to offer them the opportunity to immerse in the mikvah and complete a full conversion.[165] Alternatively, those slaves who refuse to be circumcised may only be kept in a Jewish home for one year.[166] While these laws reflect the practices of many communities throughout the pre-modern Jewish world, the laws of circumcision and conversion of slaves were a topic of significant rabbinic debate and disagreement. The vocal minority opinion that begins to grow in prominence from the eleventh century onward is that one may keep an uncircumcised slave indefinitely.[167] Thus, in certain contexts there were more Jewish slaves or slaves offered the opportunity to convert, but in other context slaves were not identified as Jewish.

The justification for the need to convert slaves is that Jews should not have idolaters touching their food, and living and working in their homes. However, the acceptance and full integration of converted slaves, manumitted slaves, and descendants of slaves varied contextually. There are many manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah which

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[164] Shulchan Aruch, *Yoreh de'ah:* 267

[165]This conversion is also reaffirmed with another immersion after the slave is manumitted. Ibid., 267 Western Sephardic traditions, particularly those preserved in the records and responsa of the Jewish community of Amsterdam suggested that this second immersion at manumission was what made the individual fully Jewish and eligible to marry a Jew. Jonathan Schorsch, *Jews and Blacks in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 174.

[166] Ibid., 267.

[167] This is also the opinion of the Rambam. Jonathan Schorsch, *Jews and Blacks in the Early Modern World*, 172.

show manumitted slaves living as Jews and fully integrated members of the Egyptian Jewish community.[168]

In each historical context, the racialization of slaves and their acceptance or rejection was motivated by the way the community understood itself internally and the way it responded to outside social forces. For example, in Egypt, the community needed to show internal unity and remain differentiated from the surrounding Muslim and pagan world. They converted their slaves and integrated them into the community as a way to reinforce that those living inside Jewish homes were Jewish and that Jewish homes were free from Muslim and pagan influence. However, as discussed further below, in seventeenth century Amsterdam, the Jewish community tried very hard to distance itself from the Christian perception of "blackness" and as such significantly limited the ways converted slaves, or free blacks and "mulattos," were allowed to interact with the community.

In addition to those slaves who were converted, there was also the complication of the status of those children born to a slave mother (whether she converted or not) and a Jewish father. In Arab contexts, the children were circumcised just as purchased slaves were, but they were not considered the legitimate children of their Jewish father and were often sold with their mothers.[169] In other contexts, like in Amsterdam, some Jewish fathers claimed a son they had with a slave woman as a "*yelid bayit*," and the child was

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[168] Craig Perry, "The Daily Life of Slaves and the Global Reach of Slavery" (PhD diss., Emory University, 2014). 160. Perry's entire dissertation illustrates a wealth of examples and focuses not only on manumitted slaves, but also the lives of converted salves and the decedents of slaves were integrated into the community and accepted as Jews.

[169] Craig Perry, "The Daily Life of Slaves and the Global Reach of Slavery" (PhD diss., Emory University, 2014), 39-40.

raised Jewish and remained in the home of their Jewish father.[170] Yet this seems to be a less common circumstance that became even more challenging from the seventeenth century onward as the community outlawed the circumcision and conversion of blacks and "mulattos."[171]

The context of the Jewish community in seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century Amsterdam and their colonies in "the New World" provide examples of a context where the Jewish community was particularly resistant to integrating Jews who were darker in complexion or perceived as the racial other.[172] Due to the fear that they would be perceived as "black" by their Christian neighbors, these Jews began to see internal phenotypical or "racial" diversity as a threat.[173] Accordingly, they passed a wealth of legislation that distanced and alienated phenotypically darker members of the community. In addition to outlawing the conversions of blacks and "mulattos," the community also made it illegal to burry blacks and "mulattos" in Jewish cemeteries, even if they were born to free parents and had never been enslaved but appeared to have "black" blood.[174] This decree was a point of tension for many in the community and later some cemeteries created a special section for the burial of black and "mulatto" Jews who

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[170] Schorsch points out that while documents from Amsterdam suggest people did use of this term "yelid bayit"to describe the status of these children, this is a misunderstanding or misuse of the halakic category that would generally see these descendants as illegitimate children. Jonathan Schorsch, *Jews and Blacks in the Early Modern World*, 176.
[171] Ibid., 175-178.
[172] Similar divisions of Jews along racial fault lines also emerged around the same time period among the Cochin Jews of India. Ibid., 192.
[173] Ibid., 166-169.
[174] Ibid., 192-195.

were born into Judaism in order to appease the protests of those who felt it was unjust to deny Jews proper burial because of their skin color.[175]

Other decrees that limited racially diverse members were more strictly enforced. For example, further legislation took away the rights of "circumcised negros" to be called up for aliyot to the Torah, and kicked all of the "mulatto" boys out of the Amsterdam *yeshiva.*[176] As we see with the use of the term "circumcised negros" the language used to exclude these individuals was meant to question the authenticity of their conversion and their belonging in Judaism; they are acknowledged as being "circumcised," not as Jewish.

The Jews of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Amsterdam offer a clear example of a way that racial diversity, while existent in most Jewish contexts throughout history, was not always welcomed and embraced. At the same time, the example also illustrates how external pressures and fears of how Judaism would be racialized or stigmatized due to racial diversity also shaped the way Jewish communities responded to internal racial diversity.

Ultimately, each socio-historical context in Jewish history had its own ways of either embracing and normalizing the phenotypical *other* or rejecting them. The phenotypical other in different Jewish contexts looked differently. The slaves of Jewish households in seventh century Egypt who were racially other came from all over the Arabian Peninsula, Africa, and India, while the slaves of Amsterdam came from Africa and Brazil or other central American countries. Contextually they also acquired Jewish

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[175] Ibid., 196.

[176] Ibid., 195-197.

status in a wide variety of different ways from conversion during enslavement, to conversion after manumission, to those born into Judaism and those who converted with no relation to slavery. Thus, the story of the racial other in Judaism has always accounted for a diverse array of experiences. However, in most Jewish contexts it seems racial diversity came with an underlying relationship to slavery. Nonetheless, that connection to slavery was ascribed different racial meanings and met different levels of acceptance or intolerance based on context.

The precedent set by both Jewish law and Jewish history does not articulate one approach to racial diversity in Judaism. Rather, both illustrate that communities have defined and approached racial diversity in a wide variety of ways. In our American Reform context, we are in similar circumstances to our ancestors insofar as our communities' conceptions of race are deeply embedded in the way racial categories are shaped and defined by the external socio-political context we live in. Like in past epochs of Jewish history, our communities balance a number of complex factors in their approach to racial diversity. These include but are not limited to: fear of antisemitism, questions over authenticity, and the over-arching context of systemic racism that defines the racial dynamic of our historical context.

Unlike in many historical Jewish contexts, Jewish racial diversity is not predominantly connected to those slaves which Jews have owned. Yet, American Judaism operates in a racialized society that has been shaped by a history of slavery. Moreover, today's Reform congregations are entrenched in and forced to navigate the complexities of "the foundational, large-scale and inescapable hierarchical system of US

racial oppression devised and maintained by whites and directed at people of colour."[177] Audacious Hospitality strives to address and respond to these socio-political challenges of twenty-first-century North America in its own way. It is operating in accordance with the ways Judaism has historically approached racial diversity because historically each community's response to race has been greatly impacted by external socio-political factors and the way the world around them relates to race. Yet, it is also completely breaking away from Jewish history because the twenty-first century American Reform Jewish context is unique.

Sexual Orientation

Throughout almost the entirety of Jewish history there has been a strong aversion to homosexuality. In the Torah both Lev. 18:20 and Lev. 20:13 render male homosexual sex acts as capital offenses and as an abomination. The understanding of male homosexuality as sinful, against halakah, and unethical has been maintained throughout Jewish history. For example, the Mishna prohibits two men from sleeping under one *tallit/blanket* because of fear that they will either commit homosexual acts or be perceived as committing a homosexual act.[178]

The Talmud and later halakic codes maintain the belief that homosexuality is non-halakic and unethical, and often take the position that there are no homosexual Jews and Jews are not mistaken as homosexuals so the question of homosexuality in Judaism is a

[177] Joe Feagin and Sean Elias, "Rethinking racial formation theory: a systemic racism critique," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36:6, (2013), 936.

[178] Mishnah Kiddushin 4:13-14

non-issue. Kiddushin 82a suggests that "Jews are not suspected of homosexual intercourse." Likewise, Moses Rivkes, the seventeenth-century Polish commentator and author of Be'er Ha'Golah, comments on the prohibition against homosexuality as codified in the Shulchan Aruch, suggesting that the sin of homosexuality does not exist in his time.[179]

In contrast to those who argue homosexuality was never a problem in Jewish communities, many Hasidic communities have posited that one role of the Tzaddik is to cure people of their homosexual thoughts. Through the act of katabatic descent, or yeridah, the Tzaddik is said to lower himself to the lower levels of creation where he attaches himself to and wrestles with the evil or demonic forces that cause his followers to sin.[180] The Tzaddik then connects a positive element of the transgression, like love, to a *mitzvah* or blessing and ascends with those demonic forces, robbing them of their power, and curing the sinner of all homosexual desires. This phenomenon within Hasidism illustrates that homosexuality or homosexual desire was not ignored within these communities, but it was considered sinful and also curable.

