

From oral histories to visual narratives: re-presenting the post-September 11 experiences of the Muslim women in the USA

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Since the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, DC on 11 September 2001, Muslims or Muslim-looking people in the USA have experienced a significant increase in hostility and hate violence. The anti-Muslim hate crimes have affected the lives of these people of color in significant ways. In this article I seek to recover part of the post-September 11 experiences of American Muslims that were obfuscated by the dominant anti-Muslim master narrative, which conflated the Islamic faith with terrorism and constructed all Muslims as dangerous anti-American outsiders. I explore a way of telling stories about these experiences using the expressive power of geospatial technologies. Using the experiences of a Muslim woman in Columbus (Ohio, USA) as an example, I describe how the technological spaces afforded by geographical information systems (GIS) may be used to illuminate the impact of the fear of anti-Muslim hate violence on the daily lives of Muslim women and to help articulate their emotional geographies in the post-September 11 period.

Key words: anti-Muslim hate violence, fear, geospatial technologies, GIS, September 11.

Introduction

The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, DC on 11 September 2001 were not only shocking to people around the world. It also posed an enormous challenge to the US government: how can the terrorist attacks be explained and how can the citizenry be assured that the government is still capable of securing the safety of the nation and its population? It was apparent to the Bush administration that the most urgent task right after the attacks was to mobilize effective

‘means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, techniques, technologies and vocabularies’ through which the attacks can be rendered intelligible and their political and social ramifications made less damaging to the administration (Dean 1999: 31). In other words, what ‘technologies of government’ (techniques and practices) or ‘forms of truth’ (rationalities and representations) could the government mobilize to address the problem of security after September 11 (Dean 1999: 31)?

The work of Foucault (1991, 1995 [1975]) and the governmentality literature he inspired offer helpful analytical insights to

the techniques used by the Bush administration (e.g. Gordon 1991; Raco 2003; Rose-Redwood 2006). A commonly deployed practice, in the context of liberal or neo-liberal governmentality, is to 'divide populations and exclude certain categories from the status of the autonomous and rational person' (Dean 1999: 132).

When a group of people (whether citizens or not) are labeled irrational, deviant, or evil, the government can explain their actions or the harms they did simply by their irrationality or wickedness instead of explicating the complex social and geopolitical history that might have contributed to those actions (e.g., the pertinent geopolitics in the rise of militant Islamic movements in Central Asia). As summarized by Foucault's notion of dividing practices, 'The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivizes him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the "good boys"' (Foucault 1982: 208). This technique (binary construction of populations) was the disciplinary strategy and the biopolitical technique that the Bush administration used in its 'war on terrorism' (Puar and Rai 2002).

While proclaiming that freedom and democracy were under attack in his televised address on 20 September 2001, President George W. Bush invoked a series of binary constructions that divide all people in the world into two groups: those who are civilized and those who are uncivilized; those who defend economic freedom and those who would attack America's way of life; those who support democracy and those who would disrupt it (Butler 2002; Winkler 2006). He grouped all terrorists, including the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks, 'into a homogenous group characterized by opposition to fundamental American values and proclaimed that terrorists "have a common

ideology ... they hate freedom and they hate freedom-loving people"' (Winkler 2006: 3). He drew a clear line between the two sides in the war on terrorism: 'if you are not with us, you are against us' (Butler 2002; Hyndman 2003: 5). Through these binary representations, Bush explained the attacks on September 11 as a clash between those who supported American's foundational values and those who opposed them (Winkler 2006). Through 'the biopolitical technique of totalization' he thus constructed an enemy population against which the US government and the American people can take defensive or retaliatory actions (Rose-Redwood 2006: 472).

With these binary constructions of people, a powerful master narrative began to be circulated by other state and non-state actors via mass media and the Internet. This narrative extended the boundary for the group of 'uncivilized' or anti-American people (originally intended for the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks) to include all believers of the Islamic faith. Biased statements like 'Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him' (by Attorney General John Ashcroft), 'Islam is an evil and wicked religion' (by Christian evangelist Franklin Graham), or 'Muslims are worse than the Nazis' (by televangelist Pat Robertson) were broadcast through televised programs. Many images of anti-Muslim signs and symbols were disseminated on the Internet, including a sign that says 'Avenge U.S.A., Kill a Muslim now' painted in red on a wall and a bumper sticker that replaces the 's' in 'Islam' with a swastika (Aly 2003).

As this anti-Muslim narrative that conflated the Islamic faith with terrorism and constructed all Muslims as dangerous anti-American outsiders captured the popular imagination, many Americans turned their patriotic fervor into anti-Muslim hate violence.

As Bush's proclamation on the war on terrorism turned into a military response (Hyndman 2003; Puar and Rai 2002), the anti-Muslim hostility evolved into assaults on the individual bodies of the Muslims or Muslim-looking people (e.g., people of color with distinct attire like the Sikhs) in the USA (Ahmad 2002). As Ahmad (2002: 101) argues, 'Among the enormous violence done by the United States since the tragedies suffered on September 11 has been an unrelenting, multivalent assault on the bodies, psyches, and rights of Arabs, Muslim, and South Asian immigrants.' Further, as a result of the highly racialized, state-sanctioned counter-terrorist measures since September 11, the citizenship and identities of these people of color in the USA have also been seriously contested (Ahmad 2002). The disciplinary power of the master narrative that totalized all Muslims as terrorists also 'dissolved' the Muslim population into 'individual bodies that can be kept under surveillance ... and, if need be punished' (Foucault 2003: 242).

