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The Religious Turn

Generational Subjectivities

Born in 1947, in a farming village near Bethlehem, Muhannad (pseudonym) has been an outspoken advocate of the Palestinian cause and a leader in the Mosque Foundation community in the suburb of Bridgeview. Academically talented, he received a scholarship to an elite private high school in East Jerusalem. In 1975, he immigrated to Chicago, where his uncle lived and was a naturalized US citizen, to pursue an engineering degree. He spent the majority of his career as a civil engineer for the City of Chicago before taking a part-time teaching job in a local community college. He and his wife, a distant relative from his home village, have four children who attended the Islamic schools next to the Mosque Foundation and now work in professional fields.

Muhannad is a contemporary of Musa Samara, Khairy Abudayyeh, and Ali Hussain (chapter 2). Within their generation (1948–67), however, he represents a diverging reformist-Islamic trajectory that ultimately gained ascendancy in Palestine during and after the first Intifada. Muhannad was a forerunner of this trajectory and a founder of its institutions in Chicago. He participated, for example, in the reformist effort to secure a majority on the Mosque Foundation board in 1978 (chapter 1). He was also instrumental, during the 1980s and 1990s, in helping to establish and lead Islamic organizations focused on the Palestinian national cause. These organizations provided a precedent and model for later groups like American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) (chapter 3). Muhannad has also served on the boards of a variety of Arab American civil rights organizations.

These diverse involvements reflect the merging of Arab and Palestinian nationalism with Islamic reformism within Muhannad's outlook. The Islamic framework, however, is primary: it subordinates nationalism and ethnicity in his hierarchy of solidarity. At the same time, the integration of nationalism as the focus of his Islamic orientation leads him to coordinate with secular nationalist

leaders and organizations on various campaigns. He has expanded his sense of nationalism to include "Americanism," which he associates with democratic values, especially the value of dissent, which he sees as central to Islam, too.

GENERATIONAL PROCESSES
OF THE RELIGIOUS TURN

This chapter describes the generational processes that Muhannad's story highlights. Its purpose is to deepen the analysis of the religious shift that began with the discussion of AMP in chapter 3. The five interviews I have chosen to focus on, including Muhannad's, represent three different generational locations corresponding with three distinct lines of identity articulation.[1] In my data, the first location pertains to the generation of 1948–67, the general features of which are described in chapter 2, and the processes of secular alienation and religious latency that occur within its incipient Islamic trajectory. Alienation and latency here refer to the experience of piety-oriented individuals who came of age politically in the period of secularist ascendancy (the 1950s through the mid-1980s). These individuals reacted against secularism, embracing Islamist political ideology, a latent possibility of their piety orientation. They constituted a distinct religio-political unit that formed synchronically within this generation, which trended predominantly toward secular nationalism (see introduction and Mannheim 1952, 304). Significantly, Muhannad, who represents this unit in my interview data, did not reject secularism entirely; rather, he subordinated it to Islam, which he presented as an all-encompassing framework of unity. His form of religious shift thus was an inversion of pan-Arab secularism, which subordinated religion to an intersectarian, secular national solidarity (exemplified by Khairy Abudayyeh in chapter 2).

The 1987–2001 cohort, which chapter 2 also delineates broadly, is the second main generational location. For this cohort, in my data, the Islamic shift deeply polarized the religious and political field. Among Christians, especially, this polarization sectarianized identity. This sectarianization constituted a reaction against, and a mirroring of, the Islamic shift. The individual I select to illustrate this process moved from a secularist standpoint to a religious-communal one in response to Islamist/Islamic ascendancy in Palestine and in Chicago. In doing so, he participated in the creation of new religious nationalist structures such as the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center.

Finally, I discuss sectarian institutional integration in the post-September 11 generation as it manifests in my data. The religious shift in the two preceding cohorts created and strengthened religious sectarian institutions that then generated a persisting shift after 2001. This continuing, post-2001 dynamic occurred through the integration of the new cohort within these institutions. In some cases, the individuals I profile helped to found new organizations like AMP, but

their doing so reflected the prior formation of a religious or religious-nationalist predisposition within already existing sectarian milieus. In my data, two types of identity trajectory emerged in this cohort: sectarianized nationalism and denationalized sectarianism. The first trajectory replicated previous forms of religious shift that produced religious nationalism; the second excluded or ignored nationalism, replacing it with an entirely religious sectarian solidarity.

ALIENATION AND LATENCY IN THE GENERATION OF 1948–1967

The first process I analyze involved a dynamic of alienation and latency within the generation of 1948–67. The individuals who experienced this dynamic grew up in traditional religious milieus but then developed a reformist, religious-nationalist orientation in reaction against ascendant secular nationalism. Their evolution in this direction entailed an embrace of religion that affirmed traditional piety while revising it through a rationalist, text-centered reformism. Reformism answered secular nationalism by deliberately placing Islam at the core of Palestinian identity and of the Palestinian national struggle. The generation of 1948–67 (its religio-political trajectory, or "generation unit" in Mannheim's [1952] terms) concretized this revision by establishing the institutions that grounded the religious turn in Palestine and in the diaspora. Muhannad, who exemplified this process, straddled the West Bank and Chicago, and in doing so provided a bifocal perspective on the phenomenon.[2]

Formational Processes

Three social processes shaped Muhannad's ideological outlook: immersion within a traditional, pietistic village milieu as a child and youth; confrontation with an ascendant secular nationalism and secular pan-Arabism, which simultaneously attracted and repelled him; and immigration to Chicago, where secularism was also ascendant but where an incipient Islamic shift was developing as well. These factors affected the evolution of his orientation in sequential progression. They also interacted simultaneously, in Muhannad's narration, to constitute a distinct Islamic-nationalist space in the Chicago diaspora.[3]

Muhannad began our interview by saying that he was from "a very conservative family" in "a conservative village: we were 100 percent Muslims." Others of the generation of 1948–67, which retained control of leadership at the Mosque Foundation and of other related institutions such as the adjacent Islamic schools, shared a similar background. A contemporary of Muhannad, a teacher at one of the Islamic schools adjacent to the Mosque Foundation, for example, also described coming from a small "conservative" village. In these narratives, "conservative" connoted a patriarchal ethos marked by traditional piety. Muhannad described his father as the "leader of our *hamula*," the extended family or clan. The respect he commanded in the family and in the village, Muhannad explained, came not only from his older age

but also from being known for honest dealing. It also derived from his reputation for piety. The father assiduously attended Friday prayers, bringing his sons with him; listened to sermons beaming from mosques in Jerusalem and Cairo on the radio; and asked regularly that Muhannad read to him—he had not learned to do so himself—from the Qur'an and the *sira* (hagiographic stories of the Prophet Muhammad's life).

Muhannad claimed not to have been motivated to perform religious duties in his youth. But, as he observed, he absorbed the culture of his family, developing a pious disposition organically as a result. The family's reputation for piety also served a disciplining end beyond the home: at the village elementary school, for example, Muhannad was asked to lead prayer and be a moral exemplar. "The school didn't ask the boys from the Communist families to do this," he said. Performing this duty not only upheld the family's reputation in public but also further reinforced Muhannad's orientation toward piety.

Muhannad's description of his family's piety and of the village as "100 percent Muslim" conflicted with his mention of "Communists." When I asked him to elaborate on this discrepancy, he described a secular-religious divide in the village, identifying two causal factors: the rise of pan-Arabism and Marxist-nationalist movements after the wars of 1948 and 1967 and the concomitant absence of a viable Islamic political alternative. Friends and neighbors supported the new movements as an expression of their desire to resist the Israeli occupation after 1967. Muhannad also joined in the activities of these movements at his high school in Jerusalem, but he felt ambivalent about doing so.