Within liberal Judaism, homosexuality was also understood as a sin and immoral. In 1973, the CCAR published a responsa on Judaism and Homosexuality that maintained that despite the fact that the Reform movement does not consider itself bound by traditional notions *halakah*, it agrees with the halakahic understanding that

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[179] Shulchan Aruch Even Ha-ezer 24, Be'er Hagolah.
[180]Moshe Idel, " The Mystico-Magical Model," in *Hasidism: A New History*, David Biale, David Assaf, Benjamin Brown, Uriel Gellman, Samuel Heilman, Moshe Rosman, Gadi Sagiv, Marcin Wodziński, and Arthur Green, (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), 103.

homosexuality is sinful and immoral.[181] Likewise, it suggests that a homosexual civil union should not be understood as a marriage akin to kiddushin, rather as "a contravention of all that is respected in Jewish life."[182] Likewise, a 1981 responsa declared that homosexuals were unfit to hold leadership positions in the Jewish community.[183]

Ultimately, the halakic and cultural understanding of homosexuality as a sin meant that homosexual desire was vilified but individuals were not kicked out of the community for being homosexuals. After all, many argue that it is halakhically forbidden to exclude people from the community due to their sins.[184] Just as more traditional Jewish communities tried to heal or prevent individuals from experiencing homosexual desire without kicking them out of the community, so did the Reform Jews. The 1973 CCAR responsa on Judaism and Homosexuality suggests that homosexuals should be discouraged from making separate congregations and should be allowed membership in Reform congregations despite their sins.[185] Likewise it suggests congregations should try to keep homosexual Jews within the community because allowing them to isolate themselves is a way of aiding them in their sin and increases the likelihood that they will sin.[186]

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[181] "American Reform Responsa, No. 49-52." Central Conference of American Rabbis.
[182] Ibid.
[183] "American Reform Responsa No. 52-54." Central Conference of American Rabbis.
[184]These arguments come form verses like Keritot 6b: "No fast day service is a genuine service unless sinners of Israel are included among the worshippers." And the requirement as delineated in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 619.1 to begin kol nidrei with the public announcement that on Yom Kippur the community is permitted and required to pray with sinners.
[185]"American Reform Responsa, No. 49-52." Central Conference of American Rabbis.
[186] Ibid.

While most of the Orthodox Jewish world still maintains the same traditional positions about homosexuality as a sin, liberal Jewish communities have changed their stance on the matter. The move to change the Reform approach to homosexuality follows changes in the scientific/psychological understanding of homosexuality as well as the changing socio-political climate in America that emerged with the gay civil rights movement. Likewise, the changes in Reform Judaism parallel or follow similar changes in other liberal branches of American Judaism. The changes in Reform Judaism formally manifest beginning in 1990 when the CCAR endorsed a report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Homosexuality and the Rabbinate, declaring that "all Jews are religiously equal regardless of their sexual orientation."[187] Moreover, the CCAR, in tandem with the URJ and HUC, endorsed the ordination of openly gay rabbis suggesting that: "all rabbis, regardless of sexual orientation, be accorded the opportunity to fulfill the sacred vocation that they have chosen."[188]

This statement was followed by a resolution in 1996 which resolved that the CCAR supports "the right of gay and lesbian couples to share fully and equally in the rights of civil marriage."[189] However, the movement did not reach a consensus on whether rabbis should officiate same-sex marriages. In 2000 a resolution on officiating at civil unions or marriages for same sex couples declared: "We recognize the diversity of opinions within our ranks on this issue. We support the decision of those who choose to officiate at rituals of union for same-gender couples, and we support the decision of those

[187] Central Conference of American Rabbis, "CCAR Resolution on Same Gender Officiation," March 2000.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.

who do not." [190] Today, the official opinion of the movement is to welcome and embrace all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, and most Reform rabbis officiate at same-sex weddings. Nonetheless, the decision to officiate at same-sex weddings is still left to the discretion of each rabbi.

Within both liberal Judaism and halakah there is very little written with regards to female homosexuality. However, in the Mishnah Torah, Rambam insists that it is forbidden for women to engage in sexual behavior with one another and while doing so does not effect their status with regards to chastity, the offense is punishable with flogging.[191] Moreover, husbands are warned that they should keep their wives away from women who engage in such practices.[192] Other codes like Arba Turim and the Shulchan Aruch also preserve Rambam's opinion as the definitive law on the matter.[193] These texts illustrate that there was acknowledgment of female homosexuality, but suggest that it was treated as a more minor offense and was not as grave a sin or threat to the community as male homosexuality. Likewise, within the Reform movement, prior to the 1996 CCAR resolution quoted above, there are only a few instances where "women homosexuals" are mentioned; rather the main concern is with homosexual desires and practices of men and boys.

Audacious Hospitality represents a completely unprecedented way of approaching homosexual individuals. The norm throughout Jewish history has been to understand homosexuality as a sin and to reject the behaviors or desires but generally not to reject the

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[190] Ibid.
[191] Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Issurei Bi'ah 21:8.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Arba Turim Even Ha-Ezaer 24 ; Shulchan Aruch Even Ha-Ezaer 24

people. However, today there is a call to recognize homosexuality as an identity, not a behavior. Audacious Hospitality seeks to offer recognition and affirmation to those who hold LGBTQIA identities in ways that would have been unthinkable twenty-five years ago, even in the most liberal Jewish contexts.[194] This new paradigm recognizes that sexual orientation is an identity that intersects with Judaism but that may define people and have its own culture or communal norms outside of Judaism. Ultimately, this new way of understanding homosexuality and the way Audacious Hospitality strives to recognize LGBTQIA individuals and affirm their belonging in Jewish space represents a break with and rejection of traditional Jewish treatment of this subject.

Gender Identity

Today, society is coming to understand gender as "a person's internal sense of being male, female, or something else."[195] Gender is not considered to be determined by the sex one was assigned at birth, or by the physical-biological markers that have traditionally denoted sex including "attributes such as chromosomes, hormone prevalence, and external and internal anatomy." [196]Rather, gender refers to the "the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for boys and men or girls and women."[197] Often, the term "transgender" is used as "an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender

[194] The T (transgender) and I (intersex) in the acronym LGBTQIA actually refer to categories of sex and gender not to sexual orientation. These categories will be discussed further below.
[195] American Psychological Association, Answers to Your Questions About Transgender Individuals and Gender Identity, http://www.apa.org/topics/sexuality/transgender.pdf, 1.
[196]Ibid.1
[197] Ibid.1

expression, or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth."[198]

These definitions have come about in response to modern science, psychology, and changes in socio-political understanding of identity. Traditionally, this is not how Judaism has understood gender. In the Torah and all halakic discourse prior to the twentieth century, gender and sex are conflated with one another. For example, the prohibition in Deut. 22:5 suggests that it is an abomination for a woman to wear men's clothing or for a man to wear women's clothing. In contemporary vernacular, one would use the terms "male" and "female" to describe a person's sex and "man" and "woman" to describe a person's gender. However, in this text, the two are one in the same. The text is suggesting that a person who was assigned the female sex at birth and who has female biological characteristics should not use the gender markers that the society ascribes to those who are assigned male gender at birth and have male biological characteristics.

Deut. 22:5 not only illustrates the way the categories of gender and sex were conflated in Jewish legal vernacular, but also illustrates the traditional rigidity enforced around gender expression and the correlation between sex and gender. Halachically, there is an intrinsic importance and logical explanation for the need to ensure that people's gender expression and sex correlate, and that these categories can be easily defined. After all, Halakah is a gendered law code.

There are many requirements and prohibitions that only apply to men, and others that only apply to women. Moreover, there are many halakhic laws governing appropriate interactions between men and women. Thus, it is imperative to know the sex/gender of

[198] Ibid.1

the person you are interacting with to know if you are allowed to be alone with the individual or to talk with them, not to mention whether it is permitted to marry them. Additionally, it is difficult to separate the categories of sex and gender halakhically because some of the commandments, like *milah* and *niddah,* are conferred upon men and women but rely on the existence of male or female genitalia. A person who identifies as a man, but has no external genitalia poses a significant halakic challenge.[199] In order to preserve a clear understanding of how an individual should be treated by others, and what halakic obligations they are commanded to fulfill, Judaism has traditionally encouraged strict gender roles and adherence to gender norms.

Judaism does, however, have a non-binary understanding of sex. Beyond the categories of male and female, halakha also recognizes individuals under the following additional genders: tumtum, androgynous, saris hamma, and aylonit. 1) Tumtum: "A person who is either male or female but whose gender is unknown because the organs are hidden by some type of membrane or cover is completely obscure."[200] 2) Androgynous: "A person whose body is neither typically male nor typically female but had anatomic features of both."[201] 3) Saris Hamma: "A man congenitally sterile [, which] might have referred to someone with undescended testes, or someone sterile as the result of a febrile

[199] This is explored extensively in halakic responsa both with regards to individuals who have no external genitalia due to injury or birth abnormality. Likewise, the issue is discussed at length in modern responsa about those who undergo sexual reassignment surgery. An overview of the ancient and modern halakic responses to these phenomena can be found in the Conservative Responsa written by Leonard A. Sharzer, "Transgender Jews and Halakhah," Even Ha-Ezer 5:11. 2017b, 6. A less extensive account including the Reform understanding of these phenomena can be found in "American Reform Responsa, No. 5769.6." Central Conference of American Rabbis.

[200] Leonard A. Sharzer, "Transgender Jews and Halakhah," Even Ha-Ezer 5:11. 2017b, 4.

