

## Conclusion

On April 25, 2017, two years after I had completed my fieldwork, Rasmia Odeh, Associate Director of the Arab American Action Network (AAAN), walked into a federal courtroom in Detroit, Michigan to plead guilty to one count of fraudulently obtaining United States citizenship. Ending a three-and-a-half-year legal and political struggle, she agreed to admit to not having disclosed a previous conviction and imprisonment on her 2004 naturalization application and to accept immediate loss of her citizenship and deportation in return for the waiving of prison time beyond the period she had already served prior to her release on bail. The incident Odeh was accused of not disclosing pertained to her sentencing by an Israeli military court to life imprisonment for membership in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and participation in two bombings in 1969.<sup>1</sup> Odeh firmly and consistently denied the charges on which she was convicted. Soon after her release as part of a prisoner exchange in 1979, she testified at the United Nations General Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland to having been tortured and sexually assaulted during her initial, forty-five-day detention and interrogation (United Nations General Assembly 1979). A psychiatrist who evaluated Odeh in Chicago determined that she suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder related to the abuse she had suffered and that this condition, which can cause repression of traumatic memories, likely accounted for her not indicating the 1969 arrest in her United States citizenship application form.<sup>2</sup>

In 1997, three years after Odeh's arrival in the United States, the US State Department listed the PFLP as a terrorist organization.<sup>3</sup> On this basis, federal prosecutors threatened to charge Odeh retroactively with membership in a terrorist group if she refused to accept the plea deal they offered her in relation to the immigration

charge. Convinced she would never receive a fair trial as spiking anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism had accompanied the Trump election in 2016 (Lichtblau 2016; Jouvenal and Zauzmer 2017; Southern Poverty Law Center 2018), Odeh's lawyers urged her to accept the offer.<sup>4</sup> Her decision brought to an end forty-two months of political organizing, fundraising, mobilizing, protesting, media work, and legal advocacy on her behalf. Her supporters expressed resignation and sorrow but also claimed victory, declaring, "For three and a half years we put Israel on trial in the United States."<sup>5</sup>

The campaign to support Odeh was an immediate response to her need for backing. But it also stemmed from a deeply rooted practice of protest and mutual aid among Chicago's Palestinians against a US society and government frequently hostile toward Arabs and Muslims (M. Suleiman 1996; Cainkar 2009; Pennock 2017). In Odeh's case, this self-protective reflex unified the various segments of the community—secular and religious—to resist yet another threat against one of their own.<sup>6</sup> The campaign's organizing committee (I attended several of its early meetings) drew from the established leadership in the secular and Islamic activist milieus. Palestinian Christian organizations did not form part of the core leadership, although the head of Friends of Sabeel North America, the Palestine solidarity group primarily supported by non-Arab Protestant denominations (see chapters 1, 3, and 4), did participate. Organizing meetings occurred in restaurants, at the AAAN offices, and in the assembly rooms of the Aqsa Islamic School for Girls situated across from the Mosque Foundation. American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) issued statements and raised money alongside the AAAN.<sup>7</sup> The women associated with Odeh's Arab Women's Committee program, many of them practicing Muslims, and participants in the AAAN's youth programs consistently attended the organizing meetings and travelled to Detroit to demonstrate in front of the federal courthouse where Odeh underwent arraignment and trial. Their signs and slogans decried Odeh's arrest and conviction as unjust and racist.

The campaign also activated longstanding alliances with Puerto Rican nationalist groups, Black Lives Matter chapters, Jewish Voice for Peace, feminist academics, and other progressive and people of color (POC) activists. Prominent African American activist-scholars like Angela Davis adopted Odeh's cause. Reciprocating the solidarity, representatives from the AAAN travelled to Ferguson, Missouri to join the protests against the killing of Michael Brown in August 2014 (Grant 2019). AAAN youth leaders connected this violence against African Americans to the surveillance and racial profiling of their own communities and to US and Israeli law enforcement coordination.<sup>8</sup>

At the center of the campaign was Odeh herself, who emerged from her relatively quiet life as a Southwest Side community organizer to become a national symbol of the resistance against oppression of Palestinians, of other POC groups, and of women. Notably, Odeh did not explicitly invoke religious symbols and tropes despite the involvement of groups like AMP. She did not wear a hijab scarf,

for example. In an interview with me, she expressed her belief, derived from her Marxist principles, that religion gave a false understanding of reality and thereby was an impediment to liberation, especially women's liberation. Still, she collaborated with religious activists working on her behalf. With those activists, some of them connected to AMP, she shared a fundamental commitment to justice. A symbol of that commitment during her arrest and hearings, she willingly integrated the diverse segments of Palestinian activism in Chicago within the revived Palestinian solidarity and antiracist coalition that supported her.

