REIMAGINED TERRITORY: A NEW THEORY

OF TERRORIST GEOGRAPHIES

by

Christopher Fuhriman

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The dissertation of **Christopher Fuhriman**

has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

Richard Medina	, Chair	**01/27/2017** Date Approved
George Hepner	, Member	**01/27/2017** Date Approved
Simon Brewer	, Member	**01/27/2017** Date Approved
Andrew Linke	, Member	**01/27/2017** Date Approved
Andrew Lohman	, Member	**01/27/2017** Date Approved

and by **Andrea Brunelle** , Chair/Dean of

the Department/College/School of **Geography**

and by David B. Kieda, Dean of The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

This research proposes a new theoretical concept of reimagined territory for application in the study of terrorism and other forms of political violence. Geographic theories of space and place, geopolitics, and multidisciplinary terrorism studies provide the theoretical framework for this dissertation. A mixed-method approach comprised of computer-aided content analysis, manual content analysis, cartographic visualization, and geographic narrative analysis is applied to ISIS's *Dabiq* magazine as a case study of the reimagined territory of a terrorist group. The results demonstrate the utility of the theoretical concept of reimagined territory in examining the ideology and goals of a given terrorist movement. A second case study of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's *Inspire* magazine validates the methodology and the general applicability of the theoretical concept.

The computer-aided content analysis generates a list of terms sorted by frequency (high to low) and alphabetical order from each issue of *Dabiq* magazine. The manual content analysis extracts all geographic place names from the lists of terms and categorizes them into one of four categories based on geographic scale. The cartographic visualization then charts the geographic place names in a series of maps from each of the scale categories. Finally, the results from each previous stage inform the geographic narrative analysis, which also considers the original text of the magazines in explaining the ideology and geographic aims of the terror group. The way in which ISIS imagines

the world to be when it has achieved its goals emerges from the narrative analysis as its reimagined territory.

This research underscores the importance of considering the territoriality of terror groups and movements. The primary conclusions of this research are: 1) ISIS's geographic goal (reimagined territory) is the establishment of a Muslim state based on the territorial expanse of early Islamic caliphates and current Muslim lands; 2) AQAP's goal is the establishment of a Muslim state centered on the Levant and eventually expanding to include all Muslim lands; 3) the methodology employed in this study and theoretical concept of reimagined territory applies to any terror group seeking to control space.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2014 a swift, brutal, and staggeringly effective brand of religious terrorism emerged from the rubble at the crossroads of the Syrian civil war and the failing governance of the Iraqi state. Leading the Sunni insurgency in northern and western Iraq since 2010, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi transformed the dying religious/political entity of al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) into a more efficacious terror group known as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) (Ibrahim 2010; Nevins 2015). After a period of successful insurgent operations in western Iraq, al-Baghdadi provided resources and manpower for the fight against Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria. This territorial expansion of ISI's influence inspired al-Baghdadi to change his faction's name to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in March 2011 (Hashim 2014). A string of continuous tactical victories followed in the power vacuums of eastern Syria and western Iraq, allowing ISIS to seize and maintain a significant geographic footprint in the region.

On June 29, 2014, however, al-Baghdadi's insurgency evolved from a regional threat into an international terror campaign via a single speech delivered from a balcony at the Great Mosque of al-Nuri in Mosul, Iraq. Al-Baghdadi anointed himself leader of all Muslims by claiming the divine appointment of caliph, declared all existing governments of Muslim countries invalid and apostate, and announced the caliphate's ultimate objective to conquer the world for Allah (Wood 2015; al-Tamimi 2014; al-

Baghdadi 2014). The military victories coupled with the establishment of the caliphate gave this group of Islamic terrorists something which, to date, no other group of Islamist terrorists had enjoyed to this extent—autonomous geographic space. The initial successes of ISIS were grossly underestimated by the global community. Six months before ISIS declared itself a caliphate, President Obama reassured the *New Yorker* that ISIS had limited capabilities: "The analogy we use around here sometimes, and I think is accurate, is if a jayvee team puts on Lakers uniforms that doesn't make them Kobe Bryant" (Remnick 2014). Yet, at the two-year anniversary of the establishment of the caliphate there has been limited progress in slowing ISIS's ideological advance in the Middle East. During this same period, scholars have largely avoided any empirical or theoretical analyses of the terror group, perhaps due to the lack of publicly available data. The meteoric rise of ISIS and its ability to expand geographically demonstrate the pressing need to better understand the causes of terrorism, the motivations of terror groups, and their ultimate geographic objectives at both the theoretical and the practical/policy levels.

The systematic study of terrorism has grown considerably in several academic disciplines in recent years, especially since the attacks in New York and Washington, DC on September 11, 2001 (Pape 2009; Baghat and Medina 2013). The resulting body of literature has provided a myriad of theoretical approaches to understanding the phenomenon of terrorism, but curiously few studies have focused on the geographic dimensions of terrorism. The discipline of geography is uniquely equipped to lead the academic examination of ISIS, which will require advances in geographic theory and innovative applications of proven methodologies.

Like any terrorist group, ISIS cannot be understood without comprehending its ideological goals which are innately geographic. Building on Medina and Hepner's (2013) theory of aspirational geography, this dissertation proposes "reimagined territory" as a new theoretical concept within the subfields of the geography of terrorism and geopolitics. The examination of reimagined territory reveals how terrorists conceptualize current political borders as part of their ideological narrative. It also describes and visualizes the way in which terror groups envision future borders and territorial expanse. One powerful data source for such conceptualizations is a terror group's propaganda publication, such as ISIS's *Dabiq* magazine, which can be analyzed to construct or geovisualize a narrative of reimagined territory. The proposed theory of reimagined territory lies at the intersection of various geographic theories of space/place and geopolitics. The importance of reimagined territory lies in its uniquely geographic approach to terrorism studies. It addresses the spatial aspects of terrorists organizations' ideologies and goals—an approach which is largely ignored in today's body of research.

1.1 Theories of Space and Place in the
Geography of Terrorism

Scholars and policy makers have struggled to agree on a single definition of terrorism. Laqueur (1999) pointed out that more than one hundred definitions of terrorism have been offered by those who study the phenomenon. Without discounting the many nuanced differences in these definitions, Hoffman (1998, 43) argued that the definition of terrorism can be simplified to "the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change." It is

perhaps due to the political nature of terrorism that political geographers have taken the lead in terrorism research within the discipline.

This dissertation approaches the geographic concepts of space and place primarily from political geography's theoretical vantage point. John Agnew (1987) established that place has three essential elements: locale (setting for social interaction), location (geographic area), and sense of place (the perceived connection between people and place) (Shelley 2003). Because "territorial states are made out of places," the key to understanding a territory lies in understanding its places (Agnew 1987, 1). This concept also applies to the study of nonstate entities which control territory. The application of this theory is particularly relevant to the development of reimagined territories of terrorist groups because sense of place and ideological narratives are inseparably intertwined. The establishment or practice of an ideology in a place necessarily shapes and defines its sense of place, which is further reinforced by reimagined territory.

Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto (2008) proposed five spatial elements of political space which are of central importance to studying conflict: scale, place, network space, positionality, and mobility. Although each element applies directly to the study of a terrorist group's reimagined territory, positionality is an especially salient link between spaces of conflict and reimagined territories. Positionality as defined by Leitner et al. (2008) is a "socio-spatial" location within a conflict space which denotes unequal relationships of power. Thus, as different terrorist groups vie for power and influence within the political spaces in which they operate, their positionality ebbs and flows. For ISIS to succeed the caliphate's ideological discourse must provide sufficient socio-spatial capital to attract support; otherwise the group's positionality will shift from a location of

significant power to location of diminished power.   The analysis of ISIS's reimagined territory will reveal how aspirational geographies simultaneously echo the ideological narrative and strengthen ISIS's positionality within the Islamist terrorist network.

Another important theory of place which supports this research is Yi-Fu Tuan's (1977) conceptualization of an individual's attachment to a "homeland." He showed that groups of people view their homelands as the center of the world, and because the homeland is at the center, the location (or place) has "ineluctable worth" (Tuan 1977, 149). Most terrorist groups claim a homeland which is integral to the cause, yet typically control a relatively small portion of that territorial homeland. Tuan's homeland concept still applies to these groups because the intrinsic worth of a place is constructed by the collective sentiment of the people, not by physical possession of the territory.   But ISIS is different from other Islamic terrorist groups in this regard.   The announcement of the caliphate was also the declaration of a Muslim homeland, not just for the Sunnis of Syria and Iraq, but for the entire Muslim nation (*ummah*). Tuan's theory of attachment to homeland is directly linked to ISIS's reimagined territory.

1.2 Geopolitics in the Geography of Terrorism

The field of geopolitics has evolved from its deterministic, contentious beginnings into a relevant, analytical discipline which addresses the interaction of dynamic geographic and political processes (Cohen 2003). While geopolitics is generally interested in how political states act and react in relation to other states, the geopolitics of the twenty-first century must also focus on nonstate entities because they "...utilize and attempt to change geographic structures for political ends" (Flint 2005, 198). A central component of geopolitical analysis is Halford Mackinder's concept of the balance of

power. Mackinder (1904) argued that political power for any given place could be measured as a function of the geographic situation (economic and strategic) and the opposing groups of people (relative number, will of the people, equipment, and organization). Because each of the components of the formula is dynamic, the balance of power oscillates from location to location as geopolitical circumstances change (Parker 1982).

While some of Mackinder's geopolitical prognostications missed their mark, his formula for determining the balance of power is directly applicable in the geography of terrorism. Framing the relative power of a terrorist faction in terms of its geographic situation and people (including its opposition) is very useful in determining the group's capabilities and intentions. This dissertation will explore the ways in which ISIS attempts to advance its ideology and bolster its ranks through circulating its geostrategic message in *Dabiq*. The analysis will show that by reimagining state and regional boundaries, ISIS seeks to shift the balance of power by manipulating its geopolitical situation.

Robert McColl (1969) theorized that national revolutions evolve through three stages (mobile, guerilla, and regular war) leading to the establishment of an insurgent state. He described an insurgency's "territorial imperative" as the initial movement to seize and maintain control of a territorial base to provide a safe haven, demonstrate the ineptitude of the existing state government, collect and distribute resources, and give legitimacy to the insurgency (McColl 1969, 614). If applied to the case of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, McColl's theory of insurgent states aptly explains the current geopolitical situation. The goal of the insurgent state is to "...gradually replace the existing state

government. The geopolitical tactic is the attrition of government control over specific portions of the state itself" (McColl 1969, 614).

In each of the examples of national revolutions cited by McColl, the insurgent group's ambitions were limited to existing state borders. Insurgents achieved victory when they attained complete political control within the boundaries of the state. But ISIS is neither a national revolution, nor confined to the boundaries of a single state. Which geographic boundaries would signify victory for the insurgents? At first glance it seems the insurgent state theory cannot account for international revolutions which ignore state borders. However, the connection between victory and controlling geographic territory still applies to international insurgencies. Rather than assuming the existing state borders to be the limits of the insurgency's objective, researchers must analyze a terrorist group's reimagined territory to determine the geographic goals of the movement. This dissertation connects McColl's territorial imperative to the concept of reimagined territories of terrorist factions through analysis and visualization of the places names as presented in *Dabiq* magazine.

1.3 Analytical Approach to Understanding

Reimagined Territories

Drawing from the theoretical framework of space and place as well as geopolitics, this dissertation introduces the new theoretical concept of reimagined territory which extends the idea of aspirational geography outlined by Medina and Hepner (2013). The research focuses on the first ten issues ISIS's *Dabiq* magazine as a case study for reimagined territory. Two methods are used to extract, visualize, and analyze the place names from the magazine issues.

The first approach utilized in this dissertation is content analysis which can be defined as "...as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding" (Stemler 2014, 1). Content analysis allows researchers to make inferences about trends, patterns, themes, and authorship by systematically and empirically detecting specified features of the text (Holsti 1969). D. W. Moodie (1971) suggested that content analysis holds the analytical power to integrate the empirical and the theoretical in geographic research.

Content analysis is used to extract the geographic place names from the text of *Dabiq* magazine. The research employs the software program R: A Language and Environment for Statistical Computing (2013) to read in the text files for each magazine issue and create document matrices to order and store the results. The frequency of occurrence for each word in the magazine issue is tallied, and the terms are sorted in order of frequency. The functionality of R also allows for the exploration of summary statistics such as histograms (displays change of usage for a single term over the span of ten magazine issues) and visualization tools such as content clouds (depicting a cluster of the most frequently used terms; font size denotes frequency) for each issue. Computerized content analysis allows the researcher to systematically reduce large texts into manageable categorical information. This is most efficient and accurate way to account for and organize each word used in the magazine issues.

Cartographic visualization is the second method applied in this research. When the textual data are categorized and quantified, the results can be explored visually to determine how features are arranged spatially (Hallisey 2005). Kraak (1999) described the "reexpression" of data as the use of cartographic techniques like choropleth and

proportional symbol mapping to display quantitative attributes. But the presence of quantitative attributes does not equate to quantitative analysis. Pavlovskaya (2009) argues that computer-aided visualization also belongs in the category of qualitative geographic information systems (GIS) techniques and mixed methods approaches. This dissertation maps the textual data (place names in *Dabiq*) and their associated frequencies to visualize the geography and reimagined territory of ISIS via qualitative GIS methodology.

The final method employed in this research is narrative analysis. The traditional application of this approach focuses on analyzing the major elements of a story (Kwan and Ding 2008). A geographic approach, however, analyzes narratives for three specific elements: action/interaction, time, and space (Clandinin and Connelly 1999). The narrative's meaning is explained when analyzed in terms of these three elements. For each place name (space element) in the narrative, the analysis will examine what actions are taking place and who is interacting in the places (action/interaction element). Place names will also be examined for the time element—whether a place name used in *Dabiq* is a past, present, or future reference to a location. The maps resulting from the cartographic visualization combined with the corresponding narrative analysis will reveal the geographic components of the terrorist group's ideology and construct a clear vision of the ISIS's reimagined territory.

To validate the applicability of the conceptual model developed in this dissertation the study will apply the methods and procedures outlined above to a different group's publication: al Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine. The first five issues of *Inspire* will be analyzed and the results will be compared to those derived from the analysis of *Dabiq*.

The second data source (*Inspire* magazine) will demonstrate the utility of the analytical concept of reimagined territory when applied to another terrorist organization and its official publications.

1.4 Research Objectives and Questions

This dissertation addresses four objectives in proposing the theoretical concept of reimagined territory. The research:

(1) develops and positions the theoretical concept of reimagined territory at the intersection of geopolitics and theories of space and place;

(2) analyzes the content of the first ten issues of *Dabiq* magazine for place names, their frequencies of use, and their contexts;

(3) visualizes the data by applying qualitative GIS techniques to choropleth and proportional symbol mapping;

(4) analyzes ISIS's conceptualization of current political borders and future political borders via narrative analysis based on the results of the content analysis;

The first objective is to propose the theoretical concept of reimagined territory using the case of ISIS as evidence. This objective relies on the successful completion of the remaining three objectives which extract, visualize, and analyze the geographic data contained in *Dabiq* magazine. The results show that ISIS reimagines borders as a geopolitical tool to advance its ideology and legitimize the movement. By using archaic place names with specific meanings, ISIS creates a sense of place by infusing history and prophecy, strengthens its positionality in the global Islamic terror network by asserting control of territory, and establishes a homeland for Muslims wherein religious narratives transcend (and ignore) political borders. The place names of ISIS also reveal an

imagined future territorial expanse, the control of which signifies a complete victory for the insurgency. The results of this objective suggest that examining a terrorist group's reimagined territory is a viable means of understanding that group's geographic and ideological goals.

The second objective involves analyzing the content of the first ten issues of *Dabiq* magazine with specific emphasis on geographic place names. Each of the issues is converted from Portable Document Format (.pdf) to Plain Text File (.txt) then imported to R for analysis. A term frequency matrix is then generated for each issue of the magazine. The matrix includes every word that appears in the text as well as the number of times each word appears. Place names and corresponding frequencies are then extracted from the list of terms within the matrices and collated in a master list of geographic terms. This empirical approach can be easily replicated either with R or with another text mining software program. The successful accomplishment of this objective is critical to the research as it generates the data required for the remaining objectives.

The third objective is to visualize the data by mapping the place names and their frequencies of occurrence. To facilitate the mapping process, geographic terms are characterized according to one of four place name categories: region, country, state/province, or city/village. It is imperative that every term is assigned to a single category only. Shapefiles for each category are then created to store and display the place names and their frequencies in an easy to comprehend format. The regions, countries, and state/province categories are represented with choropleth mapping while the cities/villages category is represented with proportional symbols mapping. The importance of this objective lies in the power of cartographic visualization. Geographic

references scattered across hundreds of pages of text can be displayed on a single map or a series of maps. A simple list of place names has no spatiality, but viewing the same list displayed as a map allows the reader/viewer to infer distance and proximity relationships of these terms with respect to ISIS.

The final objective is to analyze ISIS's conceptualizations of current political borders and future political borders. This process involves the examination of the place names in context as they appear in *Dabiq*. It also involves understanding the historical and ideological context of the obsolete geographic terms used by ISIS. Theories of geopolitics and space/place are used as a framework for this narrative analysis, which serves as the basis for the development of reimagined territory as a theoretical concept. This objective is qualitative in nature. The results of this analysis reveal which places are ideologically important to ISIS's narrative.

The objectives of this dissertation attempt to answer several research questions. Firstly, can the method of content analysis be applied effectively in geographic studies of terrorism? If so, which place names appear in the first ten issues of *Dabiq* magazine and how many times does each place name occur? Secondly, how can the place names be visualized using a map? More specifically, how can the data be categorized and how can the categories be represented on the map? What spatial relationships are revealed by mapping the results of the text mining? Thirdly, how does ISIS conceptualize current international borders? How does ISIS envision future international borders? What would constitute victory for ISIS in terms of territory controlled? Finally, can the proposed theoretical concept of reimagined territory explain the ideological narrative of ISIS and other terrorist organizations?

By combining the methods of content analysis, cartographic visualization, and narrative analysis, the strengths of each method can be harnessed and synergized to provide a more complete geographic analysis of the place names used in *Dabiq* magazine. The sum of these methods as applied in this study is greater than the result of a single methodological approach, as each approach contributes different, complementary layers of meaning.

<p style="text-align:center">1.5 Research Contributions of this Dissertation</p>

Although ISIS can trace its origin to 1999, it has published and circulated *Dabiq* only since July 2014.   Accordingly, few scholars have addressed any aspect of *Dabiq*, and none has attempted to analyze the magazine from a geographic perspective. Recent (not peer-reviewed) studies related to *Dabiq* magazine include David Skillicorn's (2015) semantic model which he developed to quantify levels of propaganda contained in three terrorist publications and Harleen Gambhir's (2014) examination of the strategic message of ISIS via a qualitative content analysis of the first two issues. Other peer-reviewed studies have employed content analysis in studying extremist and terrorist group websites, but none has focused on the magazines of terrorist groups (Qin et al. 2007; Gerstenfeld et al. 2003; Zhou et al. 2005). This dissertation is the first geographically focused content analysis of *Dabiq*.

Outlining future areas of research in the geography of terrorism, Flint (2003) called for geographic studies to focus on the role of religious influence in creating a sense of place and geopolitical vision. To date few geographers have pursued this "vitally important" research agenda in the context of Islamic fundamentalism (Flint 2003, 163). This dissertation explores the geopolitical narrative of ISIS as presented in *Dabiq* with

specific emphasis on the place names which advance the religious ideology of the terrorist organization. The original research is the first of its kind to link the use of geographic place names in a terror group's official publications to the construction of religious identity and sense of place.

Finally, this dissertation proposes a new theoretical concept for understanding terrorist groups, their ideologies, motivations, and goals. Building upon Medina and Hepner's (2013) concept of aspirational geography, this research offers the theory of reimagined territory which views terrorist groups' conceptualizations of current and future political borders as part of their ideological narratives. Understanding how terrorist organizations perceive places and borders leads to greater understanding of the ideologies and goals of the groups. This is a new theoretical concept situated at the intersection of political geography and geopolitics. However, because terrorism always has a geographic component, the theory can augment any future research within terrorism studies without regard to discipline.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation draws on several geographic theories to provide a framework for developing the concept of reimagined territory. This chapter provides an overview of those theories and their applications in selected past studies. It also reviews the methods employed in the research. There is a short section reviewing the previous publications on ISIS and *Dabiq* as well. Finally, this chapter provides an historical background and overview of ISIS.

2.1 Theories of Space and Place

Within the realm of human geography there are many competing (and often overlapping) definition of place. For Yi-Fu Tuan (1977, 18), places are "centers of value" which become real to a person through experiencing them. Nicholas Entrikin (1991, 3) defines place as both "situatedness" in the world and an analytical concept. He argues that to understand place one must both experience it directly and study it from an objective (detached) position (Entrikin 1991). Denis Cosgrove (1989, 104) contends that "places are physical locations imbued with human meaning" but not necessarily inhabited by human beings. The list of definitions of place offered by geographers is quite extensive. This dissertation, while acknowledging the multiplicity of meanings of place

across a broad spectrum of geography subdisciplines and other social sciences, will

proceed with John Agnew's conceptualization of place.

2.1.1 John Agnew's Definition of Place

For Agnew (1987) place is a multidimensional concept consisting of three

components: locale, location, and sense of place. Locale is the setting in which people

interact. These settings can be either institutional (like a courtroom) or informal settings

(like a coffee shop). Location is the geographic position and extent of the locale, or as

Dennis Pringle (2003, 608) describes, "...the relationship between a place and other

places." Sense of place is the sum of human perceptions based on the lived experience or

socially constructed images and sentiments of a place, which could be positive, neutral,

or negative. Because human experiences and perceptions are integral to place, it is a

dynamic concept that changes over time. A warm, inviting place may become cold and

foreboding. In Agnew's (2003, 612) words, "Places are thus made by the people who

inhabit them at the same time that the places help to make them." Thus, when examining

a place, it is essential to consider each of the elements of locale, location, and sense of

place.

Using Agnew's (1987) conceptualization of place as context, one means of

examining place-making is through the political ideology of nationalism. Benedict

Anderson (1983) posits that nations are imagined political communities that are

inherently limited and sovereign. Nations are imagined because one person simply

cannot know and interact with every other individual in the political community. Thus,

because one cannot know all, the sense of belonging and cohesiveness has to be

imagined. Nations are limited because of boundaries—the spatial extent of the nation.

Finally, sovereignty guarantees the political community freedom to exist without the threat of foreign interference. Anderson traces the roots of nationalism to religious communities and dynastic political powers in premodern times. In Europe during the Dark Ages, religious communities were bound together by a common sacred text (the Bible) and a common sacred language (Latin), despite the fact that there were many vernacular languages for use in everyday affairs across the pre-Westphalian political landscape of Christendom. For Anderson, the advent of print capitalism led to the demise of the church community and gave way to the rise of nationalism. Because of the printing press and capitalism, novels and newspapers became readily available for daily reading in the local vernacular language across Europe. As the influence of the church waned, people could imagine themselves as part of a national community, which was, for the first time, based on their own language in their own place. Anderson argues that in the modern state, nationalism perpetuates itself through the census (which not only numbers people, but allows them to identify their nationality), maps (which reinforce the spatial extent of the nation), and museums (which preserve the relics and narratives of the national past).

Anthony Smith (2000), on the other hand, traces the origins of nationalism to ethic identity, cultural bonds, and a shared history rather than to the advent of print capitalism. He rejects (as does Anderson) the primordialist view of nationalism which holds that nationalism is inherent in human nature. He also rejects the perennialist view which sees nationalism as a process of existence, death, and rebirth—nationalist sentiments occurred in ancient times, died out, and were reborn at different periods in history. For Smith the modernist view of nationalism (nationalism is a product of uneven

development, uneven distribution of resources, and capitalism) is also insufficient.

Rather, Smith argues that while nationalism as a political ideology may be modern (post-Treaty of Westphalia), its roots are in nations whose cultural roots and histories must be traced through long periods of time. He suggests that nationalism originates in shared common myths of national origin, common ancestry, shared sacred texts, languages, rites, rituals, and customs. Because of amount of time that has passed, or because of the lack of historically verifiable information, many of the national myths are contested. Thus, the meaning of the cultural symbols and national identity are interpreted and re-interpreted by the social elites and intelligentsia, and the new meanings become a source of cohesion for the people and (re)inform their collective identity.

Regardless of the contested origins of nationalism as an ideological movement, it is clear that in the modern world-system, nationalism has become a powerful means of creating a sense of national identity and fostering social cohesion within political groups. And while religion remains a viable, cohesive element in place-making across the world, nationalism has become a mainstay in the process of making place at the state and international levels of political interaction.

Another means of examining place-making is via borders and territoriality. Robert Sack (1986) describes territoriality as the attempt to control people, things, and relationships by exerting control over bounded geographic area. He argues that territoriality is a geographic strategy to maintain order and maintain the geographic context through which people experience the world. Sack views territoriality as a social construct rather than an innate human instinct (in contrast to Robert Ardrey's (1966) "territorial imperative" argument which presents the human desire to acquire and

maintain control over territory as biological instinct). Thus, territory becomes the spatial expression of political power.

Central to the concept of bounded political space is the border itself, which David Newman (2006) sees as an essential element in the creation of identities. For him, the process of bordering is more important than the border itself. It is the process of demarcating and delimiting space which creates categories, and in turn, informs identities based on those categories. With borders, people can conceptualize what makes those inside the boundaries different than those outside the boundaries. Charles Tilly (2003) also sees the process of boundary-making as an integral element of creating the "us vs. them" dichotomy which can take many specific forms via race, ethnicity, gender, class, or religion. According to Tilly, people have many identities based on a variety of boundaries, and that unique social situations help determine which identity a person or group of people will activate.

Juliet Fall (2010) challenges the concept of "natural" boundaries by channeling Agnew's notion that there is nothing natural about boundaries—they are all human impositions on the world. She demonstrates that regardless of the shape of boundaries (squiggly lines that follow "natural" features such as rivers, mountains, or coastlines vs. straight lines drawn without regard for language, ethnic or other divisions), all are products of social interaction. She maintains that boundaries have merits and demerits, and their meanings must constantly be weighed and reweighed. Anssi Paasi (1999) demonstrates that boundaries, as social constructs can mean different things depending on context. Citing the international borders of Finland, Paasi shows that the boundary with Russia, although technically open, is much more guarded, observed, and regulated than

the border with Sweden. The feel of the Russian border is therefore much different than

the feel of the Swedish border, making each a different type of place for the Finns who

transit them.

Thus, in terms of making a place, the construction and perpetuation of borders are

essential. Because territorial states are made up of places (Agnew 1987), the making of

places begins with delimiting territory. Peter Taylor (1994) expands on Anthony

Gidden's (1987) concept of the state as a power container. He discusses four ways in

which the state is a container. First, the state contains the power to wage war. This is an

important function in the making of place because defense of territory is integral to

maintaining sovereignty, and the power to enforce political power beyond state borders

solidifies international political clout (hearkening to Weber's state which maintains a

monopoly of violence within its territorial expanse). Second, the state contains the power

to manage the economy. This is the mechanism which can harness the power of natural

and human resources both within the state and beyond its borders. Third, the state

contains culture, and therefore has the power to define cultural narratives, draw on

nationalistic sentiments, and reinterpret cultural symbols, artifacts, and histories. Finally,

the state contains the power to manage social programs such as schools, public safety,

and transportation networks.

Through these power mechanisms, the state creates and perpetuates the national

place. State boundaries, in conjunction with cultural norms, social processes, and

political ideologies, create national identities which are rooted in and have contextual

meaning in place. Newman (2006) suggests that transition zones or borderlands,

depending on local context, can either serve to lessen tensions or to heighten differences.

In places along the French-Spanish border, people freely cross the border and the exchange is conflict-free. Conversely, in Israel the borderlands are disputed places of exchange. The Israeli wall project, in which the border is reified, deepens the divide between Israel and Palestine. The variance of interaction in different places can be attributed to different social and cultural factors unique to those places. Each place must be examined in the context of human interaction and meaning specific to that place.

Place-making, then, is a socio-political process which is inseparably connected to boundaries, identities, territory. While aspects of place are unchanging (e.g., location), places are ever-changing because they are given meaning through human processes which change over time.

2.1.2 Spatial Components of Contested Space

Using the structure of Agnew's conceptualization of place to frame the research, it is then possible to focus on specific kinds of activities which make places. Helga Leitner, Eric Sheppard, and Kristin Sziarto (2008) propose a spatial template which can be applied to the study of contentious politics, a broad category of political activity which includes terrorism. They offer five interconnected spatial elements which comprise conflict spaces: scale, place, networks, positionality, and mobility. Scale, as described by Leitner et al., denotes geographic levels of representation such as local, regional, national, or global (Smith 2000). Conflict may occur at more than one scale simultaneously, underscoring the importance of viewing the ways in which levels of scale interact.

Places are sites where people live, work, and socialize, but they also have distinct materiality (Leitner et al. 2008). The structures, layouts, and designs of these materials

shape human interaction, giving a place the power to restrict or grant access, include or exclude people, or segregate space. Terrorist organizations often attempt to "...strategically manipulate, subvert and resignify places..." to reinforce their ideologies and (re)create locations in which their narratives can take place (Leitner et al. 2008, 161).

Social movements require networks (nodes and links) in order to propagate their alternative narratives and ideologies. Leitner et al. (2008) contend that these networks have topological spatiality in that they span geographic space, not cover it. Such networks allow terrorist organizations like ISIS to connect sympathizers across the globe with the central structure of the organization as well as other individual members. This connectivity not only prevents the containment of ideas in a central location, it allows the ideology to flow without spatial restrictions.

Positionality is a "socio-spatial" location within a network, hierarchy, or structure of power (Leitner et al., 163). Nancy Hartsock (1987) explains that a person's (or organization's) positionality directly shapes how he/she understands the world. Furthermore, positionality implies a relative relationship, meaning that without the context of other people/actors/groups, the socio-spatial location would lose significance. Consequently, positionality necessarily involves a negotiation for power within a given network or structure. A major component of those negotiations for power involves the formation of alliances which can change positionality within the power structures. Smaller, weaker organizations can increase their power by allying themselves with other like-minded organizations.

The final spatial component of contentious politics is mobility, which "...refers to the material or virtual movability of individuals or objects through space-time, within

and between places" (Leitner et al. 2008, 165). Examples of mobility include protests, rallies, demonstrations, and even terror attacks wherein social movements hope to change the existing power structures. The shared act of being in motion with other members of a group fosters collective experience and understanding which can then be harnessed for cooperative action (Leitner et al. 2008).

2.1.3 Place as a Homeland

Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) demonstrates that attachment to a homeland can be deep and powerful. He explains that humans tend to consider their homeland as the center of the world, which creates a sense of worth in that place composed of its people, landmarks, and landscape. A homeland could be a city, countryside, nation, or region. Tuan argues that religion can either fuse a people to their homeland, or liberate them from it. Both seem to be the case with ISIS. For the disenfranchised Sunni peoples of Iraq and Syria, the cause of ISIS was born in their homeland, binding the insurgency to the land. Yet for tens of thousands who have left their homelands and flocked to fight with ISIS, the establishment of the caliphate freed them from non-Muslim or apostate lands.

Tuan does not reference Islam in any of his examples of homeland, but his generalization rings true: "In antiquity land and religion were so closely related that a family could not renounce one without yielding the other" (1977, 154). Inseparably connected to place, Islam requires its adherents to make a pilgrimage once in their lives to the homeland of Muhammad to visit the ultimate landmark—the Kaaba. But ISIS goes beyond this Islamic doctrine in declaring that emigration to the new homeland of the caliphate is obligatory (Islamic State 2014a).

<u>2.2 Geopolitics</u>

By the end of World War II, geopolitics had become an "embarrassment" in political geography circles and to the entire discipline (Taylor and Flint 2000, 50). The prevailing narrative conflated geopolitics and Nazism's bloody quest for *lebensraum* to the extent that the two ideas became inextricably fused (Atkinson and Dodds 2000). Richard Hartsthorne (1954, 176) perfectly encapsulated the sentiment of the day in declaring that geopolitics is "intellectual poison." Despite the seemingly insurmountable disdain for geopolitical thought, a recent resurgence has shifted geopolitics towards the mainstream of political geography discourse, despite the existence of counter narratives. As Taylor and Flint (2000) point out, Saul Cohen recognized the importance of geopolitical ideas within the discipline, and worked to preserve the intellectual traditions through the decades of marginalization. He argues that geography still "...counts in a strategic and tactical military sense, a political sense, and culturally defined territorial sense, and it counts in terms of the spatial distribution of resources, peoples, and physical systems" (Cohen 2003, 3). This dynamic view of "spatial possibilism" drives the study of state and nonstate actors within the field of geopolitics today (Starr 2013, vii).