[201] Ibid., 4.

illness."[202] 4) Aylonit: "May be what is today referred to as 'female sex reversal,' XY/fg (a person with male genetic makeup and typical female genitalia) caused by Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome. Those specifics are not as important as that for the Rabbis they were neither clearly male nor clearly female for purposes of halakha."[203]

Members of these categories were given distinct treatment under halakha and were understood as exceptions to the binary male and female norms. In certain instances, these individuals were expected to live by the laws governing men and in other instances they were expected to live by the laws governing women. With regards to the androgynous, this understanding is outlined in Mishnah Bikkurim 4. Here we learn that "there are ways that the androgynous is like men, ways that they are like women, ways that they are like both men and women, and ways that they are not like men or women."[204] The Mishnah then offers an extensive list of the ways the androgynous falls into these four categories halakhically. For example, they are like men in their dress and hair, but like women in that they must perform *niddah* and cannot be alone with men.[205] They are like both because if they are the victims of premeditated murdered their killer will receive the death penalty, and they are like neither in that they allowed to enter the temple while they are impure due to menstrual or ejaculatory discharge.[206] The chapter concludes with the notion that the androgynous is thus a unique creature, and is unlike the

[202] Ibid., 4.
[203] Ibid., 4.
[204] Mishnah Bikkurim 4:1.
[205] Mishnah Bikkurim 4: 2-3.
[206]Mishnah Bikkurim 4: 4-5.

tumtum, who is at times a man and at times a women but lacks the liminal status of the androgynous.[207]

Many markers of the individuals in these four non-binary halakhic categories of sex would fall into the contemporary conception of intersex, a person with atypical biological sex characteristics.[208] Yet none fall into the modern categories of transgender, gender fluid, or any other non-binary gender identity. The halakhic categories are all related to biological sex characteristics and individuals were still expected to live and present themselves under the norms of the sex category assigned to them at birth.

There is little mention of gender diversity in Jewish discourse until the 1980s with the early emergence of modern responsa addressing the halakic questions around sex reassignment surgery. Within Orthodox communities, poskim have opposed sex reassignment surgery and modern concepts of non-binary gender identity. Their arguments are based in part on the halakhic prohibition to mutilate or dismember a person's genitalia, and in part on the idea that regardless of one's self-perception it is impossible to alter the sex one is assigned from birth and the corresponding halakic obligations, even through surgical means.[209] Alternatively, while the Conservative movement originally rejected the modern notion of gender and insisted that sexual reassignment surgery was prohibited under Jewish law, they have since changed their

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[207] Mishnah Bikkurim 4:5.
[208] American Psychological Association, Answers to Your Questions About Transgender Individuals and Gender Identity, http://www.apa.org/topics/sexuality/transgender.pdf, 1.
[209] Tzitz Eliezer, X, no.25, chap. 26, sec. 6; "The Establishment of Maternity & Paternity in Jewish and American Law," Rabbi Michael Broyde, National Jewish Law Review (1988), appendix.

perspective.[210] Today, both the Conservative and Reform movements have both accepted and embraced the contemporary understanding of gender as separate from sex, particularly as defined by the American Psychological Association and most contemporary professional medical associations.[211] Both of these movements have begun to wrestle with the implications of these new concepts of gender with regards to matters of status, ritual observance, and other halakic or practical elements of community membership. However, Audacious Hospitality is the first major movement to approach the modern category of gender from the perspective of recognition and outreach.

Ability

Throughout Jewish history and scripture, Jews have elevated the value of not taking advantage of individuals with disabilities. Within the Torah we see this value preserved in verses like Lev. 19:14, which prohibits cursing the deaf or putting a stumbling block before the blind, and Deut. 27:18, which suggests that those who lead a blind person astray on the road will be cursed. Likewise, in the Talmud, Bava Kama 86b suggests that it is prohibited to humiliate a blind person. In addition to not taking advantage of the disabled, there are many instances where Jewish law has recognized the need to make special accommodations halakhically for individuals with disabilities. For

[210] J. David Blech, "Transsexual Surgery" in *Jewish Bioethics*, Fred Rosner and Menachem M. Brayer ed., (KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 2000), 209; Leonard A. Sharzer, "Transgender Jews and Halakhah," Even Ha-Ezer 5:11. 2017b

[211] This is a very new phenomenon. The CCAR produced two major Responsa on related matters, first in 2008 and again in 2015, and the Conservative Rabbinic Association produced their major responsa on related matters in 2017.American Reform Responsa, No. 5769.6." Central Conference of American; "5776.2." Central Conference of American Rabbis; Leonard A. Sharzer, "Transgender Jews and Halakhah," Even Ha-Ezer 5:11. 2017b

example, despite the prohibition to carry on Shabbat, an individual with a disability who would otherwise be immobile without a cane/crutch is allowed to carry the assistive devise on Shabbat.[212]

One might assume from the halakic precedent of these verses that Audacious Hospitality's attempt to welcome and accommodate people with a diverse range of physical and intellectual abilities is a continuation of long-standing Jewish practice. However, on two accounts, Audacious Hospitality breaks with the way Judaism has understood disability for most of its history. First, Audacious Hospitality focuses on ability rather than disability, highlighting all that these individuals can do rather than focusing on the ways they are limited. Second, rather than offering individuals minor accommodations so that they may join in normative communal practice, Audacious Hospitality strives to reimagine normative communal practices in ways the meet the needs and highlight the abilities of these individuals.

This first point of break with tradition can be exemplified when we look at the broad halakic exclusion granted to people with disabilities. For example, in Pesachim 116b we are told that a blind person is halakhically exempt from reciting the Haggadah because of the line

"And you shall tell your children on that day saying, it is because of this which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt."[213] Because the word "this" refers to showing the children the blood of the pascal lamb, which a blind individual would not have been able to see. The motivation of this exemption is to ensure that the commandments are

[212] Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayim 301.17
[213] Exodus 13:8

being followed to the letter, and to recognize that the individual's disability limits him/her from visualizing the blood and therefore makes it impossible for them to complete this mitzvah. The exemption highlights the focus on disability instead of ability and airs on the side of limiting those with disabilities. In contrast, Audacious Hospitality focuses on the person's abilities and not only tries to justify including that person in the ritual but also reinterprets or changes the language of the liturgy or the nature of the ritual to be more inclusive. [214]

The example of Pesachim 116b is not meant to suggest that nobody throughout Jewish history has argued for a more inclusive reading of texts that limit individuals with disabilities. Bava Kama 87a preserves a debate about whether or not a blind person is exempt from all halakha and while the debate concludes that they are exempt, the many commentaries challenge this idea and argue that they are only partially exempt.[215] Nonetheless, even these more inclusive commentaries still focus on the individual's limits or divert the conversation to other areas of life where the person would be less limited. Unlike Audacious Hospitality, they do not focus on how to accommodate and integrate the person into the rituals they would otherwise be limited from by focusing on their abilities.

Similarly, historically Judaism has suggested there are limits to the way people with disabilities should be integrated into communal spaces. For example, a person with a physical blemish or discoloration on his hand is forbidden to offer the priestly benediction because it may distract those receiving the blessing and cause them to

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[214] *Writing Inclusive Liturgy*. Union of Reform Judaism and the Ruderman Family Foundation, https://disabilitiesinclusion.org/session/writing-inclusive-liturgy/

[215] Tosafot and Chiddushey HaRashba on Bava Kama 87a.

stare.[216] Likewise, historically people with visible physical disabilities or blemishes were excluded from participating in leadership roles or from participating in ritual life if their disability would cause the community to be distracted from prayer.[217] These practices are meant to protect the needs of the rest of the community to fulfill mitzvot without distraction. Audacious Hospitality breaks with the tradition of prioritizing the needs of the community over that of disabled individuals and encourages communities to accommodate and learn to embrace individuals with disabilities even if their behavior may be unsettling or distracting at first.[218]

While Audacious Hospitality deviates with tradition in some respects, there are examples in which twentieth century Judaism reimagined traditional understandings of disability and began the move toward the level of inclusion envisioned by Audacious Hospitality. For example, the famous twentieth century *posek*, R. Eliezer Waldenberg, argued that with the advent of modern technology, like the hearing aids and assistive speech devises, the halakic category of *cheresh* (deaf and/or mute) essentially becomes non-existent. [219] In the twentieth century he suggests any laws that originally excluded individuals with these disabilities from ritual life no longer apply.[220] In concordance with

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[216] Mishnah Megillah 4:7
[217] W. Gunther Plaut and Mark Washofsky. "Teshuvot For the 1990's No.5752.5 297-304." Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1997.
[218] One example given in this resource provided by the Audacious Hospitality Initiative is to welcome individuals with Tourette's Syndrome or intellectual disabilities into the kahal even though they may make distracting verbal outbursts during the service. Rather than excluding these individuals from the community, the resource suggests debriefing the *shaliach tzibur* that there may be distractions and coaching them on how to maintain focus and continue without allowing the distractions to effect the worship. Integrating Adults with Disabilities. Union of Reform Judaism and the Ruderman Family Foundation, https://disabilitiesinclusion.org/session/integrating-adults-with-disabilities/.
[219] Tzitz Eliezer, 15, No. 46, 120 ff.
[220] Tzitz Eliezer, 15, No. 46, 120 ff.

Waldenberg's responsa and others like it, the twentieth century opened the door for much greater inclusion in Jewish spaces from Orthodox to Reform as communities embraced the use of hearing aids and other assistive technology. Waldenberg's argument about inclusion moves in the same direction as Audacious Hospitality because it embraces the use of assistive technologies to help integrate those who would have historically been excluded into normative communal practice.