#### RECONSIDERING THE RELIGIOUS SHIFT: CONCLUDING POINTS

The campaign to prevent Odeh's deportation brings into view the main concluding points of this book. First, it highlights the unresolved Palestinian national situation and the role of US policy in favoring Zionism and Israel while opposing the Palestinian demand of return and independent statehood. This lack of resolution continues to generate profound uncertainty and insecurity within Palestinian diaspora communities like that in Chicago. Law enforcement interventions targeting community leaders like Odeh dramatize and reinforce this insecurity. They corroborate for Palestinians the longstanding perception that the exile cannot and should not become the normative state. The condition of exile and occupation is the ongoing Nakba ("Catastrophe"), a distorted reality deeply at odds with universal principles of law, justice, and morality. Only liberation and return (*al-ʿawda*) to the stolen homeland can restore the arc of history to its rightful course. Given these presumptions, the exile can only be the site of inauthenticity and alienation, a space and condition to be survived until the moment of restoration.

The recent election of Rashida Tlaib (D-MI, 13th District) and Ilhan Omar (D-MN, 5th District) to the United States House of Representatives has, ironically, further underlined the uncertainty of the exile. Tlaib, whose constituency is predominantly African American, is the first Palestinian-American elected to Congress. She and Omar, the first Somali-American to join Congress, have been outspoken critics of US financial and political support for Israel and concomitant refusal to address Palestinian national demands.<sup>9</sup> In response, they have become targets of a sharp backlash that has included accusations of anti-Semitism (Barbaro 2019; Keating 2019). For Palestinians, these rebukes reinforce the sense of the exile as a hostile space—a site defined by the experience of state surveillance, arbitrary attack, and racist exclusion. The attacks have also underlined the necessity to fight back through mass political mobilization and, increasingly, through the ballot box.

It is this sense of being under siege, and the repressive interventions that provoke and confirm it, which intergenerationally re-enlivens nationalism and its emphasis on the ethnos. This orientation is fundamentally secular to the extent

that it imagines an independent national existence within territorially delimited, intersectorian terms. Secular nationalist movements, and the community centers that historically aligned with them in diaspora communities like Chicago, have expressed this secularity explicitly. The orientations carried within these movements have persisted even after the withering of the PLO and the closing of the community centers such as the *markaz*. Successor organizations like the AAAN have provided this continuity even if they no longer are the primary anchors of immigrant community life. As this book has pointed out (especially in chapter 2), secularism has continued through these structures and through families in which secular nationalism has remained a dominant tradition.

A second and related concluding point is that the inherent secularity of the national question has also affected the reformist Islam that has gained ascendancy since the late 1980s. It has done so by counterposing the moral imperative of Palestinian unity and liberation against the reformist Islamic devaluing of national solidarities in favor of the transnational Islamic *umma*. Hatem Abudayyeh (chapter 2), Executive Director of the AAAN, explained the reason for this phenomenon in these terms:

You can't say there's this transnational Islamic experience that we all have. Maybe it helps to organize across nationalities when people look at this concept of *umma islamiya* [the global Islamic community]. But there are very specific issues based on nationality. There are black issues; Mexican issues; Arab issues, beyond Islam. It liquidates the national question when you organize religiously.

As Abudayyeh points out, even if there can be overlap between secular and “faith-based” organizing frameworks, at key junctures the religious focus contradicts the priorities of national liberation. At a certain point one must decide between nation and *umma* as the locus of solidarity. A primary emphasis on *umma* ultimately dilutes the commitment to the nation and its liberation. Conversely, a commitment to the nation entails, at some point, a demotion of the *umma* to secondary importance in the hierarchy of solidarity.