Rooted within the religious culture of his family, he resisted secularism's implicit demand to subordinate Islam to the priority of national solidarity. He had made an attempt to understand the demand, claiming to have read Marx but finding atheism and "the dialectic" nonsensical. The primary reason for his refusal to join the secular nationalist current, he said, was the religiosity of his parents and a corresponding attachment to Islam "deep in my heart." Secularism alienated him because it challenged this attachment.

The confrontation with secularism, however, did not simply cause alienation. Rather, it provoked a critical appraisal and transformation of the traditional piety that had shaped Muhannad's early value orientation. Muhannad hinted at this effect in his description of the secularist polemics against religion:

> [In our village] the Communists said [religion] was backward and that [religious people] wanted to return to the seventh century [. . .]. We had this idea—even I shared it a little bit—that the Muslim Brotherhood were collaborators with the British and the Israelis [. . .]. Later, I realized the Brotherhood, even though it was weak, was the only credible [Islamic] movement at the time. To this day it is the only credible movement.

The secularist polemic stung. But it also sparked a reassessment. Muhannad, like others who eventually aligned with the Islamic turn, articulated a distinction

between religious traditionalism and a deliberate, rational Islam fully compatible with the needs of modern society. Traditionalism had reduced Islam, in this view, to ossified customs perpetuated on the authority of received precedent. There was much to admire in traditionalism, Muhannad remarked, especially loyalty to family and adherence to morality, however unmoored from the foundational texts like the Qur'an and *hadith*. But, there was also "superstition" and a failure to relate faith to the political needs of the moment.

A self-aware, rational Islam, by contrast, Muhannad remarked, rested on a "proper" understanding of the authoritative texts. These texts stressed justice as their essential message. A rational Islam was an activist Islam focused on resisting repression and reestablishing the true order of things as God had ordained it in the Qur'an and *shari'a*. For Muhannad, such an Islam, if it were to mean anything in the Palestinian context, inevitably entailed participation in the project of national liberation because the Palestinian cause was about ending a deep historical injustice. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, Islamic political forces were in disarray. The secular nationalist movements provided the only practical means to address Palestinian suffering. This reality generated fundamental contradictions for those who held to Islam as the only way forward. The tension resolved only with the Islamic shift that Muhannad and others of the generation of 1948–67 led.

The Islamic Revival and Its Generational Trajectory in Chicago

The political-Islamic shift occurred alongside a general revival of Islamic piety among significant segments of Palestinian society during the 1980s. Muhannad observed this phenomenon in his own family: "My family back home has become even more conservative, more religious than it had been when I was a boy; they are more educated, now, religiously." The mechanisms of this process were the new Islamic movements. Through their public advocacy, campus organizing, charitable societies, and preaching in mosques they drew young professionals and students into their ranks, grounding them in reformist piety in the process. Travel to Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, also contributed to this phenomenon. Members of Muhannad's family, along with other Palestinians, had gone to Saudi Arabia for work. When they returned they brought with them the Salafi reformism they had absorbed while in the Kingdom. Salafism—an exceedingly complex phenomenon encompassing a range of intellectual, missionary, and in some cases violent insurgent movements—sought to reform Islam by returning it to its textual sources and to the pious example of the first generations of Muslims.[4] Individuals who had embraced it in the Gulf region often sought to institute it in their families and in doing so helped to create a receptive audience for the later Islamic political shift that powerfully challenged the dominance of Fatah and the PLO.

Muhannad's own entry into these politics, however, occurred within the entirely distinct context of the Chicago diaspora. Secularism was ascendant in this setting too. Incipient reformist networks were nevertheless forming. One such network,

comprising businessmen and professionals, organized the initiative to take control of the Mosque Foundation board in 1978. Muhannad participated in this effort and filled prominent roles in the organization in the years following. He also participated in the launching of Islamic organizations that focused specifically on Palestinian advocacy. These institutions formed simultaneously with the Islamic political shift in Palestine.[5] In doing so, they replicated and reflected reformist Islamic orientations that had powerfully challenged secularism in Palestine and were beginning to reorient Palestinian identity in diaspora communities like Chicago. Muhannad was a forerunner and progenitor of some of the key institutions that propelled this process forward in the United States.

At the same time, however, Muhannad explicitly disputed the claim that his activism was merely an extension of the Islamism that had taken root in Palestine. Some secularists in the Chicago community as well as pro-Israel detractors had leveled such charges. He claimed instead that his activism reflected the values of dissent and pluralism that he had come to embrace as part of his self-described "Americanization." US society was certainly, he said, a type of idolatrous *jahiliya* (state of ignorance) inasmuch as some of its values opposed Islamic monotheistic belief.[6] Nevertheless, not everything in the American *jahiliya* was bad. On the contrary, there was much to affirm, including democratic principles and respect for cultural and religious diversity. Muslims, he said, were required to see these goods as the "mislaid belonging" that was their rightful inheritance—in echo of a well-known hadith, *al-hikmatu dallatu al-mu'mini fa-haythu wajadaha fa-huwa ahaqqu biha*, "Wisdom is the lost possession of the believer; so wherever he discovers it, he is entitled to it"[7]—since these things were reflective of God's beneficence. Still, Islam had always to command the ultimate allegiance of the believer. Whenever Islamic principle came into conflict with a belief or practice—whether held by non-Muslims or Muslims—the believer had the duty to dissent. Here, too, however, for Muhannad, this necessity to dissent on principled grounds was also in line with the fundamental requirements of citizenship in the United States.

Muhannad grounded his concept of dissent, as well, in the traditional values of his childhood family and especially in the example of his father. He recalled an incident in which his brother brandished a gun in a dispute with other villagers. These villagers came to Muhannad's father, the head of the *hamula*, demanding that he render judgment. His father weighed the testimony and decided against his son, paying a fee of one hundred dollars on his behalf to the aggrieved party. "My brother was furious; but my father believed in Islam and in justice," Muhannad said, "and he was my role model for putting community first."

In this reference to his childhood, Muhannad presented his father, a traditional village elder, as a principled model of specifically Islamic values. This model emphasized a willingness to go against family and tribe in the defense of justice.[8] It also exemplified openness to others beyond one's particular faction, clan, or sect. Muhannad recalled how the Prophet Muhammad spoke positively

of the institutions through which Meccan society before Islam provided charity and assistance to the poor. Muhannad, too, sought to emulate this model. He described working with Communists and secular nationalists in his village to create programs in an effort to redirect youth from going into Israel "to drink and get into trouble and have sex and all these things." Understood in this sense, Islam constituted a compelling moral and political alternative to secular nationalism, which too often devolved, he said, into competitive factionalism.

Muhannad's conception of Islam as a moral-political framework that encompassed the nation blurred religion and ethnicity. As he put it, "what's good for the Arabs is good for the Muslims and what's good for the Muslims is good for the Arabs." Islam and nation amounted to the same thing if understood correctly. He explained:

> There are no contradictions [between Islam and nationalism] as long as we keep our priorities straight. The *'aqida* [technically, the Islamic religious conviction, creed, or doctrine, but in Muhannad's usage, also "cause"] comes before everything else. I would do nothing that is nationalistic if it contradicted the *'aqida*. I'll give you an example: in the 1990s, when the Israelis exiled about four hundred people from Hamas to Lebanon,[9] we went to the *markaz* [the Arab Community Center, described in chapter 2] and we proposed to organize a rally. Some in the Islamic movement said, 'Oh, you cooperate with the secularists, but they are *kuffar* [apostates, nonbelievers].' I told them that I'm not [supporting their ideology] but if we can collaborate then let's do so. I can't be affected by leftist arguments and ideology. I know their ideology better than they do. I grew up around them. Chances are, though, that I can affect them, and I did! A lot of them, actually, became practicing Muslims, *al-hamdulillah* [praise be to God]!