Audacious Hospitality also advocates for the use of assistive technology in this manner.[221] Nonetheless, it advocates for going beyond Waldenberg's level of inclusion and further highlights the strengths of the differently abled. In communities that practice Audacious Hospitality, a non-verbal individual with an intellectual disability who may not be able to participate fully even with assistive technology could still be called to the Torah for an *aliyah* and would raise a poster in front of the community with the blessing for reading Torah rather than verbalizing the blessing.[222] Thus Audacious Hospitality embraces and pushes the fold of the trend toward inclusion that began to find its place in Jewish communities with thinkers like Waldenberg. However, it moves toward a much more radical sense of inclusion that is willing to privilege inclusion and accommodation over tradition and the community's normative expectations.

Audacious Hospitality Defined

Audacious Hospitality is an initiative of the Union of Reform Judaism designed to address the demands of diversity within the Reform movement. The initiative is built on

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[221] *Integrating Adults with Disabilities*. Union of Reform Judaism and the Ruderman Family Foundation, https://disabilitiesinclusion.org/session/integrating-adults-with-disabilities/.
[222] Ibid.

the premise that "As the demographic landscape of North America continues to shift, so too does the collective identity of the Jewish people."[223] Accordingly, in order to fully meet the needs of the Jewish people, the initiative suggests that our communities need to turn more attention to those individuals who have traditionally been on the margins. The initiative identifies a wide array of groups as being on the margins of our community today, suggesting:

> Jewish populations that require our attention—such as Jews by choice and those exploring Judaism; interfaith couples and families; Jews of Color; Jews who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer; Jews who live with physical, mental, or intellectual disabilities; multiracial families; Millennials; the aging Jewish population; and Jews who are unaffiliated and uninspired by current Jewish communal offerings—should be made visible and must be supported directly in our congregations and communities.[224]

However, to date, most of the initiative's attention has been focused on issues pertaining to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability.[225]

In addition to concern that Reform congregations do not reflect the diversity of North America's Jewish population, Audacious Hospitality emerged out of a concern that people with the aforementioned identities were disengaged from synagogue life due to discrimination or feelings of exclusion. In response to this phenomenon, the Audacious Hospitality initiative developed a wealth of strategies to address the feelings of alterity and a lack of belonging experienced by minority individuals in Jewish spaces. As April

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[223] "Audacious Hospitality Toolkit," June 2017, Union of Reform Judaism, http://urj.org/sites/default/files/AudaciousHospitalityToolkit_June2017.pdf, 5.This is a pilot version of a resources that has yet to be published and fully dispersed throughout the movement.
[224] Ibid., 5.
[225] The initiative is in its fourth year and has set a vision for expansive inclusion of the broader list of groups by 2020 "Audacious Hospitality." URJ, October 5, 2015. https://urj.org/audacioushospitality.

Baskin, the Union of Reform Judaism's Vice President of Audacious Hospitality, explains: "People are seeking experiences that relate to all aspects of their identities. If your institution is not doing everything possible to foster a safe, welcoming, and equitable space for all members and visitors, they'll find another community that will."[226] In an attempt to combat the lack of synagogue affiliation among these groups, Audacious Hospitality has devised a wealth of strategies for congregations to create safe, welcoming, equitable spaces and overcome these barriers of minority exclusion and discrimination.[227] The three main mediums through which the initiative achieves its goals include: providing congregations with educational resources on diversity and inclusion, offering consulting services for congregations on how to implement Audacious Hospitality, and implementing leadership development for minorities.[228]

Philosophically, Audacious Hospitality is about integrating diversity into the Reform Movement's self-perception so that those who have historically been on the margins are no longer understood as peripheral to the Jewish world, but as a fully integrated part of congregational life. April Baskin offers the metaphor: "We recognize that Jewish diversity in all its hues is no longer a wave, but the ocean of Jewish life."[229] In practice, this change in self-perception begins by identifying the ways Jewish spaces affirm some identities, worldviews, and experiences over others.[230] This system of privilege is what creates the notion of marginality, leaving some as minorities on the

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[226] April Baskin and Amy Asin, "4 Key Areas to Make Your Congregation Audaciously Hospitable," URJ, October 2, 2018. https://urj.org/blog/2018/10/02/4-key-areas-make-your-congregation-audaciously-hospitable.
[227] Ibdi., 5
[228] "Audacious Hospitality Toolkit," June 2017, Union of Reform Judaism, 7.
[229] Ibid., 5.
[230] These practices are at times conscious and overt and at other times unconscious or tacit.

community's periphery and others as the privileged majority, the core of the community whose identity defines the congregation's cultural norms and self-understanding.

After identifying the ways the Jewish community currently ascribes a sense of marginality or alterity to certain identities, Audacious Hospitality demands a process of atonement for the alienation and discrimination of those on the community's periphery. This atonement takes place through a set of incremental structural changes that transform the community's self-perception so that it comes to understand diversity as an integral part of Judaism.[231] As April Baskin explains, "Recognizing areas for improvement in your community – particularly through actively listening, apologizing, and adapting a willingness to change – will foster deep trust among you, your congregants, and your sacred partners."[232] As one of the Audacious Hospitality educational modules for Jewish leaders articulates, "Change in action is a meaningful form of apology."[233] Each structural change is designed to educate about and combat misrecognition, discrimination, and the barriers to integration.

Some of these structural changes address physical barriers to integration, such as removing the literal barriers in the synagogue that prevent full integration of physically disabled members. Other changes involve giving a greater voice to those with traditionally marginalized identities and encouraging their representation in community leadership. Likewise, these changes involve making diversity more visible so that the identities and experiences of diverse congregants are normalized and affirmed. These

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[231] "Audacious Hospitality Toolkit," June 2017, Union of Reform Judaism, 6.
[232] April Baskin and Amy Asin, "4 Key Areas to Make Your Congregation Audaciously Hospitable,"
[233] Ariel Vegosen, Liat Melnick, and April Baskin. "Audacious Hospitality LGBTQ Online Learning Series: Session 1." PowerPoint, June 20, 2018, 24.

structural changes not only transform the self-perception of Reform Judaism and embrace diversity, but they also affirm that people with traditionally marginalized backgrounds belong in our communities and are an integral part of who we are.

As its name would suggest, hospitality is the first strategy Audacious Hospitality suggests in order to create the safe, welcoming, and equitable environment needed to serve the needs of those on the margins. Hospitality means focusing on the welcoming reception of all individuals that enter into a Reform Jewish space.

The initiative offers a number of strategies for congregations in order to improve their hospitality. Some of these strategies focus on being welcoming: having welcoming greeters and ushers, teaching office staff and volunteers proper welcoming strategies, making websites and advertisements for communal events welcoming, and ensuring that all registration forms and physical spaces within the congregation are welcoming. The ability to be welcoming, or hospitable, in all of these ways begins with an understanding of what makes different minority groups feel unwelcome and what allows them to feel like they belong.

Some of these steps toward hospitality focus on recognition. For example, one of these strategies is to change the language on the congregation's forms to let people identify their own pronouns, title, and gender identity rather than making them select male or female.[234] This strategy leads to proper recognition of transgender and gender-nonbinary individuals. Giving these individuals space to articulate how they identify and wish to be recognized makes them feel more welcome and respected by the community.

[234] April Baskin and Martine Duffy. "Audacious Hospitality LGBTQ Online Learning Series: Session 2." PowerPoint, July 5, 2018. 8-10.

Likewise, placing non-binary language on the congregational website illustrates to those who may be researching the community that the congregation will welcome them and recognize their diverse identities.[235]

Another issue Audacious Hospitality focuses on, which is closely connected to recognition, is that of micro-aggressions. Audacious Hospitality demands congregational-wide education and policy changes that address issues of discrimination, and many of the resources the initiative provides address discrimination in the form of micro-aggressions. According to the Audacious Hospitality Jews of Color Education Resource Module, "Microaggressions are the constant and continuing reality of slights, insults, invalidations, and indignities visited upon marginalized groups by well-intentioned, moral, and decent family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, students, teachers.…"[236] According to this module, Jews of Color often experience these microaggressions in Reform congregations in the form of comments and questions like "So, how are you Jewish?," "You don't look Jewish," or "What are you?"[237] When they hear these comments, Jews of Color "feel alienated, unwelcome, or unsafe" because the comments illustrate that the speaker thinks they do not belong in the community. Other micro-aggressions may be more focused on generalizations about or misrecognition of the person's race, like "I don't really see you as [black, Asian, Latino/a]," "You're not really [black, Asian, Latino/a] like them," or "You're really smart/pretty for a [black, Asian, Latino/a] person."[238]

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[235] "Audacious Hospitality Toolkit," June 2017, Union of Reform Judaism, 35.
[236] Audacious Hospitality Jews of Color Educational Resource Module Pilot," Union of Reform Judaism, 2017, 29.
[237] Ibid., 29
[238] Ibid., 29

These microaggressions are an issue of recognition because the speaker misrecognizes the intersectionality of the other's Jewish identity and their racial identity. The comments suggest that the individual can only authentically be Jewish or a racial minority and fails to recognize that they are both. Moreover, these microaggressions also reflect issues of misrecognition and implicit bias against what it means to be non-white, because they assume that racial minorities are not intelligent, unattractive, or incapable of behaving in ways they identify with personally. However, Audacious Hospitality suggests that when congregations provide education about microaggressions and work to eliminate them, they combat one of the biggest barriers Jews of Color face regarding inclusion and feeling a sense of belonging in the community.