While Muslims and Muslim-looking individuals in the USA have experienced a dramatic increase in hate violence since September 11, the response to the anti-Muslim incidents from the media and the administration has been largely muted. As Ahmad (2002) observed, the post-September 11 anti-Muslim killings have been treated differently from other recent hate killings in the USA. While still considered wrong, post-September 11 anti-Muslim hate crimes have largely been understood as the result of a 'displaced anger' that 'the vast majority of Americans sympathize and agree' (Ahmad 2002: 108). The perpetrators of these crimes were

guilty not of malicious intent, but of expressing a socially appropriate emotion in socially inappropriate ways ... the hate crime killings before September 11

were viewed as moral depravity, while the hate killings since September 11 have been understood as crimes of passion. (Ahmad 2002: 108)

This article seeks to recover part of the post-September 11 experiences of American Muslims that were obscured by the totalizing master narrative. It explores a way of representing these experiences as counter narratives using the expressive power of geospatial technologies. Using the experiences of a Muslim woman in Columbus (Ohio, USA) as an example, the article describes how the technological spaces afforded by geographical information systems (GIS) may be used to illuminate the impact of the fear of anti-Muslim hate violence on the daily lives of Muslim women and to help articulate their emotional geographies in the post-September 11 period. This focus on geospatial technologies is shaped by the aims and purposes of this Special Issue, entitled 'Spatial Technologies/Technologised Spaces.' The article attempts to show that geospatial technologies like GIS can integrate a wide variety of geographic data and qualitative materials and can provide a multimedia interactive environment for interpreting and telling stories about people's lived experiences (Kwan 2002, 2004, 2007; Kwan and Ding 2008). The case of a Muslim woman is drawn upon to illustrate how oral histories may be used to construct GIS-based visual narratives. The article is not primarily intended to be a report of the results of my study on the Muslim women in Columbus.

Anti-Muslim hate violence since September 11

Since September 11, Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians in the USA have experienced a

dramatic increase in hostility and hate violence (Ahmad 2002). According to the Council on American-Islamic Relations (2002), there were more than 1,500 reported incidents of attack and discrimination against American Muslims by the end of 2002. These incidents include twelve killings, firebomb and arson attacks on Muslim properties (mosques or businesses) and homes, physical assaults with fists, knives or guns, a hate rape, and workplace discrimination. Because of the tightened security measures brought about by the US Patriot Act, a large number of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians in the USA were profiled, detained or interviewed by law enforcement agents, and many Muslim charities and businesses were raided or closed (Council on American-Islamic Relations 2002). While unprecedented effort and resources were committed to protect US citizens and assets in the name of homeland security, 'homeland insecurities' is perhaps a more befitting description of the post-September 11 experiences of these people of color (Ahmad 2002: 101).

The anti-Muslim hate violence has affected the lives of Muslims and Muslim-looking people in the USA deeply. Besides the possibility of being closely watched by surveillance technology as part of the post-September 11 counter-terrorist measures, being verbally abused or physically attacked has become an imminent possibility for the eight million American Muslims. As news about violent anti-Muslim hate crimes reaches them through mass media, the Internet, and friends and relatives, fear of being attacked or harassed in public spaces has become part of their daily lives. The totalization of all Muslims as terrorists by the dominant master narrative has not only produced American Muslims as feared/hated subjects but also turned many of them into fearful subjects. For many American Muslims, negotiating urban

spaces in their daily lives has become a hazardous endeavor since September 11.

Yet most of the distressing, and even terrifying, post-September 11 experiences of American Muslims have received only scant media attention. Few (if any) serious anti-Muslim incidents have made the headlines—which include an arson attack that totally burned down a mosque, an Indian man wearing a turban (the headdress of Sikhs) was mistaken as a Muslim and shot dead while working at the gas station he owned, a Yemen man was shot twelve times in the back while fleeing from his attacker, and a 15-year-old Muslim girl was raped inside a drug store by an 18-year-old man while he was making anti-Muslim comments (Council on American-Islamic Relations 2002). Victims of these anti-Muslim incidents include not only Muslims but also anyone who looks like a Muslim or an Arab. Many non-Muslims such as Sikh men (with readily identifiable turbans and long beards) and Hindus, and many non-Arabs such as Indians, Pakistanis, and other South Asians were affected. Much of this hate violence, as Ahmad (2002: 104) suggests, 'depends on a fungibility of "Middle Eastern-looking" or "Muslim-looking" people with the individuals who committed the September 11 attacks and leaves Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians enormously vulnerable.' But the violence has also affected other people of color (e.g., Latinos in Los Angeles), and it was apparent that what is at issue is not that one is Muslim or Arab, but that one is ostensibly 'non-American.' This hate violence can be thus be understood, as Ahmad (2002: 104) argues, as the result of 'racial profiling's flawed logic (people who "look Muslim" are more likely to be terrorists, therefore if we are attacking terrorism we should attack people who "look Muslim")'.

A study on the Muslim women in Columbus

To recover the lived experiences of American Muslims and to understand the impact of anti-Muslim hate violence on their lives, I conducted a study that focuses on the post-September 11 experiences of a group of Muslim women in Columbus (Ohio, USA). The study explored how anti-Muslim hostility affects their daily activities and travel, access to and use of public spaces, as well as perception of the urban environment (especially their perception of safety and potential risk in the city before and after September 11).