Muhannad was a pragmatist, willing to collaborate with secular nationalists on projects that coincided with his sense of Islam and justice. Understood in a true *'aqida* perspective, the cause of Islam was also the cause of the nation. At other points, however, as his comments on the dangers of apostasy indicated, Muhannad insisted on the priority of Islam. He described one such moment occurring during the effort to organize the protest mentioned above:

> At the meeting to discuss the rally, we agreed we all needed to come together as Palestinians, Islamic or secular; but the devil was in the details. I knew how they would want to bring in pictures of Yasser Arafat. I said, 'The best solution is no pictures whatsoever, no Arafat, no Shaykh Yassin [the late founder and spiritual head of Hamas], none of those people.' One of the *markaz* leaders responded, 'Okay, but there will be no saying Allahu akbar! [God is greater!] either.' That hit me in every nerve I had. I said, 'I'm going to tell you something. Allahu akbar means God is the greatest, greater than you, your family, all of Palestine, the whole world. If someone came to me today and said, we'll give you Palestine today, and all the Jews out of it, but you have to renounce God, I would say to hell with Palestine!' I used stronger words than I am using now. I told that guy, 'If you don't want to come to this rally,

I'll do it on my own. I don't need you anyhow! You know it! All of you here at the *markaz* might bring two hundred or three hundred people, but I'm going to bring five thousand. I dictate the agenda if you want to play that game. I'm giving you more than you deserve. I will go a long way to have unity, but unity has limits.' We could have done it without [the secularists], but I don't believe in exclusion. They can believe whatever they want. I'm not responsible for their beliefs. I'll tell them where they've gone wrong [on matters of belief]. I tell them, 'Someday you will have to pray.' I don't have any doubt in my heart that the *markaz* people love Palestine as much as I do. We just come at things differently. Palestine is a cause; but it's more than just about the nation. It's the most important cause of Islam. Palestine is part of the Qur'an. God took the prophet from Mecca to Jerusalem and he prayed with all the prophets in Jerusalem at Aqsa [al-Aqsa Mosque]. He made Palestine of the same level as Mecca and Medina. It does not matter what your nationality is. If you become a Muslim tomorrow, Palestine becomes your *'aqida,* your duty.

For Muhannad, as for other Palestinian Muslims who expressed their nationalism through an Islamic religious idiom, the Islamic *'aqida*, signified in the Prophet's ascension from the Haram platform to the very throne of God, placed Palestine at the center of Muslim ethical and religious duty. This centering of Palestine as Islam's primary concern effectively constituted an Islamic nationalist alternative to secular nationalist conceptions of solidarity. This alternative accommodated the pluralism that the secularist stance sought to enshrine: secularists and Christians were included within Islam's compass because they were part of the nation. Islam, however, was the core of this nation, and secularists and non-Muslims had to accept this fact or acquiesce in their irrelevance.

Muhannad correctly assessed that by the early 1990s, the mosques and Islamic organizations had become dominant. The secular community centers simply did not possess the same degree of mobilizing capacity. Secularists and Islamists could come together because the center of the Palestinian cause was the search for justice. Justice was the heart of Islam, too. But this justice stood above the nation itself. Palestine was a holy land equivalent to Mecca and Medina. It was the pinnacle of Islam's realization on earth, Islam's axis mundi, the point of heavenly ascension. Its redemption required rededication to God's cause above all else. Some day, Muhannad believed, secularists would appreciate this fact; they, too, would learn to pray.

THE GENERATION OF 1987–2001: POLARIZATION AND SECTARIANIZATION

The generation of 1948–67 established the movement structures and institutions of the Islamic shift in Palestine and in diaspora centers like Chicago. In doing so, it polarized the religious and political fields in Palestinian society. This polarization deepened with the rise of Hamas in the Occupied Territories during the late 1980s

and 1990s (see introduction and chapter 2). This process marked the generation of 1987–2001. One of its consequences, as reflected in my data, was the sectarianization of identity as secular nationalism lost its cultural and political hegemony in the Chicago community during this period. Sectarianization registered not only in Islamization but also in a type of Christian nationalism, "Christianization," that reacted to and mirrored the Islamic shift.

For Christians, the Islamized space was an ambivalent arena. By definition, Christians stood excluded on the other side of this space even if occasionally they ventured into overlapping zones such as downtown demonstrations, Nakba commemorations, and ad hoc organizing meetings in periods of crisis. As a shared secular space receded, many Christians retreated into their own, alternate sectarian loci. This phenomenon became visible in my interview with Munir (pseudonym), an activist of the generation of 1987–2001. Munir's narrative showed how Christians growing up within a secular nationalist milieu became integrated into the new Christian nationalist structures during the First Intifada in Palestine (1987–93). His narrative also demonstrated how the Chicago diaspora deepened this process. Munir immigrated to Chicago during the early 1990s. In that same period, the Islamic shift and the concomitant loss of a secular, intersectarian space led Christians I interviewed to retreat into sectarian-communal zones. Munir's story provides an example of this process at the individual level.

Early Secular Identity Formation

Munir was born in Jerusalem in 1977. A former political activist, he described becoming mobilized during the First Intifada. Like his peers, he joined street protests after school and church services. His politicization stemmed also from the involvements of his parents in the Communist Party. Israeli police jailed his father administratively (with no formal charges or trial) for eighteen months during the Intifada for serving in the party's leadership. Munir commented that his parents became Communists because the party prioritized nonviolence. They also joined because it emphasized resistance to the occupation as Palestinians, not as Christians.

The alignment of Munir's family with the Communists was not coincidental. Christians disproportionately participated in secular political movements. This participation reflected an interest in a politics that imagined national inclusion in ethnic-linguistic terms—as Arabs first and foremost—rather than along religious-sectarian lines, as had been the case during Ottoman rule. The roots of this nationalist commitment stretched back to the eighteenth and nineteenth century. As European powers, France and Britain primarily, impinged on Ottoman territories in the eastern Mediterranean, Christian merchants, who were forming a new commercial class, forged contacts with the West. They sent their sons to study in Europe. Those children returned with new ideas about nationalism in which Christians and Muslims shared a common, equal identity as Arabs. This development, along with

the Ottoman crackdown on Greek Orthodox Christians during the "Greek Revolt," known also as the Greek War of Independence, which started in 1821, stirred lay Arab Christians to challenge the authority of Greek Orthodox hierarchs, whom the Ottoman state had historically privileged as representatives of the empire's various Christian communities. To this day, among Palestinians, the Christian middle classes have supported secular parties and movements as vehicles for their full enfranchisement, political and religious, within an intersectarian national unity (Haddad 1970; Issawi 1982; Braude 1982; Masters 2001; Sharkey 2017, 122, 125–27, 204–12, 228, 251, 282–83).

The adherence of Munir's family to this Christian tradition of nationalist politics contrasted sharply with the sectarian-religious turn in Palestinian society during and after the First Intifada. Christians regarded resurgent Islamism with anxiety. As Hamas grew in power and prominence, Christians worried about the implications for the type of political arrangement that Palestinians would ultimately form following independence. Ensuing Christian responses ranged from redoubling their commitment to secular nationalism to withdrawing into an apolitical and sectarian quietism (Lybarger 2007b).

Other young Christians, however, individuals like Munir, hearkened to new politicized religious frameworks of activism such as the liberation theology movement. The priest at the church in Jerusalem where Munir's family were members played an especially important role in this shift to a political-religious outlook. He was a founder of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, an organization that was instrumental in adapting Latin American liberation theology to the Palestinian situation.[10] This theology essentially advocated for Palestinian national independence and Palestinian democratic governance in terms of the biblical mandate for justice. It empowered adherents to simultaneously contest the Islamist construal of the Palestinian cause as an essentially Islamic matter and critique Zionist uses of the Bible to justify maximalist Jewish claims to the land.