This fact holds true even in instances where the two priorities, *umma* and nation, seem to coincide. AMP, despite appearing to weld nation and *umma* into an undifferentiated whole, has effectively nationalized Islam by rendering Palestine and its liberation Islam's preeminent focus and duty. This transformation has remained unstable, susceptible to challenge from both nationalist and Islamic perspectives. AMP's responses to these challenges reveal the instability of its position.

When AMP prioritizes Islamic solidarity, for example, it risks censure for contradicting the principles of human rights, national liberation, and national unity. This conundrum came into sharp focus during the commemoration of the centenary of the Armenian genocide. On April 19, 2015, the US Council of Muslim Organizations, of which AMP was a founding member, issued a statement that refused to label the Ottoman state's systematic extermination campaign as

“genocide.”<sup>10</sup> Almost instantly, progressive Muslim American activists and columnists as well as Palestine solidarity social media sites demanded that AMP clarify its position.<sup>11</sup> In an attempt to do so, AMP issued a statement that acknowledged Armenian “suffering and pain” but avoided the term “genocide” as a characterization for what had occurred.<sup>12</sup> Palestine solidarity activists, Palestinian Armenians, and other Christians and Muslims derided this attempted clarification. They pointed out that AMP’s refusal to recognize the validity of the term undermined its criticisms of Zionism and Israeli occupation. It was also divisive. As one commenter noted, Palestinian Armenians were among the thousands of Palestinians who fled the fighting or were expelled by force during and after the war of 1948. Armenian Christians were, for this reason, an inseparable part of the Palestinian nation, having shared in its formative traumas.<sup>13</sup> The nation had a reciprocal obligation to stand with its Armenian sisters and brothers in their demand for recognition of genocide. Caught between its opposition to Israeli occupation and its sympathy for Islamic reformism—Turkey, which forcefully opposed the “genocide” label, was led by an Islamic reformist party that had extended support for Muslim Brotherhood opposition groups in Syria and Egypt (Kingsley 2017; Carnegie Middle East Center 2012)—AMP quietly refrained from any further public statements on the matter.

Conversely, when it has emphasized Palestinian nationalist priorities, such as defending al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, for instance, AMP has sometimes triggered the resentment of other Muslim constituencies (see chapter 3). Syrians, who provide important financial backing and leadership in the Islamic milieu, especially through the Mosque Foundation, have been sensitive to perceived hypocrisy in the stances of Palestinian Muslims whenever their nationalist priorities appear, from their point of view, to sideline the dire plight of Syrian civilians and opposition groups in the ongoing civil war. As its 2013 conference demonstrated (see chapter 3), AMP has attempted to resolve these tensions by placing Palestine at the center of a Holy Land that expands to include the entire Levant and also Iraq and Egypt. In doing so, it has rendered Palestine a metonym of the struggle for justice in the Middle East as a whole. It has also transformed it into a litmus test of religious commitment. This commitment includes advocacy for justice elsewhere—in Syria, for example, or in Ferguson, Missouri—but it is Palestine and its liberation that lies at the center of AMP’s *raison d’être*.

Secularity has persisted and shaped the Islamic turn in a second way: through the emergence of new syncretic secularities—“secular religiosities” (see chapter 6)—that have reacted against the piety-minded milieu. As chapter 6 especially demonstrates, some individuals who grow up in the midst of the Islamized milieu resist its disciplines and norms even as others embrace them. Jubran, for example, a musician, declared the Islamic turn a type of “*jahl*”—a narrow-mindedness that rendered piety into a cheerless iconoclasm. He left the enclave in search of artistic space on Chicago’s North Side. He also married a non-Muslim in a ceremony presided over

by a Brahmin Hindu priest and pursued syncretic collaborations with jazz, blues, and Indian musicians. As he did so, he formulated a Sufi sensibility open to the diversity of spiritual possibilities within and beyond Islam. His idiosyncratic spirituality comported with the artistic fusion he forged in his professional musical career. His was not the Islam of the reformist movements, the suburban “Islam of the book” and of orthopraxic piety emphasizing the regular performance of prayer, fasting, tithing, and so on. Jubran fasted sporadically, if at all. He prayed occasionally. Not strictly secularist, his Islam was at home with, indeed expressive of, the multicultural, syncretic secularity that he encountered in Chicago’s urban expanse. Palestine remained important to him. He performed at fundraisers for Palestinian organizations that advocated for the cause. But neither Islam nor Palestine was necessarily the center of his life beyond the enclave.