The study focused on Muslim women because they are especially vulnerable to anti-Muslim hate crimes and discrimination since many of them can be easily identified in public places based on their distinctive religious attire (Moore 1998; Shakeri 1998).¹ Women of the Islamic faith who practice such religious attire wear the Muslim headscarf (*hijab*) in public spaces and in the presence of men outside the family (Shakeri 1998). Further, Muslim women are particularly vulnerable because their traditional gender role in the family renders it necessary for them to undertake many out-of-home activities in their normal daily lives (e.g., chauffeuring children to and from schools). As many of these household responsibilities impose rather restrictive space-time constraint on their daily lives, the need to undertake them can make their lives particularly stressful in the post-September 11 period. To avoid the risk of being harassed or attacked after September 11, some Muslim women might change their religious attire, while some others might modify their normal daily activities and trips (Muslim Women's League 2001). Like individuals in other social groups who want to avoid violent attacks, they may also change

the places they normally visit or the time they visit these places (Pain 1997, 2001; Valentine 1993). The study aims at understanding the short-term and long-term impact of Muslim women's fear of being attacked on their daily activities and trips, and the strategies they adopted to cope with the threat of anti-Muslim hate violence.

Thirty-seven Muslim women who live in Columbus were recruited with the help of a key informant who has been an active member of the local Muslim community for twelve years. Data were collected from these women through mixed methods in a sixteen-month period from late 2001 to early 2003. First, an activity diary survey was conducted to record their activities and trips in a designated survey day. Each activity diary recorded data for all activities that a participant undertook in the survey day, including their starting and ending time, travel mode, street addresses, and purposes (e.g., household responsibilities, recreational or social purposes, etc.). Oral histories were then elicited through in-depth interviews with each participant shortly after the activity diary survey. They are the participants' stories about what kind of changes September 11-induced hate violence might have brought to their daily activities and their perception of safety and risk in the urban environment. These oral histories were recorded with digital recorders with the permission of the subjects and transcribed for subsequent analysis. In addition, each participant also sketched on a map of the study area to indicate the activity locations they frequent and the areas they consider unsafe before and after 9/11.

Oral history is a method of narrative inquiry that seeks to collect and analyze the stories people told about their lived experiences of past events or major turning points in their lives (Creswell 2007; Denzin 1989;

Ritchie 2003). It aims at providing natural and rounded personal accounts based on participants' first-hand experience, memories, and knowledge through multiple in-depth interviews using open questions (George and Stratford 2005; Ritchie 2003). Oral history is often considered a helpful means for recovering people's lived experiences of past events based on their memories and personal narratives of those events and how they have affected their lives (Creswell 2007; Kwan and Ding 2008; Nagar 1997). They may enrich our understanding of the experiences of those who do not have access to means of publicity and whose thoughts, feelings, and actions are obscured by the dominant discourse (Nagar 1997). As first-hand testimonies, oral histories are imbued with participants' emotions, feelings and attitudes toward the events or experiences they narrate. Oral histories, however, are not objective accounts of past events and do not provide 'direct access to other times, places, or cultures' (Personal Narratives Group 1989: 261). There are inevitably gaps, distortions and omissions in people's memories, and these memories are shaped by the particular personal, family and social contexts in which they are formed. The focus of oral history is not only on people's experiences as stories but also on illuminating the social, cultural, and institutional contexts within which those experiences 'were constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted' (Clandinin and Rosiek 2007: 42). Oral histories should be understood as co-authored memories since the researcher often 'writes him- or herself into the life of the subject written about' (Denzin 1989: 26). They are the results of the participants' interpretation of their own experiences and the researcher's interpretation of the participants' interpretation. As the co-produced text is 'read through the life of the reader,' its meaning may be

further interpreted or re-negotiated by the reader (Denzin 1989: 26).

Constructing visual narratives with geospatial technologies

I explore in this and the next sections some of the ways in which the technological space afforded by geospatial technologies may be used to tell stories about the post-September 11 experiences of the Muslim women in the USA. Using the oral histories and diary data collected from the subjects as well as the 3D visualization environment of a geographical information system (GIS), I created a visual narrative that focuses on the unfolding of events and personal experiences over space and time. A central element of this visual narrative is a life path that traces the temporal sequence of events based on a person's activities and trips in space-time. As this method incorporates both the spatial and temporal dimensions of people's experiences and events, it allows the researcher to articulate how a person's feelings may change as she visits different places at different times.

An early example of the oral and life histories that can be used to construct this kind of visual narratives is Ulrich's (1990) *A Midwife's Tale*. The book provides details about many events and journeys in the life of Martha Ballard (1735–1812), a midwife in Massachusetts (USA) who maintained a record of her daily activities for twenty-seven years from 1785 to 1812. Reconstructing Ballard's life story using her diary and many maps, Ulrich provides a rich and detailed account of her daily life that also sheds light on the lives of rural women in late eighteenth century. Using the account provided by Ulrich, Opdycke (2000) presents Martha Ballard's life story using a map that shows her movements

with a set of directed lines in an historical atlas of women in America. This map and Opdycke's interpretation of Ballard's activities and journeys together constitute a visual narrative of her life story.

In Opdycke's historical atlas, the life story of Martha Ballard is told with a two-dimensional map, which does not explicitly portray the temporal progression of events (and it is therefore difficult to 'see' how Ballard's journey unfolded over time).

Drawing upon the representational framework of time geography, which portrays the unfolding of a person's life and daily activities as a continuous life path in three-dimensional space, geographers have used visual representations that tell life stories with the time dimension as an integral element (e.g., Kwan and Ding 2008). Gregory (1994), for instance, combines the daily path of a dockworker in late nineteenth-century Stockholm with photos and word-pictures to tell the story about what life was like in that particular time and place. Laws (1997) uses the space-time path of a woman's life course to show the changes in her residential location and spatial mobility from childhood to retirement. The life course diagram she constructed is a helpful visual device for telling biographical stories.