Encounter with this new political Christianity not only reoriented Munir ideologically but also began to determine his educational and career opportunities. As he approached his final year in high school, his priest urged him to apply for a scholarship that would enable him to attend a private Protestant Christian college in Chicago which had recently created a Middle East Studies Center and curriculum. The creator of this center was also a clergyman, a non-Palestinian, who was outspoken on the question of Palestine and also a supporter of the Palestinian liberation theology movement. Munir would be among the first Palestinians to take part in this program. His decision to pursue this path would further strengthen his incipient sectarian turn.

Christian Sectarianization

Munir's sectarianization was not a foregone conclusion. The strong secular nationalist commitments he had grown up with continued to influence his political

orientation even as he transitioned into a politicized Christian space. The decisive factor in his sectarian shift was the steady erosion of secular spaces in which Muslims and Christians could come together as Palestinians above all else. Munir explicitly commented on this fact, noting that "there has been this real change—in Palestine, the new Islamic movement—it's defining people, defining how people behave and how they identify themselves, whether you're a Palestinian Muslim or a Palestinian Christian, and we Christians have felt the urgency suddenly to hang on to our identity as a Christian community and that's translated to America, to Chicago." Munir, in fact, perceived the sectarian shift in Chicago to be more polarizing than in Palestine. He described this difference in three respects: in the attitudes prevalent in his Arab Evangelical Protestant community, to which his wife belonged before their marriage; in how other Palestinian activists in the city positioned him specifically as "the Christian"; and in relation to the prevalence of Islamic slogans and symbols in presumably nonsectarian secular nationalist spaces.

Grounding this process was the development of distinct institutional spheres:

> Christians are definitely latching on to their churches. Maybe it's because of the lack of those community centers, the secular community centers. The only ones I know of are the *markaz* and the Ramallah Club [which has predominantly Christian membership]. But they're not as active as they used to be, and that leaves people with no option but to affiliate with their religions [. . .]. Churches and mosques are becoming the community centers. They are not just religious institutes anymore; they are shaping us socially, in separate ways.

Munir's description of these processes reflected well-established assimilation patterns in the United States. Religious institutions resituated and revalued the ethnic-national identities of immigrants within a voluntary religious-communal framework that historically typified processes of cultural integration ("Americanization") (Yang and Ebaugh 2001; Breton 2012; Kivisto 2014, 36–39). In the Palestinian context, however, these developments also reflected dynamics internal to Palestinian society in Palestine and in the diaspora. Munir offered additional insight into this fact, highlighting the Islamization of secular nationalist space and the persisting violence against Christians in the Middle East:

> A few years ago we had a national Palestinian conference here in Chicago [. . .]. The organizers asked if I could recruit Christian authorities to speak because they had invited the Mosque Foundation imam and wanted to balance him. I was glad they were aware of this need to balance but my reaction was, why couldn't this just be secular? I agreed to help invite Christians but few came. We were the absolute minority at the conference. The Christians who did come didn't actively participate. During the *hafla* [social event] in the evening, things took an Islamic turn. There were people chanting for "Muslim Palestine" and things like that. The organizers weren't leading the chanting; it was the attendees, the community. It was a reflection of what the community thinks and feels. It was eye-opening. These days, at every gathering of the community, we have to be sure to cater to the Muslims. At every conference

we have to designate rooms for prayers. Because of this stuff, the churches stay away. They have this idea that this is gonna take some kind of Islamic route. And they're right. When I was growing up in Palestine we were so consumed by the Intifada and the occupation and your father's in jail, you know, you don't have time to worry about your Christian or Muslim identity. But as Hamas became more of a force, people felt like they had to hang on to their identities as Christians. And especially in Chicago people feel this. Muslims feel this, too. They are being arrested and interrogated and attacked in the media purely on the basis of their identities as Muslims. This causes a desire to assert and hang on to their Muslim identities. As a consequence, the mosques have become the main voice. And this has shaped us, causing us to stick with our religious institutions after 9/11. One of my friends—he's secular but from a Muslim family—he and I have gotten into arguments about the church bombings in the Middle East and that pastor in Florida who wanted to burn the Qur'an and the dispute about that mosque in New York, the Park 51.[11] It didn't used to be like that between us.

Munir described an interlocking and interactive sectarianization that transcended Palestine and the United States. His bifocality as someone who came of age politically in Jerusalem during the Intifada but then, in that same moment, joined the Chicago diaspora afforded this perspective. He recalled how Christians in Palestine reacted to Hamas by closing ranks as a religious minority. He connected this response to what he saw occurring in Chicago: Christians closed ranks in response to Islamization, which itself was a response to a powerful xenophobic reaction in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

The diaspora context in both cases—Christian and Muslim—sectarianized solidarity further, however, by displacing Palestinian identity within an interethnic religious sectarian loyalty. Palestinians had to share space and leadership with non-Palestinian Muslims in the Mosque Foundation. This reality dislocated Palestinian agendas: Syrians contested Palestinian assumptions that Palestinian liberation should take precedence. Munir experienced a similar phenomenon in his North Side evangelical Protestant church, whose members included Iraqi and Syrian refugees and Egyptian immigrants. In this community, strong anti-Muslim sentiments had formed in reaction to the violence targeting Christians in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt during and after the Iraq War and the Arab Spring uprisings (*BBC News* 2015; *Guardian* 2017; Sherwood 2018). Major US Evangelical leaders also had voiced strong anti-Muslim sentiments (Graham 2001; Prothero 2018). In their discourse, the plight of Arab Christians served as evidence that Islam constituted a malevolent force in the world (Merritt 2015; Graham 2017; *Haaretz* 2017). The anti-Muslim discourse in Munir's church echoed the wider Evangelical narrative about an apocalyptic conflict with Islam.

Such sentiments had affected Munir's perspective. He sympathized with the feelings of his fellow churchgoers and drew connections between violence directed at Palestinian Christians in Hamas-ruled Gaza and the violence directed at Christians elsewhere in the region.[12] With anger in his voice, he asserted that

Qur'an burnings, as terrible as they were, did not kill; the bombings of Christian communities in the Middle East, however, did take lives, and Muslims needed to acknowledge that fact.

At the same time, Munir chafed at the support some of his Arab Protestant coreligionists, non-Palestinians, expressed for Israel. Christian Zionism had taken particularly strong root in US Evangelical churches (Spector 2009; Lewis 2010). Many Palestinian Protestants struggled against this political theology (Younan 2007; Awad 2016). Munir also criticized Christian Zionism but felt conflicted and isolated: Christians had been victimized, but Christian Zionism only contributed to Palestinian Christian suffering. Ultimately, for Munir, echoing the liberation theology themes he had absorbed in Palestine, Christian and Muslim Palestinians needed to stand together when violence and racism reared up against them. They needed to build bridges by creating activities that brought them together not as members of different religions but as Palestinians. Palestinians had a tradition of intersectarian accommodation and a commitment to a nonsectarian secular nationalist framework of solidarity. They could revive those traditions, Munir thought, but opportunities were lacking, the space in which they might have occurred disappearing.

THE POST–SEPTEMBER 11 GENERATION

Sectarianization intensified and took new forms in the post-September 11 generation. This generation emerged in congruence with three main historical events: the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim backlash in the United States following the September 11 attacks and subsequent US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq; the Arab Spring uprisings and their complicated sectarianizing aftermath, especially in Syria and Egypt; the deepening crises of secular nationalism and the peace process during and after the Second (al-Aqsa) Intifada (2000–05); and the fracturing that occurred after Hamas routed Fatah militarily from the Gaza Strip in 2007. The orientations of this cohort, as my data show, formed through integration into the already established institutions of the sectarian milieus. The profiles below exhibit two trajectories: a continuation of sectarianized nationalism in new forms and denationalized sectarianism, which replaced nationalist with religious solidarity.