In another instance recounted in chapter 6, a young woman, Muna, rejected the religious patriarchy she encountered at the Islamic schools she attended. She rebelled by leaving Chicago’s “Arabville” for a distant state, where she participated in the youth party scene. She returned later in an effort to “leave [her] bad habits behind” and retrieve her connections to Palestinian-Arab identity. In “Arabville” in the southwest suburbs, she grappled with Islam as she took university courses in feminist theory. The enclave suffocated her. She resisted it by refusing the hijab, refusing prayer, refusing to fast, and consuming intoxicants. Her search for roots took her to Palestine, where she encountered, in Haifa and Ramallah, a much more relaxed, liberal culture than the one she had grown up in, in Chicago. Individuals who made ostentatious displays of their piety in Chicago also sought out these spaces in Palestine. This fact rendered their piety a patent hypocrisy in Muna’s eyes. As a refuge from rigorous moralism, Palestine, it seems, could host more than one sort of rebellion against the diaspora’s piety-mindedness. Muna, who returned to live in the suburbs, ultimately settled for a “secular Islam,” as she described it. She expressed belief in God’s existence but rejected reformist orthopraxy. There were multiple paths. No single religion monopolized truth. In these sentiments, she affirmed a polytheistic secularity that denied authority to any single religion even as it allowed religions their place in society.

There were other similar cases of syncretic secularity. Sawsan, who grew up in a Christian family in Beit Jala, embraced Islam as an expression of her nationalism. In Chicago, however, her path evolved toward a highly idiosyncratic spirituality that resisted the sectarianism, Christian and Islamic, of the suburbs. In her triune expression, “Love, God, and Palestine,” she upheld a multisectarian vision that transcended the binaries of Christian and Muslim, Palestinian and Israeli. She acknowledged the diaspora, and Chicago’s diversity of trajectories in particular, as affording her the space within which to explore and express her individuality.

Ibrahim, too, embraced the urban exile as the space of individual freedom. He refused the demands of nationalist and religious conformity, declaring himself to be an atheist and an American. He fell in love with a likeminded Palestinian

woman who had refused the hijab and, like Ibrahim, did not pray or fast. Their relationship evolved on the North Side beyond the southwest suburban enclave: the morally and culturally diverse space of the city afforded them this chance. As a form of secular religiosity, Ibrahim's represented the furthest end of the syncretic spectrum. Religion persisted within his orientation, faintly, in as much as he pretended to adhere to piety when at home with his parents or invoked it negatively to explain and define his atheism.

As these examples have demonstrated, secularism and secularity have persisted and re-emerged under the conditions of the religious, sectarian shift. They qualified the shift, casting its terms within an affirmation of a multisectarian, polytheistic, or, at the extreme, atheistic ethos. But the dynamic worked in the reverse direction, too. This is the third main concluding point of this book: within the secular-religious interaction, the religious shift, in conjunction with the shrinking of secular space, also profoundly altered the path of secularism and secularity. It did so, as chapters 3 and 4 showed, by institutionalizing the ethos and disciplines of piety and thereby instilling the priority of Islam as the enclave's dominant framework of identity and by reinforcing a mirroring sectarianization among Christian Palestinians.

Chapter 5 further highlighted the diverse ways in which this process of religious qualification of the secular occurred in my data. It specifically profiled individuals rooted in the secular milieu who had moved toward an embrace, fully or partially, of the new piety. Nawal, Intisar, and Rami Nashashibi illustrated this type of development (that is, "religious secularity"). In each of these examples, significantly, the shift was not a matter of a complete and pure exchange of orientations. Nawal embraced the disciplines of piety within the new Islamic structures in the suburbs, but she also continued to immerse herself—at least until she accepted employment with an Islamic social service organization—in secular nationalist spaces that affirmed her Palestinian identity in ways that did not occur within the reformist Islamic milieu. As she crossed in and out of these spaces, she negotiated competing moral demands. In doing so, she arrived at a mutually conditioning compromise: she relinquished elements of "correct" reformist orthopraxy, especially as it pertained to physical contact between marriageable men and women, but otherwise held to the remainder of her orthopraxic comportment—principally, prayer, fasting, and the hijab—within the secular spaces in which she worked. In doing so, she both adapted to and transformed those spaces.