2.2.1 Halford Mackinder's Heartland Theory

In 1904 British geographer Halford Mackinder presented a holistic theory of the balance of global power based on geographic considerations in "The Geographical Pivot of History." He argued that the geographic exploration of the globe was a limited endeavor nearing its final stages, and that when Europe could no longer expand beyond its colonial reaches, conflict would arise in Europe (Mackinder 1904; Heffernan 2000). The center of gravity for Mackinder's geopolitical model was the Asian landmass, his

"pivot" area or heartland, which was a landlocked fortress from which to dominate the world (Mackinder 1904, 435). Surrounding the heartland were the inner and outer crescents comprised of the coastlands, islands, and peninsulas of Western Europe, Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and North and South America. These areas could compete with the heartland due to the mobility afforded by access to oceans and navigable rivers (Parker 1982). Revised and refined by the experiences of the First World War, Heartland Theory was summarized by its author as: "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; Who rules the World-Island commands the World" (Mackinder 1919, 194).

Despite later revisions and erroneous predictions (such as development of the railroad in central and eastern Russia), Mackinder's theory survives because of its "practical utility" and its holistic view (Taylor and Flint 2000, 55). Furthermore, Mackinder built his premise upon the concept of the balance of power. He stressed that the balance of power was the product of "geographic conditions" (strategic location and natural resource situation) and the human element comprised of the total population, motivation and resolve of the people, equipment, and organization of the opposing sides (Mackinder 1904, 437). Because the human environment changes continuously, the balance of power is dynamic at every scale. This concept is critical in studying the ways in which terrorist organizations attempt to influence the balance of power.

2.2.2 Robert McColl's Insurgent State

Robert McColl (1969) developed a theory to describe the progression of national insurgencies based on the control of territory. Insurgency is defined as "...a violent political process through which peoples or groups, who are excluded from power, contest

the ruling authority to alter or replace existing power relationships" (Lohman and Flint 2010: 1154). McColl's novel approach was the first to characterize insurgent movements as spatial processes that evolve through three stages over time (Lohman and Flint 2010). He argued that a common feature of national revolutions was the need for insurgents to capture and control territory within the state, and that capturing the territory allowed for the establishment of an insurgent state. Control of territory is valuable to an insurgency because it provides a safe haven for the leadership, demonstrates the existing government's inability to govern, becomes a personnel and resupply center, and creates "...at least an aura of legitimacy to the movement" (McColl 1969, 614). The establishment of the insurgent state is achieved in three stages.

The first stage, mobile war, begins when the government removes a group's ability to openly oppose political structures by labeling the group "rebels or bandits" and forcing the movement underground (McColl 1969, 614). The revolutionaries must then move from place to place in the countryside to avoid detection and capture by the government. It is during this time of mobility that the insurgent group begins to search for a location for a permanent base of operations. According to McColl, an ideal area for permanent camp(s) meets specific criteria. First, an area with previous experience in opposing the government is preferable. Next, local political instability aids the establishment of counter-government movements. The area should also have sufficient access to military and political targets as well as transportation networks and resources. Areas with proximity to provincial or international borders, economically self-sufficient areas, and areas with favorable terrain for military operations are ideal. Finally, the

insurgent base should be located in a place where insurgents can maintain control (McColl 1969).

The second stage is guerrilla war which begins when the insurgency establishes a permanent base in its "core area" (McColl 1969, 621). As support and success allow the resistance to grow, the insurgents must either establish a larger core area or establish new areas of support outside the core. The expansion of controlled areas affords the insurgents more opportunities to target the existing government and consequently, gain more territory. Boundaries develop in the countryside, marking the extent of government influence. In the boundary zones, the population must remain neutral as either the government or the guerillas could show force at any moment.

The final stage, equilibrium or regular war, begins when the insurgency has attained enough military power to force the national troops into the cities, engage in open battle with the government troops, and successfully defend the territory seized from the government. The revolutionaries now enjoy several advantages over the existing government: a supported cause, a guerilla army, core areas, control of large areas and their people and resources, and discrete boundaries between control zones. But success brings its own issues. The focus must now shift from military efforts to the political. In addition, the insurgency must coordinate between the core areas to ensure political unity and loyalty. The creation of a unified political structure allows the insurgent government to administer services in its areas of control. One of the bases becomes the capital and the "liberated areas" and other bases become the "states" (McColl 1969, 626). The creation of formal military districts also occurs during this phase. With the

administrative and military structures in place, the insurgency can prepare for the final push to topple the government and assume complete national control.

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2.3 Multidisciplinary Terrorism Studies and
the Geography of Terrorism

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In its modern form, terrorism emerged as a violent extension of politics hundreds of years ago, yet the study of terrorism is only decades old (Laqueur 1999). Robert Pape (2009) categorizes the academic effort to understand terrorism in two phases. The first phase began in the 1970s and lasted through the 1990s. The second phase began after the terror attacks on September 11, 2001 (Pape 2009). Among the most influential scholars of the first phase were Walter Laqueur and Bruce Hoffman, whose contributions in terrorism research laid the foundation for future studies.

Walter Laqueur's historical approach to terrorism established him as one of the founders of terrorism studies (Duyvesteyn 2004). In *The New Terrorism* (1999) Laqueur predicted that terrorism would shift from nationalistic and political motivations to fanatic religious motivations. He outlined the new dangers of readily available weapons of mass destruction in the hands of religious terror organizations, arguing that fundamentalists were more likely than nationalist or ethnic groups to use nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. He warned of the relative ease of access that cyberterrorists would enjoy should they choose to target infrastructure, government agencies, and military activities. Laqueur's scholarly work in terrorism studies stressed the importance of understanding the causes of terrorism and the motivations of terrorist groups.

Bruce Hoffman studies terrorism from the vantage point of political science. His seminal work, *Inside Terrorism* (1998), leveraged the same historical trends analysis

approach that Laqueur favored, albeit from a more political perspective. Hoffman, like many other scholars including Laqueur, attempted to address the problems associated with defining terrorism before offering a definition of his own (Laqueur 1999; Jackson 2008; Smyth et al. 2008). As previously mentioned, Hoffman defines terrorism as "the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change" (1998, 43). This definition is compelling for a number of reasons. First, it purposely omits the creators of terror, allowing for state and nonstate actors. Second, it distinguishes between violence and the threat of violence, but incorporates both in the element of fear. Finally, Hoffman's definition identifies the end purpose of terrorism—to effect political change.

The second phase of terrorism research has produced an impressive volume of books and other studies in a short period of time. Andrew Silke (2009) pointed out that in a seven-year period following the attack on the Twin Towers, 2,281 nonfiction books with "terrorism" in the title were published, while only 1,310 books meeting the same criteria had been published prior to September 2001. The area of research also expanded from its political science and historical roots across a multidisciplinary spectrum including criminology, psychology, and information studies (Reid and Chen 2007; Pape 2009). But the concepts of place and the importance of geographic context were either lacking altogether or largely underdeveloped in these studies of terrorism—a gap in the scholarship ideally addressed by the discipline of geography.

Unlike political scientists and sociologists, geographers study political violence in its geographic context. The intricacies of political behavior are fused to place because all political behavior is geographic in nature (Agnew 1987). Hoffman (1999) posits that the

goal of terrorism (and by extension, all forms of political violence) is to gain power where there is none, or seize power where there is little. In order for a group to exercise political power, it requires a place in which or over which to exert that power. Consequently, studying the concept of power outside of the context of the place wherein the power is applied risks losing the contextual meaning of that power.

Charles Tilly, a sociologist, attributes the outbreak of political violence to the onset of social uncertainties (as opposed to underlying hate), usually in the form of the government's lack of ability to enforce prior agreements or maintain security at the border (2003). He views violence as a continuum ranging from small acts of aggression such as barroom brawls to horrific acts like genocide. While he cites the creation of boundaries as the source of categorization which leads to the formation of identities, his examples of race, religion, gender, and class (among others) lack the essential element of place, and are therefore decontextualized. The nongeographic approach to violence fails to explain why a group of disenfranchised Sunni Muslims in one place facilitates the rise of ISIS, while another group of disenfranchised Sunni Muslims does not resort to violence.

Political scientist Ted Gurr (1970) argues that political violence is caused by feelings of deprivation. Building on the frustration-aggression theory, Gurr explains that in order to understand political violence, it must be viewed in terms of deprivation, a group's justification of violence, and a group's capability to fight weighed against the government's capability to counter or respond to the violence. For Gurr, deprivation occurs when a person or group compares what he/she/they have with what he/she/they *think* they should have. This deprivation may occur in terms of economic resources,

political power, basic necessities, or a myriad of other reasons. The scope and magnitude

of the violence are a function of the level of deprivation. While the concept of

deprivation is useful in understanding why some groups may be incited to violence,

Gurr's (like Tilly's) analysis ignores geographic factors which influence group identities.

He does not explore the relationship between place, boundaries, and identity and how

they could influence perceptions of deprivation.

Geographers, on the other hand, have readily recognized the indelible link

between place and political violence. Stuart Elden (2009) provides a more nuanced

approach to terrorism which challenges the dominant discourse that terrorism has become

de-territorialized. While acknowledging the deterritorialized, fluid nature of terror

groups like al Qaeda, Elden argues that these groups are still bound by aspects of

territory. For example, terror groups require bases for training, schools for

indoctrination, and logistics depots. In order to effectively operate these aspects of their

organizations, terror groups need either full permission or complicity from an entity

which maintains sovereignty within the bounds of a territory. Additionally, terror groups

have territorial goals themselves—aspirations of controlling political space (usually a

homeland). Any state response to terrorism, be it in the form of homeland security or

offensive attacks against terror groups, is also necessarily territorial. The threat must be

imagined in spatial terms (Elden 2009; Flint 2003). Without understanding the territorial

goals of a terror group, a researcher cannot fully explain the violent group in question nor

the conditions in which the political violence arose.

The interdisciplinary approach of geography is also much more likely to involve

the strengths of other disciplines in asking research questions. A political scientist may

view the Kashmir conflict strictly in political terms, and thus overlook the historical and geographic contexts of the region. Murphy (1990) demonstrates that territorial disputes often have roots in historical claims to territory wherein the disputed area was "illegally" taken from its original owners. For India, Kashmir rightfully belongs to India because the rules of partitioning dictated that the governor of the province would determine in which country (Pakistan or India) the province would be incorporated. At that time (1947), the maharajah of Kashmir, Hari Singh (a non-Muslim), chose India for a variety of complicated reasons, but mostly because Pakistan threatened to invade and take Kashmir by force (Mohan 1992). From the Pakistani perspective, Kashmir should have acceded to Pakistan because of the dominant religious/cultural make-up of the population. Thus, each country had an historic claim to the area, and therefore, each could justify engaging in violence based on rightful territorial claims. It is at the intersection of politics, geography, and history that the intricacies of place, identity, and violence coalesce in the case of Kashmir.

Although the growing body of literature (even among geographers) describes a borderless world brought about by globalization, communication, and "informationalization" (Toal 1999; Kolossov and O'Loughlin 1999; Taylor 1994; Eva 1999), territorial expressions of power by state actors are not obsolete. Recent events in Western Europe and Ukraine have underscored the viability of the state as a decisive enforcer of sovereignty, despite the scholars who have (prematurely) sounded its death knells (Paasi 1999). In the face of international opposition (in the form of the United Nations and NATO), under the guise of support for separatists, Russia invaded Ukraine based on historical claims to the land (De Young 2014). This successful attempt to exert

control over geographic space was met with a very different international response (economic sanctions) as compared to Iraq's invasion Kuwait in 1990 (international counter-invasion and subsequent destruction of Iraq's military power). Furthermore, in response to waves of Syrian (and other groups) immigrants in Europe, Austria exerted territorial control by sealing its borders to those seeking asylum (Huggler 2016). When faced with (perceived) outside threats to its sovereignty, a democratic state with membership in an open economic union (European Union) fiercely protected its borders.

These recent examples demonstrate that while globalization and communication have created processes that transcend borders, states will not hesitate to interfere with these processes by exerting control of their territories—a political act that is inherently geographic in nature. As long as political power and conflict occur in geographic space (and they must be), geographers will be better equipped to explain the phenomenon of political violence. Simply stated, without the perspectives of geographic analysis, the concept of political violence can only be viewed out of context.

Uniquely suited to studying terrorism, geographers, like their social sciences colleagues, also began to explore the various aspects of terrorism during the aftermath of al Qaeda's attack on New York and Washington. One of the earliest broad-scope efforts by geographers was *The Geographical Dimensions of Terrorism* (Cutter et al. 2003). This volume spans the discipline with essays which address geographic aspects of emergency response efforts, the root causes of terrorism, the use of geospatial data and geographic information systems in emergency response and security realms, societal risk, biological warfare, and security vs. openness debates. The wide research net cast by that work reflects the breadth of projects funded in the scramble to understand terrorism.

Geographers have since approached the geography of terrorism in vastly different ways. Harm de Blij (2005) proposed that the core areas of Islam (Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Sudan) have a tendency to be more fundamental while the periphery of Islam (Indonesia, Turkey, Morocco, Sengal) tends to be more moderate. He argued that much of the terrorism-based conflict in the international community today can be found along a border between predominantly Muslim countries and their non-Muslim neighbors, or within Muslim countries themselves (de Blij 2005). At the other end of the spectrum, Marie Smyth, Richard Jackson, and others call for a critical reading of terrorism studies because they believe the "...conventional analysis of terrorism is ontologically challenged, lacks self-reflexivity, and is policy oriented" (Jones and Smith 2009, 301).

Colin Flint has emerged as a leading researcher within the geography of terrorism. His works have emphasized that terrorism and counterterrorism occur within geopolitical structures which have locational and scalar attributes (Flint 2005; Flint and Radil 2013). Additionally, he has examined how religious and political motives that drive fundamentalist terrorists can be intertwined and unrestrained by international boundaries (Flint 2003; Flint 2005). Flint (2005; Flint and Radil 2013) also provided a geohistorical interpretation of David Rapoport's (2004) classification of modern terrorism into four waves. He suggested that the first wave (1880-1920) of terrorists focused on the scale of the nation-state. The second wave (1920-1960) also focused on the nation-state, but in the context of decolonization and a "shared sense of victimhood" between terrorist organizations in areas of colonial rule (Flint and Radil 2013, 152). The third wave (1960-1990) saw the internationalization of terrorists' causes enhanced by cross-border networks of support which included state-sponsored terrorism. The fourth wave (1990-

present) introduced a new religious terrorism with an interest in saving souls, not controlling the state's territory (Juergensmeyer 2003).

Finally, Richard Medina and George Hepner (2013) introduced the concept of aspirational homelands for terror organizations. They suggest that controlling geographic space is a necessity for survival of the terror group, and that the land(s) these groups target for control have historical value or ideological meaning for the cause. In the case of al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden envisioned an eventual caliphate spanning the Sunni Muslim world (Haynes 2005). However, he made specific reference to Iraq, Palestine, the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and Egypt (Medina and Hepner 2013). These areas represent the historical origins of Islam, the currently contested regions surrounding Iraq, and the home country of bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri. In other words, these lands represent al Qaeda's aspirational geography.

This dissertation seeks to further develop the conceptual model of aspirational geography by situating reimagined territory at the intersection of place theory and geopolitics. The analysis will show that the place names used by ISIS simultaneously create a sense of place, advance the apocalyptic ideology, and legitimize the cause. Examining the ways in which a terrorist organization envisions and articulates place names reveals the territorial goals. Knowledge of these territorial goals (which are extracted from a group's communications in any form) is not only a crucial aspect of understanding their political objectives, but it could also serve to inform anticipatory counterterrorism efforts in a more effective way.

2.4 Content Analysis

Content analysis has been defined as a systematic research method employed to generate an objective and quantitative description of the content of textual and other forms of communication by reducing large volumes of text into categories (Berelson 1952; Stemler 2014). The empirical rigor of content analysis has attracted scholars from many fields of research. It has been applied to a vast range of topics including nutrition education messages in the media, Twitter as an information source for journalists, and analyzing judicial opinions (Kondracki et al. 2002; Lasorsa et al. 2012; Bruns 2012; Hall and Wright 2008). Content analysis also offers powerful capabilities to researchers in any discipline interested in Big Data (Lewis et al. 2013).

In today's research environment content analysis typically involves the use of computers to manage and process large amounts of data. Some scholars, however, have found that relying on software alone can miss many of the more nuanced meanings within texts (Conway 2006; Linderman 2001; Lewis et al. 2013). The solution to this problem is to employ a hybrid method of content analysis which combines the strengths of automated processes to code (or categorize) manifest content with the interpretation capabilities of human researchers to code the latent content (Lewis et al. 2013; Sjøvaag and Stavelin 2012).

Terrorism research has not exploited the method of content analysis to the same degree as other disciplines. Yilu Zhou, Edna Reid, Jialun Qin, Hsinchun Chen, and Guanpi Lai (2005) employed content analysis to study the ways in which United States domestic extremist groups use the internet to distribute their messages, communicate, organize, and sell merchandise. The same group of researchers later applied similar

methods to discover how terrorist organizations based in the Middle East are using the internet (Qin et al. 2006). Another study analyzed web site content of 157 hate groups (domestic and international) for ideological messages, links to other groups, communication, and similarity to other groups (Gerstenfeld et al. 2003). To date, no scholarly works have attempted a geographic content analysis of terrorist publications. This dissertation is the first study to employ this method to a terrorist organization's periodical literature.

2.5 Qualitative GIS Analysis Through
Cartographic Visualization

Sarah Elwood and Meghan Cope (2009, 3) assert that GIS should be understood as a fusion of technology, methodology, and "situated social practice." This conceptualization essentially liberates GIS from the (now fading) stereotype that GIS research is rooted in positivism and shackled exclusively to quantitative methodologies (Lake 1993). Since the mid-1990s scholars have demonstrated that GIS is more than a tool for positivism or quantitative studies (Sheppard 1995, Schuurman 2000; Kwan 2002; Sheppard 2005). These advancements and innovations created the environment for mixed methods research using GIS (Pavlovskaya 2009).

Marianna Pavlovskaya (2009, 22) contends that "visualization is arguably the most powerful and widely used function in GIS." When scholars use a GIS to visualize their data, they merge the power of maps with the capabilities of technology to create a representation of spatial information which is "immediately accessible" to human minds (Pavlovskaya 2009, 22). A textual list of place names in tabular format cannot produce the instant spatial understanding generated by a cartographic visualization of the same

data. Alan MacEachren (1995) and Elaine Hallisey (2005) each stress the significant

impact cartographic visualization has on understanding geographic data. Thus far there

have been no published studies related to visualizing the ways in which terrorist

organizations envisage political boundaries. Using data derived from *Dabiq* magazine,

this dissertation will apply qualitative GIS methods to map the reimagined territory of

ISIS.

<div align="center">2.6 Research on ISIS Through <i>Dabiq</i></div>

At the time this research was initiated, the current iteration of ISIS was less than

two years old. Consequently, the body of scholarly research on ISIS is predictably small

when compared to terrorist organizations with longer histories. Haroro Ingram (2014)

published a study on ISIS's information operations (IO) campaign which is

multidimensional, uses several platforms, and targets both sympathizers and enemies of

the organization. He concludes that the sophistication of ISIS's IO efforts surpasses other

terrorist IO campaigns, and this should be a central concern for Western

counterinsurgency forces which have often failed in their own IO engagements (Ingram

2014).

Harleen Gambhir (2014) provided an overview of the first two issues of *Dabiq*

shortly after their release. Her summary outlined the strategic plan of ISIS as presented

in the magazine, noting the differences between *Dabiq* and *Inspire* (al Qaeda's

propaganda magazine). She concluded that *Dabiq* is more than propaganda because it

articulates ISIS' strategic vision, complete with religious justification for the cause. In

another study of *Dabiq*, David Skillicorn (2015) developed a semantic model to quantify

levels of propaganda contained in three terrorist publications. His model categorized the

language used in the magazines as informative, imaginative, deceptive, jihadist, and gamification. The level of propaganda could then be determined by examining the amount of language in each category. Skillicorn concluded that *Dabiq* had the smallest amount of deception language and scored the highest in the propaganda model.

In a final study of note, Anthony Celso (2014) analyzed the world view of ISIS, noting the apocalyptic elements of the ideology. He argued that while the military, state-building, and economic strategies are rational, the driving ideology is not. His analysis highlighted the connection between *hadith* (prophetic sayings of Muhammad) and the strategic goals of ISIS (Celso 2014). However, as in the other studies mentioned previously, Celso's focus does not include geography or the geographic elements of ISIS' strategic vision. This dissertation will connect the places mentioned in *hadith* (and quoted in *Dabiq*) directly with the ideology of ISIS and demonstrate how using these place names reinforces ISIS's legitimacy as a caliphate and creates a sense of place evoking a Muslim homeland within its borders.

2.7 Overview of ISIS

The following sections provide an overview of ISIS including its origins as a terrorist organization which date to the early 2000s. ISIS is also discussed in terms of characterizing its motivations in one of three categories of terror organizations as outlined by Medina and Hepner (2013). The section also briefly examines ISIS's social, political, ideological and geographic goals (which will receive full treatment in Chapter 4). ISIS's organization, structure, and sources of support are also discussed as an introduction to the terrorist group.

2.7.1 Introduction to the Islamic State

The Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham emerged in Iraq amidst a volatile, multi-group insurgency aimed at destabilizing the fledgling Iraqi government. However, the roots of that organization stretch beyond the war in Iraq. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian jihadist and convicted criminal, allied himself with Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi, whom he met in Afghanistan at the end of the Soviet occupation. Inspired by Maqdisi, Zarqawi plotted against Jordan's government and was imprisoned for his crimes (Fishman 2014; Michael 2007). Upon his pardon in 1999, Zarqawi relocated to Afghanistan again where he established a group called Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (JTJ) in Herat Province (Hashim 2014; Michael 2007). It was during this period in Afghanistan that Zarqawi became acquainted with al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, who sent Zarqawi and his group into the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq following the US invasion of Afghanistan (Vidino 2006). Two years later, the Zarqawi-led JTJ emerged as one of five major Sunni insurgent groups that rose to prominence in the political vacuum created by the deposition of Saddam Hussein (Hashim 2014).

After numerous successful terror attacks from 2003 to 2004, Zarqawi formally pledged his group's allegiance to al Qaeda and changed its name to Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn, or more commonly, al Qaeda in Iraq (Associated Press 2004). From that point on the terrorist group operated in Iraq as a branch of al Qaeda. The central leadership of al Qaeda soon grew uncomfortable with Zarqawi's brutal tactics, especially those aimed at fellow Muslims (al-Zawahiri 2005). His extreme views and actions even earned him the nickname of *al Gharib* (the Stranger) within al Qaeda circles (Riedel 2007). The philosophical rift between Zarqawi and the leadership of al Qaeda

Central continued to widen until an American airstrike killed Zarqawi in June of 2006 (Burns 2006). The new leaders of al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Ayub al-Masri and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi changed the name of the group again to Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), but failed to gain any traction with the Sunni population in northern and western Iraq.

By 2010, ISI's message fell on deaf ears in the Sunni areas of Iraq, and most of its leaders were either dead or in hiding. In April of that year, a joint Iraqi-US attack killed al-Masri and al-Baghdadi, leaving the terrorist group in shambles and without clear successors to the fallen leaders (Ibrahim 2010). However, a series of regional and local events and circumstances set the ideal conditions for a rebirth and rebranding of ISI's ideology. The Syrian civil war and (former Iraqi President) Maliki's discriminatory governmental policies combined to form the perfect breeding ground for ISI's revamped pro-Sunni message in the politically marginalized, poor, Sunni-majority areas of northern and western Iraq and northern Syria (Hashim 2014; Ingram 2014). The new (and also current) leader of ISI, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was reportedly radicalized while being held in the US Army's Camp Bucca prison from February to December 2004.   Drawing on his acquaintances and connections made inside the prison, al Baghdadi rose through the ranks to the top of ISI (Nevins 2015). With strategic goals in mind, al Baghdadi redesigned the organizational structure of ISI and proposed an alliance with the Syrian jihadist group Jabhat al-Nusra (JN). He then declared himself the rightful caliph (successor of Mohammad) of the newly formed Islamic State under the name of ISIS on June 29, 2014 (al-Tamimi 2014; al-Baghdadi 2014).

Despite the growing list of atrocities committed by the ISIS fighters, the establishment of a caliphate (Islamic government) may be the most dangerous event in

the group's relatively brief history. In his first speech, al-Baghdadi claimed the title of

caliph, denounced all Muslim governments, and announced the caliphate's intent to

conquer the world (Wood 2015; al-Baghdadi 2014). The fact that the vast majority of

Muslims in the world reject the theology of ISIS is, for the moment, irrelevant. The

disenfranchised Sunni populations of Syria and Iraq tolerate, and in some cases,

champion ISIS. Moreover, a breathtaking number of foreigners (at least 20,000) have

flocked to either join the armed ranks or find religious salvation within the borders of the

caliphate (Berlinger 2015). With an apocalyptic agenda, the perfect climate of political

unrest, and an ever-flowing stream of new recruits, an unopposed ISIS could be poised to

take over a large portion of the Middle East in a relatively short amount of time.

Understanding the origins, structure, systems of support, and goals of ISIS is an essential

element in crafting an effective response which not only ends ISIS, but also ends the

conditions which made ISIS' rise to power possible.

2.7.2 Defining ISIS and its Goals

There are three general categories which define the motivations of terror groups

(Medina and Hepner 2013). ISIS falls squarely within the cultural/religious category of

terrorist organizations. It has clearly stated short-term and long-term religious goals. It

has a central religious authority figure (al-Baghdadi) who demands strict allegiance to the

caliphate. Born from the ideological heritage of al Qaeda, ISIS's roots are firmly

anchored in the Salafi-jihadist brand of the more broad and nuanced Salafist approach to

Islam, which calls for a strict interpretation of the Koran and *hadith,* as well as a return to

the "pure" form of Islam practiced precisely as the adherents did during the days of

Mohammad (Wiktorowicz 2006, Hellmich 2008). Salafism's ideological umbrella is

wide, however, including a range of manifestations from purists who believe in changing individuals through peaceful education to jihadists who believe in enforcing their outlook with the sword (Wiktorowicz 2006, Stemmann 2006).

ISIS's version of Salafi-jihadism positions the West as the source of conflict in the Muslim world. For ISIS, the West promulgates violence against Islam and prevents Muslims from practicing their religion in its purest form. This theological message appeals to some of the politically disenfranchised Sunnis in Iraq and Syria who witness daily the effects of this violence. Thus, the establishment of a legitimate caliphate could, in time, provide a Muslim identity and homeland for the devoutly religious across the globe. ISIS also has enjoyed tacit acceptance (and in many areas, open support) from the Sunni peoples of northern and western Iraq and northern Syria. This community support for ISIS's ideology is also spreading to volatile areas such as Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, and Egypt (Lefevre 2014; Khachaneh 2015).

 Over the course of several years, ISIS has plainly articulated its social and political goals. First, the group seeks to eradicate the occupying armies of Iraq and establish governance in both Iraq and Syria (Lewis 2013). This governance necessarily includes the declaration of a caliphate and the establishment of Sharia law in the occupied territories (Figure 2.1). The next step is to overtake apostate sectarian governments in all Muslim lands in preparation for the destruction of the earth (by Allah) that coincides with ISIS's version of the apocalypse. Along the way, ISIS intends to fight against the army of Rome (Christians) at Dabiq, Syria to fulfill the prophecies laid out in the *hadith*, which also articulate the conquests of Constantinople (sic) and Rome following the massive Muslim victory on the plains of Dabiq (*Dabiq* Issue #1).   This apocalyptic sentiment is

Figure 2.1 Areas of ISIS control and support. Data source: Institute for the Study of War (2016).

reflected in the slogan "remaining and expanding" which appears frequently in the pages of *Dabiq*. Along the way, ISIS plans to spread monotheism and cleanse the earth of polytheism by converting, subjugating, or killing all nonbelievers. These goals are intermediate steps which ISIS views as required precursors of the impending apocalypse—an event it hopes to usher in through its actions and its enemies' actions which are intentionally provoked from among the nations of unbelievers (Wood 2015).

An indispensable component common to each of these goals is al-Baghdadi's aspirational geography. The self-anointed caliph cannot maintain legitimacy as ruler of all Muslims without geographic territory to govern. Thus, the first goal is establishing

and maintaining control in Syria and Iraq. When these areas have been (relatively)

stabilized under ISIS control, the caliphate will seek to enlarge its geographic footprint to

include all Muslim nations. The recent ISIS activity in Yemen, Libya, Egypt, and

Afghanistan demonstrate ISIS's progress in realizing its geographic goals. When ISIS

unites the Muslim world under its black banner, the caliphate will attempt to hoist its

standard over Constantinople (Istanbul) and Rome (*Dabiq* Issue #4).

     For ISIS, short-term victory may be defined as maintaining and expanding the

caliphate first in Syria and Iraq, then drawing in the army of "Rome" (which according to

ISIS means the Christians of Europe and their colonies) to defeat the unbelievers at

Dabiq, Syria in fulfilment of an apocalyptic *hadith* (Wood 2015; Celso 2014). The defeat

of the infidels at Dabiq would then set the stage for ISIS's long-term victory: to expand

the caliphate to the entire Muslim world in preparation of Allah's cleansing of the earth.

Although the last two stages of ISIS's geographic expansion plan certainly seem

unattainable in the current geopolitical climate, the group was able to expand its control

in Iraq and Syria relatively quickly, and several countries in the Middle East (Lebanon,

Jordan, Yemen, Tunisia, and possibly Saudi Arabia) are ripe for further expansion

(Stansfield 2014).

2.7.3 ISIS: Organization, Structure, and
Sources of Support

     Opposing the recent trend of decentralized organizational structures of terrorist

factions, ISIS maintains a centralized, hierarchical structure with al-Baghdadi at the head.

Directly under him (yet still considered the highest level), a council of advisors acts in

concert as the governing body and policy making entity of ISIS (Hashim 2014). It is

believed that al-Baghdadi had two deputies, Abu Ali al-Anbari (also known as Abdulrahman Mustafa al-Qaduli) and Abu Muslim al-Turkmani, who governed all administrative affairs of Syria and Iraq, respectively (Thompson and Shubert 2015). However, both men were killed and presumably replaced by March 2016, but their successors in those positions are unknown (Schmidt and Mazzetti 2016). Directly under this level are the three elements of ISIS's first echelon: the Shura Council, the Military Council, and the Security and Intelligence Council. The Shura Council is composed of al-Baghdadi and his deputies as well as an additional nine to eleven other voting members, who, in theory, can remove the caliph from power if he fails to uphold his sacred duties. This council is second in authority.

The Military Council includes a head and three additional members. This body directly oversees the Iraqi commanders of the ISIS combat battalions. Although the commanders enjoy some regional autonomy, the Military Council does not act without approval from the Shura Council and al-Baghdadi (Thompson and Shubert 2015). Equally important is the Security and Intelligence Council. This organization is composed of an unknown number of former military and intelligence officials of the Hussein regime. They are responsible for a wide range of duties including the personal security of the caliph, compliance with law, communication, carrying out sentencing (e.g., executions, fines, etc.) and counterintelligence (Hashim 2014). Under this first echelon of command there are several second-tier entities including the Finance Council, Leadership Council, Legal Council, and Foreign Fighter Assistance Council (Thompson and Shubert 2015). The most influential second-tier organization is the finances entity, of which little is known except that it oversees the war and state-building funds (Hashim

2014). To date this organizational structure has enabled ISIS to establish and maintain governance in Iraq and Syria, finance a two-front war, bolster its ranks through international recruiting, and repel military pressure from Iraq, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and competing Syrian rebel factions. While this hierarchical organization was instrumental in achieving initial success, financing the establishment of the caliphate was no less important.

Initially ISIS gained funds by kidnapping (ransom), robbing banks, and charging tolls, fees, and taxes along roads in areas it controlled. Now with a greatly expanded geographic presence, ISIS controls oil fields in Syria, operates a broad network of extortion across Syria and Iraq, and collects donations from private citizens across the Middle East (al-Tamimi 2014). Currently, the vast majority of ISIS funding comes from selling/smuggling oil from occupied fields in Syria and Iraq for as little as $25 per barrel at the Turkish border. Some US government estimates place the income at $1 million per day (Windrem 2014). To supplement the oil income, ISIS receives relatively small but consistent individual contributions from wealthy Sunni Arabs in the region, mostly from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (Windrem 2014). Perhaps most interestingly, ISIS has successfully levied taxes on the populations which it controls (Shapiro and Jung 2014). This development demonstrates that ISIS has obtained state-like powers of taxation, and it provides services (security, health care, housing, etc.) in return for taxation. As long as the occupied population continues to pay taxes, ISIS will enjoy at least some capacity to finance the operations of the state, even if it cannot expand its military operations into new territory.