While these attempts to re-present people's life histories used conventional media (printed maps, diagrams, and pictures), geographers, media artists, and community activists have recently explored how geospatial technologies such as GIS can be used to construct visual narratives that tell stories about people's lived experiences (e.g., Brown and Knopp 2008; Kwan 2002, 2007; Parks 2001). As GIS can incorporate a variety of materials and data, such as digital photos, video and voice clips, subjects' handwriting, hand-drawn maps and other sketches collected through in-depth interviews, the digital space afforded by GIS

can be used to re-present and interpret oral and life histories (Kwan and Ding 2008). An example of this use of GIS is the Ligon history project, which seeks to preserve the history, culture and memory of an inner-city high school (J. W. Ligon High) in downtown Raleigh (North Carolina, USA) (Alibrandi, Thompson and Hagevik 2000). Besides documenting the African American perspective of life during Ligon High School's pre- and Civil Rights eras, Alibrandi, Thompson and Hagevik (2000) used GIS to create a series of historical life maps and construct a biographical narrative of an alumnus, whose daily life paths were reconstructed from his memories. In the above cases, spatial stories (de Certeau 1984) are told using the life path as a narrative device. These stories are more expressive than representational, presented not as objective accounts but as interpreted visual narratives of people's experiences.

Enriching earlier work on GIS-based visual narratives are studies that explore the use of geospatial technologies as a medium for self-expression and the articulation of emotional geographies. For instance, I explored ways of using moving images generated by GIS for articulating people's emotional geographies (Kwan 2007). Drawing upon the methods in visual ethnography, visual sociology and film studies, I created a collaborative 3D GIS video that is more an artistic and expressive visual narrative than an objective recording generated with the aid of scientific visualization. I suggested that GIS can be used to help 'express meanings, memories, feelings and emotions for our subjects' and we can 'draw upon the emotional power of moving images and the techniques in narrative cinema to create GIS movies or visualizations that tell stories about the lives of marginalized people, highlight social injustice and—we hope—effect social change' (Kwan 2007: 25).

In the next section, I draw upon these recent developments on constructing visual narratives with geospatial technologies and describe a method for telling the post-September 11 story of a Muslim woman in Columbus. This woman was a key informant of the study and will be referred to here using the fictitious name Nada. Based on her oral history and activity diary data, I attempt to visually articulate her fear as she traveled and undertook activities outside her home since September 11 in a multimedia 3D GIS environment. I intend to expose the silences and omissions of the dominant master narrative that obfuscates the impact of post-September 11 anti-Muslim hate violence on her access to and use of public spaces.

The story of a Muslim woman: a visual narrative

Nada was born and grew up in Egypt. She migrated to the USA 16 years ago with her husband, who was then a graduate student and is now working in an engineering firm as a project manager. The couple, with three children, speak Arabic at home and live in a middle-class and largely White neighborhood in Columbus. Her husband leads her sons to perform the Islamic prayer and accompanying ritual (bowing and kneeling) in an archway in their house every evening when the call to prayer comes off from a preset alarm clock. Nada wears *hijab* and drives a minivan to chauffeur her children to and from schools and a variety of extra-curricular activities. She is a 'stay-at-home mom' and undertakes many out-of-home activities in her daily life for the family, including buying clothes for her husband and driving her 13-year-old son to soccer practices.

Nada's household responsibilities make it necessary for her to travel outside the home. She has been wearing *hijab* since puberty. Since September 11 she has not changed her religious attire but has greatly reduced her out-of-home activities and trips, especially in the first few days after the attacks. One day several months after September 11, I traveled with Nada while she was driving her minivan to undertake her normal out-of-home activities. As we passed through various routes, she recalled her feelings and fear when she saw particular buildings or stores (and her oral narrative was recorded). Using these audio recordings (in the form of audio clips), the textual transcripts of these recordings, the field notes and photographs I took on that day, Nada's activity diary data and the map sketches she completed during an interview, I constructed a visual narrative that tells her story using ArcScene (the 3D geovisualization environment of ArcGIS).

The central element of the visual narrative is Nada's life paths for a 'typical' weekday before and after September 11. They were created using her activity data and a custom algorithm I developed. They portray not only the activity locations she visited and the routes used to travel from one location to the next but also the starting and ending time as well as the duration and sequence of these activities and trips. Nada's life paths were color-coded to reflect her sense of safety and the level of fear she experienced as she moved over space and visited different locations: red for 'dangerous', yellow for 'not safe', green for 'moderately safe', and blue for 'quite safe'. No segment of her life paths was coded 'very safe' since Nada has never really felt that way as a Muslim woman living in the USA. This coding scheme, however, does not presume that a person's sense of safety or fear is mechanically determined by the perceived or actual risk in

the physical environment. As Koskela (1997: 304) suggests, '[F]eelings are not a mathematical function of actual risks but rather highly complex products of each individual's experiences, memories and relations to space' and it 'must be accepted that feelings are not measurable.' Further, as Pain (2008) argues, '[F]ear is not simply reactive, but is situated in complex individual and collective emotional topographies and everyday experiences. We should expect fear-provoking events and discourse to be interpreted, resisted and subverted by people in different ways.' The colors used to code Nada's life paths are merely one of the ways in which these paths can be symbolically rendered for articulating her emotional geographies. They are intended to be expressive of her post-September 11 experiences rather than representational of any observable or measurable 'scientific' facts.

In addition to Nada's life paths, digital data of several geographic features (e.g., buildings, land parcels, rivers, and street networks) were incorporated into the GIS database in order to provide the background for the visual narrative. Features identified on Nada's sketches on the map of the study area were also digitized and incorporated in the GIS. Due to the need to reduce computational intensity and improve the speed in rendering the 3D scenes, only geographic features in the relevant part of the study area were rendered and colored (see Figure 1). Further, qualitative materials collected from Nada were linked to specific segments or junctions of the life path. These include photographs, voice clips from the audio recordings, and excerpts from the textual transcripts of her oral history. After these materials were incorporated and linked in the GIS database, symbolic and artistic techniques were used to render 3D scenes that express the changes in Nada's sense of safety and use of public spaces after September 11.