Other strategies focus on removing obstacles that prevent minorities from being fully integrated into the community. For example, one strategy is to install ramps, elevators, and railings throughout the building beyond the legal requirements in order to make all spaces, including the *bimah*, fully accessible to those with physical disabilities.[239] The aim of making these modifications is to "help guests feel comfortable by anticipating their needs and help them feel competent by providing clear directions and information about communal practices."[240] Ultimately, these strategies may allow those with physical disabilities and their families to feel welcome in the space by eliminating both the physical barriers and the barriers of stress or fear that can come from having to navigate an unaccommodating space. These barriers include things like not

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[239] "Exemplar Congregation." Union of Reform Judaism and the Ruderman Family Foundation, *Disabilities Inclusion Learning Center* (blog), October 25, 2015. https://disabilitiesinclusion.org/exemplar-congregations.
[240] Ibid., 39.

being readily able to access restrooms or finding an accessible space to sit in the congregation.

The next stage of Audacious Hospitality involves cultivating leadership among minorities and developing affinity groups. On a movement-wide scale, the initiative has taken on this task through the JewV'Nation Fellowship program. The first fellowship focused on individuals from interfaith backgrounds, and more recently the URJ launched a fellowship cohort for Jews of Color, and another cohort for LGBTQIA+ individuals.[241] "This program focuses on strengthening Reform Judaism by increasing opportunities for Reform Jewish communities to learn from and be led by Jewish leaders who identify "as members of these minority groups.[242] Each member of the cohort participates in a year-long leadership training seminar and project incubator where they create a project related to Audacious Hospitality that is geared toward their identity group. Each project either works to improve congregational recognition of individuals in the cohort's identity group, remove barriers to communal integration for the group, or normalize and celebrate communal diversity. "Projects have included developing board trainings, community building/outreach initiatives, trainings for religious school educators and young professionals, and focused communications initiatives."[243]

In addition to offering leadership training and opportunities, the JewV'Nation Fellowship cohort also serves as an affinity group to support those individuals who have felt discriminated against or unrecognized in Reform Jewish spaces. One of the projects

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[241] April Baskin. "Announcing the 2019 LGBTQIA JewV'Nation Cohort!" URJ, August 21, 2018. https://urj.org/blog/2018/08/21/announcing-2019-lgbtqia-jewvnation-cohort.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid.

launched by the JewV'Nation Fellowship Jews of Color cohort has opened the affinity group model to Jews of Color throughout the Reform Movement by creating a platform on "The Tent," the URJ's collaborative online platform. Through this forum, Jews of Color can share their experiences, connect with others who share their identity, and discuss strategies for making congregational life more inclusive.

On the congregational level under Audacious Hospitality, communities are also encouraged to cultivate minority leadership and empower a diverse group of people to become board members or congregational leaders.[244] In addition to cultivating leadership among adults, congregations are also encouraged to offer leadership training for youth with traditionally marginalized identities and include them in conversations about religious school and youth group diversity and inclusion.[245] Empowering and encouraging individuals in these groups to take on leadership positions enhances the visibility of diversity within a congregation, which helps change the community's self-perception and embrace its diversity.[246] Moreover, welcoming diverse individuals into leadership roles means that they have some influence in decision making and can advocate for community resources to be allocated in ways that further inclusion and remove the barriers to full minority integration and belonging. Likewise, these individuals can help examine and reframe communal policies and practices to make them more hospitable and accepting of diversity.

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[244] April Baskin and Amy Asin, "4 Key Areas to Make Your Congregation Audaciously Hospitable,"
[245] "Audacious Hospitality Toolkit," June 2017, Union of Reform Judaism, 66
[246] Ibid., 66. Similar work to the JewV'Nation fellowship is also being offered for movement wide youth leadership through NFTY and L'Taken Social Justice Seminars.

One of the credos of the Audacious Hospitality initiative is "'Nothing about us without us.' This means that members across all identity groups are full participants in decision making processes, including and especially those that shape congregational inclusion practices." [247] In affirmation of this credo, the initiative recommends that congregations not only include diversity in the ranks of their formal leadership but that they also have listening campaigns. These listening campaigns provide a space for members of a particular group to gather and voice their needs and ways they feel the community can transform itself to be more hospitable and help them develop a deeper sense of belonging.[248]

By listening to the needs of the minorities who are speaking, the community has a better chance of creating substantive change that truly addresses the barriers to minority inclusion and meets the needs of all community members.[249] Moreover, hearing the stories of those whose experiences have often been silenced can illustrate the subtle discrimination individuals experience that those unaffected may not notice. This affirms the fact that the congregation is made up of people with diverse experiences, worldviews, and narratives. Likewise, the leadership can encourage minorities to share their story with the broader community to help reinforce the community's shift towards a more divers self-perception. Ultimately, while it is important to highlight the experiences of the

[247] "Audacious Hospitality Toolkit," June 2017, Union of Reform Judaism, 66.
[248] "4 Things to Know about Engaging Baby Boomers." URJ, December 18, 2018. https://urj.org/blog/2018/12/18/4-things-know-about-engaging-baby-boomers.
[249] As will be discussed in greater detail in the analysis to follow, Audacious Hospitality does not address how to navigate situations where listening campaigns among different groups identify conflicting needs or when a group requests something that undermines the community's status quo in ways that are limiting or offensive to the majority of the community.

individual members of the congregation, the initiative also encourages that the congregation invest in books and resources for the library that reflect diverse Jewish experiences and address the unique challenges of minority individuals.

An additional stage of Audacious Hospitality involves ritual innovation. One suggestion the initiative offers for making liturgy more audaciously hospitable is to change the words of *birkot hashachar* and remove the ideas that God makes firm each person's steps or opens the eyes of the blind.[250] This liturgical change makes the liturgy more inclusive of individuals with disabilities who may feel alienated by the traditional phrasing of the liturgy. In response to those who challenge that these verses should not be changed because they are meant to be understood metaphorically, the initiative argues that the verses are un-inclusive, even as a metaphor. After all, they still stigmatize disability or present it in a negative light by equating "infirm steps with weakness or uncertainty, and blindness with a lack of vision."[251] In addition to liturgical changes, Audacious Hospitality also encourages the inclusion of diversity among the interpretive sources quoted from the bimah and used in Torah study or other educational settings. Similarly, the initiative has created new prayers and rituals that speak to diverse life experiences, such as a set of prayers for the process of transitioning genders.[252]

The final two foci of Audacious Hospitality turn outward to partnerships with organizations that support minorities outside the synagogue and political advocacy work

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[250] *Writing Inclusive Liturgy*, Matan Koch, 2015,Union of Reform Judaism and the Ruderman Family Foundation, *Disabilities Inclusion Learning Center* (blog), https://disabilitiesinclusion.org/session/writing-inclusive-liturgy/.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Martine Duffy and Rabbi Mychal Copeland. "Audacious Hospitality LGBTQ Online Learning Series: Session 4." PowerPoint, July 30, 2018.

in the greater society. Building relationships with organizations outside the synagogue that support minorities gives congregations access to a broader range of experts in minority inclusion who can support them in their efforts to become audaciously hospitable.[253] Likewise, these partnerships allow congregations to stand out as visible allies for their minority congregants, and helps keep them informed about significant cultural events that they can participate in or about which they can offer supplemental programing.[254] Examples include disability awareness and inclusion month, trans remembrance day, or local pride parades. When a congregation serves as a visible public ally and offers programing around events that are important to the identities and cultures of minority individuals, they show a deep commitment to diversity and illustrate to congregants that they recognize and support them.[255] Additionally, being publicly visible as an ally may also attract unaffiliated Jews who are not members because they are under the impression the congregation is not welcoming and inclusive.[256]

The final benefit of these partnerships with outside organizations is that they help build a team through which to work for political and social change in society. In addition to communal partners, congregations are encouraged to participate in the Religious Action Center's national racial justice campaign, campaign for federal and state LGBTQIA non-discrimination laws, and civic engagement campaign to register and

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[253] April Baskin and Amy Asin, "4 Key Areas to Make Your Congregation Audaciously Hospitable";
Jennifer Goldstein and Daniel Bahner,"Audacious Hospitality LGBTQ Online Learning Series: Session 5," PowerPoint, August 15, 2018

[254] "Audacious Hospitality Toolkit," June 2017, Union of Reform Judaism, 7.

[255] April Baskin and Amy Asin, "4 Key Areas to Make Your Congregation Audaciously Hospitable"

[256] Jennifer Goldstein and Daniel Bahner,"Audacious Hospitality LGBTQ Online Learning Series: Session 5," PowerPoint, August 15, 2018

encourage all congregants to vote. [257] Audacious Hospitality maintains that the issues facing minorities within Reform congregations are fundamentally social justice issues and that they connect to social justice issues faced by society as a whole.[258] Thus, in order to effectively combat oppression, discrimination, and injustice congregations have a responsibility to address these issues as they appear not only within the walls of the synagogue but also outside of them.

Many of the demands of Audacious Hospitality are defended through a rational appeal to the need to serve all members. Another justification for Audacious Hospitality is the fear of growing rates of Jews who are unaffiliated with congregations.[259] With regards to the trend toward disaffiliation, congregations fear that an inability to integrate traditionally marginalized groups will stunt their ability to grow their membership base. However, this last stage of Audacious Hospitality presents the moral justification used to defend Audacious Hospitality. Audacious Hospitality rests on the prophetic values of social justice that the Reform movement has always understood as its foundation. The moral foundation of Audacious Hospitality is a belief that we are called to pursue social justice. Challenges of inclusion and recognizing diversity within the congregation are understood as deeply connected to many of the broader social justice issues faced by society as a whole. So, if the Reform Movement is to truly be an effective advocate for justice and social change, it needs to work both within and outside of its own boarders.

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[257] Jennifer Goldstein and Lizzie Stein. "Audacious Hospitality LGBTQ Online Learning Series: Session 6." PowerPoint, August 28, 2018.
[258]Ibid.
[259] In 2013, 35% of American Jews identified as Reform, yet 30% did not affiliate with any movement and that rates of disaffiliation are on the rise. "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," Pew Research Center, October 1, 2013. http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/.