Three major factors led the resurgence of ISIS after 2010: the Syrian civil war, the

anti-Sunni policies of the Maliki administration in Iraq, and the waning influence of al Qaeda under Zawahiri's leadership. The convergence of these dynamics left fertile recruiting grounds in their wake. Initially the recruits came from the disenfranchised Sunni populations of politically and economically neglected areas of Syria and Iraq. Former Hussein regime officials who were seeking a return to authority were also drawn to ISIS. With the declaration of the caliphate, recruits have been streaming in from all over the world. An estimated 20,000 foreign fighters have joined the ranks, hailing from 90 countries, and 3,400 of those combatants came from the West. Tunisia boasts the highest contribution of more than 3,000 fighters (Berlinger 2015). To reach this wide foreign audience, ISIS exploited various social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and Diaspora through its media wing, *Al Hayat*. In less than one year ISIS also published ten digital issues of its official magazine, *Dabiq*, which shares news, theology, and messages from important Islamist scholars in several languages (Ingram 2014). Released in July 2014, the first issue called for all faithful Muslims to assemble in the newly announced caliphate. A crucial aspect of ISIS' ability to recruit and receive new followers is the composition of its support community.

ISIS rose from the ashes in the poor, politically marginalized Sunni minority areas of Syria and Iraq. For those people who had been ignored by Assad and Maliki, the promises of free housing, education for their children, free healthcare in the communities, and low-cost bread were very attractive (al-Tamimi 2014). These state-building efforts of ISIS show al-Baghdadi's ability to adapt and learn, as the earlier versions of ISIS seeing the downfall of the United States, Shiite regimes, and Israel also comprise failed to gain the support of the Sunni communities in Iraq. The newer message also resonates

beyond the borders of Syria and Iraq. Affluent foreign investors interested in seeing the downfall of the United States, Shiite regimes, and Israel also comprise the greater community of support for ISIS. These foreign communities have been instrumental in both recruiting and financing, but the real power base remains amongst the disenfranchised Sunni poor across the Middle East. The ongoing civil war in Libya has created conditions favorable to the expansion of the ISIS movement in North Africa. Similar situations exist in Yemen, Egypt, and Algeria. The common ingredients of poverty, marginalization, and political instability allow ISIS to gain leverage in Sunni communities from North Africa to Afghanistan.

Also included in its community of support are the terrorist organizations affiliated with ISIS. To date more than 35 *jihadi* organizations from Algeria, Sudan, Philippines, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Libya, Indonesia, Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, Russia, and Lebanon (Figure 2.2) have pledged their allegiance to or announced their support for al-Baghdadi and the Islamic State (IntelCenter 2015). (Note: Figure 2.2 shows only countries which house terrorist groups which are sympathetic to ISIS, and should not be interpreted as the territorial expanse or influence of those groups.) The most notable of these is Boko Haram, a Nigerian terrorist organization whose brutality rivals that of ISIS. A long time al Qaeda affiliate, Boko Haram is responsible for thousands of deaths in Nigeria and neighboring countries, and poses a significant regional threat to stability (Giroux and Gilpin 2014). The recent alliance between ISIS and Boko Haram affords ISIS another foothold in Africa while potentially giving Boko Haram access to additional resources and training to be even more destructive. In fact, ISIS declared the territory controlled by Boko Haram a

Figure 2.2 Countries which are home to ISIS-affiliated groups

province when Abubakar Shekau pledged his group's allegiance to ISIS in March 2015 (Zenn 2016).

Declaring provinces outside of ISIS's direct area of control has become standard practice for the terror group. According to the Institute for the Study of War, ISIS has declared provinces in Algeria, Nigeria, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and in the Russian republics in the Caucasus Region in addition to the provinces which it controls within Syria and Iraq (Gambhir 2016). By means of an expanding international network of support, defending its territory in Iraq and Syria, and declaring provinces abroad, ISIS legitimizes its caliphate as it eclipses al Qaeda as the leading global jihadist group (Lister 2014).

2.7.4 Conclusion

ISIS is a cultural/religious terrorist group with clearly defined goals, a potentially steady source of income, and a Salafi-jihadist ideological appeal to disenfranchised Sunni Muslims. Through brutal terror attacks ISIS has gained control over significant portions of Iraq and Syria. The group's geographic goals include gaining control over all Muslim nations and eventual expansion to rule the world under Sharia law as administered by the caliph. The threat posed by ISIS is real, but if ISIS controls no territory, its cause loses legitimacy as a viable caliphate. However, if ISIS can garner support in areas outside of its current span of geographic control, it can maintain the appearance of "remaining and expanding" as it declares more and more provinces (Issue 3).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The overarching research objective is to develop the new theoretical concept of reimagined territory which can be applied to the study of any terrorist or other extremist organization. In order to demonstrate the analytical power of reimagined territory, a case study of ISIS's propaganda publication, *Dabiq*, is presented. Two methodological approaches are used to extract place names data and cartographically visualize ISIS's agenda. First, content analysis methods (computerized and manual) are used to process the text of the magazine, sort and categorize the individual terms, extract the geographic place names, and categorize the place names into one of four scale categories. Second, qualitative GIS methods are employed to map the results for further analysis. Finally, utilizing the results of the two previous methods, narrative analysis is applied to link the place names used by ISIS to its ideological goals. Figure 3.1 depicts a conceptual flow chart of the analytical processes of this research. When the analysis of *Dabiq* is complete, the methods and analytical processes are applied to a sample of al Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine to validate the conceptual model of reimagined territory.

Four objectives guide this study designed to advance the theoretical concept of reimagined territory. As outlined in the introduction, the research:

(1) analyzes the content of the first ten issues of *Dabiq* magazine for place names, their frequencies of use, and their contexts;

Figure 3.1 Conceptual flowchart of reimagined territories

(2) visualizes the data by applying qualitative GIS techniques to choropleth and
proportional symbol mapping;

(3) analyzes ISIS's conceptualization of current political borders and future
political borders via narrative analysis based on the results of the content analysis;

(4) develops and positions the theoretical concept of reimagined territory at the
intersection of geopolitics and theories of space and place.

Figure 3.2 provides a visual overview of the objectives and the methodologies
which support the achievement of each objective. The tools and techniques associated
with each method are also listed in Figure 3.2. The objectives and methods are discussed
in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Section 3.1 provides an overview of the data used in this analysis. This section
also includes a discussion of the steps that were taken to prepare the data for the
computer-aided content analysis. Section 3.2 describes the process of content analysis in

Objectives	Methodology	Techniques
Extract place names, frequencies, and context of names	Content Analysis	Computer-aided and manual analysis
Visualize place names	Qualitative GIS	Choropleth and proportional symbols mapping
Analyze current and future concepts of political borders	Narrative Analysis	Historical context Theological context
Develop theory of reimagined territory	Case study of *Dabiq* magazine	Position new theory amidst geographic theories of place

Figure 3.2 Methodology flowchart

this study. This process includes both computer-aided and manual content analysis. Section 3.3 discusses the process of visualizing the data extracted from the magazine issues via qualitative GIS techniques. A description of the mapping tools and the steps required to generate the maps is included in the discussion. Section 3.4 outlines the process of narrative analysis which investigates the historical and theological contexts of place names in the magazine issues in order to further understand the ideology of the terrorist organization. Lastly, Section 3.5 positions the theoretical concept of reimagined territories amidst three geographic theories of place, the concept of a global balance of power, and McColl's (1969) theory of national insurgencies. A case study of *Dabiq* magazine provides the empirical example which can be applied to other terrorist organizations.

<div align="center">3.1 Data</div>

The primary data source for this dissertation is *Dabiq* magazine, published electronically by Al Hayat, the media wing of ISIS. Although the production location and method of distribution are unknown, several unaffiliated websites maintain copies of the magazine issues in Portable Document Format (.pdf) after ISIS releases them to the public. The Clarion Project (www.clarionproject.org), a nonprofit organization (based in Washington, DC) dedicated to studying Islamic extremism, is the source of all the *Dabiq* issues utilized in this study. Table 3.1 summarizes the publication information for the first ten issues of *Dabiq*.

To prepare the magazine issues for processing in R, the files are first converted from .pdf format to Plain Text File (.txt) format. This is accomplished in Adobe Acrobat Reader using the "Save As Other" function which allows the user to save a file in plain text format. Both versions of each issue are saved for future analysis. The .pdf files are used for the manual coding portion of the content analysis and the .txt files are used for

<div align="center">Table 3.1</div>

<div align="center">Issues of *Dabiq* Magazine</div>

Issue	Hijri (Islamic) Date	Gregorian Date	Length (pages)
1	Ramadan 1435	July 2014	50
2	Ramadan 1435	July 2014	44
3	Shawwal 1435	August 2014	42
4	Dhul-Hijjah 1435	October 2014	56
5	Muharram 1436	November 2014	40
6	Rabi' Al-Awwal 1436	January 2015	63
7	Rabi'Al-Akhir 1436	February 2015	83
8	Jumada al-Akhirah 1436	March 2015	68
9	Sha'ban 1436	May 2015	79
10	Ramadan 1436	June 2015	79

the computer-aided coding. To accommodate the computer-aided coding in R, several adjustments to the .txt files are necessary to ensure the most accurate results.

A test run was conducted with no adjustments to the .txt files in which they were imported into R and coded by individual terms. Several problems arose with Romanized characters and punctuation. For example, sometimes "Dabiq" appears in the text spelled with an "a" for the first vowel sound. In other places in the same magazine, the word is spelled "Dābiq" with the special character, "ā." When coded in R, the software recognizes each version of Dabiq as a unique result, thereby creating two entries for the same word. This occurs anytime a special character is used in place of a standard letter. Additionally, words that were immediately adjacent to parentheses, brackets, or curly brackets were also counted as unique entries, as R recognized the punctuation mark as a standard letter. As a result, it is necessary to change and/or remove the symbols and punctuation marks that cause conflicts in word recognition.

In order to alleviate the special character and punctuation discrepancies, the following procedure is applied to each issue of the magazine. First, the text file is opened in Microsoft Notepad. Next, the "Replace" function from the "Edit" menu is opened, and the first symbol is copied in the Replace window. For all special characters that are letters (e.g., ā, ī, ū), the standard letter (e.g., a, i, u) replaces the special letters using the "Replace All" function. The parentheses, brackets, and curly brackets are simply deleted and the space which that character occupies is also deleted. This is accomplished by leaving the "Replace With" option blank. The en-dashes and hyphens are replaced with a blank space to ensure that adjacent words do not become conjoined. The special characters other than letters (e.g., ♀) are simply removed and replaced with a blank

space. All other punctuation marks (periods, commas, question marks, exclamation

points, etc.) remain at this stage of the processing, as R recognizes and removes them

during the computer-aided coding procedure. After each character is replaced, the

updated .txt file is saved for further processing. Table 3.2 shows each character or

punctuation mark requiring adjustment from the original text.

3.2 Content Analysis

A combination of computer-aided and manual content analysis is employed in this

research. The computer-aided content analysis allows for large amounts of data to be

condensed quickly and efficiently. In this study, each magazine issue is processed and

sorted into individual words (terms) and their frequencies via a process described

hereafter. To check for context, however, this research employs manual content analysis.

Moreover, unknown terms and their contexts are discovered during the manual

verification steps which are also described in the following paragraphs.

Table 3.2

Adjustments to special characters and punctuation marks

Character or Punctuation Mark	Adjustment
ā	Replaced with "a"
ī	Replaced with "i"
ū	Replaced with "u"
( )	Replaced with blank space
[ ]	Replaced with blank space
{ }	Replaced with blank space
"	Removed (no space added)
'	Removed (no space added)
'	Removed (no space added)
-	Replaced with blank space
─	Replaced with blank space
♀	Replaced with blank space

The computer-aided content analysis is powered by the text mining package (tm) in R. In addition to the tm package, three supplementary packages are also required for the content analysis in R: RColorBrewer, which provides enhanced graphic options; wordcloud, which operates the term cloud functions; and SnowballC, which implements the word stemming algorithm used in creating the term list for each document. Each package (tm, RColorBrewer, wordcloud, and SnowballC) is loaded in R prior to performing any text mining functions. Appendix A lists the R code utilized in this study.

As previously mentioned, each magazine issue is converted to Plain Text Format. A separate folder is created for each text file and given the name of the corresponding issue (e.g., the "Issue 1" folder contains only one file: islamic-state-Dabiq1.txt). This separation is necessary because all files stored in a folder would be combined into a single corpus (object which stores a text document) in R. To examine the place names issue by issue the respective corpora must remain separate objects in R. However, to examine the first ten issues as a single entity, all issues of *Dabiq* are also copied and stored in a single folder and imported into a single corpus in R.

After reading the first magazine issue into R as a corpus, the processing begins by running a function to remove all numbers from the text. This function removes number symbols from the text as a means of condensing and decluttering the corpus. If a number is spelled out, it remains in the text as a term with an associated frequency. The next processing function is designed to remove all punctuation from the text. Leaving the punctuation as part of the text would cause issues with term frequency. For example, R would consider the words "crusader" and "crusader," as separate terms since one has an additional character at the end. By removing all punctuation marks, this issue is avoided.

Next all white space is removed from the body of the text. White spaces are any blank spaces before and after words. This process is necessary for the same reason that punctuation marks are removed—to reduce duplicate entries and improve accuracy. Following this procedure, all remaining text in the corpus is converted to lower case letters only. This also prevents duplicate entries based on capitalization differences such as "Iraq" and "IRAQ." These occur frequently in different features of the magazine such as titles, captions, and lettering as part of images or nontextual graphics. The corpus is now prepared for the final few adjustments prior to sorting the terms. Next, all stop words are removed from the text. Stop words are natural language terms that occur frequently throughout text such as "the," "and," "or," "an," etc. Removing the stop words allows for faster computation times and it reduces the clutter in the final term list. No geographic place names are included in the stop words list, thus ensuring that no relevant terms are inadvertently discarded during this process. Lastly, the stemming process collapses words to their stems such that "walks," "walked," and "walking" are all stemmed to "walk" in the final body of text. This process allows for a more accurate count of term usage throughout the document. As no place names can be reduced to a stem, this process has no effect on the geographic terms.

After all text preparation processes run their courses, R converts the text into a Term Document Matrix, which lists the terms as rows of a matrix and the documents as columns of a matrix. In each individual issue's case, there is only one document, resulting in a matrix with a single column and many rows. Various data exploration techniques are now applied to the matrix, such as querying the most frequent terms and displaying them in a term cloud. Figure 3.3 exhibits a sample term cloud generated from

Figure 3.3 Sample word cloud of Issue #1

the first issue of *Dabiq*. The frequency is depicted by font size and color, with the largest font equating to the highest frequency of occurrence. In the above sample, the minimum frequency is set to 15, which means that only terms appearing 15 times or more in the text appear in the visual output. The term cloud presents vast amounts of data—in this case an entire magazine issue—in a simple, intuitive format which is an effective way to explore data visually. Finally, the term document matrix is exported in Comma Separated Values (.csv) file format for further analysis in Microsoft Excel.

The entire process of reading in a text file, processing and adjusting the text, creating a term document matrix, and exporting a .csv file applies to each issue of the magazine. The results yield ten .csv files which become the data input for the manual content analysis. In order to view usage of place names over the entire body of text which spans ten issues, a single corpus containing all ten issues is created. The same process applies to this corpus that applied to the individual issue corpora. However, this

corpus draws all ten text files from a single directory and stores them together in one object in R. This corpus is then processed exactly like the other corpora as previously outlined. After all numbers, punctuation, white space, and stop words are removed, and all terms are converted to lower case, the term document matrix is created. Annex B contains the code for these operations.

A .csv file for the entire body of text could also be generated and exported if required, but examining the terms by issue is more efficient and provides frequencies by issue as opposed to a single value for total number of occurrences. Therefore, in this study only the individual issue matrices are exported for manual content analysis. Using the all-issues matrix, place name frequency bar plots (using issue numbers as marks along the x-axis) are generated and exported as images. As an alternative, bar plots can also be produced in Microsoft Excel using the frequency data from R. Figure 3.4 displays a frequency bar plot for "Iraq" as it occurs in each issue.

Figure 3.4 Bar plot of the frequency of "Iraq" in *Dabiq*

After the computer-aided content analysis is completed, the manual content analysis begins by opening the first .csv file in Microsoft Excel and saving it as a worksheet (.xlsx) file format. This change in format allows for full functionality in Microsoft Excel. A second spreadsheet (PlaceNames.xlsx) is required to store all manually extracted place names. This spreadsheet records the place names and frequencies by issue number. In addition to the ten issue columns, the spreadsheet also stores the place names in one of four categories based on geopolitical division and geographic scale. The largest scale category is region, defined by entities including more than one political state (or parts of more than one state), entire continents, seas, or rivers. The next scale category is country, defined by a single political state (regardless of physical size) in the current geopolitical environment. The next category is province/state, defined by either a subnational administrative division such as provinces, states, districts, and governates or an area within a given country's territory. The final category is city, defined by cities, battle sites, specific mountain peaks, or other point place names. There is also a total place names column that sums the place names and frequencies from the ten issue columns, combining the ten frequencies for a single total value.

With the proper file structure in place, the manual extraction of place names from the issue matrices ensues. The terms are sorted by highest frequency first, then alphabetically in the output files from R. Each term is read and evaluated. If the term is a geographic place name, the term and its frequency are copied and pasted into the PlaceNames spreadsheet under the corresponding issue column. In the output spreadsheet from R, the background of the place name's row is changed to yellow to

signify the name has been copied to the master list, and to provide ease of finding the term again. When the manual coding is complete for a single issue, the place names extracted from that issue are then copied into their appropriate category column in the master spreadsheet. The frequency numbers in these columns are a running total for each place listed. The names and frequencies are also added to the master place name list (sorted by total frequency, not by category) in the PlaceNames spreadsheet. When the matrices from all issues are manually coded, the final results are tallied in the master place list and the results are compared to the four category columns to check for accuracy in the frequency totals for each place name.

In each issue of *Dabiq*, many words appear which are not translated into English, but appear in the context of an English sentence. For example, the phrase listed after each use of Muhammad's name (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, which means peace be upon him) remains in Romanized Arabic throughout the text of each issue. (Later issues began to use the symbol representing "peace be upon him" instead of spelling out the phrase). Other examples include *bayah* (pledge of spiritual allegiance) and *taghut* (to rebel). Because numerous Arabic words occur in each issue, it is necessary to check each term in its sentence context to determine the English meaning, and whether or not the word is a place name. Many of the terms are defined in the text by stating the English meaning in parentheses following the Arabic word. Those which are not defined in the text are easily defined using an online Arabic-English dictionary. The most important distinction lies in determining if an Arabic word is a place name or not. This is easily determined by manually inspecting each term in the original .pdf file. Because the sentences are in English, the context of a given Arabic word is unambiguous, and the

term is obviously a place name or not. As an integral part of the manual coding process, each nonplace name definition is recorded with the corresponding Arabic term in the Arabic dictionary. It should be noted that if this dictionary were to be used for other purposes, the translation of each term would need to be verified by an Arabic specialist.

Furthermore, because of the differing methods of Romanization, the spellings of Arabic place names vary, even within the same issue. Each spelling is researched in an effort to capture all place names. Although the term document matrix records different spellings as separate terms, the manual content analysis ensures that multiple spellings are grouped under a single place name. One example of this phenomenon is the Syrian city of Raqqa. In some places *Dabiq* spells the city "Raqqa" and in other places it appears as "Raqqah." As a quality control measure, every Arabic place name therefore is searched in the original .pdf file to verify usage and context.

Manual content analysis is also very valuable in identifying places that have more than one name, such as the United States of America. *Dabiq* refers to the "United States of America," "United States," "America," "USA," and "US," all of which appear as distinct terms in the R output files. Manual content analysis compensates for this discrepancy by combining multiple terms into a single place name in the PlaceNames spreadsheet. Some place-names, however, are not combined even though they refer to the same absolute location. An example of this is the use of both "Afghanistan" and "Khurasan" in *Dabiq*. Although each refers to roughly the same place, the term "Khurasan" refers to an area that includes more than Afghanistan, and has an ideological and religious meaning that evokes a different feeling than "Afghanistan." This

phenomenon is an integral element of reimagined territory and is analyzed in depth in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Another benefit of manual content analysis is the ability to discern meanings of place names by context. For example, the computer recognizes "Washington" as a single term, when in context it may refer to two different places. Manual coding allows the researcher to validate the term in context to determine if "Washington" refers to the capital city of the United States, or if it refers the US state in the Pacific Northwest. This example underscores the necessity of manual coding in order to preserve empirical rigor in the study.

At the end of the manual content analysis, every term from all ten issues is verified, and all place names are tallied and categorized in the master spreadsheet. The combination of computer-aided and manual content analysis ensures that all place names are captured, proper context is substantiated, and duplicate references are combined. Because this content analysis considers every word of every issue of *Dabiq*, the problem of possible sample bias has been eliminated. The ten issues of the magazine are the entire body of work, not a sample. Furthermore, this approach can easily be duplicated by using the issues of *Dabiq* and the R code provided in Appendices A and B.

3.3 Qualitative GIS

The next phase of analysis is the cartographic visualization of the results of the content analysis. As previously stated, the place names are categorized in one of four scale categories: regions, countries, provinces/states, or cities. Maps are generated for each of the categories. The Global Administrative Area (GADM) administrative boundaries (country level and district level) shapefiles are the departure point for the map

layers. Natural Earth's (naturalearthdata.com) "Gray Earth" and "Ocean" shapefiles are combined to form the background image for the final versions of each map created. A geodatabase with the WGS 1984 geographic coordinate system is created to store the feature classes and other map layers.

The regions category is the first to be mapped. The world country administrative boundaries shapefile is loaded into ArcMap. The countries included in a given region are selected using the "Select" tool, then exported as a feature class and added to the map. For example, "Arabian Peninsula" appears in the text of *Dabiq*. For this region, all countries on the peninsula are selected and exported as the Arabian Peninsula feature class. For the purposes of this study, references to entire continents are included in the regions category. When all regions from the PlaceNames spreadsheet are built in this manner, the resulting shapefiles are merged using ArcMap's "Merge" function, creating a single regions feature class.

Some of the place names occurring in *Dabiq*, however, are antiquated references which refer to historical places or boundaries which have either changed or no longer exist in the current geopolitical environment. The previously mentioned term "Khurasan" is one example. This historical region included areas of modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. In such cases, the spatial data are digitized in ArcMap from .jpg images of existing historical maps. In other cases, *Dabiq* may refer to cultural regions which do not enjoy political autonomy in the current nation-state system. One example is Kurdistan, a cultural region that includes areas of Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran. For these cases, boundaries are digitized from existing maps. When all historical and cultural regions are

digitized, they are combined with the other regions into a single feature class. Finally, a frequency field is added to the regions feature class and the frequency totals from the PlaceNames spreadsheet are assigned to their corresponding polygons. Graduated colors are used to display the frequency results.

A similar process is used to compile the countries feature class. Once again, the world country administrative boundaries shapefile is loaded into ArcMap. The country names from the PlaceNames spreadsheet are selected and exported as a feature class, then added to the map. In the new countries feature class, a field is added to store the frequencies. The same graduated colors are used to display the country place name frequency results.

Province and state place names require a different administrative boundaries base shapefile from that used for the regions and countries maps. For this step, the global administrative boundaries (district level) shapefile is loaded into ArcMap. Next, the select function is used to highlight all districts (or similar subnational divisions) occurring in the text of the magazine. The selection is then exported as a feature class. A frequency field is added to the feature class data table and the corresponding frequency numbers are entered from the PlaceNames spreadsheet. Once again, the same graduated colors are used to display the province name frequency results.

The city place names data are treated differently in this study. A new spreadsheet is created to record the city name, X-Y coordinates, and the frequency of occurrence. The city names are imported from the finalized version of the PlaceNames spreadsheet. The coordinates for the city place names are verified in and retrieved from Google Maps or OpenStreetMaps. The coordinates are copied into the corresponding column in the

new city spreadsheet. Finally, the frequency values from the PlaceNames spreadsheet are copied into the city spreadsheet. The new city spreadsheet is then saved as a .csv file and converted into a geodatabase table using ArcMap's "Table to Table" conversion tool. The new geodatabase table is then added to the map and X-Y data are displayed. Finally, the data are exported as a feature class with WGS 1984 coordinates and added to the map. In this case, graduated symbols display the difference in city place name frequencies.

The resulting maps of place names at four geographic scales present the spatial data extracted from *Dabiq* in a visual format that is immediately intelligible to the viewer. The cartographic visualization of the data informs the narrative analysis of ISIS's ideology and conceptualization of current political borders, future borders, and goals.

3.4 Narrative Analysis

After all place names are extracted from the pages of *Dabiq* and cartographically visualized on a series of maps, the narrative analysis can proceed. Traditionally, methods of narrative analysis have focused on studying the five elements of a story's structure: setting, characters, events, problems, and resolution (Kwan and Ding 2008). Other approaches have analyzed the theme of narrative as a way of understanding the story of a people (Creswell 2012). Clandinin and Connelly (1999), however, developed a geographic approach to narrative analysis that informs this dissertation's approach to interpreting the results of the content analysis. They suggest that narratives should be analyzed for three elements: action/interaction, time, and space. The action/interaction element includes personal and social actions. The time element consists of the past,

present, and future. The space element includes the physical places of the narrative

(Clandinin and Connelly 1999).

In the case of this study, the narrative is a combination of the message of *Dabiq*

and the story told by the place names used by ISIS. To uncover this narrative's meaning,

the place names (space) need to be viewed in terms of their corresponding elements of

actions/interactions and time. The analysis examines who is acting or interacting at a

given location mentioned in *Dabiq*. References to past, present, or future places are

examined in their context of the magazine and compared to historical places and future

(prophetic) places of Islam. Thus, understanding who is acting where in which context

allows a researcher to analyze the overarching narrative of all the place names in each of

the magazine issues and how they relate to ISIS's apocalyptic ideology and agenda for

future expansion. Figure 3.5 shows an illustration of the narrative analysis process.

Figure 3.5 Narrative analysis flowchart

Narrative analysis represents the final step in the analytical process. This step relies on multiple data inputs from the previous stages of the analysis. Table 3.3 shows each method, the input required for that method, and the data output as a result of the application of the method. The computer-aided content analysis method takes the magazine issues and coverts the text to a term document matrix. This matrix becomes the input data for the manual content analysis method, which transforms the raw term document matrix into a categorized list of place names by checking the context of the terms. The next analysis step, cartographic visualization, maps the results of the manual content analysis. The narrative analysis then examines the original text, the categorized list of place names, and the mapped results to articulate a cartographically visualized conceptualization of political borders viewed in historical and theological contexts—the terrorist group's reimagined territories.

At this stage of analysis, it is necessary to examine three former empires which provide historical context to the expansion of an Islamic caliphate. The historical place

Table 3.3

Narrative analysis data inputs

Method	Input	Output
Content Analysis (computer)	Magazine issues	Term document matrix (sorted by frequency)
Content Analysis (manual)	Term document matrix; magazine issues	Categorized list of place names
Cartographic Visualization	List of place names	Categorized maps
Narrative Analysis	List of place names; categorized maps; magazine issues; historical analogy	Reimagined territory

names of *Dabiq* are compared to their original historical settings which span the Rashidun Caliphate (632-661 CE), the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 CE) and the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 CE) (Bishai 1968; Belyayev 1969; Hawting 2000). The place names from these times and circumstances provide valuable insight into the geopolitical aspirations of ISIS. Thus, the results of the narrative analysis yield a reimagined territory in which the place names of *Dabiq* (in their dual historical-modern context) are simultaneously the way in which ISIS views the world and the way it wants the world to be viewed in the future.   It is a futuristic vision based on prophetic sayings rooted in an idealized past.

3.5 Reimagined Territory's Place in
Geographic Theories of Place

This dissertation proposes the new theoretical concept of reimagined territory as an analytical approach to the ways in which terrorists conceptualize current political borders and geographic goals (future borders). These conceptualizations both advance and reinforce the organization's ideology by creating a specific sense of place, which Agnew (1987) argues is an essential element of any place. The conceptualizations also affect a terrorist organization's positionality in the global political system, either demonstrating legitimacy and thereby gaining position, or undermining their own causes and thereby losing position in the network of international actors (state and nonstate entities) as outlined by Leitner et al. (2008).

Finally, the terrorist organization's conceptualizations of geographic boundaries seek to create a sense of homeland for the followers—a place that unites the people physically and ideologically to the land itself (Tuan 1977). Each of these theories sheds

light on the ways in which terrorist organizations seek to manipulate place in an effort to gain influence in what Mackinder (1904) calls the global balance of power. If terrorist acts are political in nature, pursuing power and control for a group which had little or none previously, they are also geographic in nature. The political power which terrorist organizations pursue must be exerted in geographic space—it must literally take place.

It is at the intersection of these three geographic theories of place and Mackinder's (1904) balance of power that the concept of reimagined territory is positioned to describe the ways in which terrorist groups view the world. McColl's (1969) stages of insurgency are also interconnected to theories of place and reimagined territory, and consequently important to this study. For McColl, the insurgency achieves its ultimate goal when it controls the state's territory. But international terrorist organizations may not be limited to sovereign state boundaries. Thus, examining the group's conceptualization of territory more fully reveals the desired geographic outcome.

A case study of ISIS serves as an empirical example of the utility of reimagined territory. In this case, the propaganda magazine is the data source for place names. Other studies, however, might find social media, official group communication, or news articles as the source(s) for stated or unstated geographic aspirations. Regardless of the data source material, a content analysis yields place names that can be mapped and analyzed in the historical and ideological context of the terrorist organization. The resulting narrative analysis—based on sense of place, positionality, and homelands—provides an outline of the group's geographic goals.

This theoretical advancement has the potential to provide analysts and policy makers with the methodology and analysis necessary to anticipate a terrorist

organization's ultimate objectives. Understanding a group's reimagined territory could reveal the group's short-term, intermediate, and long-term geographic goals. The counterterrorism efforts could be consolidated and concentrated on specific objectives, making the process more efficient and effective. Furthermore, understanding the ways a terrorist organization conceptualizes place as a recruiting tool can lead to more effective counter-recruiting efforts.

<div align="center">3.6 Conceptual Model Validation</div>

Another data source is needed to validate the methodological approach and resulting theoretical concept of reimagined territories proposed in this dissertation. To this end, the methods and analysis will be applied to a second publicly available data source: al Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine. A sample of *Inspire* issues is processed and analyzed, and the results are compared to those achieved from the *Dabiq* data source. The results reveal the ways in which al Qaeda conceptualizes territorial boundaries, and how they differ from ISIS's conceptualizations.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF *DABIQ* MAGAZINE FOR

ELEMENTS OF REIMAGINED

TERRITORY

In Section 4.1, the results of the computer-aided content analysis are presented, and world cloud and bar plot visualizations of the data are explored. This section represents the quantitative portion of the mixed-methods approach employed in the dissertation. Section 4.2 presents the results of the manually-coded place names extracted from the term matrices produced in the computer-aided content analysis. This section is qualitative in nature, using predefined categories based on geographic scale to group place names in one of four classes. Section 4.3 presents the results of the cartographic visualization of the data. Results are mapped by category using choropleth symbolization for area (polygon) place names, line width for river place names (wider line represents higher frequency), and graduated symbols for point place names (cities, airports, specific mountain peaks, etc.). Section 4.4 presents a narrative analysis of the places names contained in *Dabiq* magazine in the context of the geopolitical narrative of ISIS. This section also demonstrates the utility of the reimagined territory conceptual model using ISIS as a case study. Finally, Section 4.5 validates the methods employed in the analysis of the ISIS data by applying them to another case study: al Qaeda and its

magazine, *Inspire*. This section demonstrates that the concept of reimagined territory is not limited to a single terrorist group, but can be applied to any violent group seeking power, political control, or sovereignty.

<div align="center">

4.1 Results of the Computer-Aided

Content Analysis

</div>

After the magazine issues were converted to text format and prepared for processing as outlined in Chapter 3, the computer-aided content analysis successfully reduced each issue's text into a term document matrix containing list of individual terms and their frequencies of occurrence. The terms are sorted by frequency from highest to lowest, then alphabetically when frequencies were the same. The average number of unique terms per issue was 2,690.8, with 3,351 terms (Issue 7) as the maximum value and 1,702 terms (Issue 1) as the minimum value. By far, the most frequently used term over the span of ten issues was "Allah" with 2,067 individual occurrences. Table 4.1 shows the number of unique terms (excluding stop words) that occurred in each issue.

<div align="center">

Table 4.1

Number of unique terms and highest frequency terms in *Dabiq*

</div>

Issue	Length (pages)	Unique Terms	Highest Frequency Term	Frequency
1	50	1,702	Allah	104
2	44	2,043	Allah	106
3	42	2,222	Allah	129
4	56	2,715	Will	227
5	40	2,149	Allah	120
6	63	3,323	Allah	204
7	83	3,351	Allah	313
8	68	2,852	Allah	264
9	79	3,221	Allah	253
10	79	3,330	Allah	381

With the data in term document matrix format, the functionality of R allows for visual exploration of the terms and their frequencies. An interesting way to view the most frequently used terms in each of the issues is via word clouds, which "have evolved as a core technique of information visualization that is applied in many contexts" (Heimerl et al. 2014: 1833). While static, single-term word clouds used in this research cannot provide context for the terms, they can visually summarize the text in an intuitive format which is easy to interpret (Cidell 2010). The minimum frequency for the *Dabiq* issues visualizations is set to fifteen, meaning that any word used less than fifteen times in the text does not appear in the word cloud. This value was selected solely for aesthetic purposes and plays no role in the later analysis (as many important terms would be omitted if the minimum frequency were set to fifteen). For comparison and continuity across all issues, a single minimum frequency value that yielded visually desirable results for every issue had to be selected. After experimenting with a few values, it became clear that fifteen was the best fit for all issues.