It should be noted, however, that the illustrations in this article are static 2D screen captures from a 3D interactive multimedia GIS environment. These images are by no means equivalent to the visual narrative constructed using the multimedia environment. There are thus obvious limitations in using these 2D images to convey the expressive and emotional power of GIS because they do not provide the same range of sensory and interactive experience of a multimedia visual narrative created using 3D GIS. To be able to appreciate how GIS may help articulate emotional geographies, one needs some direct experience with such a multimedia GIS environment instead of looking at these 2D screen captures. Further, the discussion below refers to the color version of the figures available at <http://geog-www.sbs.ohio-state.edu/faculty/mkwan/VisNar.html>.

Figure 1 shows Nada's life path on a typical weekday before September 11 and several background geographic features rendered in color (e.g., buildings, rivers, and the street network). Her activities and trips proceed from the bottom to the top along the temporal axis (her stay at home is shown as two vertical segments). The life path is coded blue to suggest that Nada felt 'quite safe' but not 'very safe' as she moved over space and visited different locations even before September 11. Her first out-of-home activity was dropping off her daughter at an elementary school, which is about ten minutes from home by car. Nada would then return home and go to a mosque to attend a *Quran* class before making some shopping stops at various stores (e.g., grocery and department stores). After these shopping trips, she would return home, pick up her two sons at their middle schools, and then stay at home for the rest of the day.

In the first few days after September 11, Nada did not go out to perform any activity.

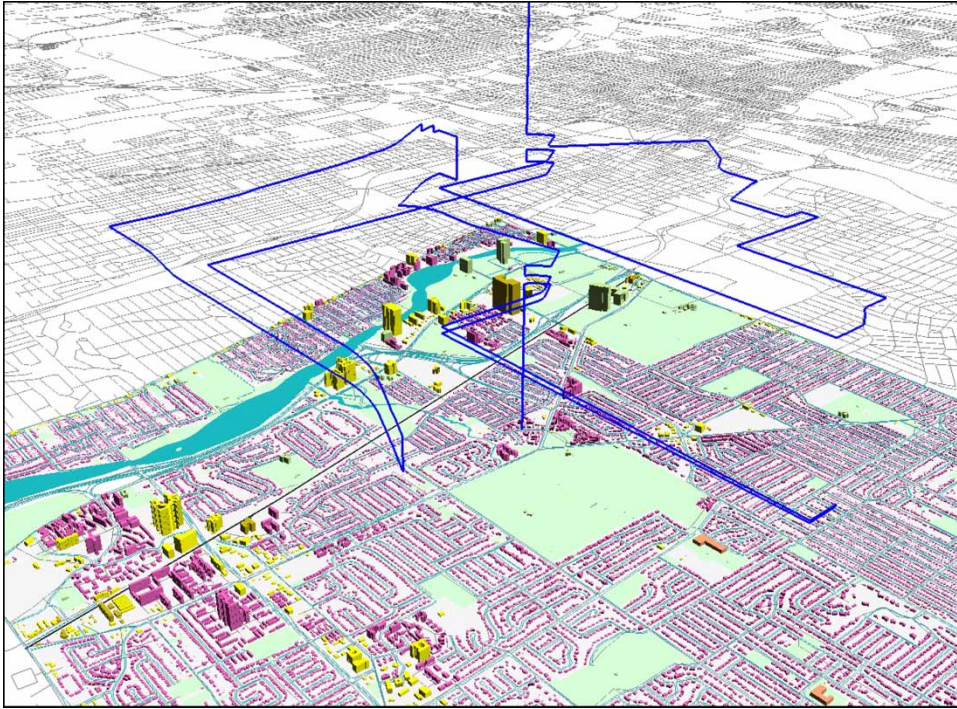


Figure 1 Nada's life path on a typical weekday before September 11.

The *Quran* classes at her mosque were cancelled for several weeks. Her husband temporarily helped chauffeur the children to and from their schools. Nada had heard about many anti-Muslim incidents in Columbus and did not feel safe even when she was at home. Some of her Muslim friends received death threats or obscene messages on their answering machines. Apparently, there were people who randomly identified Middle-Eastern names in telephone directories, called the numbers and left these messages. She heard that some Muslim children were beaten up at school. She knew that there was an arson attack on a Muslim home that caused the residents to be hospitalized. Nada has a CD-ROM with photographs that show the damage of the Islamic Foundation of Central Ohio on Broad Street, which was vandalized

and incurred a US\$100,000 loss. This incident was very distressing to Nada, who also heard about the profiling of Muslims and Muslim-looking people at the Port Columbus International Airport. People of color who look like Muslims were searched and questioned much more intensively than before September 11. This has led Nada to rule out air travel as a viable means for out-of-town travel.