Merits and Challenges of Audacious Hospitality as a Philosophical Model

This chapter constructs a conversation between Audacious Hospitality and the other philosophical models articulated in part one. This conversation is meant to illustrate both the merits and challenges of Audacious Hospitality as a model for meeting the demands of diversity in Reform congregational life. At the point that this paper is being written, the Audacious Hospitality initiative has been active for four years. It is clear that the initiative is well on its way to launching a wealth of strategies and support systems for integrating its policies into congregations by 2020.[260]

The webinars and toolkits the URJ has produced are being piloted by a wide array of congregations, and many of these congregations have already begun taking major steps to embrace Audacious Hospitality.[261] In other instances some of the early steps toward creating an audaciously hospitable movement have not been particularly successful. For example, in August of 2018 the movement tried to launch an online platform for Jews of Color across the country.[262] The platform was meant to create an affinity group amongst Jews of Color in which they could support one another, work to

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[260] "Audacious Hospitality." URJ, October 5, 2015. https://urj.org/audacioushospitality.

[261] This is evidenced by the conversations which have taken place via Zoom among the many congregational leaders participating in the initiative's educational modules. Recordings of the modules have been preserved on the URJ's Tent platform but all of the conversations between individual participants have been deleted from the public versions of these recordings. Other evidence can be found on the list of congregations that the movement has identified as exemplar congregations for the steps they have already taken toward inclusion of individuals of diverse abilities. "Disabilities Inclusion Learning Center: Exemplar Congregation." *Disabilities Inclusion Learning Center* (blog), October 25, 2015.

[262] "Yammer : The Tent (URJ) : JOC : All Conversations." https://www.yammer.com/thetent/#/threads/inGroup?type=in_group&feedId=12863239&view=all.

articulate shared challenges, and create strategies for addressing the needs of Jews of Color throughout the Reform movement. [263] While 88 individuals initially activated accounts, fewer than 20 have ever posted anything on the platform. Moreover, after the first month conversations all but stopped and only three users who are not moderators paid by the URJ have posted anything on the site.[264] There is a seeming lack of success here marked by the platform's inabilities to reach a significant percent of the population of Jews of Color and to build relationships among these individuals and engage them in dialogue that would further the cause of Audacious Hospitality.

Nonetheless, at this point it may still be too early to determine whether this platform or any other measures taken to implement Audacious Hospitality will be successful in the long run. Outside of these limited examples and statistics, it is too early to determine the efficacy of Audacious Hospitality. Yet, through conversation with other philosophical models, we can articulate some of the philosophical merits and challenges of Audacious Hospitality as a model for meeting the demands of congregational diversity.

Compared to all of the models and strategies for navigating diversity discussed in this paper, Audacious Hospitality has the least in common with tolerance. The framework of tolerance illustrates a way that people with conflicting values can coexist in the face of moral disagreement and disapproval across lines of difference.

In contrast, Audacious Hospitality makes no mention of the potential for moral disagreement or diversity in moral values within Reform Congregations. Audacious

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[263] Ibid.

[264] The moderators of the site are paid with stipends as part of the JewV'Nation Jews of Color fellowship. These observations are reflective of the site as of January 18th 2019. Ibid.

Hospitality is portrayed as part of the ethical responsibilities to repair the world and pursue social justice, which are incumbent upon all Jews. However, this portrayal ignores the fact that some members of Reform congregations may disagree that Audacious Hospitality falls within the realm of these mitzvot. Moreover, the initiative completely ignores the fact that some members of the congregation may have moral qualms with the identities Audacious Hospitality strives to integrate and the means by which the initiative suggests integrating them. Ultimately, it seems reasonable to expect that some members of Reform congregations will take moral issue with Audacious Hospitality. After all, the formal position of the Reform movement until 1990 was that homosexuality was considered immoral, which was during the lifetime of most Reform adults.

This failure to address the potential for moral conflict within Reform congregations may ultimately be a shortcoming of Audacious Hospitality. Societies that operate under the maxims of tolerance can sustain programs without universal agreement over the moral validity of the projects by demanding that those who find the project immoral not interfere. In contrast, Audacious Hospitality demands the full support of the entire community in order to be successful. This reliance on unanimous support and inability to deal with moral descent may ultimately make it impossible to fully implement Audacious Hospitality across the movement. Moreover, even if the movement can eventually come to complete moral agreement about the value of Audacious Hospitality, the work needed to change people's moral perceptions and reconstruct the culture around some of these identities may come with exorbitant costs and the transformation may take a very long time. Furthermore, if the Reform movement were to succeed in creating unanimous moral support for Audacious Hospitality there would be a certain irony to this

accomplishment. In this case the movement would be privileging the recognition and support of marginalized groups at the expense of recognizing and affirming diversity in values and conceptions of morality.

In contrast to the way Audacious Hospitality's juxtaposition with tolerance highlights this shortcoming, the juxtaposition also highlights the ways the initiative may succeed in certain ways that tolerance fails. For example, Audacious Hospitality is not subject to the critique of moral inconsistency that is often leveled against tolerance. This is because all of the changes it demands are justified by what the movement understands as an objective moral argument.

Additionally, in comparison to tolerance, Audacious Hospitality may be more able to successfully engender respect across lines of difference. The matter of whether tolerance engenders respect across lines of difference is a subject of scholarly debate. Yet Herman perceptively argues that tolerance may fall short in encouraging respect among those with different values because it does not encourage a level of knowledge about and conversation with the other. Without these measures people are more likely to treat the other the way they want to be treated or in ways they believe show good will, rather than in ways the other would actually like to be treated and understands as respectful. Audacious Hospitality's insistence upon listening to the voice of the other, cultivating minority leadership, and its reliance on the motto "nothing about us without us" all show the ways the initiative is able to overcome this shortcoming of the model of tolerance.

Of the models discussed in this work for navigating the challenges of diversity, Audacious Hospitality is most similar to the model of multiculturalism. The models of multiculturalism and Audacious Hospitality share the following principles. First, they

both suggest that in order for all members of a community to experience equity, policies have to go beyond non-discrimination and offer support and recognition of the different needs and interests of diverse groups. In Audacious Hospitality this ability to move beyond non-discrimination is valuable because it may cultivate a deeper sense of belonging among those who have been discriminated against in the past and because it allows these individuals to feel welcome and safe in Reform spaces.

Second, both models share the understanding that in order to meet the demands of diversity, the community needs to make a shift in the way diverse groups relate to one another. This shift demands transformation from a majority-minority or core-periphery model of self-understanding to the perception of a diverse community with a plurality of different values, worldviews, experiences, and interests. As in multiculturalism, this shift demanded by Audacious Hospitality is helpful for enhancing the causes of equity in the face of diversity. The shift is beneficial because it allows the community to take ownership for the ways historical norms have systematically preserved socio-political inequality among community members. Additionally, the shift draws the community's attention to the way hegemonic cultural norms and perceptions about communal belonging alienate and discriminate against minorities. It is an asset for the community to be able to take ownership, repent, and shift away from its past mistakes so that the movement can make amends for their past actions and the harm they have caused members of Reform communities. Additionally, this element of Audacious Hospitality allows congregations to do a more effective job of serving the needs of individuals it has failed to serve in the past.

In both multiculturalism and Audacious Hospitality, this shift in self-perception is meant to both address unmet needs of diverse groups and to foster a greater sense of unity among all the community's members. Ultimately, if it succeeds in shifting the self-perception of the community towards a more substantive appreciation of communal diversity, Audacious Hospitality will be able to ensure that congregants with historically marginalized identities are perceived by others as a core part of the community and experience a sense of belonging.

Third, both models work to acknowledge and address the ways that the community's status quo does not serve everyone's needs equally. Likewise, both models work to provide equitable and differentiated recognition, affirmation, and accommodation for all the community's members. A merit of both multiculturalism and Audacious Hospitality is that they also commit to reapportioning resources and investing in diversity, and they do so in a way defined by the needs of those who have been marginalized. This is true even in cases when equity means distributing resources in disproportionate ways. For example, while only a very small percentage of individuals in a given congregation may be confined to a wheelchair Audacious Hospitality means utilizing a disproportionate amount of communal resources to ensure that the building is completely wheelchair accessible.

Ultimately, this commitment to reapportion resources based on the needs defined by those who have been marginalized is a strength of Audacious Hospitality because it means the initiative may actually be able to meet the needs of those whose needs are net met by maintaining the status quo. Likewise, the redistribution of resources is a way the community can illustrate to minorities that it is invested in their needs and that it values

their full integration and participation. This may in turn make those who have been discriminated against in the past feel more welcome, safe, and heard.

Just as the aforementioned parallels between multiculturalism and Audacious Hospitality highlight some of the initiative's strengths, the lack of parallels between certain aspects of these models may indicate some of Audacious Hospitality's shortcomings. The most blatant difference between multiculturalism and Audacious Hospitality is that multiculturalism is directed at cultural groups and Audacious Hospitality is directed at minorities who do not necessarily have a shared culture. This difference between multiculturalism and Audacious Hospitality presents several challenges.

One challenge is that Audacious Hospitality offers group recognition to minorities that do not necessarily have anything that gives them a shared sense of identity except their experience of discrimination. In a Reform congregational setting, individuals with minority identities may not even understand themselves as a group until the initiative puts them into affinity groups together and offers them public recognition as a group. While a sixteen-year-old boy who was adopted by a white family from China as a baby and a forty-year-old African American woman who converted to Judaism as an adult may both experience a lack of belonging in congregational life because of their race, there may be little else that unifies their worldviews, self-perceptions, and cultures other than the experience of alterity in Jewish spaces. There is no reason to believe that minority individuals have any deeper relationship, shared culture, or collective identity with other marginalized individuals than they do with the rest of the community.