The most frequently occurring terms (highest percentile using natural breaks classification) in each issue not only appear in larger font (bigger words = higher frequency), they also appear in blue font. The remaining terms (which meet the minimum frequency value) appear in green font. As Table 4.1 demonstrates, earlier issues tend to have lower total term counts. As a result, the word clouds for those issues are less dense and include fewer terms than the more dense, longer issues. As no manual coding has been applied to the term document matrix at this point in the analysis, several "stemmed" words appear in the clouds. For example, the word "people" has been stemmed to "peopl" in the matrices. Also, the stemming process changed words that end

with the letter "y" to "i" such that "army" has become "armi" and "many" has become "mani" in the clouds. Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 include the word clouds for all ten issues of the magazine.

The longstanding assumption in textual content analysis is "the higher the frequency of a word, the more central it is to the content" of the text in question (Philip 2012, 93; Krippendorf 2004). With this assumption in mind, the first obvious visual pattern that emerges is the recurrence of the high-frequency words "Allah," "will," "Islam," and "State" across all issues. (In the majority of cases "Islam" has been stemmed from "Islamic"). The term "Islamic State" is (not surprisingly) used frequently throughout the issues. It should be noted here that despite the inclusion of a geopolitical term (state) in the terror group's name, this research treats "Islamic State" as the name of political organization, not a place name. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared himself caliph and established the Islamist caliphate in Iraq and Syria, but the term "Islamic State" (or IS, ISIS, ISIL, or Daesh) refers to the spiritual, religious, and political entity embodied in the caliphate, not a geographic location.

Two contextual evidences for this argument emerge from the text of *Dabiq*. First, throughout the text, ISIS refers to its organizational apparatus and form of theocracy as the "Islamic State." Second, any mention of territory associated with the Islamic State mentions a specific location such as Iraq or Syria, not just the "Islamic State" by itself. The geographic context of "where" is always required when referring to the organization in a given location. Thus, the context of usage in *Dabiq* demonstrates that references to the Islamic State are not geographic in nature, and are therefore treated as a proper name.

Figure 4.1 Word clouds for *Dabiq* issues 1-4

Figure 4.2 Word clouds for *Dabiq* issues 5 and 6

Figure 4.3 Word clouds for *Dabiq* issues 7 and 8

Figure 4.4 Word clouds for *Dabiq* issues 9 and 10

In the cases where "Islamic State" is used in conjunction with a geographic place name, the place name is counted, but Islamic State is not counted.

The second noteworthy item from the word clouds is the presence of several geographic place names among the second tier of higher frequency words (green font in the figures). Those appearing include Dabiq, Iraq, Sham, Syria, Yemen, Turkey, and Libya. Although the context of these place names cannot be discerned from the word clouds, the relative importance of place names to the body of text can be assumed. Still, the word clouds are an effective way to view a summary of the most frequently used terms in the body of text. The analytical value of the term document matrices, however, is greatly increased when combined with manual coding and categorization.

4.2 Results of the Manual Content Analysis

The data input for the manual content analysis is a combination of the term document matrices generated in the previous stage and the original magazine issues. In many circumstances, computer-aided categorization is efficient and accurate. Content analysis software programs have the capability to assign meanings (categories) to words based on their context in the document (Al Fawareh et al. 2008). Other research has shown that machine learning methods (artificial intelligence) can produce similar accuracy results when compared to manual extraction and classification methods (Sebastiani 2002; Nahm and Mooney 2002; Mooney and Bunescu 2005; Pang and Lee 2008). However, in most cases, the software requires either a robust logic database, a set of precoded documents (created by manual coding), or other types of predetermined data dictionaries (Al Fawareh et al. 2008; Sebastiani 2002; Mooney and Bunescu 2005).

As this dissertation is the first research of its kind, there are no preexisting data dictionaries or precoded documents for use in computer-aided content analysis. However, during the manual coding process, a dictionary of Arabic terms and names (including non-Arabic names) was created to aid in efficiency of term recognition in subsequent issues. While this list of terms served its intended purpose during the manual coding stage, it could also be used as a data dictionary in further research of Islamist terror groups' correspondence. After coding the terms from ten issues of *Dabiq* and five issues of *Inspire*, the final dictionary contains 1,723 Arabic terms and names.

The first stage of the manual coding is determining if a term is a place name. Many of the words are obviously not geographic place names, but many are ambiguous outside of context. For every known place name, every unknown proper noun, and every unknown Arabic term or name, the term was located in the original text using the find function of Adobe Acrobat Reader. Using the textual context of the term, each unknown word is classified as either a place name, or not. If a term is determined to be a place name, it is copied along with its frequency to the PlaceNames spreadsheet and pasted in the corresponding issue's column. Furthermore, each place name is verified using Google Maps and OpenStreetMap, which are instrumental in retrieving the geographic coordinates for the terms in the cities category.

Several place names appear in the text of *Dabiq* in more than one form. For example, the Syrian city of Aleppo is sometimes referred to as "Aleppo" and sometimes as "Halab." Further examples include the United States being listed as "US," "USA," "United States," and "America;" and Iran being listed as either "Iran" or "Persia." For the first stage of manual content analysis, each of these terms is counted separately,

such that the final column of place names for any given issue (as recorded in the

PlaceNames spreadsheet) could include more than one name for the same place. The

multiple names are combined in the following stage (discussed hereafter).

Usage of the term "US" presents a particular challenge in the manual coding

process. As the script in R removes all capital letters to facilitate the frequency count,

there is no differentiation between the plural pronoun "us" and the political state "US" in

the term matrix. Thus, each instance of the letters "u" and "s" in succession are

examined in the original text. The find function in Adobe Acrobat Reader is not case

sensitive, however, and a search for "us" yields every instance in the entire document

regardless of case, position in words, and so forth. A note with the total number of

references to the United States is then made next to the "us" entry in the term document

matrix.

Table 4.2 shows the total number of place names per issue along with the highest

frequency place name and its corresponding frequency. The average number of place

Table 4.2

Number of place names and highest frequency places in *Dabiq*

Issue	Length (pages)	Place Names	Highest Frequency Place	Frequency
1	50	63	Dabiq	35
2	44	63	Dabiq	24
3	42	62	Sham	35
4	56	79	Iraq	38
5	40	48	Arabian Peninsula	25
6	63	87	Dabiq	45
7	83	98	Dabiq	75
8	68	96	Dabiq	47
9	79	116	Yarmouk	55
10	79	98	Sham	75

names per issue is eighty-one. The maximum number of place names in any issue is 116

(Issue 9) and the minimum number is forty-eight (Issue 5). The most frequently

mentioned place name is Dabiq, with 430 instances. Figure 4.5 shows the eleven highest

frequency place names (three are tied at fifty-five for ninth most) occurring in *Dabiq*.

The frequency totals displayed in Figure 4.5 represent the sum of all place names

and their variants. After all place names from each individual issue had been identified

and copied into the PlaceNames spreadsheet, the categorization of each term could

commence. To accomplish this task, the first term in the first issue is inserted into the

find function in Excel, which locates each occurrence. The frequency value of the place

name is summed from all ten issue columns and totaled in the appropriate geographic

category. For instance, the term "Jerusalem" is categorized as a city. If a place name has

a known alternate name, that term is also searched in conjunction with the first term. If,

Place Names with the Highest Frequency in *Dabiq*

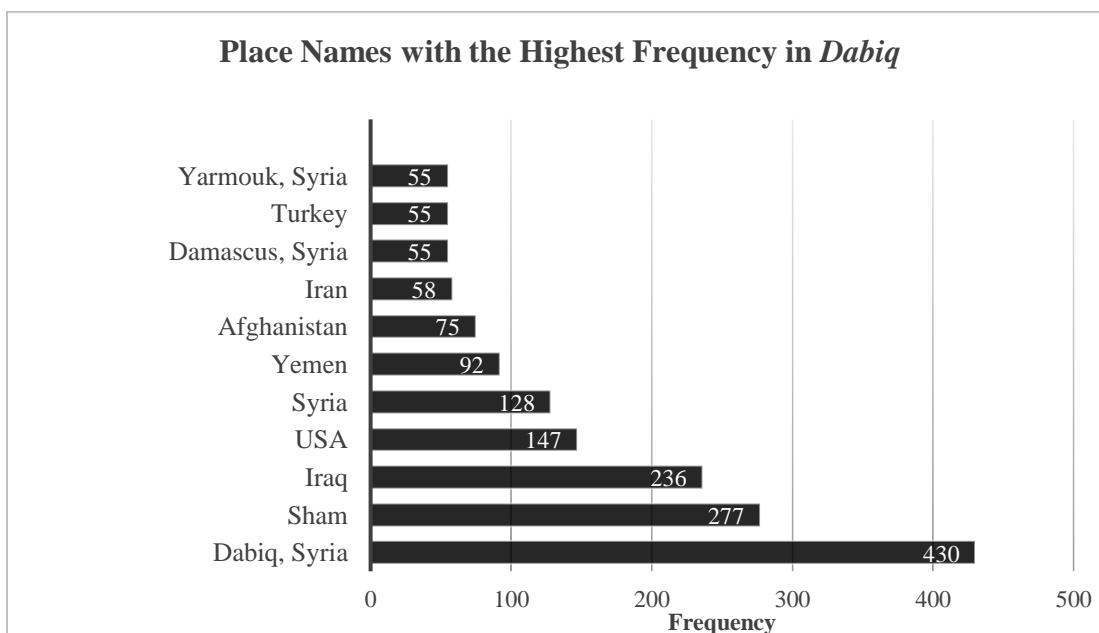| Place Name	Frequency
Yarmouk, Syria	55
Turkey	55
Damascus, Syria	55
Iran	58
Afghanistan	75
Yemen	92
Syria	128
USA	147
Iraq	236
Sham	277
Dabiq, Syria	430

Figure 4.5 Highest frequency place names occurring in *Dabiq* issues 1-10

however, a place name has an unknown (to the author) alternate name (al Quds and

Baitul Maqdis for Jerusalem), the frequency of the alias is added to the original term's

total in the appropriate category when the alias is discovered either later in that issue or in

other issues. This method ensures that terms are not double-counted, not used in separate

categories, nor plotted as two different places.

Additionally, the context of each term is verified in the text of the magazine to

distinguish between places which could fall into two or more categories. An example of

this is "Raqqah," which could refer to either the Syrian province or its capital city. If the

frequency for Raqqah in a given issue totals 15, each occurrence is located in the

magazine and categorized appropriately according to its usage. Furthermore, as the term

document matrix counts only single words as opposed to groups of words, compound

place names are searched and verified in the original text. For example, "America" might

have a frequency of 15 in one of the issues. Unless each instance is verified in the

magazine text, a modifying term such as "North" or "South" could be overlooked and

counted along with the other uses of "America." Thus, place names like "Asia" and

"Africa" are searched in the magazine to discover any modifying terms such as "Central"

or "South," and those distinctions are recorded as separate place names in the final list of

terms and their frequencies.

The manual coding process of categorizing all places names into one of four

geographic categories results in a final count of 353 distinct places. There are twenty-

five place names in the regions category, sixty-two in the countries category, seventy-

three in the provinces category and 193 in the cities category (See Appendices C, D, E,

and F for the complete listings).   Table 4.3 displays the frequency results by category

Table 4.3

Number of place names and highest frequency places in *Dabiq* by category

Category	Place Names	Highest Frequency Place	Frequency
Regions	25	Sham	277
Countries	62	Iraq	236
Provinces	73	Waziristan (Pakistan)	52
Cities	193	Dabiq, Syria	430

along with each category's most frequently occurring place name and its associated

number of occurrences in the first ten issues of *Dabiq*.

The majority of the place names mentioned in *Dabiq* have a relatively low

frequency. Of the 353 terms, 247 (70%) appear less than five times over the span of ten

issues. Two hundred (57%) place names occur two times or less throughout the text.   It

would be of little value to visualize bar plots of frequency by issue for these low-

occurrence terms. For higher frequency terms, however, it is useful to visualize changes

in place name usage across all issues via bar plots. The eleven highest-frequency place

names are selected for bar plot visualization (the same terms which were listed earlier in

Figure 4.5). Figures 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 display bar plots for these terms along with trend

lines (dotted lines) for reference. The general trend is increasing over time for the

highest-frequency place names. Of the places plotted in these figures, only Iraq has a

decreasing trend from Issue 1 to Issue 10.

To further explore the data, the dates of the two deadliest terror incidents which

are first, within the timeframe covered by the first ten issues of *Dabiq*, and second,

claimed to be perpetrated by ISIS are compared to frequency bar plots for the locations of

the attacks.   The first incident occurred at the National Bardo Museum in Tunis, Tunisia

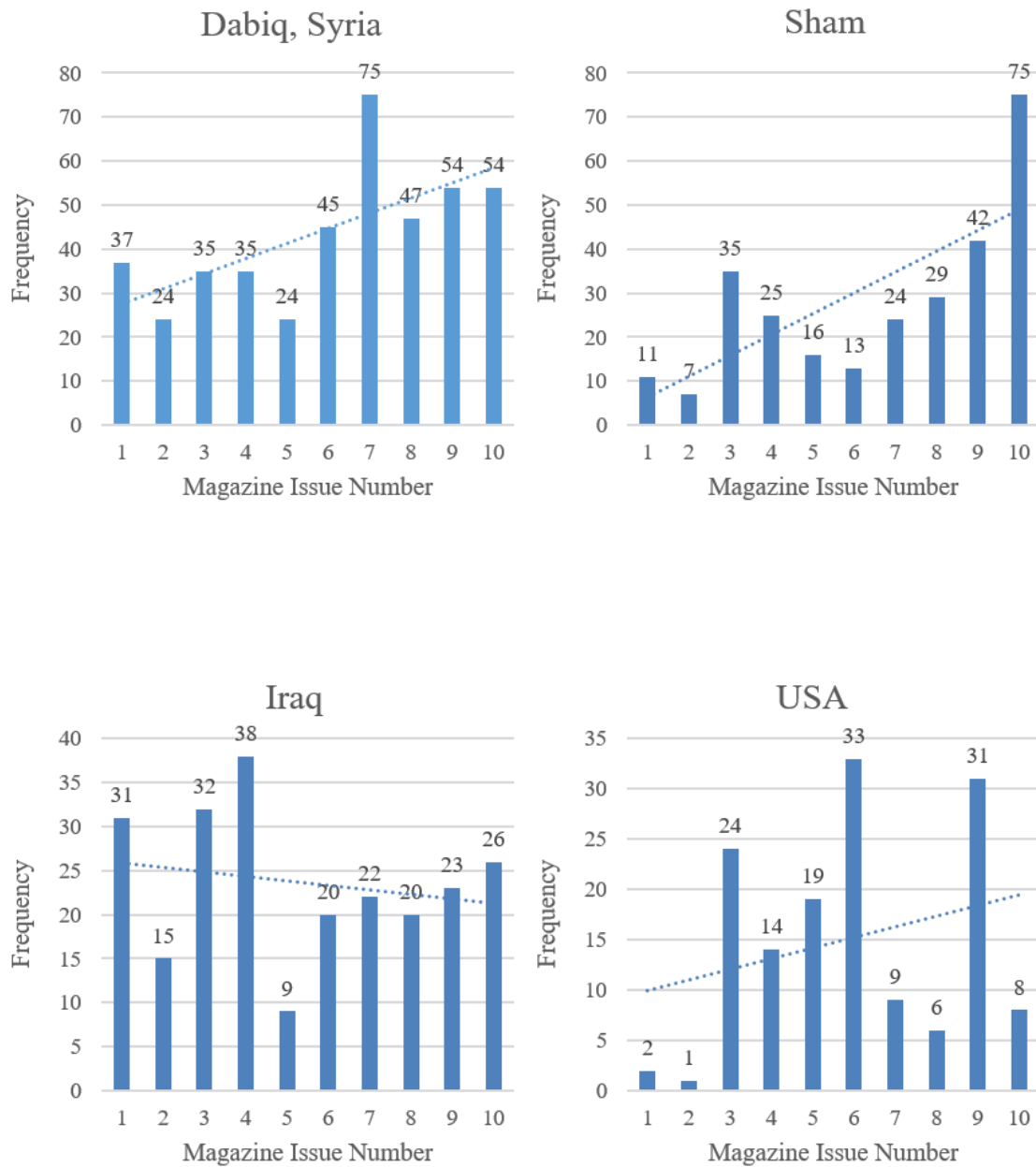Figure 4.6 Bar plots of the four highest frequency place names occurring in *Dabiq* issues 1-10
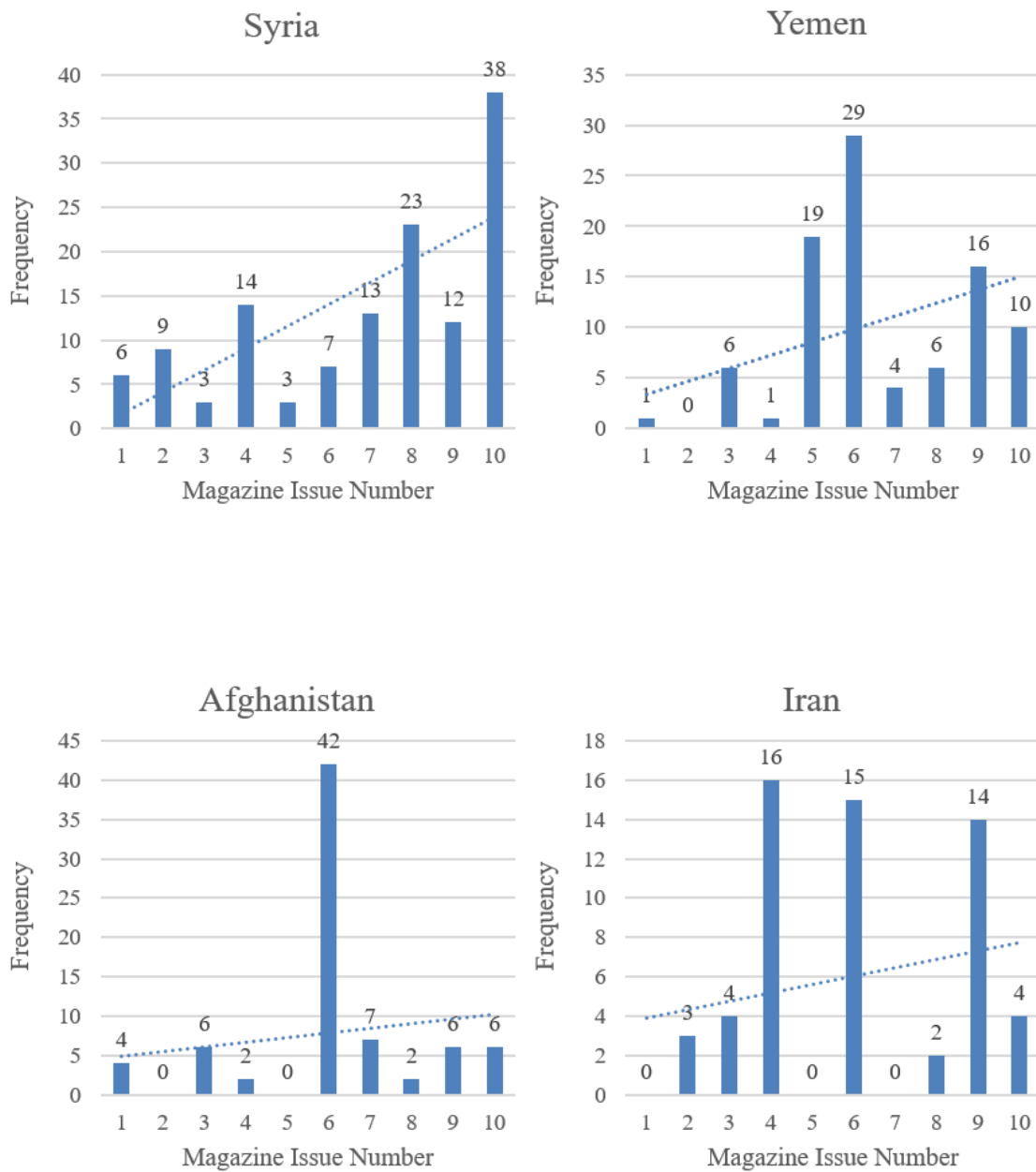
Figure 4.7 Bar plots of the fifth through the eight highest frequency place names occurring in *Dabiq* issues 1-10
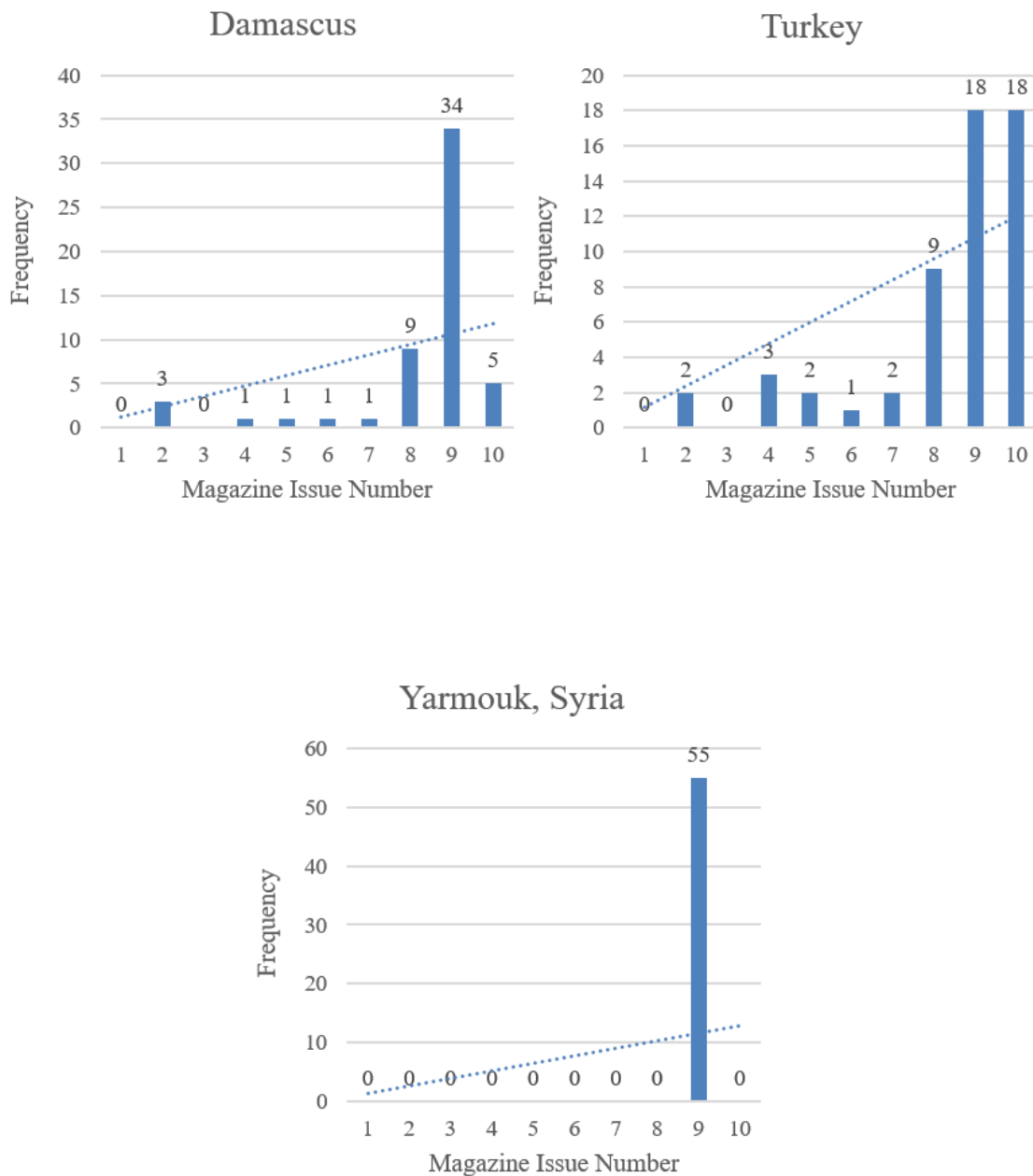
Figure 4.8 Bar plots of the ninth highest frequency place names (three places had a frequency of 55) occurring in *Dabiq* issues 1-10. The dotted line is the trend line for each place name.

where gunman killed more than twenty tourists, many of whom were European (Kirkpatrick 2015). The second incident occurred just two days later in Sanaa, Yemen where suicide bombers coordinated attacks on Shiite mosques, killing more than one hundred thirty worshippers (Kalfood et al. 2015).

One interesting question to ask of these data is whether or not the text of the magazines contains an increase in place name frequency prior to an attack. In other words, can researchers narrow down possible locations for upcoming attacks by detecting increasing frequencies of place names in the most current issues of the magazine? A similar phenomenon was reported by US intelligence agencies which experienced an increase in electronic "chatter" in the months and weeks leading up to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001 (Zegart 2005). In the case of the two deadliest attacks during the time period covered by these issues, however, there appear to be no predictive indications (via frequency or context) of pending attacks.

Both attacks occurred at the end of March 2015, which coincides with Issue 8. As both attacks are mentioned by name and with images of the aftermath in Issue 8, it is clear that the issue was published after the attacks occurred. In viewing the frequencies from Issues 6 and 7 (roughly coinciding with January and February 2015), there is no increase in either "Tunis" or "Tunisia" prior to the attacks (see Figure 4.9). Furthermore, both terms combined only garner three mentions in the first seven issues. In the case of Sanaa, Yemen, there are only two occurrences in the first seven issues, and none in Issues 6 and 7. Yemen's highest frequency occurs in Issue 6 (29 mentions), bolstered by an article focusing on why al-Zawahiri and al Nadhari of al Qaeda are mistakenly opposed to the Islamic State's expansion into Yemen. The next issue, however, only mentions

Figure 4.9 Bar plots of the two locations of the deadliest terror attacks during the time period covered by *Dabiq* issues 1-10. Issue 8 coincides with the month of the attacks.

Yemen four times. For these two attacks, the evidence suggests that the magazine is not

a reliable indicator of attacks to come, but serves as a means of publicizing the group's

successful endeavors.   The most mentions of "Tunis," "Tunisia," and "Sanaa" each occur

in Issue 8, which was published immediately following the attacks.

In an effort to validate this pattern using one of the more infamous terror

operations conducted by ISIS, the Paris attacks were investigated, despite their

occurrence outside of the time period covered by the issues of *Dabiq* in this study. The

Paris attacks were carried out by three teams of ISIS militants who killed more than 100

people in different locations in the city on November 13, 2015 (Nossiter et al. 2015). The

date of the attack coincides with Issue 12, which dedicates the cover and the foreword

section to the attack. Paris is mentioned seven times in the first 10 issues (once in Issue

6, five times in Issue 7, and once in Issue 8). The spike in Issue 5 is attributed to the

commentary focusing on the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks (which were claimed by al Qaeda) of

January 7, 2015 (Callimachi and Higgins 2015). There is no further mention of Paris in

Dabiq until Issue 12. Once again, the magazine does not appear to tip ISIS's hand for

future attacks. To date, it seems to have been used only as a medium to advertise

successful attacks after the events. However, as more violent event data become

available at finer spatial and temporal resolutions, the contents of the magazine may be

tested for predictive capabilities of the magazine, especially in areas closer to or under

ISIS control. At present such data are unavailable for public use.

A final note for manual coding turns to a limitation which is shared by the

categorization and cartographic visualizations processes—clearly defining what and

where "the West" and "the East" are. In *The Myth of Continents*, Martin Lewis and

Kären Wigen (1997) examine the metageographical categories of West (Occident) and East (Orient). They argue that although each term had a specific geographic context in their original meanings, these meanings have shifted over time to such an extent that today "the West" and "the East" are essentially nonspatial categories (Lewis and Wigen 1997). Indeed, the meaning of the West has transitioned from Latin Christendom in its original context, to noncommunist Europe, Canada, and the United States following World War II, to a synonym for the "developed world" in modern discourse. Meanwhile, the meaning of the East has changed from Southwest Asia in its original context, to communist Europe and Russia, to the "Third World" or "developing world" today (Lewis and Wigen 1997). While the contested and ever-changing meanings of the West and the East are somewhat problematic with respect to mapping, it is the shift from spatial to nonspatial meaning which has rendered the terms essentially unmappable.

ISIS uses "the West" fifty-seven times and "the East" four times over the span of ten issues of *Dabiq*. In nearly all of the occurrences of the West, ISIS employs the term as a reference to an opposing ideology, forms of government, groups of people, and socio-religious beliefs and practices. Rarely is the West used as a place name. Rather, it is a mindset, a culture, or an ideology which presents external opposition to Islam. (Islam-internal opposition to ISIS is referred to as either "*murtad*," or apostate, for fellow Sunni Muslims, or "*rafidah*," or rejector for Shia Muslims). Therefore, this research acknowledges the limitations of both defining and mapping the terms, West and East, and leaves them unmapped. However, the terms are viewed (later in this chapter) in their nonspatial context employed by ISIS as a means of constructing the terrorist identity which is fundamentally rooted in opposition to its Western Other.

Similar to the West-East binary narrative, ISIS employs another pair of opposite terms which seem to be geographic but are nonspatial in context. These terms are "Land of Islam," with fifteen occurrences and "Land of *Kufr*" (unbelief) or "Land of *Harb*" (war), with thirty-one occurrences over ten magazine issues. Lewis and Wigen (1997) observe that premodern Muslim scholars divided the whole of their known world into one of those two categories. ISIS seems to take the same binary approach, although its definition is more narrow and not necessarily spatial. For ISIS, the lands of Islam are anywhere that ISIS has control, while the lands of *kufr* are literally everywhere else, including all Muslim-majority countries and states with Islamic governments which would have been included in the original definition. Simply stated, if ISIS is in control, it is the land of Islam. Everything else is not.

This binary categorization is problematic, however, due to the constant capture and recapture of territory in the ongoing war in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, the Caucasus, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, and anywhere ISIS has some measure of influence or control. Lacking the more well-defined (yet still changing) boundary of the original land of Islam, ISIS's land of Islam is a moving, fluid entity with ever-shifting borders, spaces of control, and geographic meanings. Like the West-East binary, the Islam-*kufr* pair is evoked more for identity building than for describing geographic space in the pages of *Dabiq*. For these reasons, the land of Islam and the land of *kufr* are also acknowledged as important ideological constructs to be considered in the narrative analysis, but are not mapped in this research.

4.3 Results of the Cartographic Visualization

The results obtained from the manual categorization process are used to create a series of twenty-one maps. Because the place names from three of the geographic categories are represented as polygons on the maps, there would be considerable overlap if all place names were mapped together. Moreover, as the size and location of the regions, countries, and provinces vary significantly, a small-scale map would omit much of the detail that can be achieved using several maps at variable scales. Thus, the results of the manual coding are mapped within their categories according to the spatial distribution of the place names.

Additionally, each place name is mapped individually by its frequency result rather than nesting the terms in a geographic hierarchy. In a nested hierarchy, the larger-scale terms would be combined with the smaller-scale place names such that the frequencies of Mecca, Medina, and other cities or features in Saudi Arabia would be added to the province, country, and region total and mapped as a single frequency. While a nested hierarchy map would show a similar spatial distribution of high frequency place names, considerable detail and nuance would be lost from the country level down to the city level as the larger-scale place names are subsumed into country and region place names. Moreover, the nested hierarchy approach is far more susceptible to the "territorial trap" (privileging the international state as fixed units) than a multiscale approach which includes the larger-scale place names, even if the multiscale approach must also be cautious of the territorial trap (Agnew 1994). One particularly illustrative example of the territorial trap is Russia and its immense territorial expanse. ISIS's presence in Russia is limited to small pockets in the North Caucasus region, yet the entire spatial extent of

Russia is mapped. While acknowledging this limitation at the regional and country

scales, the territorial trap is mitigated by mapping multiple scales and by exploring the

meanings of place names as employed by ISIS. Thus, in an effort to map the terms as

ISIS uses them, the place names are visualized using a multiscale approach. The

following sections exhibit and discuss the cartographic visualization results of the

regions, countries, provinces, and cities categories.

4.3.1 Cartographic Visualization Results
of the Regions in *Dabiq*

The manual classification process yields twenty-five distinct place names in the

regions category. The place names are further categorized as either continents, current

regions, historical regions, or hydrologic features. One exception is Central America,

which, although it is a current region place name, is mapped with the continents to

optimize the map scale. If Central America were included in the current regions map, the

scale would be too small to show sufficient detail in the spatial extent of all current

regions. It would also be of little value to map this region by itself (there are no other

region place names in the Western Hemisphere) when it could easily be included in the

continents map. Figure 4.10 is the map of the continent place names in *Dabiq* magazine.