Sectarianized Nationalism
Christianized Nationalism in the Second Intifada

Hanna (pseudonym) was in his final semester of studies at one of Chicago's universities when I interviewed him on campus in the student government lounge. He had helped lead an effort to win the support of his fellow students for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS). The campaign sought to convince the university to divest from holdings in certain companies doing business in Israel. Hanna and his fellow activists had just succeeded in steering a resolution supporting divestment through the student council.

Hanna seemed an exceptional figure. Most of the Christians I had interacted with had distanced themselves from nationalist activism or had avoided it altogether. All of these individuals had expressed concern about the turn toward Islam they perceived to have occurred in the wider immigrant community. Hanna was different. He not only had voiced support of the Palestinian cause but also provided highly visible public leadership for it. The community's Islamic turn seemed irrelevant to him.

Yet, as our interview progressed, I began to see Hanna's experience as indicative of a religious turn that encompassed Christians, too. Hanna's politicization occurred not through secular nationalist structures but rather through the new politicized Christianity that had emerged during and after the First Intifada and that had eventually become institutionalized in the liberation theology movement. His mobilization highlighted the relative weakness of secular nationalism as immigrants of the post-September 11 generation came to political awareness. It also reflected the critical importance of continuing links to Palestine. Travel to Palestine—and the encounter there with political Christianity—oriented Hanna toward Palestinian advocacy in Chicago. As with Palestinians born in Palestine who then immigrated to the United States, Hanna's visits to the homeland provided a bifocality that led him to view the diaspora through the lens of a struggle transcending the diaspora and homeland. Crucially, a post-Intifada politicized Christianity filtered this view.

Born in the northwest suburbs of Chicago in the early 1990s, Hanna described how his parents and the Christian community generally deemphasized the Palestinian struggle.

> I was talking to a friend of mine who goes to the Melkite Church [St. John the Baptist Melkite Catholic Church in Northlake] about [how Christians distance themselves from Palestine]. She was, like, it was really messed up that Arab Christians don't really affiliate with being Arab and helping people with the situation [in Palestine]. She told me that she tried to get these Christians [to support BDS] but she did not get the same effect as she did with the Muslims. I was like: Preach on, sister! It's really true that a lot of the Arab Christians don't want anything to do with being Arab or Palestinian. I know a Christian family that pretty much killed the Arab culture. They won't even listen to Arabic music. The only thing they might do is go to an Arab wedding. But they are like the outsiders at the wedding. My parents also tried to distance me from my Palestinian identity, but it backfired.

The denationalization and depoliticization in the Christian community that Hanna described echoed Munir's observations (above) about Christian alienation from Islamized activist spaces. Hanna, however, represented an anomaly; de-Palestinianization produced the opposite consequence in his case. Rather than abandon identification with the nation, he embraced it. This counter-trend development in his case occurred, as Hanna described it, for several reasons: the participation of his family in the Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church in

Cicero; visits from and to family in the West Bank; and encounters, during those visits to Palestine, with the new Christianized nationalism. The involvement at St. George, he said, "kept us connected to an Arab identity even though my parents didn't want us having anything to do with Palestine." St. George's head priest was a Palestinian and advocate for the national cause, and the church's liturgy integrated Arabic and English. Another individual, Leo (pseudonym), profiled further below, indicated in his interview, however, that many Christians of the post-September 11 generation at St. George had become dissociated from "Arabness" and nationalism. The relationship to St. George, therefore, was a contributing but not sufficiently explanatory factor in the formation of Hanna's outlook.

Visits from relatives in the West Bank also perpetuated attachment within Hanna's family to Arab and Palestinian culture and an awareness of the political situation in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Visits to family in the West Bank had a similar effect. Beginning in the 2000s, Hanna accompanied his family or traveled on his own several times to Palestine. The experience of passing through Israeli border security made a distinct impression. On a trip in 2003, he recalled, "we were stripped down and searched at the airport and made to sit in our underwear, [. . .], not something a thirteen-year-old kid would want to experience [. . .]." This ordeal and others like it at military checkpoints made Hanna conscious of his status as a feared and hated presence that Israel, the state, deemed necessary to interrogate, monitor, and exclude. These experiences stirred his anger and his desire to resist.

The nationalizing and politicizing effects of humiliating border rituals coincided with Hanna's integration into a Christian nationalist milieu during these visits to Palestine. Hanna's introduction to this space began during his first summer trip to reconnect with relatives in Beit Jala in 2010. His uncle took him to the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem, the same organization that Munir, a generation earlier, had helped to establish. Sabeel's leaders invited him to participate as volunteer staff for the organization's annual conference that year. As part of the conference, participants visited the southern West Bank city of al-Khalil (Hebron), where they talked to survivors of the Baruch Goldstein massacre at the Ibrahimi Mosque during Ramadan 1994.[13] "Hearing those testimonies was shocking," Hanna recalled. The conference attendees also went to Nazareth, first visiting the Basilica of the Annunciation and then listening later to a Sabeel leader discuss how the Israeli authorities refused permits to build or buy homes in predominantly Jewish communities to Palestinians who held Israeli citizenship.

The most significant outcome of Hanna's conference experience was his exposure to Sabeel's politicized biblical hermeneutic:

> Sabeel not only took us to the religious sites but Qissis Na'im [Fr. Naim Ateek, one of Sabeel's founders] explained that Jesus lived under occupation just like we did. That meant something to me. We had a long conversation about it. They have a book called *The Way of the Cross,* which explains the stages of when Jesus was crucified.[14]

> It surveys different ways in which the occupation relates to the different stopping places of the Stations of the Cross. There are like thirteen or fourteen stations, right? I can't remember [laughter]. Anyway, each one represents a different part of the occupation. Like, one stage showed settlements, which represented occupation, which Jesus also experienced, and some of the settlements were next to the apartheid wall. Going through those stages and seeing the parallels really hit me.

In the same way that the American Muslims for Palestine oriented Muslim Palestinians, Sabeel provided Hanna with a religio-political perspective through which to make sense of the Palestinian predicament. The perspective was liturgical, involving the reader in an imaginative re-enactment of Jesus's humiliating march to Golgotha. Significantly, the fusion of Jesus's suffering with Palestinians' tribulations, a logical conclusion derived from Christ's "option for the poor and the oppressed," elided the historical Jesus's Jewishness. Sabeel's Jesus was a Palestinian: his suffering was Palestinian suffering.

Upon returning to Chicago, Hanna joined the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapter at his university. He was one of only two Christians in the group. He described the chapter as committed to affirming a secular Palestinian identity but also willing to work with religious organizations. During his senior year, the group held a conference on Palestine at the university in collaboration with activists from American Muslims for Palestine, Friends of Sabeel North America, and Jewish Voice for Peace. Hanna provided the conduit to Friends of Sabeel. The goal was to create a citywide coalition in support of BDS and to support campus efforts to pass BDS resolutions. The central role of Palestinian advocacy groups with religious ideological underpinnings in this effort was notable: in the aftermath of the religious turn of the 1990s and 2000s such groups had come to the fore as primary mechanisms of mobilization. Individuals like Hanna, who had become politicized through a type of Christianized nationalism, reflected this phenomenon.

Islamized Nationalism in the Period of Israel's Wars in Gaza

The importance of religious milieu structures and religious-nationalist advocacy organizations registered, as well, in a second example of mobilization in the post-September 11 generation. Born in 1984, Sara (pseudonym) came of age politically during the post-September-11 anti-Muslim reaction in the United States and during Hamas's ascendancy in Gaza and its armed conflicts with Israel. She was among the activists who helped to start American Muslims for Palestine, which took form in response to Israel's attacks on Gaza beginning in 2006.