Figure 2 symbolically expresses Nada's feelings about Columbus and the impact of her fear on her use of space. The entire area was covered by a red surface—red is used to represent the highest level of fear in this and subsequent figures—and the vertical yellow line represents her stay at home and lack of mobility over time in this period. This line was coded yellow (not safe) to represent a rather high level of fear even when Nada was at

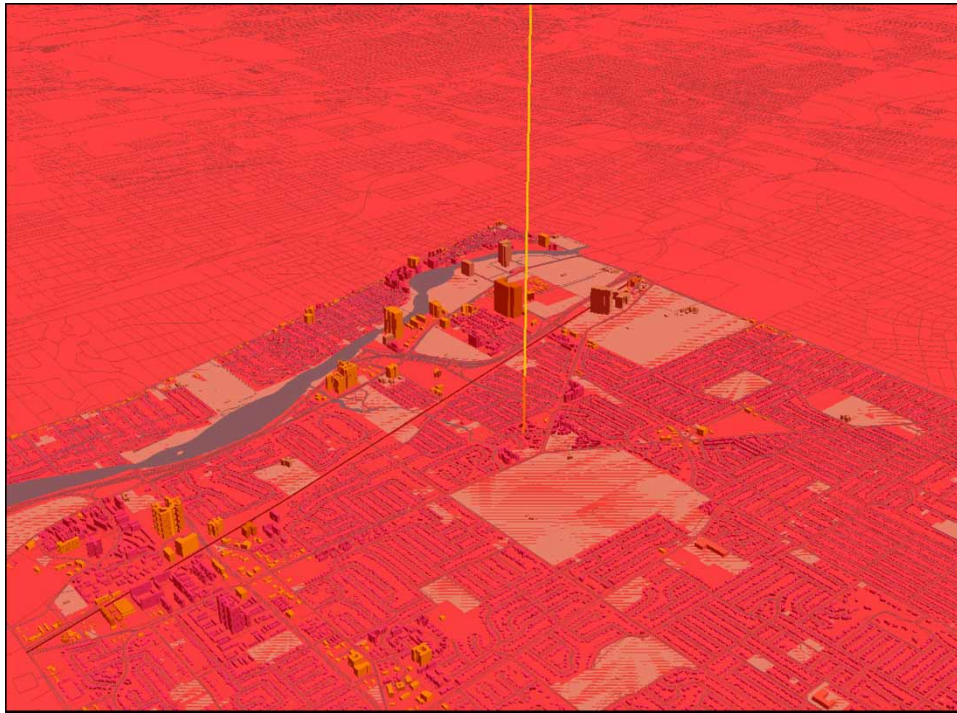


Figure 2 Nada's life path immediately after September 11.

home. As Nada recalled, she did not go shopping as usual immediately after September 11, and the *Quran* classes at her mosque were cancelled for several weeks for safety's sake. As a result of her fear of anti-Muslim hate violence, Nada made adaptations to her behavior that involved 'self-imposed restrictions' such as staying home and avoiding certain parts of town (Pain 1991: 416). These adaptations and precautions, however, had adversely affected her personal freedom and general quality of life.

Several days later, Nada's fear decreased somewhat. But she still remained at home most of the time (represented by the vertical yellow line; Figure 3). The lower level of fear she experienced was symbolically represented by a lowered surface (in red) that allows certain areas to emerge as dangerous places, which mainly

include the Port Columbus International Airport (on the top left) and East Broad Street (the linear 3D feature on the top right). Nada perceived these two areas as particularly unsafe largely due to the vandalism that occurred in the Islamic Foundation of Central Ohio on East Broad Street and the profiling incidents that targeted Muslims and Muslim-looking people at the airport. These two areas, delineated in Nada's sketches on the map of the study area and being 2D geographic features originally, are rendered as red 3D objects protruding from below and rise above the lowered red surface. This symbolizes the fear-provoking property of these two areas.

Nada resumed most of her pre-September 11 routine activities several weeks later. But her feelings about the public spaces in the study area were not the same as before.

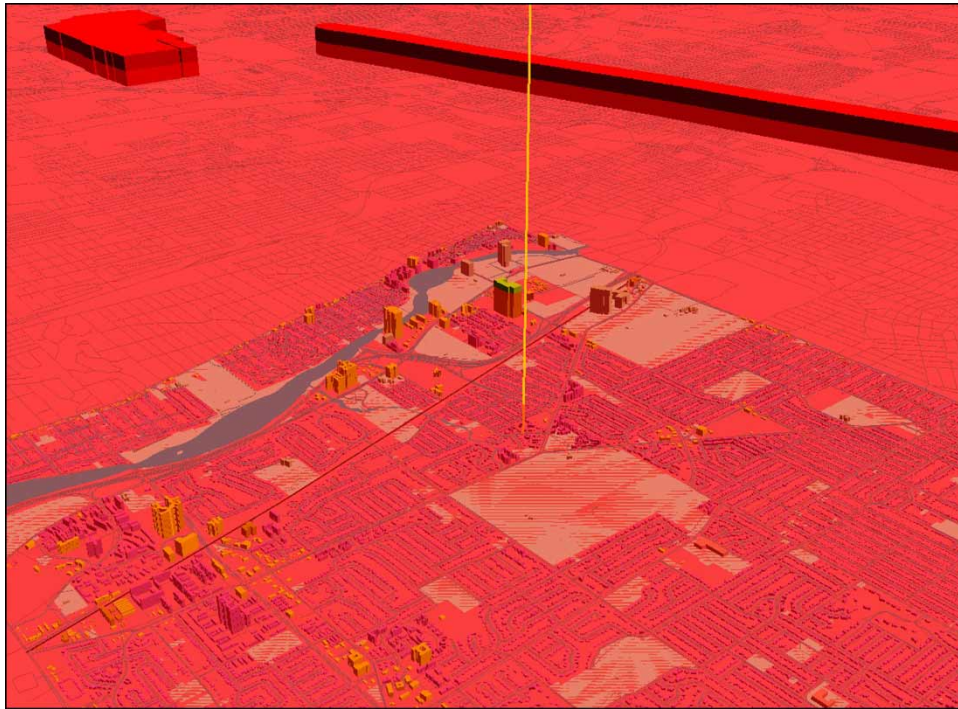


Figure 3 Nada's life path several days after September 11.