The continents map presents *Dabiq* frequency data in the Robinson projection,

which minimizes overall distortion (error) in global scale maps (Dent et al. 2009). The

frequencies are depicted using graduated colors (choropleth technique). Typically, raw

data or count data are not suited to choropleth mapping because the numbers are not

standardized to account for size differences in the areal units (Dent et al. 2009). For

example, mapping the total population of provinces in a country would alter the

Figure 4.10 Frequency of continent place names in *Dabiq*

perception of population distribution, especially if larger provinces had higher total population. However, if population density were mapped, the data would be standardized (population per square kilometer) across all areal enumerations, and smaller units could be directly compared to larger areal units.

For this study, however, the data (frequencies of place names) are not geographic phenomena which occur *within* areal units, they are textual references *to* those areal units. There is no relationship between spatial area and place name usage that needs to be or even could be standardized in a meaningful way. Furthermore, applying graduated symbols or dot density mapping techniques (traditionally associated with total or raw count data) for the regions, countries, and provinces categories obfuscates the spatial patterns which are immediately intuitive in a graduated color scheme applied to areal units. The most effective way to represent these frequency data is the choropleth technique using a sequential color scheme (light yellow through brown) with the cartographic convention of "dark equals more" (Harrower and Brewer 2003). Unmentioned countries, continents, oceans, and seas are mapped for reference. For these background items, the standard cartographic conventions of gray for background land features and blue for background water features are adopted.

The data for the map are classified using the natural breaks (Jenks) method. This method has three distinct advantages with respect to the *Dabiq* data. First, the frequency values of place names do not have a normal distribution, eliminating standard deviation as a useful classification scheme (Dent et al. 2009). Second, equal interval classification produces classes which contain no observations due to the distribution of data values across the range of frequencies. Finally, the equal frequency approach produces maps

which have less contrast between classes than the natural breaks classification (acceptable, but not optimal). Therefore, for these frequency data, the best classification method is natural breaks because it maximizes the distinction between classes while minimizing the variance of values within each class (Jiang 2012).

Europe is the most often mentioned continent with thirty occurrences. The next closest continent is Australia (also mapped with the countries category as it is impossible to separate continent from country in the case of Australia) at twelve, then Africa at eight occurrences. Interestingly, ISIS appears to favor "Europe" over smaller geographic regions: "Western Europe" with two occurrences and "Iberian Peninsula" with one occurrence are the only two subregions of Europe appearing in the pages of *Dabiq* (see Figure 4.11). In the cases of Africa and Asia (only three occurrences), ISIS seems to prefer the smaller regions over the entire continent. In Asia, ISIS uses "Arabian Peninsula," "Caucasus," "Kurdistan," "Middle East," and "Persian Gulf" more frequently than the continent place name. In Africa, *Dabiq* refers to West and North Africa twenty-five times, totaling three times as many references as Africa. For North America, the choice is overwhelmingly country-level place names (USA with 144 occurrences versus just one for the continent), while South America at any level is comparatively ignored by ISIS.

Figure 4.11 is a map of the current regions occurring in *Dabiq* issues 1-10. The map employs the Plate Carrée projection which optimizes the viewing extent of the map. The majority of the remaining maps also utilizes this projection in an effort to maximize the area of the polygons being mapped, standardize the distortion across all maps, and for efficiency of incorporating external data (default projection for GADM and Natural

Figure 4.11 Frequency of current region place names in *Dabiq*

Earth). All other projections are noted explicitly in the text. This research acknowledges that defining regions by economic unions, political alliances, geographic features, or any other grouping is a process of managing contested meanings. One geographer may insist that Europe has specific geopolitical regions, while another would draw differing boundaries and regions altogether (see Cohen 2003 and de Blij 2005).

With these caveats in mind, the regions presented here fit within the range of commonly used definitions in the modern world system. The region polygons are constructed by merging the shapes of the included countries. The country boundaries appear in the background for general reference. Although the Arabian Peninsula is also included in the Middle East, it is shown as the top layer to prevent it from being masked. Similarly, Western Europe includes the Iberian Peninsula, which is displayed as the top layer to avoid being masked by the larger region. The polygon for Kurdistan was digitized from a map of Kurdistan found on the Kurdish Institute's website (n.d.). The boundaries encompass those areas which have a Kurdish majority among the residents. In this way, Kurdistan is more of a cultural entity and not a recognized political entity.

The Arabian Peninsula occurs the most times among the current regions mentioned by ISIS. West Africa, the Middle East, Kurdistan, and the Caucasus also have relatively high frequencies. These areas encompass many of the ISIS-declared provinces, which may account for the higher frequency. However, ISIS also declared provinces in Libya and Afghanistan/Pakistan, which fall in regions with relatively few mentions (albeit higher frequencies in the countries and provinces categories).

Figure 4.12 is a map of the historical regions mentioned in the pages of *Dabiq*. These place names are no longer used in the current geopolitical environment, but

Figure 4.12 Frequency of historical region place names in *Dabiq*

represent places of an earlier age—the golden age of Islam (Lapidus 1992). The borders

of these regions are approximations of territorial extents based on historical maps. The

Historical Atlas of the Islamic World provided the areal extents for Andalus,

Mesopotamia, and Transoxiana (Nicolle 2003). The historical borders of Khurasan were

derived from cartographic information at Anthrogenica.com (Atmal 2013). Finally, the

Atlas of the Qur'an outlined the areal extents of Sham and Hijaz (Khalil 2003).

The most frequently used term is Sham, which refers to the historical region of

Greater Syria or the Levant. This region roughly covers an area equivalent to modern-

day Syria, Jordan, parts of southern Turkey, western Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine,

eastern Egypt and northern Saudi Arabia. Sham boasts the second highest frequency

place name in any category, underscoring its ideological importance for ISIS (see section

4.4 Narrative Analysis). Khurasan, a distant second to Sham, still maintains a relatively

high frequency in the regions category. This historical region covered modern-day

Afghanistan, parts of Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and

Pakistan. In the earlier issues of *Dabiq*, ISIS refers to Khurasan in this context.

However, after declaring their own "Wilayat Khurasan" (province), later references in the

text refer to the province Khurasan (mapped in the provinces category).

Andalus is the Islamic name for the region roughly equivalent to the modern

Iberian Peninsula. However, Andalus did extend into what is now southern France, and it

did not include portions of the northern coast of modern-day Spain (Nicolle 2003). The

Hijaz is an ancient region which extends from the Gulf of Aqaba down the Red Sea coast

of modern-day Saudi Arabia. Home to Arab tribes and Jews before the days of

Muhammad, the Hijaz has housed many political regimes from the early Arab caliphates,

to the Wahhabi, the Egyptians, and the Ottomans (Ochsenwald 2015). It is the place of Islam's two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina. Mesopotamia is the ancient Greek name for the "land between the rivers" (Euphrates and Tigris) in what is now Iraq and Syria (Pollock 1999). This region overlaps Sham along its northeastern reaches.

Transoxiana is the final historical region place name. This area consists of parts of modern-day Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Like Mesopotamia, the meaning of Transoxiana is rooted in Greek, meaning "the land on the other side of the Oxus River" (Allouche 2007: 45). The region spanned the area between the Oxus River (Amu Darya in the modern world) and the Syr Darya River. As it overlaps Khurasan on the map, the transparency level for Transoxiana is increased to allow viewers to see the northern borders of Khurasan.

Figure 4.13 depicts the final regions category map—hydrologic features mentioned in *Dabiq* magazine. The Persian Gulf was exported from the Natural Earth oceans shapefile. The Tigris, Euphrates, and Indus Rivers were digitized from ESRI's National Geographic base map layer. Country boundaries (and select country names) are shown in gray for reference. This map departs from the sequential color scheme applied to the other maps in the analysis for two reasons. First, the cartographic convention for mapping hydrologic features is blue. In keeping with that tradition, these water features are presented in blue. Second, both polygon and line features appear on this map, and each type of feature requires a unique form of representation. Line width indicates the difference in frequency in the river features, where thicker lines represent higher frequencies. Because there is only one polygon feature (Persian Gulf) and one corresponding frequency, a sequential color scheme is unnecessary. A blue polygon

Figure 4.13 Frequency of hydrologic region place names in *Dabiq*

outlined in light blue distinguishes the Persian Gulf from the gray-blue water features in the background.

4.3.2 Cartographic Visualization Results
of the Countries in *Dabiq*

The manual categorization process yields sixty-two country place names. Unlike the regions category, the countries need no further categorization to prevent overlapping entities. However, in order to optimize the visualization of countries of differing areal dimensions, the maps display countries in geographic groupings defined by the data in a series of four maps. Based on the spatial distribution of countries mentioned in *Dabiq*, the four maps are the Western Hemisphere, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and Asia. Country polygons are exported from the GADM feature class. The same sequential color scheme (light yellow through brown) denotes frequency.

Figure 4.14 is the map of countries in the Western Hemisphere which appear in the pages of *Dabiq* magazine. The USA Contiguous Lambert Conformal Conical projection minimizes distortion within the extent of this map. The United States is the most frequently mentioned country on this map, and the second most frequently mentioned country overall with 144 occurrences. With ten mentions, Canada is a distant second. The remaining four countries (Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela) only garner one mention each. The very high frequency total for the United States is expected from ISIS, an ideological offspring of al Qaeda and Salafi-jihadism, which have often referred to the US as "the Great Satan" (Boroumand and Boroumand 2002). The recurrent references to the "Other" are an important facet of establishing and perpetuating ideology—a point which is further analyzed later in this chapter.

Figure 4.14 frequency of Western Hemisphere country place names in *Dabiq*

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Figure 4.15 is a map of European countries mentioned in the magazine. The UK and Russia each have the highest total number of references with thirteen. (The Middle Eastern and North African countries on this map are discussed later). Like the US, these countries represent the "Other" in ISIS's ideological narrative. Other relatively high-frequency countries like Belgium and France, however, gain more mentions because of successful ISIS-led or ISIS-inspired operations. As previously mentioned, France has a higher total due to reportage on the *Charlie Hedbo* attack. Belgium's higher numbers are attributed to commentary on the shooting at the Jewish Museum of Belgium on May 24, 2014 in Brussels (Higgins 2014). Compared to other geographic regions mapped in this category, European countries have relatively low frequency totals. However, ISIS used the continent's term thirty times, indicating its discursive importance.

Figure 4.16 is a map of countries in the Middle East and Africa. This area represents the highest concentration of high-frequency country terms. Twelve of the top fifteen countries appear on this map (see Appendix D). It is expected that Iraq and Syria would yield high totals, as ISIS maintains de facto sovereignty there. Yemen, Iran, Turkey, and Libya also boast high frequencies. Turkey and Iran are perceived as military and ideological enemies to ISIS, which views the Turkish government as an apostate regime and the Iranian (Shia) people as rejecters of the true form of Islam (Akyol 2016). ISIS has declared provinces in both Yemen and Libya, which contribute to the higher frequencies (Lister 2015, Zelin 2016).

Figure 4.17 is a map of the Asian countries mentioned in *Dabiq*. With seventy-five occurrences, Afghanistan has the highest frequency outside of Southwest Asia. Afghanistan is the easternmost country in the contiguous belt of high-frequency countries

European Countries in Dabiq Issues 1-10

Frequency

- 1 - 6
- 7 - 17
- 18 - 34
- 35 - 92
- 93 - 236

Norwegian Sea

Atlantic Ocean

North Sea

Baltic Sea

Black Sea

Mediterranean Sea

NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
ESTONIA
LATVIA
LITHUANIA
BELARUS
DENMARK (5)
UK (13)
IRELAND
NETH.
BELGIUM (11)
GERMANY (4)
POLAND (1)
FRANCE (8)
SWITZERLAND (1)
CZECH REP
AUSTRIA (1)
SLOVAKIA
HUNGARY
UKRAINE (2)
ITALY (3)
SPAIN (7)
CROATIA
BOSNIA
SERBIA
KOSOVO (1)
ROMANIA
BULGARIA
GREECE
RUSSIA (13)
GEORGIA
TURKEY (55)
CYPRUS (1)
ISRAEL (5)
JORDAN (29)
IRAN (58)
IRAQ (236)
SYRIA (128)
SAUDI ARABIA (11)
EGYPT (22)
LIBYA (48)
TUNISIA (21)
ALGERIA (22)
MOROCCO (5)

0   250   500   750   1,000
Kilometers

Data: ISIS, Natural Earth, GADM
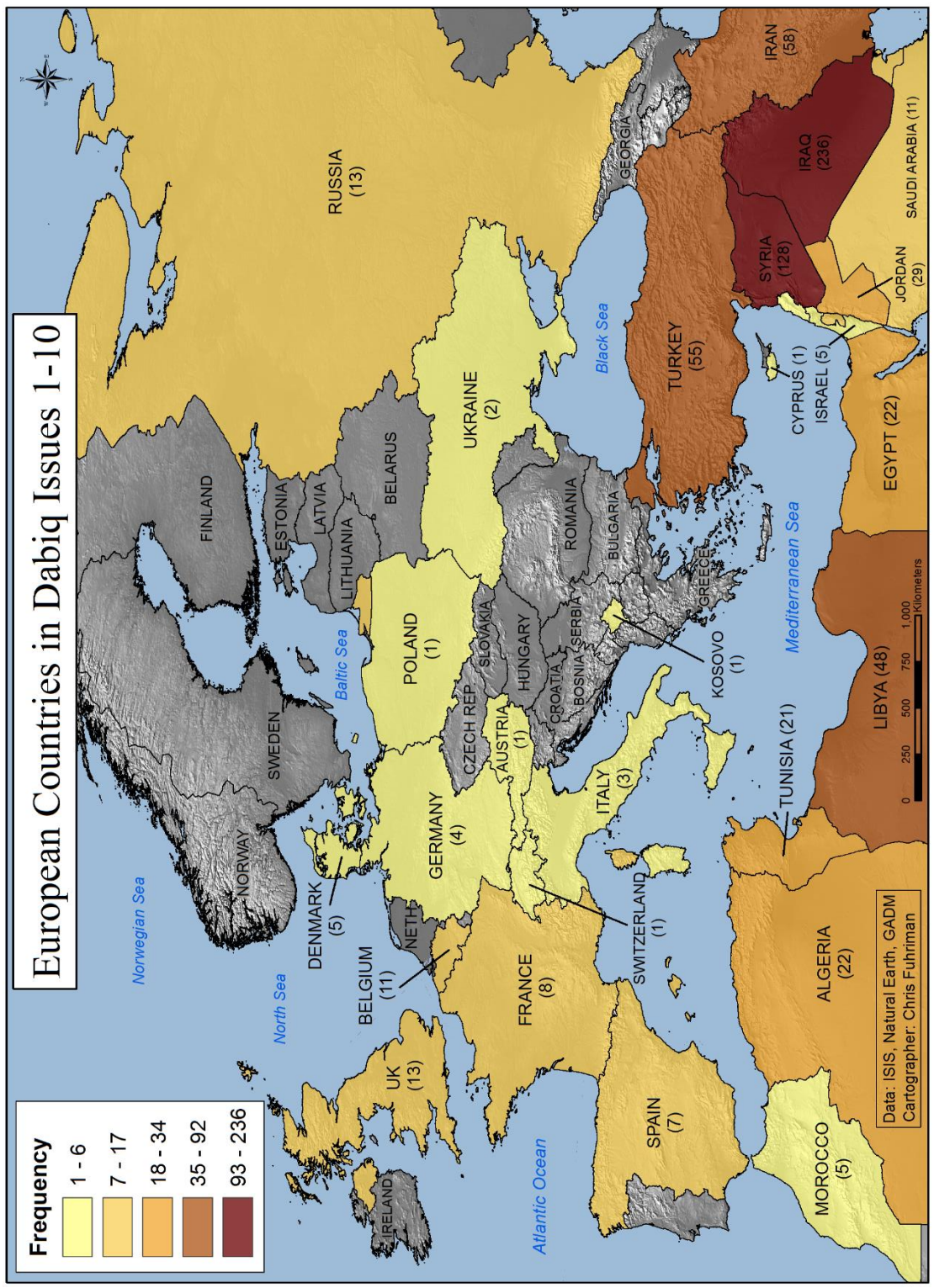Cartographer: Chris Fuhriman

Figure 4.15 Frequency of European country place names in *Dabiq*

Figure 4.16 Frequency of African and Middle Eastern country place names in *Dabiq*

Figure 4.17 Frequency of Asian country place names in *Dabiq*

that centers on Iraq and Syria. Like Yemen, Libya, Syria and Iraq, Afghanistan offers

geographic territory with limited or no national government presence and/or control.

These "ungoverned spaces" have enabled Islamist extremists to plan, train, fight, and in

the case of ISIS, establish sovereign power (albeit in a state of constant flux) (Roberts

2016). Pakistan's frequency of seventeen is perhaps a bit lower than expected, due to its

shared border with Afghanistan and its vast ungoverned space of the Federally

Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Yet, ISIS cites Waziristan (a pair of districts in the

FATA) fifty-two times—the highest total for any place name in the provinces category.

The remainder of South, Southeast, and East Asian countries have relatively low

frequencies. Japan scores the highest in those regions with thirteen occurrences. The

majority of these references are directly related to ISIS's beheading of two Japanese

journalists in January 2015 when Japan did not comply with prisoner release demands

(Norland 2015). ISIS largely ignores the majority of Southeast Asia and mentions the

most populous Muslim country in the world (Indonesia) only two times in ten issues.

The Philippines, a country with one of the highest numbers of terror attacks in recent

years, garnered only three mentions in *Dabiq* (Medina and Hepner 2013).

4.3.3 Cartographic Visualization Results
of the Provinces in *Dabiq*

The manual categorization process yields seventy-three province (or similar areal

unit) place names. This category includes all subnational divisions of space such as

provinces, states, districts, governorates, and agencies, but excludes cities, towns,

villages, or geographic features such as named mountains. The provinces are presented

in a series of six maps: Western Hemisphere, Africa, the Middle East, Arabia, the

Caucasus, and South Asia. The GADM feature class (administrative levels 1 and 2) provides the majority of the province polygons. However, some of the ISIS-declared provinces were created in ArcMap using the create features function. These are discussed in the context of each map on which they occur. The same color scheme (light yellow through brown) applies to this series of maps.

Figure 4.18 shows the provinces of the Western Hemisphere as they occurred in *Dabiq* magazine. This map utilizes the USA Contiguous Lambert Conformal Conic projection to minimize distortion within the extent of the map. Three US states and one Canadian province are mentioned one time each. ISIS discusses California's earthquakes and the Missouri's civil unrest in Ferguson (without naming the city) in terms of domestic crises that President Obama should be addressing instead of engaging in wars in Muslim lands (Issue 3). ISIS refers to Virginia in a recurring section of the magazine called "In the Words of the Enemy." This section presents quotes about ISIS given by political figures, analysts, and other influential people who oppose the terror group. In this case, Virginia Senator Richard Black's statement on the importance of Damascus in the fight against ISIS is featured. Martha's Vineyard appears in an article titled, "If I Were the US President Today" written by the captive British journalist, John Cantlie (Issue 5). Cantlie sarcastically states that if he were the US president, he would rather spend time golfing in Martha's Vineyard than deal with ISIS. Finally, the reference to Quebec in Issue 5 is in the context of the hit-and-run incident wherein a terrorist ran over two Canadian soldiers, killing one (Austen 2014).

Figure 4.19 is a map of African province place names occurring in the first ten issues of Dabiq. All provinces in Africa are ISIS-declared provinces not recognized by

Figure 4.18 Frequency of Western Hemisphere province place names in *Dabiq*

Figure 4.19 Frequency of African province place names in *Dabiq*

the international community. Since ISIS has not published any maps to date, delimiting

the boundaries of their declared provinces is speculative work at best. Furthermore, it is

very unlikely that ISIS maintains continuous, sovereign control of any of its declared

provinces outside of Iraq and Syria. Smith (2005) argues that bounded territory

representations (polygons) are less accurate than network representations (nodes and

connectors) of a central government's capacity to influence territory. Thus, depicting

these ISIS-declared provinces as bounded areas is somewhat problematic in that the

visualization of boundaries inherently suggests the limits of sovereignty. However, the

data extracted from Dabiq are not meant to represent ISIS's actual territorial holdings, but

its aspirational or reimagined geography.

With these limitations in mind, the provinces of ISIS are mapped using polygons

with boundaries based on the best information available, be it descriptions by ISIS or

traditional boundaries derived from historical place names. In Libya, ISIS established the

provinces of Tripolitania, Fezzan and Barqa (also called Cyrenaica) based on historical

divisions that existed until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Vandewalle 2012). The

boundaries for these divisions were constructed using current GADM district boundaries

for Libya, grouped into three provinces as outlined in Global Security.org's Libya map

(2011). The significance of the names and provincial divisions is discussed later in the

narrative analysis section.ISIS also declared a province in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula in

November 2014 (Kirkpatrick 2014). The boundaries for this province are the combined

boundaries of Egypt's North Sinai Governorate and South Sinai Governorate from

GADM's province feature class. To date, ISIS has not articulated the boundaries for its

Sinai territory, so the boundaries are assumed to correspond with existing borders for the

purpose of the map. There are only two references of "Sinai" in *Dabiq* prior to ISIS's

declaration of the Sinai Province. The remaining forty references all occur in the context

of ISIS's newly established province. However, as the preprovince borders of Sinai are

mapped the same as the ISIS province borders, all forty-two occurrences of Sinai are

simply mapped as ISIS's province.

Figure 4.20 is a map of provinces in the Middle East. This area represents the

highest spatial concentration of ISIS-declared provinces. The leadership of ISIS has kept

many of the existing province names. However, they have also declared many new

provinces in Iraq especially. ISIS claims authority over the following governorates in

Syria: Latakia, Idlib, Hama, Rif Dimashq, Homs, Halab (Aleppo), Ar Raqqah, Deir al-

Zour, and Hasakah. These are not mapped as ISIS-declared provinces because the

boundaries and names have not changed (with the exception of Deir al-Zour). In Iraq,

however, ISIS has completely redrawn the boundaries between provinces and has

renamed many of them. The new boundaries are shown, as are the names of the new

provinces marked with "(ISIS)" following the name. The boundaries for these new

provinces are simplified estimations based on descriptions of the provinces in *Dabiq*. For

example, ISIS describes Junub Province as being everything south of Baghdad. To create

this polygon, all existing provinces south of Baghdad are merged into one polygon.

For the other new provinces, the existing provinces are divided according to the

descriptions in the magazine to produce approximate boundary locations. One border

change of particular importance is that of Furat Province which straddles an international

boundary. ISIS deliberately targeted the Syria-Iraq border in creating Furat, a process

designed to "eliminate any remaining traces kufri (unbelief), nationalistic borders

Figure 4.20 Frequency of Middle Eastern province place names in *Dabiq*

from the hearts of Muslims" (*Dabiq* Issue #4, 18). To show the international border on the map, Furat Province is rendered more transparent. Rejection of the Sykes-Picot borders (a secret agreement between the French and British to divide the lands of the Ottoman Empire) (Fromkin 2010) is a common recurring theme which appears in six of the first ten issues a total of ten times. Expunging the effects of this 1916 agreement is central to ISIS's ideology and is examined in detail in the narrative analysis section of this chapter.

Figure 4.21 is a map of the provinces of the Arabian Peninsula that occur in *Dabiq*. ISIS declared provinces in both Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The Saudi Arabian provinces are Najd, which is the central plateau region consisting of the modern-day provinces of Ha'il, Riyadh, and al-Qassim, and Haramayn, which consists of the provinces of Mecca and Medina (Bishai 1968). The boundaries for these new ISIS provinces are constructed by merging the polygons of the existing Saudi provinces listed previously. Again, as ISIS does not exercise sovereignty within these boundaries, they are notional delimitations of approximate spatial dimensions. ISIS has not indicated a change of boundaries for the Yemeni provinces it declared in November 2014 (*Dabiq* Issue #5). Rather, like the Syrian provinces, Yemeni provinces seem to retain their established boundaries. Thus, the province borders depicted in the map are consistent with current Yemeni political boundaries.

Figure 4.22 is a map of provinces in the Caucasus region of Russia that occurred in the magazine. The Russian republics (autonomous provinces within the Russian Federation) of Dagestan, Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Ingushetia are each mentioned as separate geographic entities prior to ISIS's declaration of Al-Qawqaz

Figure 4.21 Frequency of Arabian province place names in *Dabiq*

Figure 4.22 Frequency of Russian province place names in *Dabiq*

Province in February 2015 (Issue #7). The Dagestani districts of Babyurtovsky and Tabarasan are likewise singled out, but in reference to the formation of Al-Qawqaz Province. Beginning with Issue 7, ISIS refers to its new Al-Qawqaz Province five times. Prior to that issue, all references to the Caucasus area are counted as a current region (see Figure 4.11). So as not to obscure the areal units that constitute ISIS's Al-Qawqaz, the province is mapped as the sum of all the polygons appearing on the map. The label for Al-Qawqaz is positioned in the center of the map and a note directs the map reader to the spatial extent of Al-Qawqaz.

Figure 4.23 is a map of the provinces of South Asia. This is the final map for the provinces category. The highest frequency province is Waziristan, Pakistan which totals nearly four times the next nearest province's sum of eighteen occurrences. Within the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas of Pakistan, Waziristan is actually two agencies— North and South Waziristan. However, ISIS seems to view the area as a single entity, never referring to either North or South Waziristan, only Waziristan. Thus, for the purpose of the map, North and South Waziristan are merged to form a single province which reflects ISIS's usage of the term.

ISIS announced the formation of the Khurasan Province in Issue 7 (February 2015). The spatial extent of this province remains unclear, but the inclusion of Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan is certain. From the text of Dabiq, Khurasan Province seems to include the whole of Afghanistan as well as the Pakistani provinces of Balochistan, the FATA, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This interpretation is comparable to the ancient boundaries of Khurasan which serves to validate ISIS's apocalyptic ideology (discussed later in Chapter 4). Once again, these boundaries are notional, and as such,

Figure 4.23 Frequency of South Asian province place names in *Dabiq*

can only be approximated for visualization. The current boundaries of all stated provinces, districts and agencies are utilized in creating the map. An explanatory note describes the boundaries of Khurasan Province, which is mapped beneath the smaller provinces and districts so as not to mask their areal expanses. The international boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan is depicted as a slightly thicker line for clarity through the border region.

4.3.4 Cartographic Visualization Results
of the Cities in *Dabiq*

The final cartographic visualization category is cities. Amassing 191 place names, this is the largest category with the most maps. As the classification is based on geographic scale, this category consists of a range of smaller-scale places including cities (157), airports (8), ancient battles (8), named valleys (4), prisons (3), named mountain peaks (3), gas fields (2), mosques (2), lakes (2), a cemetery, and a training camp. Unlike the previous three categories, the spatial representation for this category is a point feature class. Graduated symbols (circles) denote the frequencies in this series of maps. The feature class is created by importing a spreadsheet (in .csv format) with the place names and their corresponding x-y coordinates and frequencies into ArcMap, then converting the table into a point feature class. The spatial distribution of the 191 points facilitates the creation of seven maps.

Figure 4.24 is a map of places in the cities category located in the Western Hemisphere. The USA Contiguous Lambert Conformal Conical projection is used to minimize distortion within the extent of the map. Washington, DC has the highest frequency on this map, and it accumulates the eighth-highest frequency among the cities

category. ISIS uses "White House" six times in referring to the US capital, so these occurrences are added to the total for Washington. In keeping with political convention, ISIS uses the capital city of Washington (and the White House) as a proxy for the United States as a whole in most occurrences. This is also true of several other capital cities featured on the following maps. Ottawa, however, appears in reference to the attack on a Canadian soldier guarding the tomb of the unknown soldier at Canada's National War Memorial on Parliament Hill (Austen and Gladstone 2014). Garland, Texas likewise makes an appearance in *Dabiq* because of a (failed) shooting incident on May 3, 2015 at an art exhibit of cartoons depicting Muhammad (Stack 2015). ISIS refers to Hollywood in an article penned by the captive British journalist, John Cantlie.

Figure 4.25 is a map of European and North African cities that occur in *Dabiq*. The highest frequency term on this map is Rome, with eighteen mentions. Rome is very important to ISIS's ideology both as a proxy term for "the West" or "Crusaders" and as a place that plays a central role in its apocalyptic narrative (discussed later in this chapter). Moreover, Rome is referred to in the context of the seat of Christianity and the origin of Western ideals, not as the modern capital of Italy. Similarly, Constantinople (Istanbul) is another critical place in ISIS's end of the world discourse. *Dabiq* refers to "Istanbul" only one time through the entire body of text (Issue #10). In every other instance, the magazine calls the Turkish city "Constantinople," which has not held that name officially since 1930, when the fledgling government of Turkey requested the countries of the world use the name Istanbul exclusively (Lewis 1972). The significance of preferring Constantinople to Istanbul is examined in the geographic narrative analysis section appearing later in this chapter.

Figure 4.24 Frequency of Western Hemisphere city place names in *Dabiq*

Figure 4.25 Frequency of European and North African city place names in *Dabiq*

Figure 4.26 is a map of the cities of the Middle East in *Dabiq*. This map includes

the place name with the highest total frequency in any category—the Syrian city of

Dabiq. This eponymous city occurs in the magazine 430 times. Some might assert that

the number is artificially inflated due to Dabiq's appearance in the margins of many

pages as well as the name of the interviewer in numerous interview featurettes throughout

the issues. However, this research contends that in choosing a place name (with its

specific sense of place) as the title of its official periodical, ISIS underscores the

importance of that place in its ideology. Each issue's table of contents (located on page 2

in every case) begins with the following statement from ISIS's founder, Abu Musab al-

Zarqawi: "The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify – by

Allah's permission – until it burns the crusader armies in Dabiq" (*Dabiq* Issues #1-10).

Each occurrence of the name Dabiq reminds the reader of this statement and the prophecy

to which it is linked. Thus, each instance of Dabiq is counted as a place name (see the

narrative analysis section for the full explanation.

The map in Figure 4.26 is densely populated with place names, especially in Syria

and Iraq. Eight of the top ten and eleven of the top fifteen highest frequency cities appear

on this map (see Appendix F). Many lower frequency place names also appear on this

map. To render areas with the most overlap more readable, two inset maps display more

detailed geographic scales. The first inset map is labeled "Dabiq & Vicinity." The

corresponding) area on the larger map is marked by a black-outlined box labeled "Fig. 1."

The second inset map is labeled "Damascus & Vicinity" and its corresponding area on

the larger map is likewise marked by a black-outlined box labeled "Fig. 2." The other

congested areas on the larger map (Jerusalem, Fallujah, and Baghdad) each have enough

Middle Eastern Cities in Dabiq Issues 1-10

Frequency
- 1 - 3
- 4 - 11
- 12 - 24
- 25 - 55
- 56 - 430

Data: ISIS, Natural Earth, GADM
Cartographer: Chris Fuhriman

Dabiq & Vicinity
Dabiq (430), Azaz (10), Akhtarin (2), Huwar al-Nahr (3), Tel Malid (1), Rasin El Aboud Airport (1), Halab (4)

Damascus & Vicinity
Douma (1), Ghouta (9), Valley of Taymullah ibn Thalabah (1), Sidi Miqdad (2), Beit Sahem (3), Damascus (42), Babila (2), Tadamon (2), Yalda (5), Yarmouk (55), Al Hajar (7), Al Aswad (1), Aqraba (1)

TURKEY, SYRIA, IRAQ, IRAN, JORDAN, ISRAEL, EGYPT, CYPRUS, KUWAIT, AZER, Mediterranean Sea

Ankara (2), Jazah (1), Sulaymaniyah (1), Battle of Nahavand (1), Kuwait International Airport (1), Umm Qasr (1), Camp Bucca (1), Mount Judi (4), Mosul (24), Erbil (4), Kirkuk (1), Daquq (2), Sulaiman Bek (1), Al Adhaim (3), Sinsil (1), Miqdadiyah (2), Baghdad (24), Al Mada'in (1), Al Rusafah (1), Baghdad International Airport (2), Battle of Dayr a-Jamajim (1), Battle of al-Qadisiyyah (1), Zumman (2), Wanah (1), Tal Afar (3), Al Zab (1), Zawiyah (1), Hammam al-'Alil (1), Al Baaj (1), Al Hatra (1), Qayyarah (1), Hawija (2), Baiji (6), Tikrit (5), Samarra (2), Dhuluiya (2), At-Tahiya (1), Taji (1), Yusufiyah (1), Ramadi (6), Fallujah (12), Amiriyah Fallujah (3), Baqirda (1), Rabia (1), Tal Atbah (1), Sinjar (8), Rawa (1), Al Qaim (3), Haditha (1), Al-Khalidiyah (2), Saqlawiyyah (4), Mintaqat Albu Shihab (1), Al-Bukamal (8), Rutbah (1), Kamishly Airport (1), Tell-Abyad (4), Hasaka (1), Suluk (1), Al Jazrah (1), Raqqa (15), Al-Taqpa Airbase (7), Al Sukhnah (5), Al Hayl Gas Field (2), Palmyra (4), Sha'er Gas Field (1), Mount Adah (1), Kendal (1), Harran (1), Manbij (1), Al Khafsah (1), Al Ajrawi (1), Maskanah (1), Bashiriyah (1), Homs (2), Khalkhalah Airbase (3), Zur Maghar (3), Jarabulus (6), Sarrin (1), Binnish (1), Idlib (5), Kobani (9), Atme (1), Al Amaq (1), Al Ameq (5), Qalb Loze (6), Salqin (1), Kessab (1), Latakia (1), Beirut (2), Lake Hulah (1), Lake Tiberias (1), Anatawt Camp (1), Al-Aqsa Mosque (5), Ashkelon (2), Rafah (1), Arish (2), Jerusalem (1), Al-Karak Salti Airbase (1), Muwaffaq Salti Airbase (5), Amman (1), Zarqa (1), Irbid (1), Azraq (1), Aqabah (1)

Figure 1, Figure 2, Fig. 1, Fig. 2

50 Km, 25, 0, 100 200 300 Kilometers

Figure 4.26 Frequency of Middle Eastern city place names in *Dabiq*

space within the map extent for labeling, and therefore, required no insets.