Sara grew up on Chicago's North Side. This geographic location determined the particular form of the Islamic religious shift Sara experienced. Lacking easy access to the Southwest Side community centers, Sara's parents increasingly became active in the Muslim Community Center (MCC). The MCC catered primarily to South Asian Muslim immigrants; however, a small group of North Side Palestinians had also established themselves there by the time Sara and her siblings started to attend

school. Concerned about ensuring cultural and moral continuity in the family, Sara's parents enrolled their children in the MCC's youth programs. Sara and her siblings attended "weekend and night schools for Arabic and Islamic studies and Qur'an," beginning at the pre-K level and continuing to age fourteen. At age twelve she began attending a Qur'an memorization class led by a Pakistani *shaykh*. Her parents then enrolled her in the private K-12 Islamic school in which this *shaykh* also taught. Through this educative process she developed a primary identity as a Muslim oriented toward the core Islamic texts as the basis for piety and cross-ethnic solidarity.

Within this context, too, Sara learned to fuse Islam with advocacy for Palestine. The MCC and the Pakistani school had explicitly embraced the Palestinian cause. This support reflected a sympathetic response to the concerns of the Palestinian minority in the mosque and, as Sara asserted, to a key Islamic mandate. Islam itself, Sara observed, had primed MCC's South Asian majority to support the issue. "It's in the Qur'an," she said—a claim echoing Muhannad's assertions above—"all the prophets went through [the Holy Land]." Palestine was Islam's axis mundi and therefore, in Sara's view, advocating for it was an essential duty, indeed, the very essence of the faith. That MCC made this central to its mission and identity made perfect sense to her. The universalizing of the Palestinian cause in Islamic terms at MCC went beyond verbal exhortations to include participation in direct actions. During Israel's war with Hezbollah in 2006, Sara recalled, Palestinians and South Asians boarded buses at the MCC to join a mass protest in Chicago's downtown.

The interethnic Islamic framework of Palestine solidarity at the MCC modeled for Sara the type of advocacy politics that she and other activists would seek to institute in AMP. Sara described how the idea for the organization arose in 2005. That year, while still a student at a university in the city, Sara attended the annual convention of the Islamic Society of North America at the McCormick Place Convention Center. MCC youth typically attended this annual conference, and Sara had agreed to volunteer at a booth. During one of her shifts, she met individuals discussing the need for a Muslim organization focused exclusively on Palestine activism. They invited Sara to help organize two conferences, one later that year and another one in 2006, to raise awareness and gauge public support. These activities led to further meetings and the creation of AMP in 2006. Barely two years later, Israel launched its "Operation Cast Lead" bombardment of the Gaza Strip. AMP responded quickly, taking the lead in organizing protests downtown. That same year, the organization held its first fundraiser at the Aqsa School, raising enough money to open its national office in Palos Hills, a southwest suburb, and to expand its staff considerably. "It was amazing," Sara said. "After 9/11, the work for Palestine died because people didn't want to speak about Palestine, didn't want anything to do with it for obvious reasons, but Operation Cast Lead opened the floodgate."

The new post-September 11 Palestine activism, originating within an incipient interethnic Islamic context, departed from the secular nationalist forms of advocacy that had prevailed from the late 1960s through the end of the 1980s. It also diverged

from the forerunner Islamic organizations that Muhannad and others in the generation of 1948–67 had launched. Those earlier groups "focused specifically on the Palestinian Muslim community," Sara remarked, "but we go beyond that." AMP sought to mobilize all US Muslims; cultivated support among non-Muslims; and lobbied lawmakers in Washington, DC. This broader focus reflected the post-September 11 generation's experience of integration into the Islamic institutions that had formed during and after the 1990s. These institutions instituted a transethnic and Islamic ethos. Sara's schooling within the interethnic MCC context exemplified the process. The resulting ethos shaped the direction of response to Cast Lead in 2009: pan-Islamic solidarity, not ethnic-national identity, became the basis of unity and action. This religious solidarity, as AMP construed it, and as Sara experienced it at the MCC, amalgamated the nation, orienting those drawn into its orbit toward an understanding of the struggle for the Holy Land as the supreme Islamic duty.

Denationalized Sectarianism

The religious turn, however, did not always lead to a sacralized political (religious-nationalist) activism in either the 1987–2001 or post-September 11 generations. Another trajectory—"denationalized sectarianism"—emerged across both cohorts in my data. This orientation almost entirely ignored nationalism, constituting identity exclusively in religious sectarian terms. The primary factors producing this trajectory included a high degree of participation in religious institutions and a corresponding lack of integration within the structures of secular nationalist or religious-nationalist activism.

Denationalized Sectarianism among Muslims

'Aziza (pseudonym) illustrates how denationalized sectarianism manifested within the Islamized suburban enclave. Born in Bridgeview in 1966, 'Aziza was the oldest daughter of immigrants who came to the city just before the war of 1948. Her date of birth placed her in the generation of 1987–2001 but her autobiographical account revealed parallels with the post-September 11 generation. Like this later cohort, 'Aziza's primary formational experiences occurred within the institutions that propelled the religious shift. 'Aziza was, in this sense, a generational forerunner, marking a trajectory that would reappear in the narratives of other interlocutors in the post-September 11 period.

Like Sara, 'Aziza grew up in isolation from the secular nationalist community centers in Chicago's Southwest Side. She described her family as highly assimilated. They had moved to the suburbs before the waves of relocation in the late 1980s and 1990s. They had little contact with Palestinians elsewhere in the city, never travelling to the Southwest Side:

First time I went [to the Southwest Side] was after I got married and went to visit my husband's sister. I was twenty years old, and I remember driving into the area

and seeing all the Arab stores and women in their *thawbs* [traditional embroidered dresses], and I was like, 'Wow! What is this place!' [laughter] We never ate falafel. We ate corned beef and cabbage and my mom made turkey with stuffing! My grandma picked things up from her [white] neighbors. So, people [other immigrants] were like, 'Who are you people!?!?'

Her suburban isolation excluded 'Aziza from the institutions and mechanisms of cultural transmission within the immigrant community. 'Aziza never learned to read, write, or speak Arabic fluently. Had her family lived on the Southwest Side she might have participated in afterschool language and cultural programs and absorbed the nationalist politics of the community centers, which were dominant during her generation.

A form of cultural transmission did occur nevertheless through the family. This transferal involved the reconstitution of gendered hierarchies derived from the patriarchal ethos of the West Bank village in which 'Aziza's parents and grandparents had grown up prior to immigrating. Her parents restricted 'Aziza's socializing beyond the home. As previously noted, families often justified these restrictions in relation to fears for the safety of children traveling through Chicago's urban expanse. 'Aziza remembered the curtailment of her movements, however, as deriving from "traditional ideas" about female propriety. It was "shameful" (*'ayb*) for girls to move beyond the home unaccompanied. Her brother, 'Aziza told me, did not have to contend with the same limits. Significantly, 'Aziza did not perceive this repatriarchalizing ethos as distinct from "American identity." The gendered constraints were simply how the family did things. "I never really saw my parents as immigrants," she told me, "[we were] as American as you could get."