As Koskela and Pain (2000: 278) emphasize, '[F]ear of crime influences the meaning of place, as much as places influence fear.' Nada felt that no place besides her home was safe:

The safest place for me was home, and the most uncomfortable places were public places ... I try not to get out of the car. If I have to go out I try not to interact with people unless they start talking to me. I was frustrated and scared and felt the same as my kids. (Nada)

Although the anti-Muslim hate violence in Columbus had abated somewhat, Nada still did not want to go out. She, however, had resumed some essential out-of-home activities. For instance, Nada resumed dropping off or picking up her daughter and sons at school. But unlike what she used to do before

(like talking to some of the teachers or parents of other school children), she stayed inside the minivan and left the school once the children got in the car. She resumed attending the *Quran* classes at her mosque but exercised extra caution. She felt more comfortable shopping in a small ethnic grocery store close to her home than in the big supermarkets and department stores she used to frequent. But the small grocer did not have all the things she needed and she still had to go and shop in those big stores. She was not comfortable in dealing with the staff in these stores who may be hostile to Muslims and she would try to find a friendly person when she needed to check out. As she recalled:

I didn't let my feelings hold me back from doing my regular activities. But there is no doubt that I wasn't

feeling the same as before. At that time, I was uncomfortable over the entire course of my activities. I was trying to see if anyone would look at me in a different way. It was very uncomfortable but I kept going. (Nada)

The color-coded life path in Figure 4 expresses Nada's feelings and sense of safety at that time (i.e., several weeks after September 11). She felt that all shopping activities were dangerous (red vertical segments) and there was no place that she really felt very safe (hence, no segment of her life path is coded 'very safe'). Only when she was at home (blue vertical segments) or traveling inside her minivan (green segments) that she considered herself quite safe (blue) or moderately safe (green). Areas or urban structures that Nada perceived as unsafe are rendered as red 3D objects, which are now clearly visible in the scene. These include the Port Columbus International Airport (on the top left), East Broad Street (the linear 3D feature on the top right), and several department stores, grocery stores, and other business buildings (the two clusters of red 3D blocks in the middle and lower left of the figure). With the areas and urban structures perceived unsafe symbolized in this manner, Figure 4 may be viewed as a portrayal of Nada's personal landscape of fear at that time.

Through this process of rendering Nada's life path and relevant geographic features and incorporating other materials such as audio clips and photographs in an interactive, multimedia 3D GIS environment, I created an expressive visual narrative that tells the story of Nada's post-September 11 experiences. The central visual element of this narrative is Nada's life path, which temporally organized her oral history and is color-coded to reflect the level of fear and perceived danger she experienced. In Figure 4, for instance, green lines (moderately safe) were used to

represent the tiny comfort zones that Nada experienced as she was traveling in her minivan through the streets in Columbus; while the exclusionary effect of the hostile urban environment was symbolically represented by coloring particular buildings as red 3D blocks. This visual narrative tells Nada's spatial story (de Certeau 1984) as she recalled what happened to her life and how she negotiated the hostile urban spaces after September 11. It turns her oral history into an expressive visual narrative based upon her personal movements, memories, feelings and emotions.

Conclusion

Binary construction of populations has been the technology of government (in Foucauldian terms) used by the Bush administration to address the problem of security since September 11. The dominant anti-Muslim master narrative, however, has conflated the Islamic faith with terrorism, where American Muslims were constructed as anti-American outsiders. Muslims and Muslim-looking people in the USA have experienced a significant increase in hate violence since September 11. While this has deeply affected their lives, most of their post-September 11 experiences have been obfuscated by the muted response from the media and the administration. In this article I used a Muslim woman's oral history to construct a visual narrative that recovers part of these experiences. I explored a way of telling stories about these experiences as counter-narratives using the expressive power of GIS. Creating visual narratives, 'is an intentional, reflective, active human process in which researchers ... explore and make meaning of experience both visually and narratively' (Bach 2007: 281). As I suggest elsewhere, visual

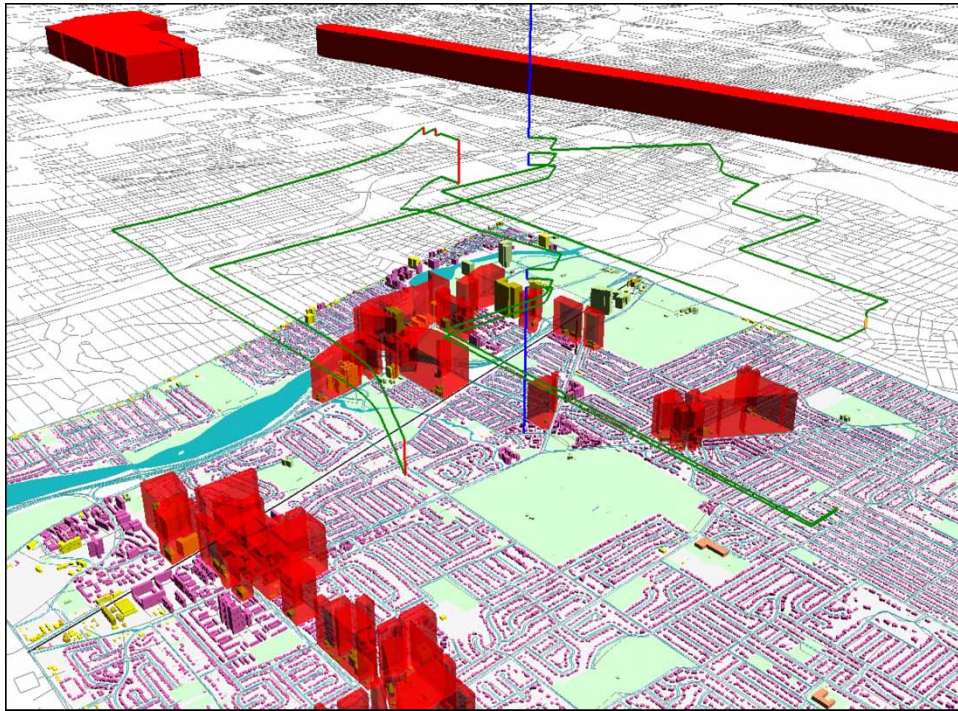


Figure 4 Nada's life path several weeks after September 11.

images, words and numbers can be used together within the multimedia environment of geospatial technologies to compose contextualized visual narratives (Kwan 2002).