Creating affinity groups for the sake of offering them public recognition and support may end up making the individuals placed in these groups feel a sense of support, comradery and understanding as it is intended. Alternatively, it may make members of these groups feel even less understood by community leadership. It may even enhance their feelings of alterity because the community is choosing to lift up their stories of discrimination and highlight all of the ways they are different rather than affirming all that they have in common with the rest of the congregation.

A second challenge is that Audacious Hospitality demands changing the hegemonic culture in more intrusive ways than are found in multiculturalism. In multiculturalism recognition works as a tool to ensure that all major cultures have equity in the ways their cultural institutions, behaviors, and values are supported. Through equal levels of cultural recognition, multiculturalism is able to preserve all viable cultures without threatening the character of any one culture, including those who have historically had power. In contrast, in order to give minorities the full support they need to practice their Reform Jewish culture, Audacious Hospitality makes demands that the culture change. This is a challenge because it may mean that elements of the normative culture that other congregants strongly identify with are undermined and changed for the sake of those congregants who have been previously marginalized. If a person has prayed a liturgy their entire life, feels a deep affinity to that liturgy, and the liturgy imagery of the liturgy has shaped their worldview, that person may feel that their culture is being attacked by these changes and that they are being denied the ability to connect to the divine in ways they find meaningful.

These challenges are problems in the model of Audacious Hospitality and not in multiculturalism because the two systems rely on different types of recognition. In multiculturalism, recognition is offered to diverse cultural groups. In Audacious Hospitality, minorities do not need cultural recognition; Reform Judaism *is* their culture. To specify, the type of recognition that does apply to Audacious Hospitality is threefold. First, it is a recognition that these individuals who experience discrimination are members who belong in our congregations but have not been treated as such. Second, it is a recognition of the ways internal cultural behaviors have prevented these individuals from being fully able to practice and express their Reform Jewish culture. Third, it is a recognition of their diverse identities and/or abilities, as well as the unique needs and interests that are born out of their diversity.

Audacious Hospitality's reliance on recognition means that it benefits from the merits of the politics of recognition and that it is also subject to the critiques of recognition. As Taylor argues, recognition is important for psychological health. Many Jewish leaders hold the belief that one of the primary responsibilities of congregations is to promote psychological and spiritual health among congregants. Audacious Hospitality's commitment to proper recognition of those who have traditionally gone misrecognized or unrecognized works to further congregational efforts to promote psychological health among those who may have been harmed in the past. When Audacious Hospitality talks about creating a space where these individuals feel safe, part of the safety the initiative refers to includes psychological safety. Thus, a merit of the politics of recognition as they apply to Audacious Hospitality is that recognition can be a

tool to help create safe space and enhance the psychological well-being of minority congregants.

Another merit of Audacious Hospitality is that through recognition, the congregational leadership is able to show genuine interest in the experiences of minorities and offer them a level of respect they have previously been denied. To offer these minorities public recognition is to affirm their belonging in Reform Jewish spaces. Recognition shows these individuals that their diversity matters and that the community respects and values them. For example, in the past, a person with Autism and their family may have internalized the lack of recognition from their congregation as a message that their family was not welcome and not valued by the community. However, when the congregation offers public recognition that the community is made up of people with different abilities and works to celebrate and affirm the full range of abilities, that family may feel a new sense that the community respects them, understands their needs, and values them as covenantal partners. Now, while everyone else's children are becoming *bnai mitzvah* and being celebrated by the community, they do not have to feel like they are the only ones whose child is seen by the community as unworthy of celebration. Their child can be celebrated, respected, and affirmed in his/her/their particularity which the community has publicly recognized and embraced by offering him/her/them a *bnai mitzvah* experience that fits their ability.

In addition to the aforementioned benefits, recognition also undermines the stigma around certain identities that the movement historically perpetuated or that have been a long- standing part of Jewish tradition. Likewise, as discussed in part one, recognition works to combat the subtle ways stigmas are preserved in culture by the

attitude of blindness towards difference. Ultimately, this is one of the most significant benefits of recognition because it allows congregations to challenge and break away from values and norms that are still dominant in the secular and non-Jewish world. When a congregation offers recognition to an individual who is stigmatized by the outside world, they are affirming that person's value and encouraging congregants to reimagine the way they understand that person. The messages that are combated include negative messages about minority individuals and the message that these individuals are best served by ignoring their differences. Recognition becomes a re-educative tool that combats these harmful stereotypes, affirms the sanctity of people, affirms the value difference, and combats the messages systematically instilled by the broader world.

Despite these significant benefits of the use of recognition in Audacious Hospitality, the initiative is still privy to the critiques offered against the use of recognition. For example, Appiah's critique that recognition may be harmful in the way it limits individuals and demands that they perform their identities in accordance with publicly recognized scripts. This is problematic from the perspective of individualism because it denies them the ability to choose their own ends and how they want to express their identities. Moreover, it draws into the public sphere elements of identity that people may wish to keep private.

There are some ways that Audacious Hospitality works to emphasize the need for flexibility when understanding identity. For example, the initiative's LGBTQIA inclusion education module offers a script that congregational leaders may use at the beginning of all programing to frame asking everyone to introduce themselves and share their preferred pronouns. The script offers: "Some of us might change our names or pronouns

during the course of knowing each other. When that happens, we call each other by our new names and pronoun."[265] This acknowledgment that gender identity can be fluid or that people may change the way they wish to be recognized helps to address Appiah's critique of recognition and add a bit of flexibility to recognition. Nonetheless, it does little to combat that while the individual is using any particular pronoun the community will make certain assumptions about them and have certain expectations based on how they understand the meaning of the pronouns that person uses. These external assumptions and expectations then place a certain pressure on the individual to perform their identity in accordance with the ways that identity is publicly recognized. Likewise, this added flexibility does not address the challenge that some people may not wish to announce their pronouns or gender identity to the whole room and may feel undue pressure to claim and preform identities publicly once those identities are publicly recognized.

Other shortcomings of Audacious Hospitality are highlighted in conversation with Markell's critiques of recognition. First, there is the challenge outlined in Markell's critique of the discourse style around recognition. In Audacious Hospitality, recognition is portrayed as something that "we" grant to "them." This model, where the core of the community offers recognition to marginalized groups, may reinforce (rather than dismantle) the community's core-periphery dichotomy. In some ways this problem is more understated in Audacious Hospitality than in settings like national multiculturalism because one of the initiative's first priorities is to integrate minority individuals into the

[265] Ariel Vegosen, Liat Melnick, and April Baskin. "Audacious Hospitality LGBTQ Online Learning Series: Session 1." PowerPoint, June 20, 2018.

community's leadership. Nonetheless, the initiative has yet to accomplish significant integration of minorities into Reform leadership positions or to prove that recognition is a viable tool for achieving that goal. Thus, this critique is still valid and applicable to Audacious Hospitality.

Another element of Audacious Hospitality that highlights and reinforces this us-them, core-periphery dynamic is the initiative's focus on welcoming and hospitality. The ground of the entire initiative is the desire to be hospitable, and a significant percentage of all of the resources the initiative has created are designed to make congregations more welcoming to the identified minority groups. The focus on hospitality reinforces the core-periphery model because it highlights the minority individuals' lack of belonging in Reform institutions. There is no need to welcome someone into their own space. Ultimately, by focusing on "Audacious Hospitality," the Audacious Hospitality initiative fundamentally reinforces the same problem it has set out to combat.

Another challenge of Audacious Hospitality relates to Markell's critique that recognition may be a bandage solution that lacks the depth to address the true issues of systemic injustice. As Markell argues, misrecognition and alterity have been used as tools throughout society to maintain the socio-political domination of some groups and the subordination of others. Focusing on recognition distracts from the deeper challenges of systemic inequality, domination and subordination. In place of the politics of recognition, Markell advocates for the politics of acknowledgment.

Audacious Hospitality's heavy reliance on recognition opens the initiative up to Markell's critique. It is early in the initiative to make any firm judgments about the model's efficacy, and whether or not Audacious Hospitality's reliance on recognition will

ultimately resolve issues of systemic inequality or fail to acknowledge and address the true depth of the problem. My speculation is that the Audacious Hospitality initiative may help expand congregational diversity and make modest gains towards equity of minorities within congregational life. Alas, in its current form I think Audacious Hospitality will not be successful in addressing the full extent of the problems around discrimination, marginalization, and inequity faced by certain minorities in Jewish spaces.

Nonetheless, I do believe that Audacious Hospitality is a good starting point from which the Reform Movement can move into a more acknowledgment-centered model. Embracing the politics of acknowledgment would not only allow the Reform movement to address the full depth of systemic inequality, but it would also serve to resolve many of the challenges leveled against Audacious Hospitality in this chapter.

A politics of acknowledgment *acknowledges* everyone in a society as an agent and partner in a shared political system. Within Reform Judaism this would help the community acknowledge and address the full depth of systemic inequality and identify what substantive changes need to be made to promote social equity. This would make the shift away from an us-them/core-periphery model more substantive. Likewise, with the acknowledgment of each individual as an agent and a partner, the acknowledgment of any individual's needs does not need to be grounded in group recognition or tied to the strict script of a publicly recognized identity.