The isolation and assimilation—the transferal of the rural patriarchal ethos notwithstanding—stemmed, in 'Aziza's view, from a failure to systematically institute religious identity and practice, in particular. Religious transmission, if it occurred, took place in an ad hoc fashion. She offered her grandfather as an example: "My father told me once that after they arrived in the 1940s he asked his father if they were going to do the Ramadan fast and my grandfather said, 'You can do it if you want, but I'm not!'" 'Aziza's grandfather apparently still kept the daily prayers, even "praying twice if he missed a prayer," but "he never encouraged us to pray and this is what I thought about as I got older: why didn't he pass that along?" Her parents, too, especially her mother, attempted sporadically to instill religious knowledge in their children by organizing a Sunday school to learn Qur'an and uttering pious phrases like "*ashhadu an la ilaha illa llah* [the first part of the statement of faith, the *shahada,* 'I bear witness there is no deity save the one God'] every single day when we left to go to school."

In the absence of mosques and formal religious leadership, individuals like 'Aziza's mother improvised. Their efforts were unsophisticated and occurred in a disconnected fashion. There was no systematic integration of practice. The result

was an inchoate "God-consciousness"—'Aziza's choice of phrase in English glossed the Qur'anic notion of *taqwa,* or "God awareness." She and her family were adrift in America, she seemed to indicate, no longer retaining a connection with Islam other than, in her telling, a few formulaic phrases and a rudimentary encounter with scriptural revelation.

Standing on the other side of her conversion or "reversion" to "proper Islam," 'Aziza viewed her previous life as mired in ignorance, immersed in a mistaken fusion of culture and faith. Her interpretation of the past reflected a long-established reformist Islamic explanation for the putative decline of Islam in the face of North Atlantic (Western) culture and power. This explanation pinpointed the weakening of Islamic orthodoxy and of a corresponding ignorance of "true Islam" among believers. Assimilation among immigrant Muslims constituted one example of this problem. Subjectively, 'Aziza experienced the "truth" of this diagnosis of Muslim weakness as a personal crisis of identity that only became resolved through her counter-assimilation into reformist ideology and practice ("proper Islam," in her terms).

The key event in this resolution for 'Aziza and her family was the establishment of the Mosque Foundation as the predominant institution of the suburban enclave. Along with their friends and neighbors in their suburban community, 'Aziza's parents and husband began to participate in prayers and other activities at the mosque. As they did so, they adopted the form of piety that the mosque leadership, following the reformist ascendancy in the late 1970s and early 1980s, advocated.

'Aziza, too, gradually joined in this process. With her husband, she began to attend prayers at the Mosque Foundation. She felt initially awkward, however, having "learned prayer incorrectly from my mother." She also did not immediately conform to reformist expectations for women's dress. She began wearing the scarf and a robe, as mandated by the mosque, during prayers but regularly removed these garments when she left the mosque's premises. The sartorial question confronted her from multiple directions. At the mosque's Qur'an study circles for women, the discussion often centered on the Qur'anic passages addressing hijab and women's clothing. Discussion leaders interpreted these texts as mandates to women to remain properly covered in public spaces beyond the mosque's premises (see Q 7:46, Q 19:16–17, Q 33:53, Q 41:5, Q 42:51 on hijab and Q 24:31, Q 33:59 on clothing practices). 'Aziza's husband, too, lobbied her to wear the scarf continuously. "My husband wasn't a good teacher," she reflected, "he just said he didn't want me to end up in hell; we had issues about this for like three years."

She resisted the pressure but finally, in 1993, during Ramadan, she made the decision to wear the hijab continuously: "By the time of the *'id* [the three-day feast that ends Ramadan]," she recalled, "I remember my daughter saying, 'Take off your scarf, we're going out to eat,' and I said, 'No, I'm not taking it off,' and that was that." The decision marked her definitively as a "Muslim" to non-Muslims and to Palestinians, including her grandmother, for whom veiling was "old world," not

something one did in America. She described the decision as a "radical mastectomy" that cut off her former self. Years later, in the moment of our interview in 2012, the realignment had taken hold, the scarf and *jilbab* coat now fully integrated into her sense of who she was.

Alongside these processes, and central to them, was the creation of the private Islamic schools, Universal and Aqsa. These new institutions offered an opportunity to 'Aziza to integrate her children into an Islamic religious milieu that simultaneously preserved Arab ethnic attachments and religious values without contradictions. As she discussed what these schools meant to her, she recalled a young man who was helping to organize the effort. During a planning meeting, he spoke of a "lost generation" in Chicago. He described the schools and the mosque as a return to authenticity, a path out of the American wilderness. The young man's words reverberated within 'Aziza. They voiced what had been an inchoate feeling, an unspoken sense of perdition. Recalling what he had said still caused her to weep: tears came to her eyes as she recounted the moment to me.

Toward the end of our conversation, I observed to 'Aziza that I did not notice any display referring to Palestine in her home. Instead, Qur'anic verses framed in gold calligraphy decorated the walls. "That's true," she said. "I know I'm Palestinian, but I'm a Muslim above all else." Recently, however, she had begun to absorb a political perspective, especially through her son-in-law, who was an immigrant from the northern West Bank. A devout Muslim committed to reformist ideals, he sympathized with the Islamist movements in Palestine, claiming they were pure in their intentions, unlike "the corrupt [Fatah-led] Palestinian Authority." 'Aziza agreed with this idea. Echoing a well-established reformist argument, she asserted that the plight of Palestinians was the result of their falling away from Islam. The oppressors—the Israeli and US governments but also corrupt secular Palestinian leadership—were God's sword wielded against the people to bring them back to Islam: "There's a *mathal* [saying] in *'arabi* [Arabic]: *inna al-zalim sayf allah*," she remarked, "which means, 'the oppressor is Allah's sword,' that the oppressor is not an accident; he's there to remind us, bring us back."

'Aziza had felt deeply the communal falling away from faith she described. She recounted the public ridicule and rejection she confronted after she began to wear the scarf. Her detractors, Palestinians opposed to the Islamization occurring in the suburbs, accused her of embracing a backward ideology that would retard Palestinian progress. But 'Aziza had come to see herself first and foremost as a Muslim, and through her scarf and *jilbab* and through her volunteer work for the mosque she presented herself publicly as such. She was profoundly concerned for the injustice that Palestinians suffered. But her politics, to the extent she expressed them, emphasized the necessity of conversion or reversion to Islam. Only in this way would Palestinians discover a path out of their wilderness in Chicago and in the Holy Land, too.

Denationalized Sectarianism among Christians

A second example of denationalized sectarianism comes from the Christian milieu. It bears strong parallels with 'Aziza's case: a specifically religious-sectarian affiliation and a corresponding sense of distance from ethnic-national identity emerge as dominant themes. These orientations, also as in 'Aziza's trajectory, reflected weak or absent integration into secular nationalist institutions and isolation from the main immigrant enclave. They showed, too, the shaping effect of participation within the religious structures that immigrants of the generation of 1948–67 created.

Born in the late 1970s, Leo (a pseudonym) grew up in South Chicago. His father worked in the steel mills there while his mother supplemented the family income as a seamstress. After the mills closed, his father, along with the majority of other men in their neighborhood, suffered extended unemployment punctuated by occasional work in the local service economy. He eventually secured a permanent and relatively well-paying job as a barge operator on the Chicago River. The family subsequently moved to the Northwest Side to be closer to his work.

The move occurred at a critical juncture in Leo's life. The first Gulf War (1990–91) was nearing its end. During the war, neighborhood children had bullied Leo and his siblings. They taunted them for being Arabs and, erroneously, Muslims:

> When the steel mills closed, parents lost jobs. So a lot of men, fathers and brothers, signed up for the military and ended up overseas. Their kids now saw us as the Arabic kids. They started bullying us. A couple of guys beat up my brother. They were like, 'My brother's fighting your dad over there.' I was like, 'No! My dad is working at Little Caesar's trying to get by! He's trying to do the American dream thing!' They just assumed this 'Muslim versus us' thing. They'd ask, 'Is your mom dressed up in a scarf?' And, I'd say, 'No, no we're Christian! You saw me at church last Sunday!' We were going to the Orthodox Church [St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cicero] during the holidays, but we'd go to this local Methodist church during the week 'cause it was close by. It was a nightmare until we moved to the Northwest Side. In our new neighborhood, everybody was accustomed to differences.