In identifying Muslim women as fearful subjects, I challenge the dominant anti-Muslim narrative that portrays them as terrorists and anti-American foreigners. In doing so I do not intend to construct Muslim women or their responses to post-September 11 hate violence as a homogenous category. Although anti-Muslim hate crimes are rampant and the lives of American Muslims have been deeply affected, the participants' oral histories revealed diverse experiences, reactions, and coping strategies in relation to their perceived threat of anti-Muslim hate violence. They were not passive victims of the situation. Some of them, for instance, reached out to the

non-Muslim population in Columbus and presented knowledge about Islam in order to counter the misunderstanding and negative images of Islam portrayed by the media. This effort was often supported by both Muslim and non-Muslim organizations.

Some adopted a boldness strategy (Koskela 1997) and overcame their fear and continued to undertake their normal daily activities and trips. Although this strategy did not remove the cause of their fear or reduce their risk, it was less costly in terms of their freedom in accessing and using public spaces—since women's self-imposed restrictions and 'social and lifestyle precautions ... are most costly in terms of personal freedom' (Pain 1991: 420). Despite the observation that participants' fear tends to be associated with public spaces and that the socio-spatial restrictions many of

them faced have been significant, I do not intend to suggest that their experiences can be generalized by some fixed or universalized categories (see also the discussion in Koskela 1997, 1999; Pain 2001). The diversity in their responses and strategies needs to be examined carefully in order to provide a more nuanced account of what happened to their lives since September 11.

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Note

- 1 It may be estimated that about 50–70% of Muslim women adhere to the Islamic religious attire (that is, wear loose-fitting outer-garment and the Muslim headscarf (*hijab*) in public spaces and in the presence of men outside the family) (Kwan and Ding 2008). I recognize the diversity of experience and religious practices among American Muslims (Aitchison, Hopkins and Kwan 2007; Kaya 2007; Moore 1998; Shakeri 1998). I do not intend to use *hijab* as a binary subject indicator but foreground the importance of a visible difference that often makes Muslim women more vulnerable to discrimination and harassment in their daily lives. Such a material difference not only can be

life-threatening to Muslim women but also is a critical element in the process of their identity formation and their subjectivities.

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Abstract translations

Des histoires orales aux récits visuels: la représentation des expériences des femmes musulmanes aux États-Unis au lendemain du 11 septembre

Depuis les attaques du 11 septembre 2001 dirigées contre le World Trade Center de New York et le Pentagone à Washington DC, les actes d'harcèlement et de violence motivée par la haine que subissent les Musulmans vivant aux États-Unis ou les personnes qui leur ressemblent ont augmenté de façon marquée. Les crimes de haine perpétrés contre les Musulmans ont été lourds de conséquences pour ces personnes de couleur. L'objectif de l'article est de récupérer une partie des expériences vécues par des Américains de confession musulmane au lendemain du 11 septembre qui ont été escamotées par le grand récit dominant anti-musulman qui faisait l'amalgame entre la foi islamique et le terrorisme et construisait une image de tous les Musulmans comme des étrangers anti-Américains dangereux. Il est question d'examiner ici la manière de raconter des histoires sur ces expériences en ayant recours à la puissance expressive des technologies géospatiales. À travers l'exemple des expériences vécues par des femmes musulmanes de Columbus (Ohio, États-Unis), les espaces technologiques créés grâce aux systèmes d'information géographique (SIG) peuvent servir à connaître l'impact de la peur de la violence haineuse anti-musulmane sur la vie quotidienne des femmes musulmanes et à mieux articuler les éléments de leur

géographie émotionnelle en cette période de l'après 11 septembre.

Mots-clefs: violence haineuse anti-musulmane, peur, technologies géospatiales, SIG, 11 septembre.

De historias orales a narrativas visuales: representando las experiencias de las mujeres musulmanas en los Estados Unidos pos-11 de septiembre

Desde los ataques contra el Centro de Comercio Mundial de la ciudad de Nueva York y el Pentágono en Washington DC el día 11 de septiembre de 2001, ha habido un incremento importante en hostilidades hacia y violencia de odio contra los musulmanes y las personas con aspecto musulmán en los Estados Unidos. Los delitos de odio antimusulmán han afectado las vidas de estas personas de color de manera significativa. En este artículo intento recuperar parte de las experiencias de los musulmanes estadounidenses pos-11 de septiembre, las cuales quedaron confundidas por la narrativa maestra predominante que era anti-musulmán y que refundía el fé islámico con el terrorismo y que representaba a todos los musulmanes como peligrosos afueranos antiamericanos. Exploro un modo de contar historias sobre estas experiencias, empleando el poder expresivo de las tecnologías geoespaciales. Utilizando como ejemplo las experiencias de mujeres musulmanas en Columbus (Ohio, EE.UU.), describo como se puede emplear los espacios tecnológicos aportados por los sistemas de información geográfica (SIG) para esclarecer el impacto del temor a violencia de odio antimusulmán sobre las vidas cotidianas de las mujeres musulmanas y para ayudar a expresar sus geografías afectivas en el período pos-11 de septiembre.

Palabras claves: violencia de odio antimusulmán, temor, tecnologías geoespaciales, SIG, 11 de septiembre.

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