Figure 4.27 is a map of the Arabian Peninsula cities that occur in *Dabiq*. Islam's two holiest cities, Medina and Mecca, are the third and fourth highest frequency city names in the magazine, emphasizing their relative importance in the ISIS narrative. In fact, most of the place names in Saudi Arabia refer to Koranic locales or battles in the early days of Islam. The Yemeni cities emerge in the text in the context of operations against the government and warring factions (like the Houthi). Interestingly, Camp Bucca only has one occurrence in the first ten issues of the magazine. One might have expected more references to a place that was instrumental in the radicalization of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as well as the resurgence of AQI and ISI when released prisoners returned to the militant ranks with renewed anti-Western sentiment (Nevins 2015 and Benraad 2009).

Figure 4.28 is a map of the cities of South Asia mentioned in *Dabiq*. Aside from Miran Shah (11), most of the cities on this map have relatively low frequencies. Miran Shah's higher frequency occurs all in one issue (#6) due to a feature article on the *mujahidin* of Waziristan. Most of the other Pakistani cities occur in the next issue in the context of ISIS declaring its Khurasan Province in Afghanistan and Pakistan. References to Tehran emerge in the same vein as the other capital cities—ISIS uses the place name of Tehran as a proxy for the government of Iran and Iran as a whole.

Figure 4.29 is a map of the Russian cities referred to in *Dabiq*. No Russian city accrues more than one occurrence in the first ten issues. Four Dagestani cities are mentioned in the context of areas of strong ISIS support in the Caucasus region. These occurrences align with the announcement of Al-Qawqaz Province in Issue 7 of the
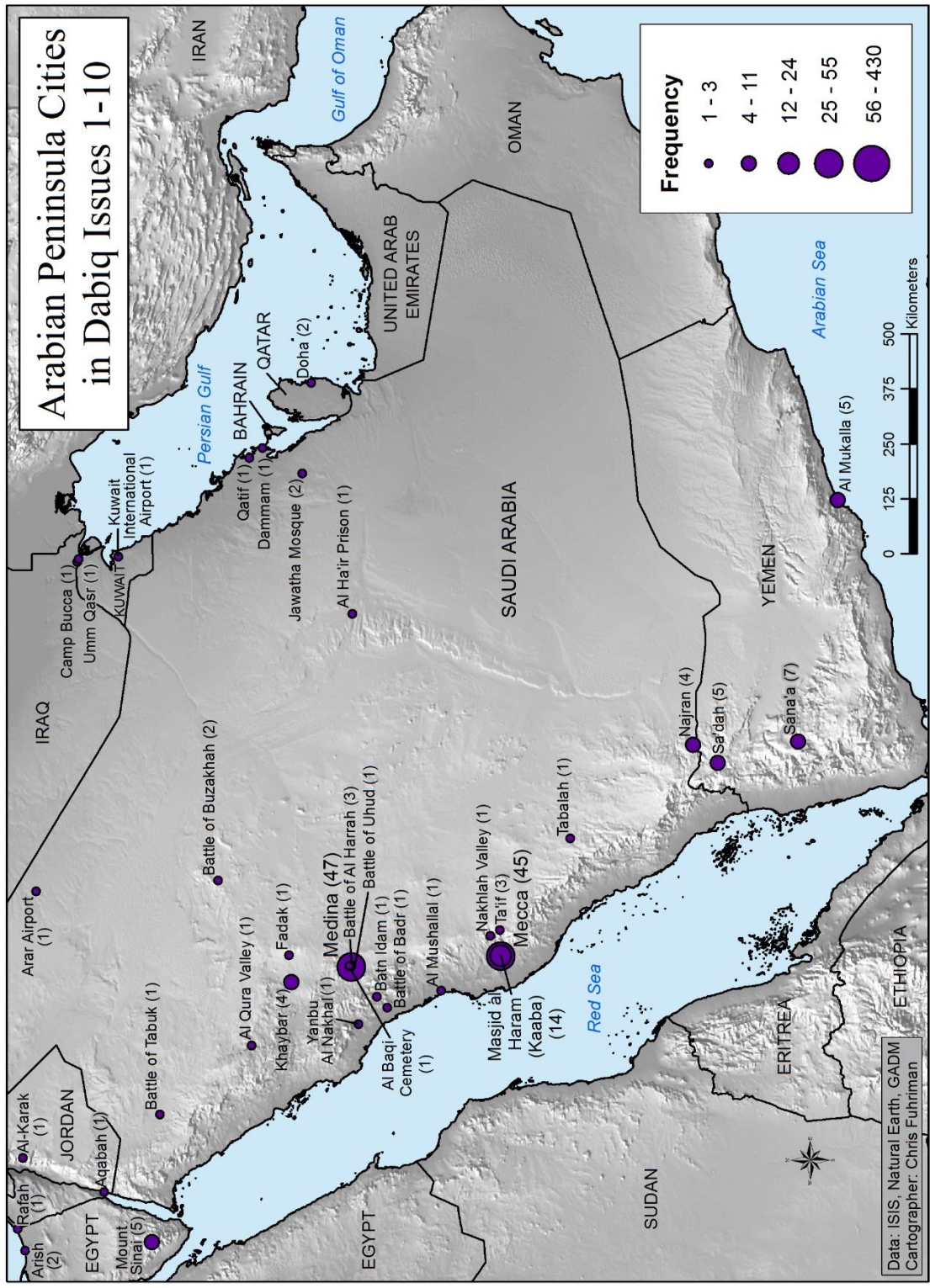
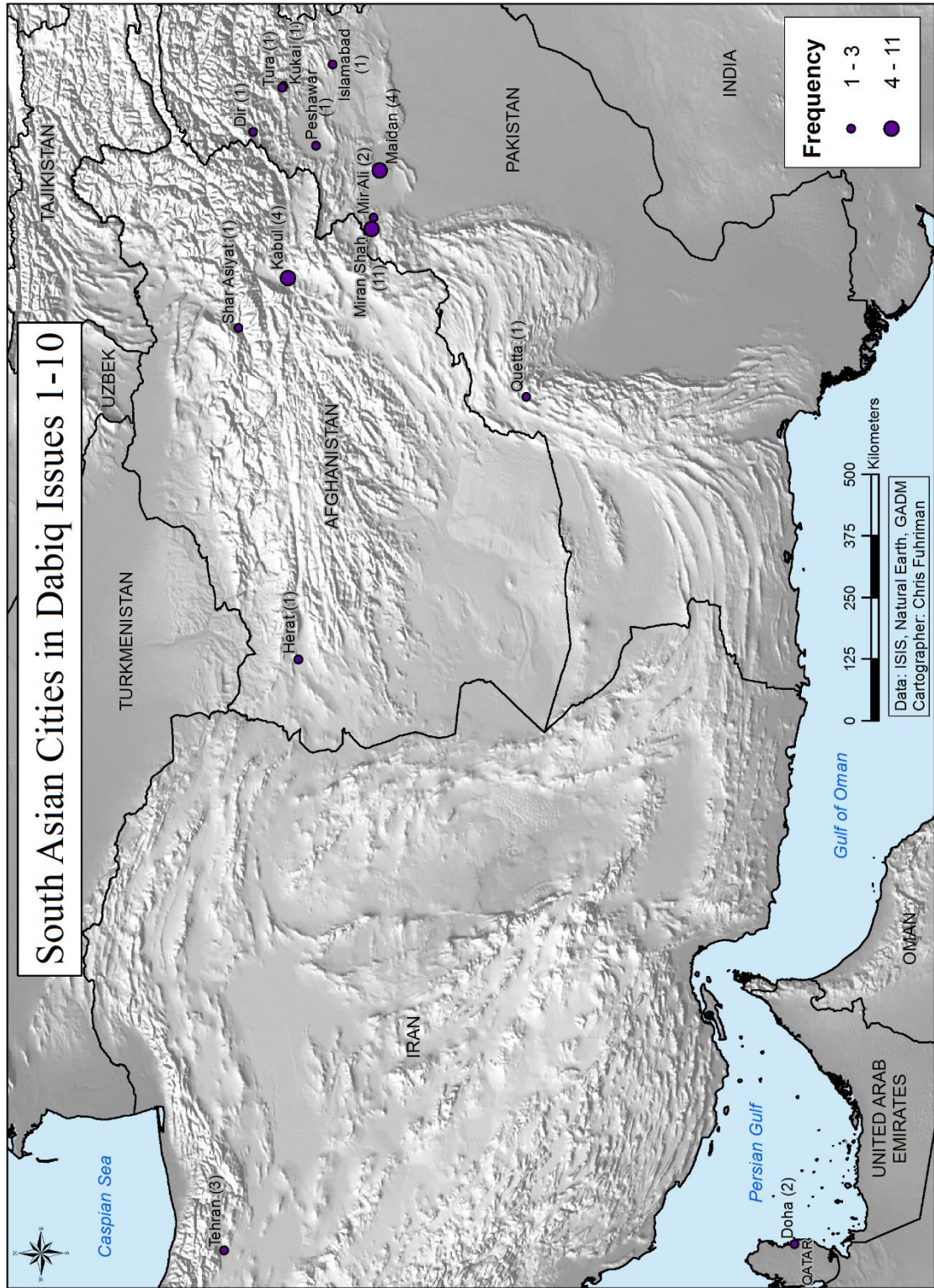Figure 4.27 Frequency of Arabian Peninsula city place names in *Dabiq*

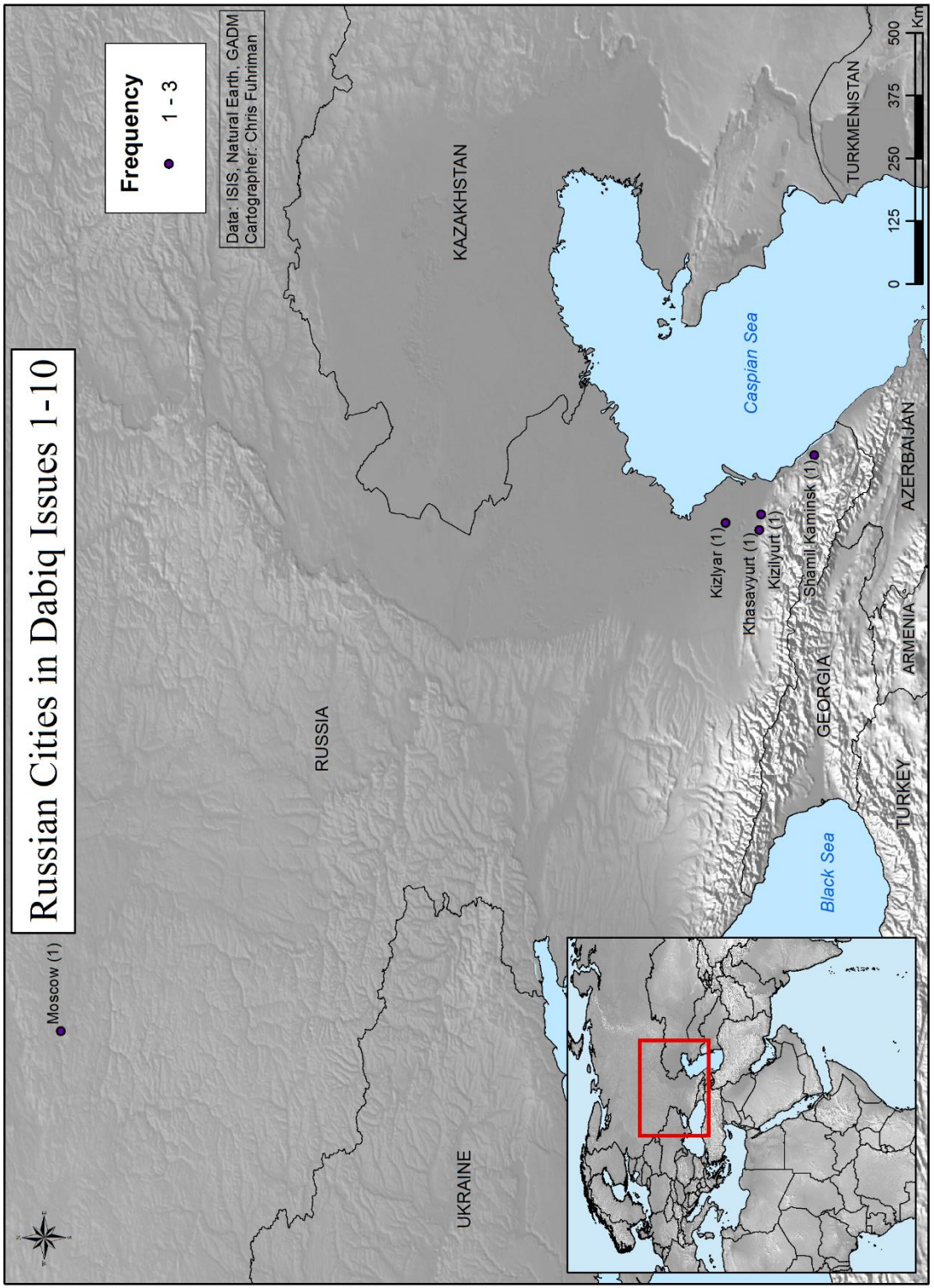Figure 4.28 Frequency of South Asian city place names in *Dabiq*

Figure 4.29 Frequency of Russian city place names in *Dabiq*

magazine. Moscow's instance is a reference to a Chechen mujahidin assault on a theater in Moscow in 2002 during which more than fifty armed militants took hostages and wired themselves and the theater with explosives. The Russian military pumped an undisclosed gas into the ventilation system, killing 118 hostages and fifty attackers (Wines 2002). The reference to the Moscow attack in *Dabiq* came in the context of a congratulatory statement issued by Abu Muhammad al-Adnani (a top-level ISIS officer/strategist who frequently acted as the official spokesman) to the people of Al-Qawqaz Province, whom he urged to continue the fight against Russia (Issue #10). Incidentally, al-Adnani, whom many believe was next in line to be the Caliph, was killed in an American drone strike which targeted his vehicle in Aleppo, Syria on August 30, 2016 (Schmitt and Barnard 2016). Russia also claims that its own airstrikes killed al-Adnani (Nechepurenko 2016).

Figure 4.30 is a set of maps featuring the cities mentioned in *Dabiq* in East Asia, Australia and Africa. The map on the right side of the figure shows the African locales. Only two cities in Sub-Saharan Africa appeared in the magazines. The context for both Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania was a brief mention of the al Qaeda embassy bombings in 1998. Because of the geographic distance between these two African cities and those located in North Africa, it is necessary to make two maps to optimize scale and detail. The figure also includes an inset showing the location of the map extent on the African continent.

The map on the left shows the East Asian and Australian cities. Sydney, Australia has the highest frequency in this area, with three occurrences. Each of the mentions occurs in Issue 6, which begins with a featurette on Man Haron Monis, the terrorist who attacked a café in the Australian city. ISIS cites (erroneously) Hiroshima and Nagasaki
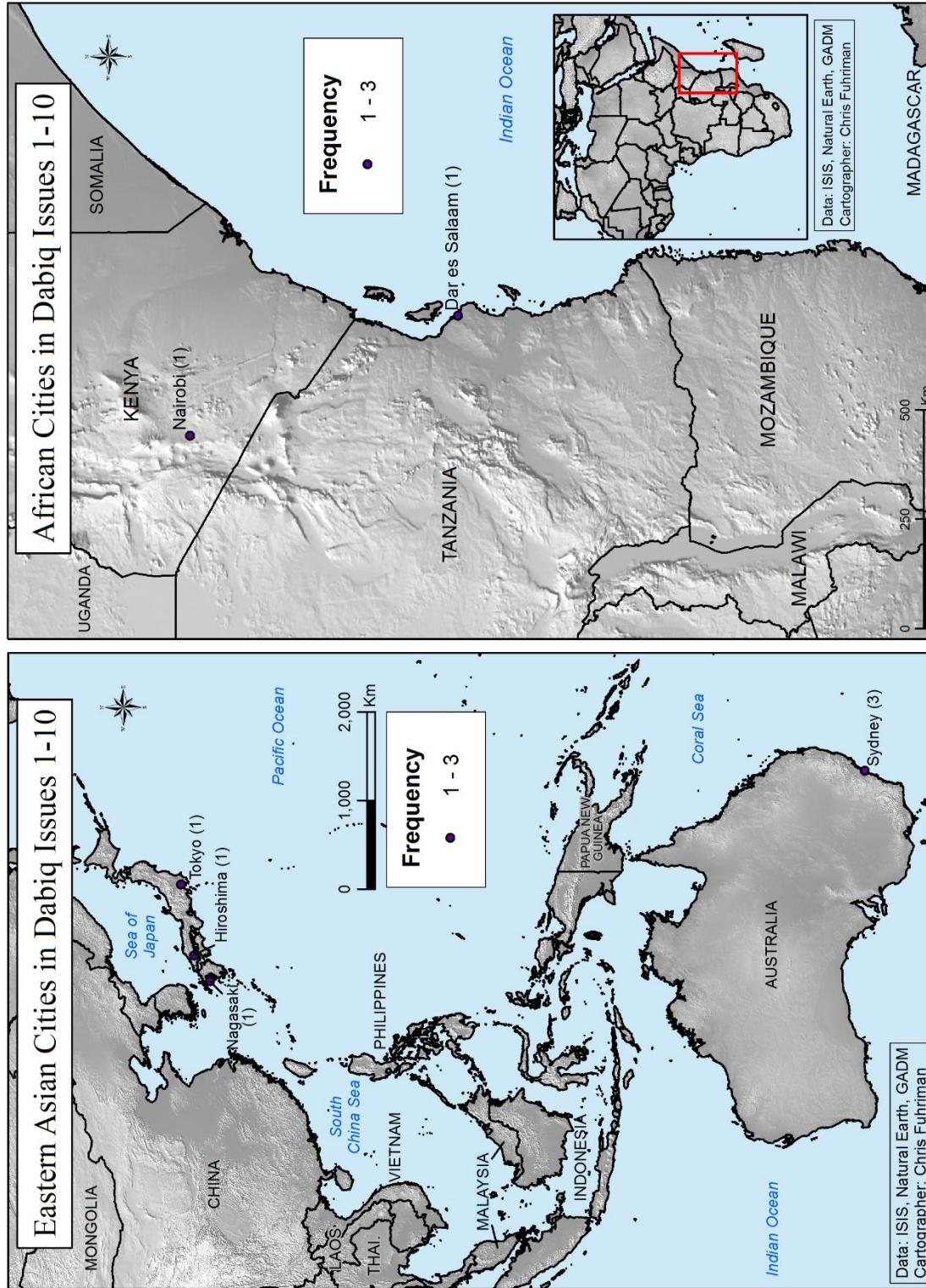
Figure 4.30 Frequency of East Asian and African city place names in *Dabiq*

as the only historical case of victory in armed conflict utilizing airpower alone (Issue#4).

Finally, Tokyo arises in passing, mentioned only as brief meeting place for emissaries of

the Taliban and the West during a rare diplomatic engagement (Issue #6).

4.4 Results of the Narrative Analysis

The narrative analysis relies on input from the content analysis (categorized list of

place names and their frequencies) and the cartographic visualization processes (series of

maps by category), as well as the original text. Further, ISIS's use of place names in the

magazine is compared to the historical use of place names during the first three Islamic

caliphates. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the conventional approach to narrative analysis

has examined stories (literary works, films, ideology, etc.) in terms of their five structural

elements which are settings, characters, events, problems, and resolutions (Kwan and

Ding 2008). Clandinin and Connelly (1999) suggest a more geographically-focused

method for studying narratives in terms of actions/interactions, time, and space. The

geographic narrative analysis that follows in this section (and again in the next section

featuring al Qaeda's ideology) applies Clandinin and Connelly's (1999) framework to the

ideological narrative of ISIS.

4.4.1 Elements of Geographic Narrative Analysis:

Actions and Interactions

The first element of geographic narrative analysis is sociality, or in other words,

the cultural context of the characters and their actions and interactions within the

narrative. The foundations of cultural context which must be considered are language,

religion, rhetoric, and mythology (Tololyan 1987). It is from these traditions, stories, and

myths encapsulated and preserved in a familiar language that a collective consciousness (or group identity) is created and shared by a cultural community. At the first opportunity, ISIS unequivocally defined its cultural community by announcing, "…the world has been divided into two camps and two trenches, with no third camp present…" (Issue #1, 10). This binary categorization renders the process of self-identification simple: one is either allegiant to ISIS or against it. Simply stated, there is no middle ground in the struggle between the virtues of Islam and faith and vices of unbelief and apostasy in ISIS's Salafi-jihadist ideological framework. Thus, the cultural narrative of Islam is appropriated by ISIS and manipulated to construct new personal identities based on the shared cultural foundation of religious belief.

Arena and Arrigo (2005) describe the framework for understanding the terrorist identity as a product of culture via the sociological theory of structural symbolic interactionism (SSI). They assert that five principles of SSI apply to the construction of terrorist identities. First, the establishment and use of symbols are integral to the terrorist's narrative (Arena and Arrigo 2005). Symbols can be objects, events, or even people that draw on the underlying cultural narrative while simultaneously creating a new terrorist agenda. For ISIS, the caliph (al-Baghdadi) serves as a symbol of a unified Islam under the direction of Mohammad's rightful successor as well as the spiritual and political leader of the movement. Another prominent symbol is the black banner of the caliphate, which occurs frequently in images throughout the magazine. The flag dually signifies the Islamic State and the black banner of the *Mahdi*, a mysterious warrior who will lead the armies of Allah in the days preceding the apocalypse according to the *hadith* (McCants 2015). Thus, a new terrorist identity begins to coalesce at the nexus of the

Muslim cultural narrative and ISIS's ideology in the form of a symbol—the black banner.

The second principle of SSI is the definition of the situation, which is the process of assigning meaning to the symbols (Arena and Arrigo 2005). This is facilitated by drawing on cultural narratives and terrorist ideologies. ISIS achieves this in part by publishing prophecies and teachings of great Islamic thinkers alongside pictures and stories of victorious military campaigns in *Dabiq*. For the reader, the images of victorious *mujahidin* surrounded by verses from the Koran or other sacred texts communicate the religious legitimacy of the actions. As the symbols of *jihad* take on meaning for the followers, the terrorist identity grows at the personal and societal levels.

The third principle of SSI is roles. A person's role defines how he or she is connected to other people within social and cultural systems. Roles also cue behavior, which is defined and justified by the place or position of the role within the social system (Arena and Arrigo 2005). ISIS defined the role of a true believer in the first issue of *Dabiq* by declaring that all Muslims were obligated to emigrate to the new caliphate: "O Muslims everywhere, whoever is capable of performing *hijrah* (emigration) to the Islamic State, then let him do so, because *hijrah* to the land of Islam is obligatory" (Issue #1, 10). ISIS also attempts to appeal to those Muslims who live under oppressive regimes by promising that the newly-formed caliphate will, "return your dignity, might, rights, and leadership" (Issue #1, 7). The identity being created is that of an obedient, dutiful follower of Allah whose rightful place is in the land of Islam (where ISIS maintains sovereign control of territory).

The fourth principle of SSI is socialization and role-taking. Socialization is the education process that validates the cultural narrative, its symbols, and the social roles

within the system (Arena and Arrigo 2005). The use of formal training (in areas controlled by ISIS, or in virtual environments) and propaganda (videos, speeches, and magazines like *Dabiq*) facilitates the socialization of the terrorist narrative. This process is particularly important for terror groups because the effective use of terrorism as a means to achieve political change relies heavily on narrative in two ways. First, the philosophy or ideology must be clear and accessible to the trainees or potential recruits. Likewise, the training materials (such as manuals) must be coherent and logical (Kubiak 2004). *Dabiq* excels in presenting ISIS's narrative as both accessible and logical. The layout and format of the magazine is appealing, and the religious quotations are well documented with proper citation. The second reliance on narrative is that the attack itself must create the desired effect of terror, or it runs the risk of not matching the narrative of massive loss of life, widespread destruction, or chaos (Kubiak 2004). ISIS celebrates successful terror attacks by publishing them in prominent places in the magazine, such as the cover or first featurette, even using the word "terror" to describe the effects (Issues 6, 10, 12). Thus *Dabiq* serves to legitimize the cultural/ideological narrative of ISIS through education and favorable reportage.

Role-taking is the process of imagining oneself in another's role. Role-taking could be employed by a potential recruit to imagine himself as a member of the terror organization, or it could be used by terrorist planners to anticipate a response or counter-terror actions. In the case of building a terrorist identity, however, the process of imagining oneself in a different role takes center stage. ISIS facilitates this process by showing the doctors of the caliphate working in state-of-the-art hospitals, villagers receiving food and medicine, and courageous young fighters raising their rifles

victoriously overhead while the black banner of ISIS waves in the distance. It is easy for a sympathetic reader to imagine himself or herself doing those things and being those people in the pages of *Dabiq*.

The fifth and final principle of SSI is the emergence of self. This occurs when the symbols, narratives, and roles work in unison to authenticate the meaning of the terrorist ideology which can be embodied through the new terrorist self (Arena and Arrigo 2005). Whatever identities existed previously, the new self emerges dominant. Former identities are not wholly abandoned, but they become less important in defining oneself. An ISIS militant who previously self-identified as "Syrian" or possibly "Muslim" would now assume the ISIS self as the primary identity. In whole, the SSI principles demonstrate the integral role of cultural narratives in the formation of the terrorists' identity. Terrorist ideologies and identities are born, nurtured, and realized in the cultural context. Situated in its cultural context, the terrorist identity becomes the main character in the ideological narrative.

Yet, cultural processes cannot advance or evolve in a vacuum. They, along with social, economic, and political processes which lead to violence, require space for their formation, development and implementation (Simmons 2005). Within that interactive space, place becomes the site or location wherein daily life occurs, human processes converge, and local cultural structures produce distinct community identities (Agnew 1987; Martin and Miller 2003). But as Janz (2008) warns, places cannot be studied as independent objects. Places can only be given meaning through the dynamic discourses which continually define and redefine them. In this way, places become indispensable components of local cultural narratives. While regional processes create the conditions

necessary for violence, place-based cultural and historical circumstances convert necessary conditions to sufficient conditions for violence (Simmons 2005). For example, the Arab Spring was a regional political process which helped to set the conditions for violence in Syria, and it was the local anti-Kurd and anti-Sunni policies of the Assad regime combined with a failing local economy and severe drought that transformed the necessary conditions into sufficient conditions for the civil war and rise of ISIS in northeast Syria (Al Jazeera 2016).

Janz (2008) suggests that places associated with terrorism have seven psychological features which drive their narratives. These places can be the site of an attack, the site of the planning of the attack, or even the hometown of the attackers or victims. Although Janz applies these features in the context of the targeted nation (the United States in nearly every example), this research contends that the psychological features of terror places can also apply to those who employ terrorism, especially in terms of a given terror group's creation of the Other within its ideological narrative.

The first feature of a place of terror is the loss of place-making imagination, or in other words, the place must reinforce the new narrative of terror (Janz 2008). For example, the Bataclan Theater in Paris can no longer exist as a place for cultural events from the perspective of the targeted city/country/people (and by extension, those who can identify with the targeted city/country/people). Rather, the attack transformed the theater into the site of the ISIS terror attack and a memorial for those who died there. Similarly, ISIS publishes gruesome images of dead children who were killed by the enemies of ISIS in Aleppo, Raqqa, and other locales in *Dabiq*, transforming those cities into places of martyrdom in the caliphate's narrative of *jihad*.

The second feature is that place creates "the Other" which embodies the fears of a given cultural narrative (Janz 2008). Using place to define the Other allows the French to see those who attacked the Bataclan Theater as "Muslim" or even "terrorists" instead of seeing them as legal citizens of France (Farmer 2016). ISIS effectively conflates the place of "the West" with the dominant cultural values of those who live in the West (wherever that may be). Throughout the pages the *Dabiq* "the West" can mean culture, nationalism, liberal democracy, and even religion that opposes ISIS's ideology and theology. By presenting the West in this way, ISIS creates the Other against whom the faithful followers of Caliph Ibrahim can rally and from whom they must be protected. The construction of the Other serves to unify ISIS immigrants of varying cultural, ethnic, and national backgrounds against a common enemy. It also serves as a practical demonstration of ISIS's binary world view in which one must choose to either join the camp of Allah or remain in the company of infidels and apostates. Moreover, the various names of ISIS's Other are inseparably connected to prophecies recorded in *hadith* through place. The Other (who must be Roman or, in other words, Christian) must come to either Al Amaq or Dabiq to fight against the armies of Allah. The Other must also be present in Constantinople for its fall to ISIS and again in Rome for its fall. Because ISIS's theology rests on these prophecies, the fulfillment of these sayings cannot take place anywhere else—they must occur in their original locational context.

The third feature is the narrative of place becomes triumphalist in the wake of an attack (Janz 2008). The narrative must show its place as rising from the ashes of victimhood. The images of American flags hanging from the twisted steel ruins of the World Trade Center in the wake of the 9-11 attacks exemplify this feature. For ISIS, the

black banners of the caliphate flying over the ruins of coalition-bombed cities stand a monument to ISIS's resilience in the face of a technologically superior enemy. The fourth feature is the death of the public space (agora), or in other words, the loss of public space due to heightened security and control. The narrative shifts from public interaction to public protection which trades freedom for security and prevention of further attacks (Janz 2008). For fear of another attack, the place is avoided until the narrative shifts again to the aforementioned triumphalist narrative. ISIS has all but eliminated public interaction in its two most important cities, Raqqa and Mosul (Hawramy et al. 2015). They have banned mobile phones and home internet service for fear of exploitation by enemy intelligence operations. As airstrikes in these cities have increased, activity in the public markets has slowed to fraction of its former volume. In these places, agora is, for the time being, dead.

The fifth psychological feature is the tendency to impose fixed meanings on places of terror. The permanence of place is constructed by narrowing definitions which exclude alternate understandings from the discourse (Janz 2008). "For example, the reality of America's past as a pluralistic nation gives way to an imaginary Christian America, tacitly contraposed to the Muslim 'nation' of terrorism that is being resisted" (Janz 2008, 200). This also holds true for ISIS, which fixes the meaning of its territory through the narrative of immutable and ineluctable prophecy. As readers of *Dabiq* are reminded in each issue, "The spark has been lit…" and it will not be extinguished until ISIS achieves its ultimate goals (Issue 1, 2). The Caliphate has a single meaning and a single destiny, neither of which is open to interpretation. They are fixed.

The sixth feature is topophobia, or the fear of place. Janz (2008) describes this as

the fear of a place that often occurs after it has been the site of an attack. Yet, more significant that the fear of a place itself is the "cultural stage fright" that occurs as a byproduct of an attack (Janz 2008, 201). The victimized state reasserts its cultural identity in the form of retaliatory foreign policy, masking the fear of another attack behind the false bravado of a heavy hand. For ISIS, the loss of previously held territory and the devastation of bombing attacks are the epicenters of topophobia. The subsequent declarations of provinces in near and distant lands and the crackdown on public spaces within caliphate controlled areas are the manifestations of ISIS's cultural stage fright.

The final psychological feature of places of terror is the realization that terror narratives of places eventually begin to include other ways of experiencing and understanding those places (Janz 2008). For societies which enjoy broader social freedoms, the process of challenging terror narratives can be faster than in societies with limited freedoms. For ISIS, however, the cultural narrative of place only has to last until the apocalypse. For the near future, ISIS will likely attempt to enforce (through violence) its version of the place narrative in the areas which it controls, and propagate its vision (through magazines, videos, and social media) through areas it does not control.

In summary, the actions/interactions component of the geographic narrative analysis of ISIS's magazine consists of the people which make up the cultural community of ISIS, the construction of the ISIS identity and the parallel construction of its opposite Other, and the psychological elements of places of terror. These features combine to inform the ISIS faithful (and potential recruits) who they should be or become, who their enemies are, how the ideal ISIS subject should view the world, and the ways in which they should experience place. This identity-building cultural narrative further imbues

meaning into places as it incorporates the elements of time (the when of place) and space (the where of place).