The spike in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism during the Gulf War stripped Leo's family of their quiet attempt to assimilate. His father's new job and the diverse neighborhood that became their new home offered refuge from the collapsing economy and war-driven bigotry in South Chicago. The family's social center, however, increasingly became the Antiochian Orthodox milieu and its institutions, principally the St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cicero. Integration into this milieu led Leo to see himself as primarily Orthodox Christian, not as Arab or Palestinian. His family's mixed ethnic and sectarian background also influenced him in this direction.

Leo's grandfather immigrated to Palestine following the genocidal violence targeting Armenians in eastern Anatolia during the First World War (1915–17). He

settled, like most of the refugees, in an area of Jerusalem's Old City now known as the "Armenian Quarter." The grandfather eventually married a Greek Orthodox woman from the town of Beit Sahour, which lies adjacent to Bethlehem just southeast of Jerusalem. Leo's father, who grew up in South Chicago, also married beyond the Armenian and Palestinian communities. His wife had grown up within the Chaldean Catholic community in Iraq.

Leo's family were among the original members of St. George. From its beginning, the church integrated Arab immigrants of diverse backgrounds from across the Chicago metropolitan area. It did so through an explicitly Orthodox sense of identity that elided nationality and even Arab ethnicity. Leo described how this occurred:

> At St. George Church there are Iraqis, Syrians, Jordanians, Lebanese, and Palestinians. Most of us, the young adults, are mixed. My vice-president [of the young adults group] is half-Jordanian and half-Palestinian. We don't have this sense of national pride. It doesn't get discussed. Some of us identify with the term 'Arab,' some people do; and other people don't identify with the term at all. They think that 'Arab' means 'Muslim.' It's weird. You'll hear somebody say, like, 'how Arabs are,' and somebody else will say, well, 'we're not Arabic.' And, it's like, really? It's weird because at St. George the liturgy is half in Arabic and our parents speak Arabic and understand it [. . .]. The only connection those of us who are younger have [to Arab ethnicity] though is the food. I'm kinda of like that, too, no strong connection to Arab or Palestinian identity. What I care about is whether someone shares the same values I have with respect to Orthodoxy. If I met a girl who was Protestant and she shared the same values I did, I wouldn't have an issue with it. It's a deep-rooted sense in me: this is the Christian faith.

The denationalization that had occurred within St. George—and among the earliest Muslim Palestinian residents in the suburbs, like 'Aziza's family—replicated a classical assimilation trajectory in the United States in which sectarian or denominational identities elided ethnic particularities. But in Leo's case there were other reasons, too, for national disaffiliation, or, in the terms employed here, denationalized sectarianism. Like 'Aziza's, Leo's family never lived within the Palestinian immigrant milieu. Instead, they lived on Chicago's far southern edge and, later, on the city's Northwest Side, commuting on Sundays to St. George in Cicero. As Christians, moreover, they increasingly perceived the main Arab immigrant concentrations, including the Palestinian one, as "Muslim." US wars in the Middle East and the consequent spiking anti-Muslim reaction reinforced the sense of distinction. Many Arab Christians such as Leo and his family sought to distinguish themselves from Islam in response to this reaction.

Leo described this dynamic of alienation further as he discussed his interactions with Muslims during his college years. This period, the 1990s, corresponded with the Islamic shift occurring among immigrant Muslims, including Palestinians. Leo's Muslim classmates, he stated, adopted an "extreme, combative" stance toward him, emphasizing religious differences:

My college had a big Muslim student organization. There were no Arab Christians on campus, I never met one, never had a class with a Christian Arab in it—'Oh, you're a Christian and you're an Arab, that's cool'—never had that experience. It was always Muslim guys and they always made a big deal of their religion with me [. . .]. They could not stop taking potshots at me because I was Christian. They'd come up with these stories I'd never even heard of. I couldn't find them in the Bible. I'd go to my *abuna* ['father,' that is, priest] and he'd go, 'Oh, that was a story in the Qur'an.' They'd claimed it was from the Christian Bible. I'd come back and correct them and then they'd be like, 'Oh, okay, but what about this or that?' So, it became this back and forth to the point of exhaustion. I was like, 'Okay, I have to continuously prove my faith to you? Why every time we hang out you gotta like test my faith?'

Leo's experience with Muslim women was different. "Muslim women were the best, the girls my age, including the *muhajjaba*s [*muhajjabat*, women who wear the scarf], they have always been insanely sweet to me and caring." He recalled a grade-school friend who brought him things to eat from her father's store. The sectarian prejudice he encountered with men did not register with the same intensity in these interactions with women. Leo thought the difference might have had to do with the need of men to perform a type of combative masculinity: "Maybe it's just being a man," he said, "Maybe we're testosterone driven and looking for a fight." When religion did arise as a topic with his female acquaintances, the women would express curiosity about why Leo followed a "Jewish religion" and not the religion that the Prophet Muhammad, "who they said was a Palestinian," had proclaimed. Such comments, as Leo reported them, illustrated the extent to which Islam particularly had come to link tightly with national-ethnic affiliation. Islam was Palestinian; Christianity was other, even possibly, vaguely, Jewish. Christians, too, as Leo reported, absorbed these distinctions, associating "Palestinian" with "Muslim" and consequently placing "Christian" in a separate, de-ethnicized (non-Arab) category.

In contrast with individuals who questioned his religious identity, either by challenging it or by expressing puzzlement over it, Leo described interactions with "agnostic" Muslims who communicated a skeptical view of religious claims generally. These students seemed more interested in simply "hanging out" than with demarcating sectarian distinctions. Leo found acceptance in their attitude. Significantly, he did not describe their outlook as secular but rather as focused on the individual and rooted implicitly in a Christian-like notion of service and love—he used the Greek New Testament's term "caritas," a love of humankind or charity—that looked beyond sect and nation to the individual. The Muslims and Christians he respected were those who said, in Leo's words:

'I love you as a human being and I'll help you regardless of what denomination you are.' A Muslim and Christian can be friends in a deep-rooted love for God. The true Christian never says, 'I'm a Palestinian first, a Christian second.' They say, 'I'm a servant of the world regardless of ethnicity.' I'm assuming true Muslim belief says the same thing.

CONCLUSION

The religious turn as it manifests in the narratives of the individuals featured in this chapter unfolds along generational lines. In my data, religious revitalization in Palestine affects the diaspora religious turn primarily through the experiences of immigrants of the generations of 1948–67 and 1987–2001 who are born in the homeland. These individuals establish the core institutions through which the religious shift shapes the subjectivities of individuals in succeeding generations. In some cases, the generational lines in my data overlap: ʿAziza's trajectory, for example, arcs between the 1987–2001 and post-September 11 cohorts.

In the aftermath of the emergence of distinct sectarian milieus, the evolution of religious subjectivities moves, in my data, along the diverging axes of sectarianized nationalism and denationalized sectarianism. The factors determining these trajectories have to do with the degree to which an individual becomes integrated within religious-nationalist structures, Christian or Muslim. Equally significant for this process, however, is the relative absence of a desectarianized secular space that integrates individuals as Palestinians across sectarian lines. This lack reflects the impact of the sectarianization process, particularly through the mechanisms of the religious shift and the consequent decentering of secularism.

The sectarianization trajectories described in this chapter are not, however, the only possible outcomes of these processes. The next two chapters explore religious-secular hybridizations that result from the same sectarianizing dynamic. In doing so, they shift the analysis from a generational to a typological approach. This change allows for a mapping of the range of syncretic orientations that have formed since the 1990s.