Intisar similarly modified her secularism by enrolling her daughters in the new Islamic schools, primarily as a way to shield them from anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism. She also did so by redefining her activism as Muslim and Islamic advocacy. "Islam exploded within [her]" after the September 11 attacks as the anti-Muslim and anti-Arab backlash built. Her response was mainly defensive. But, increasingly, as she became integrated into the Islamized suburban milieu, she participated in events at the Mosque Foundation and at the Islamic schools

and cooperated with Mosque Foundation leadership to educate residents of the suburban enclave about their civil rights. She had not completely embraced the disciplines—prayer, fasting, hijab—that signaled alignment with reformist Islamic identity, and she remained a committed nationalist. The center of her identity and work, nevertheless, had now come to encompass Islam and the piety-oriented suburban community it represented.

Rami Nashashibi, by contrast, had abandoned the secular nationalist milieu entirely in favor of a cosmopolitan Islam rooted in the Black Muslim space of Chicago's South Side. Significantly, however, he conceived of this Islam as an analog of the Third Worldism that the previous generation of secular activists, who were committed to the Palestinian national struggle, had pioneered. He explicitly invoked Edward Said to express this congruence. Nashashibi's religious turn generated a religious secularity that displaced particular instantiations of Islam in favor of a diversity of expressions and approaches to questions of justice that one could conceive of as Islamic and as equally and universally human in the Saidian sense, as well.

Nashashibi's example points also to the fourth main concluding point of this book: secular-religious interactions and the identity transformations they produce are conditioned by generation, race, class, gender, homeland-diaspora bifocality, and the multiplicity of narrative trajectories, of "stories so far," within the urban and transnational space of Chicago and Palestine. The generation of 1948–67, responding to the ascendancy of pan-Arabism and the Fatah-led Palestine Liberation Organization, created the core institutions, the community centers, which anchored a secular nationalist ethos in Palestinian Chicago. These institutions, embracing Third World solidarity frames and a sense of shared destiny with other liberation struggles, pioneered relationships with other immigrant and minority communities. Khairy Abudayyeh, Ali Hussain, and Musa (see chapter 2) exemplified the orientations and the organizational leadership of this cohort.

The generation of 1948–67 also harbored a competing political Islamic trajectory, in Mannheim's (1952) terms a "generation unit," that rejected secularism. It asserted, instead, that Islam constituted the center—the *'aqida* (core principle and meaning)—of Palestinian identity and the Palestinian cause. The converse also held: Palestine lay at the center of Islam. In Muhammad's view (see chapter 4), to declare that one was Muslim was also to declare one's readiness to struggle for Palestine. Marginal within his generational cohort, Muhammad, who participated in the successful reformist bid for majority control of the Mosque Foundation board in 1978 and who helped create and lead Islamic organizations dedicated to Palestine advocacy, was a forerunner of the Islamic shift that would achieve dominance through the activism of the generation of 1987–2001. This later generation, which came to political maturity during the First Intifada and the Oslo Peace Process, forged its orientations within the Islamic institutions that had come into existence through the organizational efforts of Muhammad's generation.

These processes constituted a phenomenon I have referred to as the sectarianization of identity. Sectarianization highlighted the erosion of nonsectarian or intersectarian secular space and the concomitant movement toward religious conceptions of corporate belonging. Increasingly, to see oneself as Palestinian was to see oneself as Muslim. Rami Nashashibi's conversion (his word) and his subsequent efforts to reorient activism at the *markaz* and AAAN in Islamic terms was one indication, in my fieldwork, of this transformation. Some of my Christian interlocutors who retained a sense of nationalism lamented the consequences of such changes. One individual, a Christian committed to Palestine advocacy, expressed this feeling in relation to AMP, saying, "I wish they had just called themselves 'Americans for Palestine' or 'Palestinian Americans for Palestine,' instead." Other Christians like Munir (chapter 4) noted how sectarianization had affected putatively secular spaces. An event he attended at AAAN had started with the Islamic invocation *bismillah al-rahman al-rahim* ("in the name of God the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful"). It also made accommodations for Muslims to hold group prayers. The Muslim participants in the meeting even used the phrase "Muslim Palestine" in chants. These sorts of phenomena had led Christians to view any Palestine-oriented event, even those occurring in supposedly secular spaces, as "Islamic." The result, Munir observed, was a Christian retreat into parallel Christian sectarian spaces.