Thus, acknowledgment addresses the challenge associated with affinity groups and the way they may manufacture ties between discriminated individuals and accentuate those individuals' feelings of alterity. Similarly, acknowledgment addresses the limits Audacious Hospitality puts on people's ability to express their identities and values in the

ways they see fit. This applies to those who would be limited to certain scripts as minorities receiving recognition. It also applies to those who have moral objections to the work of Audacious Hospitality who would be silenced under the assumption that moral descent for the initiative falls outside the scripted values that are essential to contemporary Reform Jewish identity.

An additional problem the politics of acknowledgment solves, which has yet to be articulated in this work, is the issue of the way Audacious Hospitality completely intertwines its actions within Reform institutions and its externally-focused political advocacy work. On the one hand, there is an element of the politics of acknowledgment already at play in articulating the connection between systemic injustice in Reform institutions and in society as a whole. Acknowledging the link between these two manifestations of systemic inequality shows that Audacious Hospitality is aware of the ways Reform Judaism is not isolated from the larger socio-political structures that reinforce systemic inequality and shape the assumptions Reform Jews have about diversity.

On the other hand, when the celebration of diversity within Reform congregations becomes a political cause for the community to rally around, then the recognition of diverse members of the community becomes an act of charity. *Tzedakah* (charity) embodies the value of making a personal sacrifice of one's resources in order to acknowledge and support those in need. It has always been an integral part of Judaism, so in one respect Audacious Hospitality is keeping in line with an important Jewish value and with the legacy of Jewish tradition. Nonetheless, this paradigm portrays individuals who are different as those who are less fortunate and in need of communal handouts.

Likewise, those who offer recognition are made out to be heroes who fight for justice and forge the path toward a messianic age. However, their heroic act is addressing the inequality in the system that they have benefited from and sustained. Ultimately, linking the external and internal focus of Audacious Hospitality may take away from the respect Audacious Hospitality provides for those who have historically been discriminated against, and may also make those individuals feel that they are being treated like a cause or a means to an end rather than a true member of the community.

In the face of this challenge, the politics of acknowledgment demands that each Reform Jew, regardless of their other identities, understand themselves as partners in the political system of Reform Judaism and partners in the same national and global political systems. As partners, nobody is the hero and nobody is receiving aid, but everyone acknowledges the ways their lives have been impacted by systemic injustice.

There are many challenges facing Audacious Hospitality if it is going to be transformed into a model that can meet the true moral and socio-political demands of diversity. Today there are already Jewish institutions that are making shifts that reflect the values of the politics of acknowledgment in ways that the Reform Movement could adapt to enhance Audacious Hospitality.

One such change can be seen in Seattle's non-denominational Jewish startup, the Kavana Cooperative. There are many elements of Kavana's programing that function like a traditional synagogue. They have weekly Shabbat and Havdalah services, holiday programing, and a Hebrew school. Yet the way they structure and understand their community makes more space for diversity. Kavana prides itself on being "a producer not

consumer of community."[266] They have broken away from a traditional hierarchical model of synagogue leadership.

Audacious Hospitality works within that traditional top-down hierarchy, where clergy and board members determine the character of community programing and serve a core group of members. With the help of Audacious Hospitality, the hope is that other members on the periphery may also be served by these programs. Unlike Audacious Hospitality, however, Kavana uses a bottom-up model.[267] At Kavana, nobody is served. Everyone who participates in the community is not a leader or a member; they are all partners.[268] These partners work together to create and provide programs and to set a culture catered to their needs and identities. Each program only happens if cooperative partners step up to run it and commit to participating. In order to make this system run effectively, the community relies on people's ability to build relationships with one another so they can work together to identify and serve their shared needs.

This congregation has successfully attracted many families with adopted children of color and LGBTQIA individuals who feel that they are accepted, welcomed, and affirmed as an important partner. Unlike in communities with hierarchical models of leadership, Kavana's core is constantly changing because each program changes based on who wants to participate and what they contribute. Thus, partners do not feel that they are on the margins even if they have traditionally marginalized identities because they are shaping the programs and culture to their own needs and interests.[269] Moreover, the

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[266] The Kavana Cooperative. *Kavana's 10th Anniversary Video*. Accessed January 24, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vj8y9UNXXZU&feature=youtu.be.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Ibid.

relationships they build as they create programs help people understand one another across lines of difference and keep people from feeling like they do not belong in the community.[270]

The Kitchen is an example of another community that has had similar success attracting the groups Audacious Hospitality targets, through a more acknowledgment focused model. The Kitchen is a congregation in San Francisco that offers casual and innovative Jewish programing to a wide variety of diverse individuals. Their mission states:

> We believe that Jewish religious practice can transform: It can change lives, make meaning, and invest people in the world. This transformation requires a flexible, living ecosystem of Jewish experiences. So we're building it. The Kitchen is a religious community, deeply grounded in serious exploration of Jewish tradition, text, and ritual. We are creating a spiritually engaging community of seekers at all levels of Jewish knowledge and experience. The Kitchen does not welcome people only because we aspire to be tolerant, accessible, or inclusive. We welcome people because we ARE those people. There are no insiders or outsiders, there are no others here. We are all others and we are all members of modern families. We begin from a place of yes: Every question and request is met with a sense of possibility, optimism and embrace.[271]

Unlike Kavana, The Kitchen does have full time clergy and a cabinet that operates like a synagogue board. However, among the ranks of the leadership there are a variety of individuals who reflect the diversity the Audacious Hospitality initiative targets. This group of leaders uses a number of strategies to minimize the sense of alterity members might experience in normative settings, and to make the community flexible and accessible enough to meet everyone's needs.[272]

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[270] Ibid.

[271] "MISSION.," The Kitchen, Accessed January 24, 2019. https://www.thekitchensf.org/mission/.

[272] "Welcome to The Kitchen on Vimeo." Accessed January 24, 2019. https://vimeo.com/100938130.

One of the ways that The Kitchen achieves an environment that is in line with the politics of acknowledgment is by moving away from traditional liturgy. The Kitchen's weekly Shabbat services rely heavily on niggunim, which make the prayer more inclusive and remove barriers to inclusion for those who do not know the liturgy or whose ability may make it difficult for them to engage in more traditional davening.[273] Similarly, their culture around the Torah service involves a rotation between a more traditional Torah service and creative storytelling that is based loosely off the Torah portion for each week.[274] The rotation allows those who are seeking a more traditional experience to find something that speaks to them, and the storytelling allows the congregation to expand traditional narratives and point to the ways they are multivalent. Storytelling allows the community to interpret Torah in ways that speak to modern life and capture the worldviews of those with a more diverse array of identities and experiences than one would find in traditional Torah commentaries.

Another way the Kitchen moves toward acknowledgment is through creative use of space. They do not own a building and their worship, programing, and religious school rotate between a wide variety of outdoor spaces and indoor spaces like firehouses and schools.[275] These non-traditional worship spaces alleviate some of the physical barriers traditional synagogues need to overcome in order to be inclusive and accessible. They also break away from traditional assumptions people may have about community membership because nobody owns and controls the cultural narrative of the space. This

[273] "FAQ" The Kitchen, Accessed January 24, 2019. https://www.thekitchensf.org/join-2/.
[274] Ibid.
[275] Ibid.

makes the idea of belonging and welcoming in this community and makes the culture more adaptable to the needs of the diverse individuals who walk in the door.

A final way the Kitchen works toward inclusivity and accessibility is through a flexible membership model. Anyone can choose to "subscribe" to the Kitchen, thus becoming a member and paying an annual flat rate for all programs. [276] Likewise, anyone can choose to participate on a fee-for-service basis. The fee-for-service model means that the community expects a certain amount of flexibility in who will attend each program.[277] Similarly, they are able to break away from the traditional model of programing for the core of the community, because each program may attract a different core based on their willingness to pay for any given service. This allows for more inclusivity than the traditional model because there is no majority body of members who expect the programing to serve their needs and interests. Accordingly, there is less of a communal core and periphery and the community has more flexibility to define its culture or target its programing situationally.

The strategies represented in the work of the Kavana Cooperative and the Kitchen have been created in small communities by entrepreneurial individuals who have chosen to step outside of the mold of traditional congregational life. Nonetheless, many of these strategies could still be adapted to Reform congregational life in order to enhance Audacious Hospitality in the spirit of the politics of acknowledgment. The challenge for congregations is how far they are willing to stretch the limits of their normative practice and adapt strategies that may make individuals who are comfortable with the status quo

[276] "JOIN," The Kitchen, Accessed January 24, 2019. https://www.thekitchensf.org/join-2/.
[277] Ibid.

feel uncomfortable. Often in congregational settings, there is hesitance among the majority to embrace even the most minor changes. Whatever changes a community takes to embrace diversity, whether through Audacious Hospitality or through other models of navigating diversity, the changes will only be effective if those who currently see themselves as the majority are willing to buy in. Likewise, even if changes push the fold of tradition through non-traditional liturgy, ritual innovation, or creative use of space, what they create must still look and feel like Reform Judaism.

Despite the many challenges, I do believe that Reform Judaism is capable of overcoming its current shortcomings around systemic inequality and diversity. Reform Judaism is equipped with the language and tools to recognize the need for equality. Reform Jews are committed to employing those tools to honor all people and to truly dismantle unjust systems within Judaism. Furthermore, Reform Judaism chooses to prioritize socio-political equity among all Jews and to honor the value of all people. These strengths are unique to Reform Judaism and the way it synthesizes Jewish tradition and liberal enlightenment values. Ultimately, the unique commitments and tools of Reform Judaism make it possible for the movement to combat injustice, acknowledge and dismantle systemic inequality, and celebrate the value of every Reform Jew as a covenantal partner.

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