4.4.2 Elements of Geographic Narrative Analysis:

Time and Space

The space element of geographic narrative analyses consists of the physical places of the narrative (Clandinin and Connelly 1999). Clearly, not every place name from the list of 353 terms extracted from *Dabiq* enjoys equal significance in the overall ideological narrative of ISIS. In fact, the geographic place names appeared in all sections of the magazine, including quotations from non-ISIS sources.   Thus, it is necessary to apply the time element (past, present, future) of geographic narrative analysis to reveal the usage pattern of place names which supports ISIS's ideological discourse.

In general terms, ISIS's usage of place names can be divided into three categories: homeland places (where ISIS either controls or has some measure of influence), places of the Other (enemy places), and sacred places (religiously important sites where ISIS has little or no influence at the moment, but aspires to in the future). ISIS's binary worldview makes this categorization possible—there truly are no neutral places according to its theological narrative. There are only areas which it controls (lands of Islam) and areas outside of the caliphate's sovereignty (lands of *kufr*). However, it is clear from the text of the magazine that ISIS views sacred sites of Islam in a slightly different way than the rest of the lands of *kufr,* even though the sites are in areas governed by enemies of ISIS (e.g., Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem). For this reason, it is useful to distinguish the sacred sites from the remainder of the enemy place names. Of the fifty-one highest frequency (twelve or more mentions), 67% were names of places that ISIS controlled, 27% were

places of the enemy, and 6% were sacred places.

Still, broad categorizations of ISIS's place name usage fail to identify integral elements of ideology. Rather, examining the ways in which ISIS uses geographic place names to advance its ideology is a more fruitful endeavor. A key component of this approach is historical analogy, which allows for the comparison of place names of the past (especially the first three Islamic caliphates) to the way in which ISIS utilizes place names today to advance its ideology. The *Dabiq* data reveal two notable patterns of place name usage when viewed through the lens of historical analogy. The first is the use of antiquated or historical place names to simultaneously create a specific sense of place and fuse the ideology of ISIS to Islamic prophecies contained in the sacred writings of the Koran and *hadith*. The second is the implementation of the provincial system of governing conquered territories used in the earliest Islamic caliphates as the geographic boundaries expanded beyond the Arabian Peninsula into Africa, Europe, and Asia. Each of these patterns is examined in the following paragraphs.

4.4.2.1 Developing a Sense of Place Infused

With ISIS's Ideology

At the center of ISIS's ideology is the concept of a divinely commissioned Islamic caliphate, which according to al Baghdadi (2014), came into existence by the grace of Allah. The rise of the caliphate not only fulfills ancient prophecy, but it legitimizes the tactics employed to gain the caliphate (Wood 2015). While the vast majority of Muslims reject ISIS's version of a caliphate, the concept of an Islamic political entity which controls territory and operates according to Islamic law has wide

appeal, even in the more secular or moderate Sunni communities (Hamid 2014). It is this longing for a true Muslim homeland, absent from the world for centuries (although many Muslims cite the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century as the most recent caliphate), that ISIS intends to evoke amongst Muslims everywhere. In his inaugural speech, al-Baghdadi connected the fall of the caliphate (presumably the Abbasid empire, as the Ottomans are rejected by ISIS as illegitimate caliphs because they lacked the required Qurayshi bloodline) to the collective humiliation, defeat, and weakness of Muslims everywhere (al-Baghdadi 2014; Wood 2015). Thus, al-Baghdadi gives the weak, dispossessed Muslim subject a homeland in his declaration of the caliphate. Place and self are fused into a single identity embodied by a true Muslim—an identity which can only exist in the context of a Muslim state which is "remaining and expanding" (Issue #5).

To further legitimize the claim of the caliphate, ISIS relies on the frequent quotation of sacred religious texts, leaning heavily on literal interpretations of the Koran and *hadith* to propagate its apocalyptic discourse. One potential problem with place names, however, is that they change over time. Some of the place names like Dabiq and Rome have endured, while others such as Constantinople and Khurasan have evolved. Thus, in order to link 1400-year-old prophecies to the current geopolitical situation, ISIS simply refers to ideologically significant places in their original (seventh and eighth centuries) context. The practice of referring to places by their historical names achieves three effects. First, the antiquated names evoke a collective memory of a glorified Muslim past, reminding the reader/listener of his/her heritage and further empowering the new ISIS identity. Second, the historical place names tie the past to the present and the

future when viewed through the arc of Islamic prophecies. Finally, the use of antiquated place names is an overt rejection of the current political landscape in the Middle East and its ill-conceived, invalid borders established by the Sykes-Picot agreement following the First World War. All three effects combine to form a sense of place that induces feelings of community, homeland, and destiny as the prophecies of Islamic scripture unfold in the believers' eyes. Figure 4.31 shows the spatial extents of the Rashidun, Umayyad, and the Abbasid Caliphates at the height of their territorial claims. The Umayyad Caliphate (shown in dark green) included all of the Rashidun territory in addition to its own gains, resulting in the most expansive territory among the three dynasties.

The highest frequency term of any category, the Syrian town of Dabiq, is the most obvious historical term which supports ISIS's apocalyptic narrative. The introductory feature in the first issue of *Dabiq* explains the meaning of its namesake—certainly a necessary elucidation for the English-speaking audience which is presumably unfamiliar with Syrian geography and possibly unfamiliar with the particular *hadith* quoted. The magazine tells the reader that Dabiq is a place in northern Syria where "one of the greatest battles between the Muslims and the crusaders" will occur in the future as told by Abu Hurayrah, an oft-cited narrator of the *hadith* in the Sunni tradition (Issue #1, 5). According to ISIS's interpretation of the events associated with the end of the world, this future battle at Dabiq is the first in a series of events that must occur prior to the ultimate victory of the apocalypse, when Allah will destroy the enemies of Islam.

There is some debate among Sunni scholars concerning the order of the events of the apocalypse. This uncertainty applies to ISIS as well, but from the official publications and other statements of the organization to date, the eschatological events
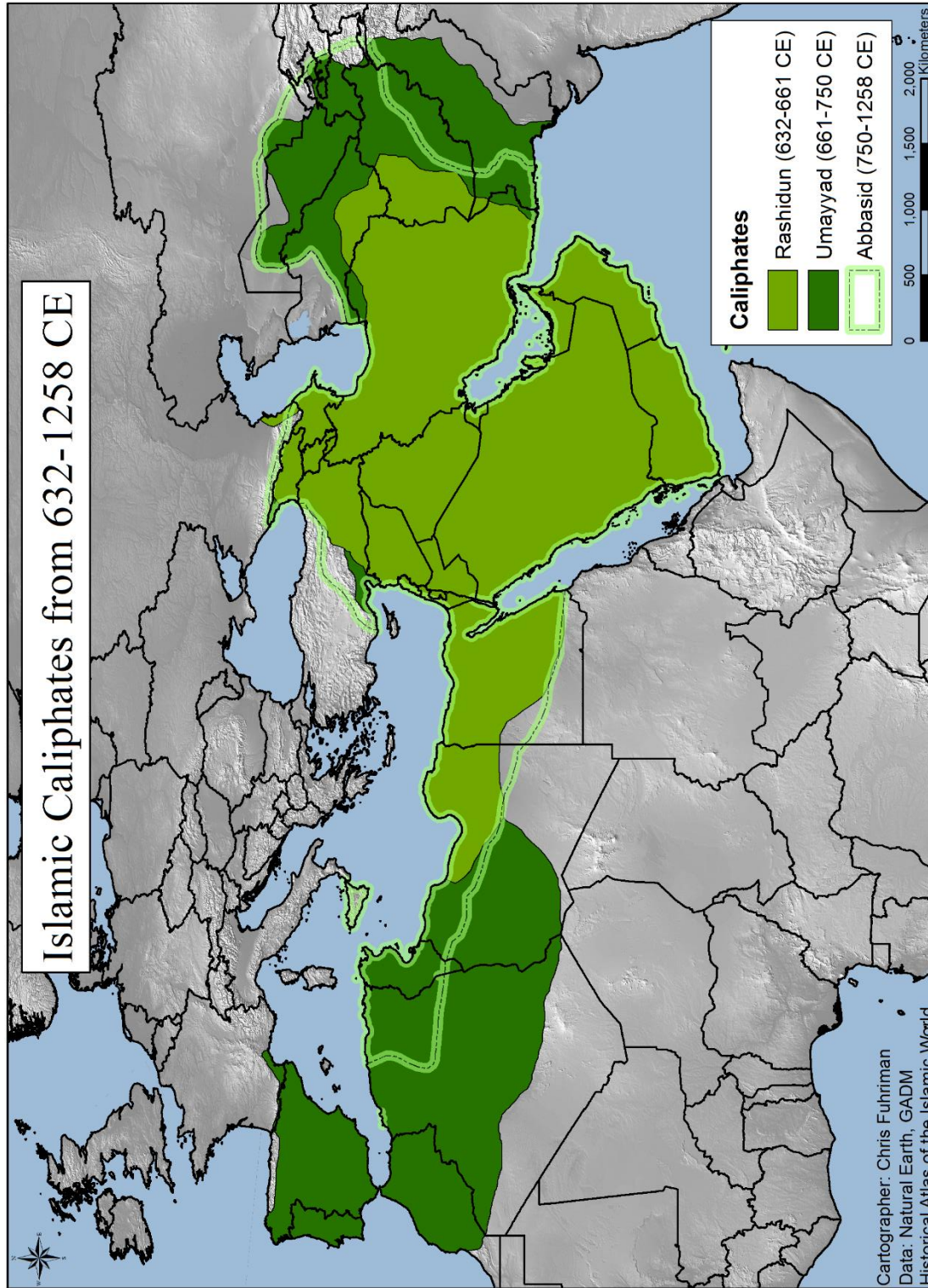
Figure 4.31 Maximum extent of the Rashidun, Umayyad, and Abbasid Caliphates

appear to have the following order: 1) establishment of a rightful caliphate (occurred in June 2014); 2) great battle between the armies of Allah (ISIS) and the Romans (Christians) at Dabiq, Syria; 3) the appearance of the *Mahdi* (descendant of Mohammad who bears his name, rules in righteousness, and helps to conquer the Antichrist; 4) Muslim armies conquer Constantinople; 5) The Dajjal (Antichrist) appears; 6) Muslim armies conquer Rome; 7) Jesus, Son of Mary, appears and kills the Antichrist; 8) end of the world (Hijazi 1995; Discovering Islam 2016; McCants 2014; Islamic State 2014). ISIS seems to interpret these events from the collection of *hadith* literally, including the names of the places mentioned.

Dabiq is the epitome of this interpretation. During its expansion into Syria in 2014, ISIS made a special effort to capture and subjugate the town of Dabiq despite its limited military importance (Fraser 2014). However, as a significant locale in ISIS's apocalyptic geography, Dabiq's strategic importance is elevated. ISIS reminds the reader on nearly every page that he/she is engaged in the early stages of the final *jihad* before the end of time in the very places prophesied by Mohammad. This powerfully compelling cultural narrative, centered in geography, has attracted fighters from all over the world.

Appearing in the same group of related *hadith* are the terms Constantinople and Rome. Constantinople represents an intermediate milestone while Rome represents the final conquest in the eschatological series of events. Constantinople's significance to ISIS's ideology is multifaceted. First, the *hadith,* which predate the city's current name of Istanbul by several centuries, specifically refer to it by name. Therefore, ISIS must refer to the city by its ancient name as a means of connecting the past to the future and

legitimizing its narrative. Second, using the term Constantinople instead of Istanbul demonstrates ISIS's rejection of the Ottoman Empire as a legitimate caliphate. ISIS essentially suggests that Constantinople has yet to be conquered by the army of Allah as outlined in the *hadith*. In other words, according to ISIS, Mehmet II's conquest of Constantinople in 1453 CE is not a fulfillment of the prophecy because the Ottomans did not meet the prophetic requirements laid out in the *hadith*. This dismissal of the legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire and rejection of the Ottoman apocalyptic narrative (which names its own conquest of Constantinople as the beginning of the end of the world) (Sahin 2010) emerges in the text of the magazine.

ISIS blames the Ottomans for polluting the Muslim lands with "pagan domes" and "manmade laws" (Issue #9, 21). In the following issue the message recurs, this time accusing the Ottomans of establishing a false caliphate because there was no *sharia* law and because the Turk rulers did not descend from the Qurayshi line (Issue #10). Consequently, the Ottoman's capture of Constantinople and modern Turkish state's renaming of Istanbul are both invalid. Thus, *Dabiq's* use of the term Constantinople in place of Istanbul is simultaneously a rejection of the Ottoman Empire and a scriptural reference which links ISIS's ideology to a wider Muslim narrative of the end of times. If the city has not been conquered by the army of Allah according to the *hadith*'s prediction, it certainly cannot be Istanbul. It must remain Constantinople until the prophecy is rightfully fulfilled.

Rome enjoys a similar level of importance in the geopolitical narrative of ISIS. Also appearing in the *hadith*, Rome was mentioned in the first speech given by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi at the mosque in Mosul in 2014 (al-Baghdadi 2014). Although there has

been some discussion among scholars and pundits regarding ISIS's intended meaning of the place name Rome, the cover of Issue 4 appears to settle the debate. Waving atop the Egyptian obelisk in St. Peter's Square is the (digitally added) black banner of the caliphate in place of the (digitally removed) cross. While St. Peter's Square is actually in the Vatican City (a sovereign state), the message inside this issue and the other issues is that ISIS literally intends to conquer Rome and raise its banner over Rome's monuments. ISIS spokesman al-Adnani said, "We will conquer your Rome, break your crosses, and enslave your women, by the permission of Allah, the Exalted" (Issue #4, 5). Further, a video released by ISIS in August 2016 specifically mentions Rome as a target, spurring Italian leadership to increase security at historic, cultural, and transportation sites across the city (Jackson 2016; Roy 2016). Because Rome is referenced directly in the *hadith* quoted by ISIS, there can be little doubt that ISIS intends to expedite the apocalyptic chain of events until they can rest "…under the olive trees of Rome" (Issue #4, 4).

Cities are not the only category which includes ideologically-charged historical place names. There are several historical region place names that support ISIS's narrative as well. The most frequently-used term is Sham, an Arabic word meaning "land of the left hand" (Jacob 2007). This phrase refers to the geographic area north of the Hijaz (or Greater Syria), which would be on an observer's left side when facing east in the vicinity of Mecca and Medina. The same observer would find Yemen, or "land of the right hand," to the south (Jacob 2007). Prior to the Arab invasion in 636 CE, the Byzantine Empire controlled the area they called "Syria," which corresponds to the modern terms "Greater Syria" and "the Levant" (Rollinger 2006; Bishai 1968). Umar, the second Rashidun caliph, conquered al-Sham, subjugated the Jewish and Christian

Syrians, declared it a province of the caliphate, and appointed a governor to oversee the

administrative affairs according to the wishes of the caliph (Belyaev 1969).

Sham gained greater prominence in the new empire when Muawiyah, the first

ruler of the Umayyad dynasty, moved the caliphate's capital from Medina to Damascus

where it remained for nearly a century (Little 2016). It was during the Umayyad rule that

the caliphate enjoyed its greatest period of expansion and reached its maximum territorial

expanse (Bishai 1968; Belyaev 1969). Though ISIS has not controlled Damascus at any

time since its founding, it established the capital of the caliphate in another Syrian city of

historical significance (Remnick 2015). Raqqa was the capital of Harun al-Rashid's

Abbasid caliphate for nearly 13 years before it was again relocated to Baghdad (Bonner

1994). Whether it was out of the convenient circumstances of the Syrian rebellion

against Assad, a deliberate attempt to restore an historical seat of government in its

original place, or if it was sheer happenstance, ISIS's de facto capital city is the same as

the short-lived capital during the Golden Age of Islam. Thus, in evoking Sham, ISIS

resurrects the name of an ancient province which symbolized Muslim victory over both

Jews and Christians, and restores a connection to the glory of the Umayyad and Abbasid

dynasties who established capital cities therein. Consistent with the use of other

historical place names, ISIS positions Sham within its ideological narrative which recalls

the glory of the medieval caliphates as a victorious, powerful homeland for believers.

Additionally, ISIS effectively erases the international boundaries created by the

Sykes-Picot agreement by evoking the historical place name of Sham. In the seventh and

eighth centuries, the province of Sham encompassed modern-day Lebanon, Israel,

Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and parts of Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The borders of these

place names fade away for the audience which reads "Sham" instead of modern place names. The same effect occurs when ISIS employs other historical region's place names such as Mesopotamia and Transoxiana. The intent appears to be defiance of the current geopolitical system, denunciation of Sykes-Picot borders, and rejection of all non-ISIS governments.

Khurasan is another ideologically-charged place name occurring throughout the pages of *Dabiq*. While the name survived the centuries as a modern province in Iran, the original Khurasan encompassed a much larger area of central Asia. At the outset of Rashidun territorial expansion under Abu Bakr, Khurasan was a province of the Sassanian Empire (Ghodrat-Dizaji 2011). The conquest of Khurasan by the Arab Muslims occurred during the reign of the Uthman (third Rashidun caliph), who gained full control of Sassanian territory as far north as the Amu Darya River by 651 CE (Belyaev 1969). The Arab conquest of Persia marked the defeat of one of the greatest empires of the day.

It is clear from the text that ISIS's use of the term refers to the historical province of the Rashidun and later caliphates as opposed to the current province in Iran. Here again, the inclusion of an historical term in the magazine allows the reader to imagine a new border which displaces the colonial borders of central Asia while reminding him/her of a time when Muslims ruled atop the international power structure. Past, present and future coalesce in the place name of Khurasan.

Furthermore, Khurasan makes a by-name appearance in the *hadith* as the place from which the *Mahdi* will lead an army carrying black banners to capture Jerusalem (McCants 2015). Invoking the prophetic symbol of the black banners of Khurasan, ISIS

conflates its own (deliberately designed) black flag with those which will march to certain victory as promised in the *hadith*. It positions the caliphate as the vessel of prophecy fulfillment, further legitimizing its claim as a divinely-sanctioned government and setting the stage for the arrival of the *Mahdi* through the lineage of the rulers of ISIS's caliphate. Thus, ISIS exploits the process of identity-ideology-place construction by intermingling historical place names tied to sacred texts throughout the features of its official magazine.

ISIS also utilizes the antiquated place name "al-Andalus" in the text of *Dabiq* magazine. When the Umayyad expansion reached the Iberian Peninsula early in the eighth century, Visigoths ruled the area known as Hispania (Belyaev 1969). In 711 CE, Muslim invaders led by Tariq landed at Gibraltar and subdued the Visigoths (Bishai 1968). By 712, nearly all of Hispania was subject to Muslim rule (Nicolle 2003; Hebert 1991). Islamic governance remained in varying forms by various ruling parties in al-Andalus until 1492 (Belyaev 1969). In the early years of the Umayyad rule in Spain, Andalusian raw materials supplied the rest of the Islamic world with (among other minerals) mercury, which was used in the amalgamation of precious metals for usage in coins (Hebert 1991). Prior to this time, Muslims favored the use of Roman and Persian coins over minting their own. However, Islamic (Rashidun) coins dated as early as 651 CE have been discovered (Donner 1986). It was the reform efforts of Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, the fifth Umayyad caliph, that changed the caliphate's policy on minting Islamic coins free of Roman or Persian imagery (Donner 1986).

In a feature story in *Dabiq* Issue 5, ISIS links Marwan's reform and images of Andalusian coins devoid of foreign icons to its own initiative to produce gold, silver, and

copper currency for the caliphate. While the magazine article overtly states ISIS's motive in producing its own coins is "…to disentangle the Ummah [community of believers] from the corrupt, interest-based global financial system…," the reference to al-Andalus achieves another purpose. It reminds the reader that this disengagement from the world economic standards of the day has been accomplished in the past, lending credence to the idea that it can be accomplished again today. Furthermore, the renunciation of the global financial structure frees ISIS from the political power structure that governs the world economy. Finally, invoking the antiquated al-Andalus place name serves both as a reminder of Islam's once-great influence in Europe and as a subtle hint that Muslim rule in al-Andalus may soon return.

Several references to other historical sites of Islamic importance occur in the context of scriptural passages and other religious quotations. These references occur in nearly every section of the magazine, repetitively marrying ISIS's actions, programs, and ideas to Sunni theology. Invoking Koranic place names such as Hijaz (ancient coastal region in the Arabian Peninsula), Haramayn (the land of the two cities, Mecca and Medina), and Nadj (central highlands of the Arabian Peninsula) affords ISIS the opportunity to openly reject the Saudi royal family, government, and borders in the Muslim holy land. These historical names appeal to a time when the land of Mohammad was not polluted with apostate governments, but flourished under the rule of the "rightly guided" caliphs. This was a time for conquest as well, beginning with Mohammad's subjugation of most of the Arabian Peninsula during his lifetime and continuing with the Rashidun caliphs Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali (Nicolle 2003; Bishai 1968; Belyaev 1969).

ISIS reminds its readers of decisive battles of Islam's past such as the Battle of Nahavand in 642 CE, which effectively destroyed the Sasanian Empire in the Middle East and Central Asia and gave the riches of Persia to the invading Muslims (Bishai 1968). Known as the "battle of battles" to Muslim scholars, the Arab victory at Nahavand (near present-day Hamadan, Iran) resulted in a caliphate that stretched from Egypt to India (Bishai 1968). The Battle of Qadisiyyah (near present-day Najaf, Iraq) also appears in *Dabiq*. This battle in 637 CE pitted the Rashidun army against the Sassanian forces in Iraq near the capital city of Ctesiphon. A Muslim victory at Qadisiyyah exposed the weakness of the battle-weary Sassanid army which was still depleted from a decade of war with the rival Byzantines (Bishai 1968). One year after the battle of Qadisiyyah, Ctesiphon fell to the Arabs—a military and moral defeat that drove the Sassanian Empire's counterattack at Nahavand four years later (Bishai 1968).

Additionally, ISIS references some of the earliest battles (also known as expeditions) of Mohammad which were instrumental in the consolidation of the Arab tribes under the banner of Islam in its infancy. In 624 CE, Mohammad ordered the raid of a Meccan caravan heading north to Syria. The resulting skirmish, known as the Battle of Badr (near Medina), was a modest military victory for the Muslims, but yielded lucrative spoils of war (Bishai 1968). It also enraged the Meccans who were more powerful and wealthy than the Muslims. The following year the Meccans plotted to avenge the losses of Badr, which they accomplished at the Battle of Uhud (also near Medina). While Mohammad's men lost the battle, their resilience and tenacity impressed a number of other Arab tribes. By 630, the Muslims sacked Mecca and united most of the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula (Bishai 1968; Nicolle 2003). ISIS references these

(and other) battles to advance its divinely-sanctioned *jihad* narrative. The greatly outnumbered army of Mohammad was protected and blessed with victory over a superior enemy. So, too, will the armies of ISIS be blessed with victory over a superior enemy if Allah wills. Through the place names of these historical battles, ISIS tells its faithful followers that Mohammad's story is their story, and his blessings and victories are their blessings and victories.

While the memory of great Muslim victories of the past certainly plays a central role in the creation of identity and the imbuing of meaning to a place, it also illuminates a similar set of geopolitical circumstances for the rise of ISIS today and the establishment of the Rashidun caliphate in the seventh century. Bishai (1968) attributes the immediate success of Abu Bakr's fledgling empire to four factors (to which this study adds a fifth): 1) Abu Bakr's personal prestige afforded to him by his close association as a companion of Mohammad; 2) the competence of the army commanders he selected to lead his forces; 3) the appeal of fighting for one's religion; 4) the lengthy wars between the Byzantine and Persian Empires which greatly reduced their military capabilities by 632 CE; 5) a fifth factor, not mentioned by Bishai, was the military knowledge and experience gained by the Arabs while fighting as hired hands in the wars of their enemies (Nicolle 2003).

The parallels between then and now are uncanny: 1) The self-proclaimed caliph of ISIS, also named Abu Bakr, relies on his (purported) Qurayshi lineage to qualify him for the position of caliph and to elevate his personal prestige as member of Mohammad's tribe; 2) al-Baghdadi selected his military commanders from the experienced army and security forces of Saddam Hussein's regime (Hashim 2014); 3) the appeal of *jihad* has been a continuous calling card for Islamists who have fought for their religion in several

places throughout the world since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979
(Malashenko 2001); 4) the lengthy US/NATO wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Syrian
civil war, and the anti-Sunni policies in Iraq and Syria combined to create the
political/military/social conditions which allowed the rise of ISIS; 5) Some of the current
military leaders (including former Tajikistani lieutenant colonel Gulmurod Khalimov)
and fighters of ISIS received training and experience directly from the American military
(Kucera 2015; Bulos 2015). It is very unlikely that ISIS could have deliberately
orchestrated all of the similarities, but it is certain that its ideological and theological
legitimacy are enhanced by these coincidences.

In addition to decisive historical military engagements against the foreign Other,
ISIS also alludes to several scriptural battles involving caliphate-internal conflicts. When
Mohammad died in 632 CE, a number of Arab tribes rescinded allegiance from his
successor, Abu Bakr, disputing the legitimacy of Islam's required taxes (*zakat*) for
believing subjects (Bishai 1968). The establishment responded by dispatching troops to
quell the rebellions across Arabia in a military campaign known as the Ridda wars, or
Wars of Apostasy (Nicolle 2003). One of the first battles was at Buzakhah (near present-
day Ha'il, Saudi Arabia), where the Asad tribe and its prophet, Talha, renounced Abu
Bakr's authority. Khalid ibn al-Walid led the Muslim soldiers, defeating the Asads and
capturing Talha, who was sent to Medina where he repented and reconverted to Islam
(Bishai 1968).

Like the Rashidun caliphate, the Umayyad caliphate had its share of internal
rebellions of dissatisfied subjects. When the first Umayyad ruler, Muawiyah, died in 680
CE, his son, Yazid, inherited the title of caliph as mandated by his father (Belyaev 1969).

However, the descendants of the companions of Mohammad rejected the Umayyad's shift to a dynastic form of succession because it left them without power or position within the caliphate (Belyaev 1969). The revolt's epicenter was in the land of the two holy cities. Yazid sent an army to quell the rebellion in the Hijaz, which resulted in an Umayyad victory at the Battle of Al Harrah outside of Medina in 683 CE (Belyaev 1969). Yazid died mysteriously that same year and his son, Muawiyah II (who was only 13 years old) accepted the mantle of caliph in political conditions nearing anarchy (Bishai 1968). Muawiyah II died 40 days later and another Umayyad clansman named Marwan assumed the title of caliph in Damascus (Bishai 1968).

Amidst the uncertainty surrounding the rapid turn-over in leadership, the rebellions and civil war continued in the Umayyad-controlled state under Marwan until he died in 685 CE. His son Abd al-Malik finally subdued the rebels and established peace in the caliphate after two decades of turmoil (Bishai 1968). The Battle of Dayr al-Jamajim in Iraq was the last stand for the enemies of the Umayyad clan, and with their defeat, Abd al-Malik stabilized the Arab Empire and set the stage for expansion into Europe, Asia, and Africa (Bishai 1968). In citing these past battles, ISIS communicates to its faithful that internal struggle is an expected part of the history of the formation of the original caliphates. The battle analogies also demonstrate the ultimate fate of those who do not pledge their allegiance to the rightful caliph. Thus, ISIS draws on historical elements of the first caliphates to legitimize its own efforts and solidify its claim as a divinely-sanctioned successor to the glory of an idealized Islamic past which it seeks to re-establish in the present.

4.4.2.2 The Significance of ISIS's Provincial

Administrative System

The territorial gains achieved during Mohammad's lifetime were not substantial enough to warrant the distribution of administrative power. Rather, he instituted a system of representation wherein his appointed agent would serve as an emissary and tax collector to the Arab tribes which pledged their allegiance to Mohammad (Bishai 1968). Abu Bakr continued in this administrative practice over the course of his stewardship, but by the time Umar became caliph, changes were in order. He appointed governors from among his trusted (Arab) associates to oversee the affairs of the newly conquered provinces (Bishai 1968). The practice of designating Arab governors to administer in non-Arab provinces was continued by the Umayyad rulers. However, this fostered resentment among the local populations as Arabs received leadership roles and held political power. Bishai (1968) cites this as one of the causes of the fall of the Umayyad dynasty. The Abbasids, however, learned from the mistakes of the Umayyads, and they appointed local regents to oversee the caliphate's affairs in the provinces. The custom of declaring provinces where allegiance to the caliph was either offered or coerced, and appointing provincial governors with authority from the caliph lasted from the Umayyad dynasty in the seventh century until the partition of the Ottoman Empire brought the age of the caliphates to a close in 1922 (Fromkin 2010).

ISIS reintroduced this practice shortly after declaring itself a caliphate in 2014. Although the group claimed administrative authority over territory in Iraq and Syria, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the caliphate's first acceptance of another group's oath of allegiance in November 2014 (Zelin 2014). The acceptance of the pledges constituted the

formation of the provinces (*wilayat*) which are noncontiguous territories in most cases.

ISIS's ability to exercise territorial control in the newly proclaimed provinces outside of

Iraq and Syria is most likely limited at best. Still, ISIS can point to the expansion of the

caliphate as new provinces are declared, even if it suffers significant territorial losses in

Iraq and Syria. It can also draw parallels between the narrative of its own territorial

administrative practices and those of caliphates past.

ISIS appears to have adopted the Abbasid model of governor selection, favoring

local leadership over imported Arab leadership, even in cases which forced ISIS to

replace chosen governors (*wali*). One example is the change in leadership of ISIS's West

Africa Province (Nigeria) which was formerly known as Boko Haram. When the

province was established, the existing leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, was

appointed *wali*. However, his tactics of using children to carry out suicide attacks and his

attacks on other Sunni Muslims apparently caused ISIS to disavow Shekau and appoint

another governor in his place (Searcey and Schmitt 2016). The Arab leadership of ISIS

selected the Nigerian, Abu Musab al-Barnawi, as the new *wali*. This appointment is

significant for two reasons. First, it demonstrates ISIS's commitment to include non-

Arab Muslims in provincial leadership positions, even after other non-Arab Muslims

rebel or disappoint in those positions. Second, it emphasizes ISIS's concept of the

ummah, which is not limited to Arabs, but includes "all Muslims" (al-Baghdadi 2014).

Positioning the ISIS identity alongside the *ummah* identity could possibly generate wider

appeal, and it encourages the faithful to retain the elements of their ethnic identity that are

congruent with ISIS's interpretation of Islam. If a follower can identify as Caucasian and

ISIS, nationalism is supplanted. Furthermore, it demonstrates that the ISIS leadership is

looking ahead to further expansion during which it would likely need to rely on local governors because of ISIS's limited manpower.

ISIS already controlled sizeable portions of the provinces in northern Iraq and Syria when the group announced the caliphate from Mosul. These areas serve as ISIS's core, much like Medina for the Rashidun, Damascus for the Umayyad, and Baghdad for the Abbasid (and Constantinople for the Ottomans, which ISIS does not recognize as a valid caliphate). ISIS initially did not amend the administrative borders of the provinces it controlled within Iraq and Syria. However, later ISIS announced a revision of the boundaries in an effort to erase the borders drawn by Sykes and Picot and fight against what it deems the false idol of nationalism (Issue #4). ISIS claims that wherever its provinces are established, the existing government becomes null and void, and the caliphate assumes control of religious and government activities (Issue #5). To date, ISIS has declared provinces in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Algeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan (together comprising the province of Khurasan), Nigeria, and Russia (North Caucasus region).

In the years 2014 and 2015, ISIS enjoyed expansion of territory, and by virtue of taxation (like the caliphates of old), increased financial support. In 2016, however, ISIS lost nearly half of the key locations (gas fields, airports, cities, places of infrastructure) it gained (Almukhtar et al. 2016). Furthermore, it is unlikely that ISIS has any significant measure of sovereignty in any of its provinces outside the core area, with the possible exceptions of Libya and the Sinai Peninsula (Visser 2016; Wintour and Stephen 2016). Yet, ISIS can only claim control of small areas in Libya and Egypt. In the embattled areas in North Africa, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia it certainly cannot perform any of the

state-building functions or taxation it manages in Syria and Iraq. Thus, the declaration of provinces outside of ISIS's core territory is mostly political in nature. The territorial claims serve to establish ISIS as a formidable power on the international stage, and they serve to attract more Muslims to immigrate to the expanding caliphate. Moreover, these declarations match ISIS's geopolitical narrative, and at the very least, they mirror the administrative practices of the caliphates of the past, even if they have little bearing on sovereignty in those areas.

4.4.3 The Reimagined Territory of ISIS

As Hoffman (1998) noted, the goal of terrorism is political change which a group achieves by gaining power. Any given group's power has spatial limitations defined by the territory it controls (Sack 1986). Therefore, without territory, political power has no context. In order to understand a terror group's political goals, then, a study must include the territorial extent of those goals, even if the group in question does not explicitly state its spatial agenda. Through cartographic visualization paired with content and narrative analyses of the group's written or verbal statements, letters, or other publications, researchers can discover the ways in which a given terror group views political space and ways in which it wishes to modify territorial control. Thus, a terror group's vision for territorial control when the desired political change has been realized is the group's reimagined territory.