Homeland-diaspora bifocality also affected secular-religious interaction and its identity outcomes. Bifocality developed and manifested in multiple ways. One powerful matrix lay in the trips that individuals took to visit with family in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. These journeys served as powerful initiations into one's status as a member of a stateless, policed population. Border crossings were especially traumatic, as were reports on satellite television of massacres, bombings, and invasions of Palestinian communities in Lebanon or Gaza. In other ways, too, however, Palestine could serve bifocally as a lens on something to be rejected: for example, Nashashibi's alienating encounter with political Islam and with PLO nationalism or Ibrahim's revulsion at the humiliating conditions of his aunt's refugee camp in Lebanon. Conversely, it could represent a contrasting space of freedom, possibility, and action: Muna's encounter with liberal party scenes in Haifa and Ramallah; Jubran's experience of Bahá'ism in Haifa and his hearing of Israeli-Palestinian Sufi interactions in Nazareth; Hanna's discovery of a Christian-Palestinian nationalism through the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center.

The interaction with other Arab Muslims and Arab Christians, whose reference points were the wars in Syria and Iraq and the political upheavals in Egypt during and after the Arab Spring, provided an additional element of bifocality. These other groups provided a contrasting lens through which to view critically the priority that Palestinians placed on Palestine. In doing so, they appealed to sectarian unity to combat injustice in their own home countries. American Muslims

for Palestine responded to this critical view and moral pressure by casting the struggle for Palestine as an Islamic duty that encompassed the effort to achieve justice in the Middle East as a whole. The Holy Land as a divinely blessed Islamic *waqf* (endowment) expanded to include Syria and Iraq and even Egypt. The entire region was “the surroundings of which We have blessed,” as the Qur’an stated. Palestinian Christians, too, felt the moral force of Christian solidarity in the face of the anti-Christian violence in other Arab countries such as Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. Munir described the consequences for his own views: his interactions with Palestinian Muslim friends had become tense as each side pointed to the bigotry and aggression of the other.

Sectarian bifocality, however, did not lead inevitably to interreligious distancing. Sawsan’s experience of religious communalism in Palestine and also in the immigrant enclave caused her to seek an expansive, inclusive space of identity, first through Islam and then through an individual spirituality. The multifocal polytheism of Chicago’s urban expanse provided her latitude to forge her idiosyncratic path in contrast with the homeland and the enclave, both of which had imposed demands of communal conformity and suffocated her as a woman.

Bifocality highlighted how space conditioned the identity dynamics described in this book. As symbols and as arenas of lived experience, homeland and diaspora interacted through a mutually defining relation. Nationalist narratives, secular and Islamic, construed the diaspora as a temporary extension of the homeland: the struggle in both spaces was the same, focused simultaneously on liberation. AMP’s conception of the land blessed by God elided the diaspora space precisely in this manner, positing that Muslims globally were to see the meaning of their lives and of Islam as fulfilled in a singular focus on the Holy Land as the all-encompassing center of faith (*‘aqida*). Secular nationalism also devalued the diaspora in its insistence on “return.” At best, the exile was a site of struggle, at worst a sign of Palestinian dispersion and loss.

Other narratives contested such formulations, however, by embracing the diaspora as a space of freedom and transcendence beyond nation and religion. Sawsan, Muna, Ibrahim, Jubran, and Nashashibi exemplified this trajectory in different ways. In each instance, Chicago, and US society generally, offered alternative sites of leisure and sociability (youth party scenes; world music milieus; diverse religious, activist, and intellectual communities) and the chance to interact with other immigrant and minority communities in which contrasting perspectives on solidarity, activism, and religion become available.

Nashashibi’s particular form of Islamic cosmopolitanism developed, for example, in the experience of crossing into Black Nationalist and Black Muslim circles on the city’s South Side, a process underscoring both class and race as aspects of the spatial factor. Jubran’s multiculturalism formed through his participation in the city’s world music networks. Sawsan’s journey to “Love, God, and Palestine” passed through her encounter with Shi’i spaces. Muna’s secular Islam

traveled through the party scenes that afforded her the opportunity to “sin” and, in doing so, to break with the moral norms of the patriarchal, Islamizing enclave. A spatial perspective brings into focus the simultaneity of these trajectories, these “stories so far.” It also underlines the fluidity of these narrative lines as well as the spaces in which they form and which they constitute. Spaces intersect and overlap, moreover, as individuals cross through them. This fact undermines any clear and easy distinction between the secular and the religious. The distinction remains useful analytically; empirically, however, spatial edges blur. Nawal Islamized the secular, for example, even as she secularized the Islamic. The forms of syncretic secularity documented in chapters 5 and 6 established this point as well.

The spatial perspective also casts light on how gender and class affect secular-religious identity dynamics in the fieldwork I have described. Gender had ambivalent effects. The traumatizing experience of coercion brought to bear on women who challenged their subordination within religious-patriarchal milieus could lead to disenchantment and the search for alternative, equitable identity frameworks beyond those milieus. Sawzan, Muna, and Ibrahim exemplified this possibility. Encounter with nonsectarian zones beyond the immigrant enclaves—university campuses, women’s and gender studies programs, and nonreligious leisure spaces—facilitated their rebellions and their formulations of opposing moral orientations. A similar phenomenon of spatial crossing could also empower women to contest traditional patriarchal authority in the home. In these instances, as Nawal illustrated, religion could provide the countervailing moral authority. Nawal’s interactions with Muslim Student Association activists at her university empowered her to invoke Qur’anic authority and reformist Islamic hijab practices to expand the latitude of her individual autonomy against demands to conform to the requirements of female “respectability.”

The pressure to perform respectability coincided with a significant socio-economic class transition. Nawal’s family had moved from working class—her father had labored in factories—to the small shop-owning middle class. The shift manifested symbolically and physically in their move to the southwest suburbs. The suburban shift in which they participated was a community-wide process. The formation of the Mosque Foundation and its associated schools accompanied and symbolized this process. The forms of piety instituted within the new reformist Islamic spaces aligned with a middle-class emphasis on a rational, text-based morality compatible with professional and entrepreneurial careers, wealth accumulation, and socioeconomic advancement. The wealth and expansion of the Mosque Foundation signified the success of the enclave, a success narrated through the trope of commitment to Islam as a framework for individual moral discipline and community cohesion.

At the same time, not every member of the enclave had the capacity to succeed in this transition. The AAAN and Nashashibi’s Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) sought to address the needs of poor and working class Palestinian

immigrants and non-Palestinian minorities on the city's Southwest and South Sides. These community networks constituted contrasting, competing spaces of identity in relation to one another and in relation to the piety-minded suburbs. They instituted activist trajectories, secular and religious, that resisted the middle-class ethos of career-seeking and economic advancement, asserting instead the priority of solidarity with movements committed to social, political, and economic justice. The AAAN and IMAN shared this alternative class solidarity—both, pointedly, had resisted locating in the suburbs—even if they departed in their respective emphases on the ethnos (Palestinian and Arab advocacy) and the *umma* (Islam as the frame of a transethnic, transnational solidarity).

#### RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR: WHAT TO DO? HOW TO LIVE?

In his famous address “Science as a Vocation,” Max Weber (1946b) spoke of the problem of understanding and cohering with others in modern societies marked by the polytheism of values. Modern societies formed through the rationalization and diversification of autonomous institutional spheres. Each sphere structured status, authority, and significance in relation to its own distinct moral hierarchies. Weber contended that social analysis, which this book has attempted to provide, could clarify “what the godhead is for the one order or for the other, or better, what godhead is in the one or in the other order” but “the great and vital problem that is contained therein is, of course, very far from being concluded” (148–49). That “great and vital problem,” Weber went on to say, was the question of how to live and what to do in a situation of competing moral and political orientations arrayed across diverging social milieus and social classes.

For Palestinians, the question of how to live and what to do is especially pressing at this moment. Religious-secular divisions deeply, perhaps irreparably, cleave Palestinian politics and society in the Occupied Territories. In the United States, despite moments of unity in the face of racist backlash and law enforcement interventions, similar tensions have manifested, albeit with important differences within the immigrant context. Palestinians, however, do not live in isolation. The tensions those living in the United States must negotiate reflect and bear on similar divisions, contradictions, and contestations among other groups in the United States and globally. A particular question their experience illuminates pertains to the status of immigrant others in the United States, a nation for which immigration features centrally within the founding myth. How are Americans to coexist across lines of religious, racial, and national differences in an era in which the demonization of immigrants and minorities has received ratification from the highest political office? What are we to do? How shall we live?

Weber's (1946b) answer is equivocal: in the absence of genuine visionaries capable of forging a new consensus, a new solidarity, our moral and political divisions

appear unbridgeable. The best we can do is attempt to understand one another, holding to our diverging principles while retaining a sense of responsibility toward others in a shared, inexorably polytheistic society (152–53). In this sense, if citizens of the United States can understand what matters most to others, to those they oppose most of all, perhaps then they can arrive at a *modus vivendi* that allows diverse and divergent forms of human flourishing to coexist and interact in a type of harmonic counterpoint.

The metaphor of counterpoint is Edward Said's. It is his answer to the question of how one is to "coexist with people whose religions are different, whose traditions and languages are different but who form part of the same community or polity in the national sense" (E. Said and Jhally 2005). He asks further:

How do we accept difference without violence and hostility? I've been interested in a field called Comparative Literature most all of my adult life and the ideal of Comparative Literature is not to show how English literature is really a secondary phenomenon to French literature or Arabic literature is kind of a poor cousin to Persian literature or any of those silly things, but to show them existing, you might say, as contrapuntal lines, in a great composition by which difference is respected and understood without coercion. And it's that attitude I think that we need (14).<sup>14</sup>

One of the most contested sites of belonging today remains the territory that constitutes Palestine and Israel. This conflict plays out globally through geopolitical calculations of regional and international powers, principally the United States, and through the advocacy politics of the Jewish and Palestinian diasporas. These diasporic politics are not unitary. They are complex and contested, certainly between Jews and Palestinians, but also internally within these two multiply divided communities. On many different levels, Palestine and Israel are a shifting, conflicted question that, as this book has shown, deeply implicates the United States, socially and politically. The question transcends national boundaries. The conflict that defines it shapes US politics at multiple scales, including at the very local. Palestinian Chicago offers important insight into these multilevel complexities and thus provides a point of departure for thinking in new ways about questions of exile and diaspora, intergenerational change, and belonging across racial, spatial, ethnic, class, gender, generational, religious, national, and regional lines.

These complexities should force a hard look at the damaging reductions of Palestinians, specifically, and Arabs and Muslims, generally, to the figure of "terrorist." Contrary to US stereotype, Palestinians, other Arabs, and Muslims have most often been the targets, not the perpetrators, of racism and political violence, including terrorism (Miller 2016; Hayden 2017). This violence and exclusion have had contradictory implications for how Arabs and Muslims view US society and their place in it. Among Palestinians, the struggle against oppression has led to the forging of alliances with other "people of color" (POC) groups that equally lay claim to a history of persecution and resistance. And, through this allied struggle,

Palestinians have defended their civil and national rights and their collective presence against state surveillance and racist majoritarian reaction. This struggle has challenged US social, political, and legal institutions to live up to constitutional principles such as equal protection and due process.

Not every individual discussed in this book has embraced a nationalist or religious identity or a politics of resistance against oppression as his or her primary orientation. Some have ventured into the wider US society, and have forged alternative self-understandings. They have moved in those directions for many reasons, including the desire to escape the moral strictures of a suburban community that has embraced modern reformist piety—a phenomenon with complex origins, as this book has shown, turning on the interrelated dynamics of secularism's attenuation, local religious institutionalization, global religious revival, and the external pressures of bigoted reaction and over-reaching law enforcement intervention. What it means to see oneself as Palestinian and as American is very much in flux for these boundary-crossing individuals. But this fact also holds for those who remain within the enclave, where religion, in the aftermath of the weakening of secularism, has redefined the terms of belonging.

The different narratives presented in this book reveal that religion and nation remain powerful determinants of self-understanding under the contested, polytheistic circumstances of political and social life in the United States and Palestine. Their effects, however, are not unidirectional. In Palestinian Chicago, the interplay of religious and secular, conditioned by gender, race, class, generation, and the multiplicity of space, generates diverse, syncretic trajectories. If there is an answer to the pressing question of what to do and how to live, it perhaps lies here, in this dynamic, diasporic interplay from which new, contingent, and contrapuntal forms of relationship and identity are emerging across lines of difference both in Palestine and in America.