Medina and Hepner (2013) introduce the concept of aspirational homelands as geographic areas over which nationalistic, cultural, or ideological terrorist groups wish to exert political control. The theoretical concept of reimagined territory builds on this concept by revealing that more than simply desiring a homeland, terror groups actively

reimagine geographic space and boundaries in order to fuse the identities of group members to specific places via the cultural narratives of the groups. These place-making processes not only define the group goals, they inform the members of the group how to experience place. Thus, the theoretical concept of reimagined territory advances Medina and Hepner's (2013) aspirational homelands by tying its premise to geographic theories of place and space, geopolitics, and theories of political violence, and by demonstrating that terror groups intentionally "make place" to advance and legitimize their ideologies.

This research has produced a list of 352 place names extracted from *Dabiq* magazine and sorted into one of four spatial scale categories. The results were then visualized in a series of twenty-one maps. Next, the list of place names, the maps, and the original text of the magazine contributed to the geographic narrative analysis of ISIS's ideological message. Finally, the reimagined territory of ISIS takes shape by combining the results of the list of place names, the maps, and the narrative analysis into a representation of ISIS's desired geopolitical situation.

ISIS's eschatological narrative takes center stage in understanding the group's geographic goals. It is clear from official statements and from *Dabiq* that ISIS intends to expand beyond its holdings in Syria and Iraq. Issue 4, which shows the black banner of ISIS flying over the Vatican, presents the clearest version of ISIS's spatial aspirations. In the foreward section of that issue, several quotations from various top-level leaders lay out the blueprints for ISIS's map of the future. Jerusalem and Rome are singled out as places that will be conquered. One statement describes a caliphate that stretches from Spain to China, while another quotation on the same page (p.4) indicates the caliphate will extend to Indonesia. Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, the leader of an earlier version of ISIS,

made these comments in reference to former president George W. Bush's remarks about the political goals of Sunni extremists. Al-Baghdadi confirmed the veracity of the statement by adding, "He [Bush] spoke the truth although he is a liar" (Issue #4, 4).

But how would the borders of this caliphate appear in today's geopolitical climate? A good start would be to examine the greatest extent of the early caliphates referenced earlier in this dissertation. Returning to these borders would bring the glory of political relevance on the world stage back to the Muslim population living in those areas, and instill in them a sense of dignity and might according to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (al-Baghdadi 2014). However, the geopolitical power structure and international system of today are much different from the global power network that operated between the 7th and 13th centuries.

The modern (sovereign) state emerged through a gauntlet of wars and treaties, dissolutions of empires, and the consolidation of power at the national level—the bulk of which occurred after the fall of the Abbasid's Baghdad in 1258 CE (Krasner 2001; Bishai 1968). As much as ISIS would like to ignore the Westphalian system of international relations, the group understands that states are its main antagonists. Evidence for this acknowledgement arises in ISIS's construction of the Other in the form of states as previously outlined (USA, Russia, Israel, Iran, etc.). Thus, using the early caliphates as a territorial backdrop, a clear view of ISIS's geographic aspirations takes shape by considering states with relatively large Muslim populations as potential places of provincial expansion. With a few exceptions (like Indonesia), these countries cover roughly the same area as the original "lands of Islam" that ISIS seeks to recover from what it deems to be the shackles of nationalism, democracy, and secular governments.

Figure 4.32 displays countries wherein the largest religious denomination (in terms of percentage of the population) is Islam on the first map, and the spatial dimensions of the caliphates of old compared to Muslim countries today on the second map. ISIS seeks to unite the Muslim world under its black banners, and the countries shown in Figure 4.32 represent the places ISIS believes that could happen if Muslims answer the call to pledge spiritual and political allegiance to the caliphate.

In addition to explicit statements from official ISIS sources regarding territorial interests, the cartographic visualizations from this analysis corroborate the group's reimagined territory. By comparing and/or overlaying the place name frequency of use results from *Dabiq* with the early caliphates and current Muslim-dominant countries, we discover striking similarities. For the regions and countries categories, a visual examination requires comparison maps because the frequency polygons would obscure the underlying Muslim countries and early caliphates. For the provinces and cities categories, however, overlay maps demonstrate the congruence between the most frequently used terms and the borders of Islam (early and current).

Figure 4.33 presents a map of the historical and current regions mentioned in Dabiq and a map showing the boundaries of the early Islamic caliphates superimposed over the countries wherein Islam is the most prevalent religion today. The continent frequencies are omitted from the regions map for simplicity, but it should be noted that "Europe" had thirty mentions and "Africa" had eight. The spatial distribution of high-frequency regions in Dabiq closely simulates the borders of historical and modern Islam. In fact, only three region place names (North, Central, and South America) occurring in the magazine fall entirely outside of the Muslim-dominant countries or historical areas of

Countries Where Islam is the Most Prevalent Religion

Islam is largest
religion (% pop)

Cartograher: Chris Fuhriman
Data: GADM, Natural Earth, CIA

0   1,000   2,000   3,000   4,000
Kilometers

Early Islam vs. Modern Islam

Rashidun Caliphate

Umayyad Caliphate

Abbasid Caliphate

Islam is largest
religion (% pop)

Cartograher: Chris Fuhriman
Data: GADM, Natural Earth, CIA,
Historical Atlas of Islam
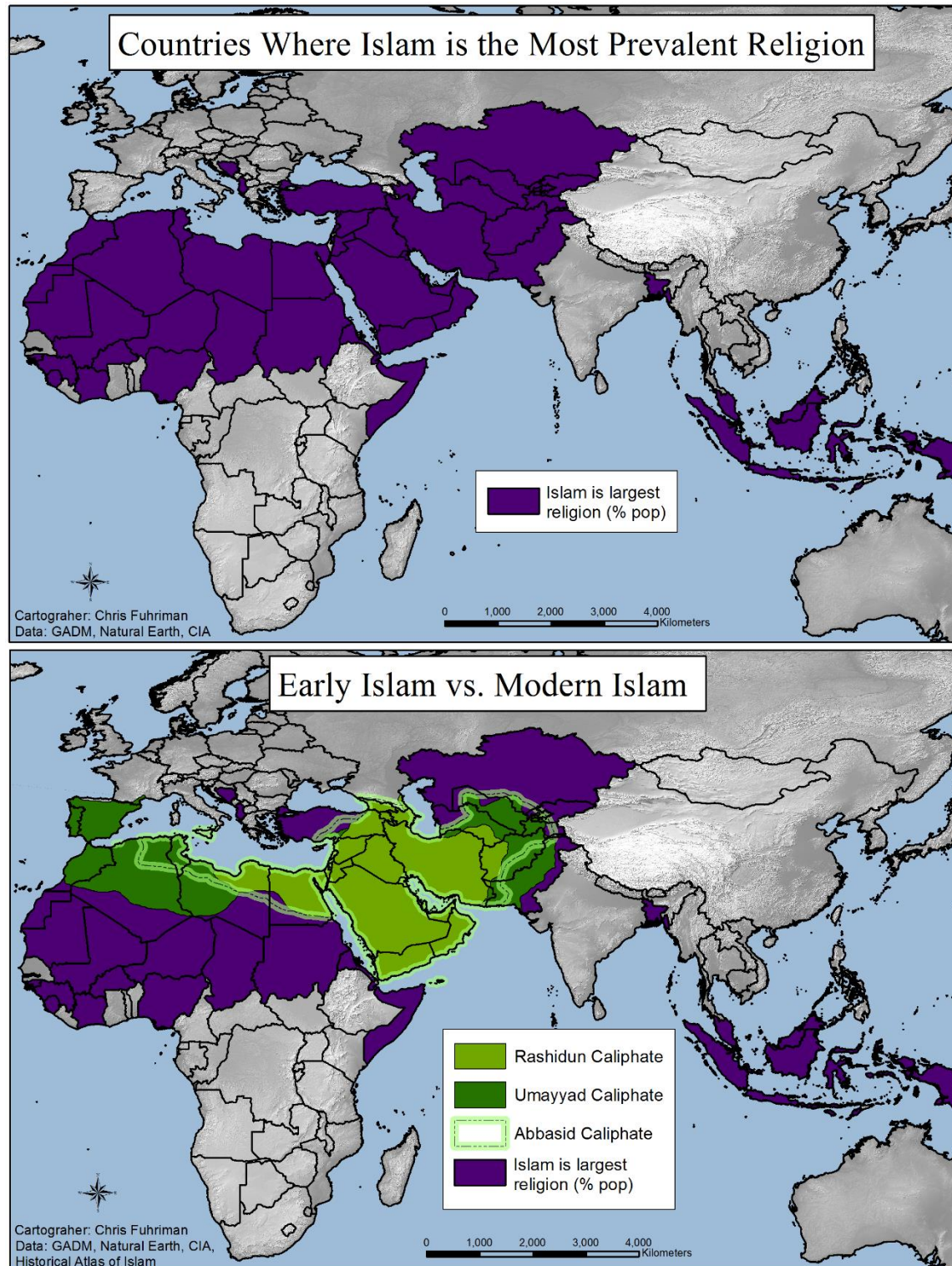
0   1,000   2,000   3,000   4,000
Kilometers

Figure 4.32 Countries wherein Islam is the most prevalent religion compared with the boundaries of the early Islamic caliphates
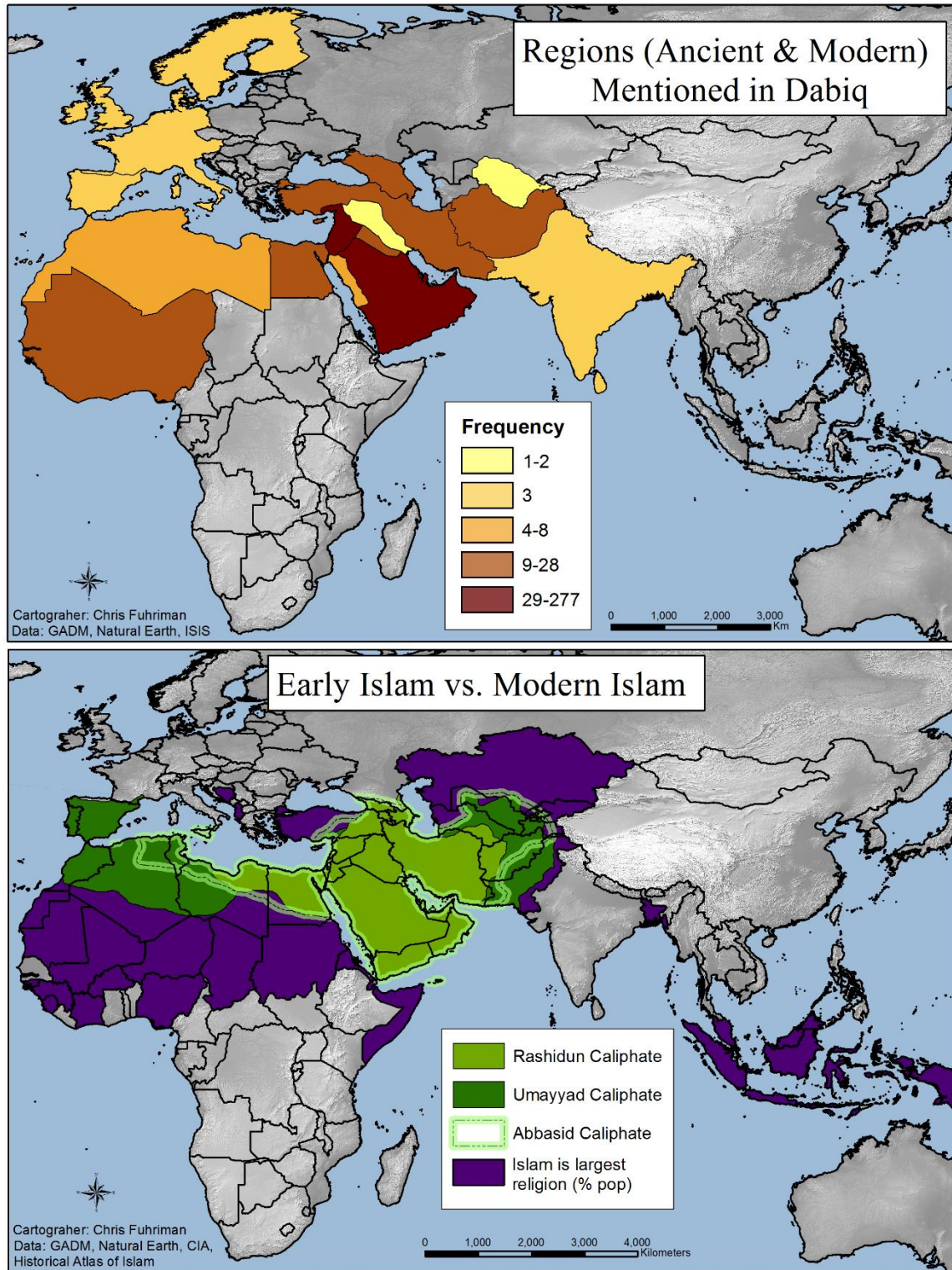
Figure 4.33 Historical and modern regions mentioned in *Dabiq* magazine compared with the boundaries of early and modern Islam

the caliphates. Western Europe includes both the Iberian Peninsula (al-Andalus) and Italy. Neither area boasts a large Muslim population currently, but both areas fell under Muslim rule (the Umayyads held Spain and Portugal and the Abbasids held Sicily) in the past. Moreover, Spain and Italy (Rome) are both mentioned by name as places ISIS wishes to control. At the regions scale, the frequency data generally align with the stated objectives of ISIS, the borders of past caliphates, and the countries in which Islam is currently the most prevalent religion.

Figure 4.34 compares the countries (excluding the Western Hemisphere) mentioned in *Dabiq* to the traditional and current Muslim lands. Here again the spatial distribution of high-frequency place names generally follows the borders of past and present Islam. Among the highest three frequency categories, only one country is outside of the past and/or current Muslim-dominated areas—the United States. Once more, the reason for the United States' high frequency centers on its important role as the Other within ISIS's ideology. Similarly, Japan, Russia, the UK, Belgium, and Australia garner higher frequencies based on their positions as enemies of ISIS, but none of them is in the highest three frequency categories. One seemingly obvious anomaly that occurs when comparing the two maps in Figure 4.34 is the relatively low frequency (5) of Muslim Indonesia, which houses the largest number of adherents of Islam in the world. Yet, ISIS's fixation with territorial holdings of the past combined with prophecies of the future may shed light on why the group largely ignores Indonesia (aside from the single comment about the extent of the eventual caliphate in Issue #4). Although Arab merchants brought their religion to Indonesia's ports as early as the eighth century, Islam did not gain significant influence as a religious belief system in the islands until the
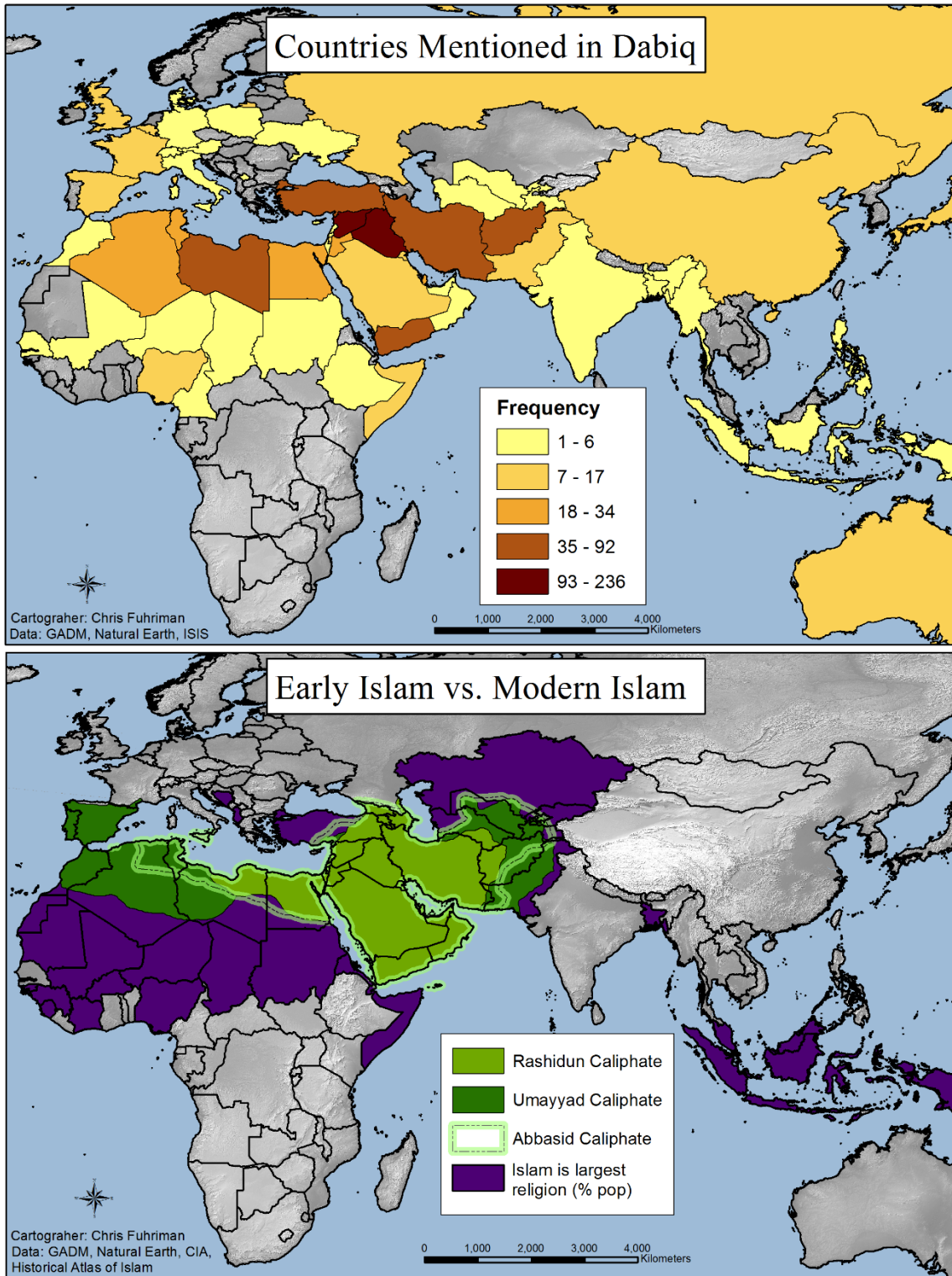
Figure 4.34 Countries mentioned in *Dabiq* magazine compared with the boundaries of early and modern Islam

fifteenth century (Wanandi 2002). The timing of Islam's spread into Indonesia contributes to its low frequency of occurrence in *Dabiq*. First, none of the idealized caliphates of the past included Indonesia within its borders. Second, Islam reached Indonesia after the Koran and *hadith* were recorded, and therefore, the place name occurs in neither of those sacred writings. Thus, because Indonesia is not mentioned in the prophecies regarding the end of the world, it does not hold as much ideological sway in ISIS's eschatological narrative. Like the regions scale, the country scale frequency data also align with ISIS's stated goals, the borders the Rashidun, Umayyad, and Abbasid caliphates, and the places wherein Islam prevails today.

Figure 4.35 depicts the provinces and cities mentioned in *Dabiq* magazine with the early caliphates and Muslim-dominant countries as a base map. Only five (California, Martha's Vineyard, Missouri, Quebec, and Virginia) of the seventy-three provinces occur outside of the past and current lands of Islam, with each of them having a frequency of one. These provinces are each mentioned in the context of enemy places, or places of the Other. Each of the remaining sixty-eight province place names occurs within the boundaries of the historical caliphates and current Muslim countries. Thus, the high-frequency and lower frequency place names at the province scale mirror the two previous geographic scales in terms of spatial distribution within the confines the early caliphates and the current countries where Islam is the most prevalent religion.

At the city scale, only two place names in the three highest frequency classes occur outside of the lands of Islam. Rome is the ninth most frequently used city place name (eighteen mentions). As previously discussed, Rome's ideological importance as the final conquest in bringing about the apocalypse cannot be understated. The second

Provinces Mentioned in Dabiq

Frequency
- 1 - 3
- 4 - 9
- 10 - 18
- 19 - 35
- 36 - 52

- Rashidun Caliphate
- Umayyad Caliphate
- Abbasid Caliphate
- Islam is largest religion (% pop)

Cartograher: Chris Fuhriman
Data: GADM, Natural Earth, CIA,
Historical Atlas of Islam, ISIS

0   1,000   2,000   3,000   4,000
Kilometers

Cities Mentioned in Dabiq

Frequency
- 1 - 3
- 4 - 11
- 12 - 24
- 25 - 55
- 56 - 430

- Rashidun Caliphate
- Umayyad Caliphate
- Abbasid Caliphate
- Islam is largest religion (% pop)

Cartograher: Chris Fuhriman
Data: GADM, Natural Earth, ISIS

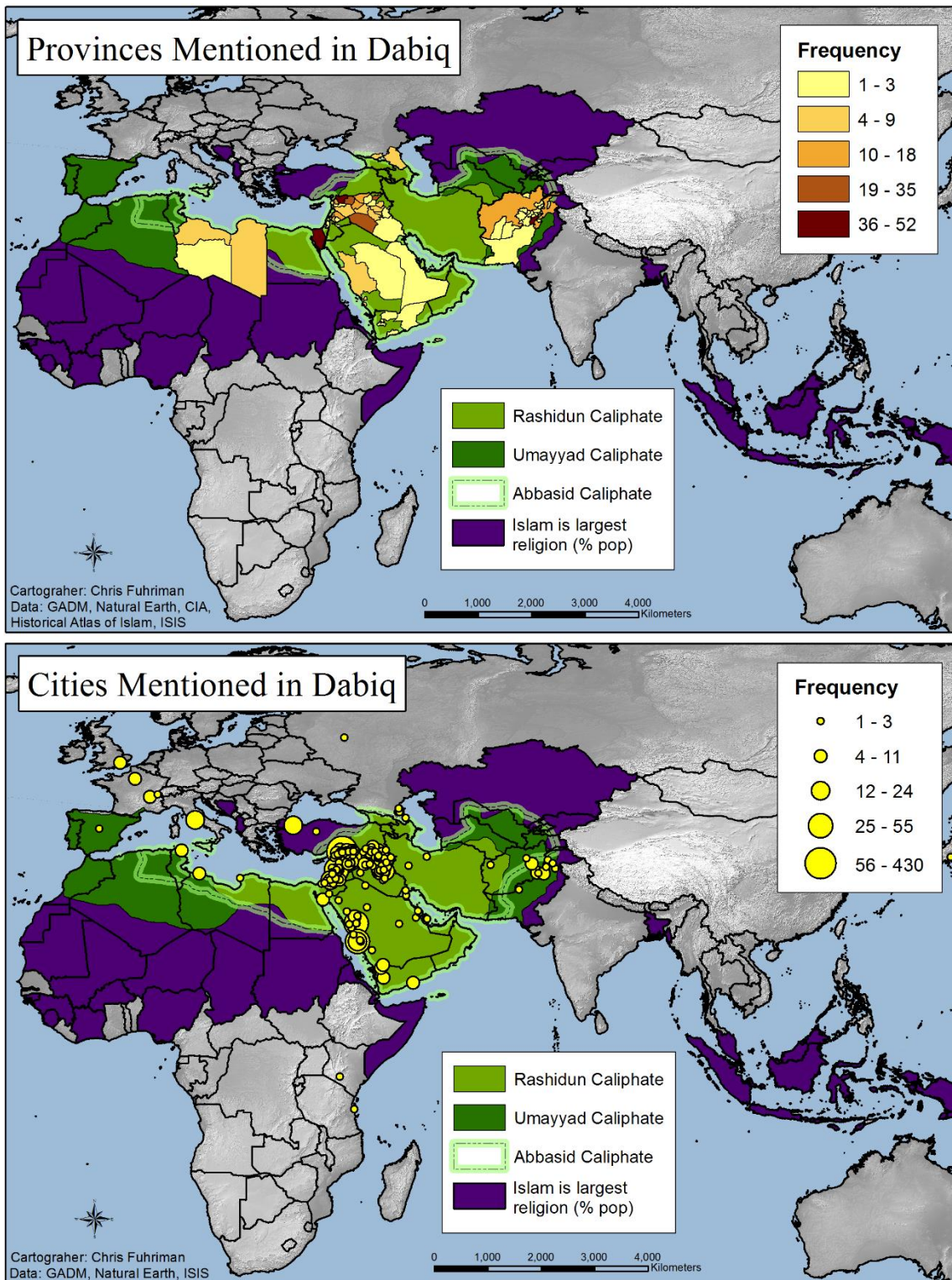0   1,000   2,000   3,000   4,000
Kilometers

Figure 4.35 Provinces and cities mentioned in *Dabiq* magazine compared with the boundaries of early and modern Islam

city is Washington, DC, the capital of ISIS's Other. All remaining high-frequency (top three classes) place names and the overwhelming majority of low-frequency city names occur within the areas of Islam's past and present. Therefore, the frequency city scale follows the same spatial distribution pattern as the larger three geographic scales.

A clear picture of ISIS's reimagined territory now emerges. The group's apocalyptic outlook positions specific geographic places at the center of its ideological, military, and political goals. In order to initiate the chain of events that ISIS believes will lead to the end of the world, the group has focused on establishing a de facto state by declaring itself a caliphate. ISIS, while performing state-building functions in Syria and Iraq, has attempted to expand its influence and borders by declaring provinces in eleven countries (including Syria and Iraq). The group has also executed terror attacks in several countries in an effort to draw the target countries into a ground war in Syria. ISIS needs the army of Rome to come to battle at Dabiq, where Allah will grant them victory over the crusaders. The battle will then turn to Constantinople, and on to Rome before the apocalypse occurs. Based on the place name frequencies from *Dabiq* magazine, ISIS's stated geographic objectives, and the borders of past and current lands of Islam, ISIS's reimagined territory appears in Figure 4.36.

In the short term, the most important places for ISIS are its core in Syria and Iraq (for security, administration, and expansion) and the holiest sites of Islam (Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem). In order to gain and maintain legitimacy as a caliphate, ISIS must show that it can perform the functions of a caliphate such as security, health care, education, and taxation. It must also gain control of Islam's holy sites if it wants to control the cultural narrative of Islam upon which it relies for theological authority
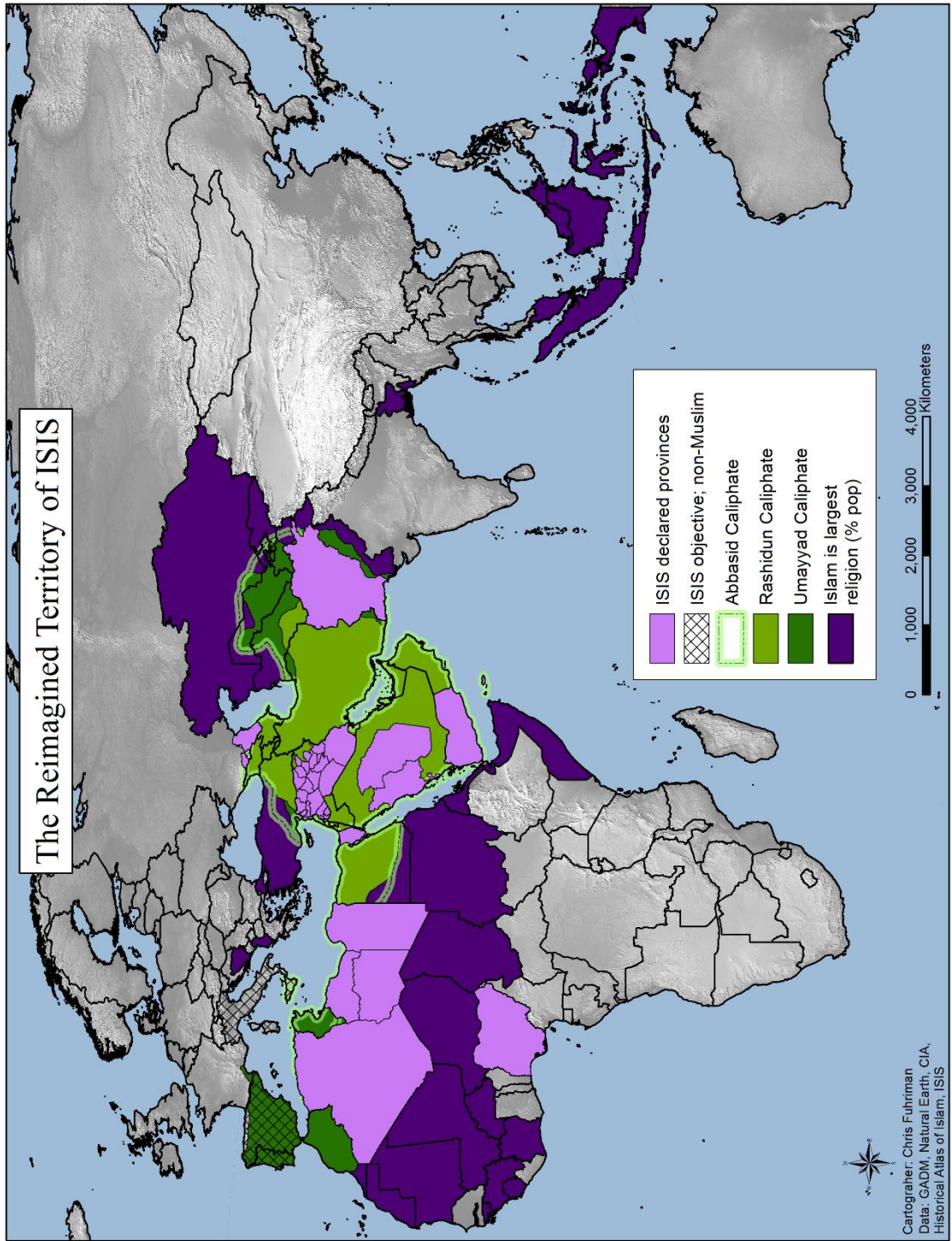
Figure 4.36 The reimagined territory of ISIS

(Crooke 2014). If Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is to be a rightful successor of Mohammad, he must control Mohammad's homeland. Accordingly, Dabiq mentions Medina forty-seven times and Mecca forty-five times, making them the third and fourth most frequently used city place names. Moreover, ISIS has already declared a province that spans the lands of the two holy cities in Saudi Arabia—an area which each of the three early caliphates controlled. ISIS's medium range goals include the expansion of the caliphate. Like the short-term goals, this endeavor has also begun in earnest with the announcement of provinces from Algeria to Afghanistan. These provinces are depicted in lilac on the map in Figure 4.36. Even if ISIS cannot enforce sovereignty in these provinces, the declaration of control is ideologically sufficient to maintain legitimacy. As ISIS declares more and more provinces (meaning that more groups and/or populations have pledged their allegiance to the caliphate), the caliphate's borders grow more akin to its dynastic predecessors. When it first declared its statehood, ISIS's caliphate was small and confined like the Rashidun's state. Viewing the spatial extent of its declared provinces, ISIS's caliphate now extends beyond the reach of the Rashiduns, but not yet as far as the Umayyads.

ISIS's long term geographic aim is to unite the entire Muslim world under the black banner of the caliphate to usher in the final victory for Allah and his army. However, in order to fulfill the eschatological prophecies of the *hadith*, ISIS will need to conquer lands beyond the current and historical bounds of Islam. Any of the Sunni-majority countries holds the potential for a pro-ISIS internal uprising and overthrow of its own secular government (see Libya or Syria). But Iran will require external pressure due to its Shia majority. ISIS will have to follow the footsteps of the Umayyads to win the

prize of Persia. Next, the once-Muslim al-Andalus has been Christian for more than 400 years. Returning Islam to the Iberian Peninsula will require another full military conquest. Finally, Rome must fall to the Muslim army. Here again, ISIS cannot rely on internal pressure to break the crosses of Rome. It must accomplish what no Muslim army has ever accomplished—the conquest of Rome for Allah.

In short, ISIS imagines the future borders of the caliphate to encompass all the lands of Islam. The boundary will stretch from Spain in the west to Indonesia in the east, defying the false borders of Sykes-Picot and the reordering the international system of state sovereignty. The sprawling caliphate will be the homeland for the entire *ummah* of believers with a rightful successor leading them to victory against the enemies of Allah until Constantinople and Rome fall. The high frequency place names which occur outside of the lands of Islam serve their purpose in becoming the place of the Other. These places are to be attacked and provoked, but not conquered and occupied.

4.5 Validation of the Theoretical Concept

Using al Qaeda's *Inspire* Magazine

This dissertation analyzes the official publications and statements of ISIS to reveal the group's geographic vision for the future. However, the analytical methods and theoretical concept of reimagined territory apply to any terrorist organization with political (and therefore geographic) ambitions. The aim of this section is to validate the utility of the methods employed using ISIS data on a different data set, and to demonstrate general applicability of reimagined territory as a useful theoretical concept in understanding the goals and aspirations of terror groups. In analyzing al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and its magazine, *Inspire*, this section follows the structure

employed earlier in this chapter: results of the computer-aided content analysis, results of the manual content analysis, cartographic visualization, geographic narrative analysis, and reimagined territory of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The methodology and theoretical framework remain the same for these data. Accordingly, only deviations or other special considerations are highlighted as necessary in an effort to present the data and analysis in a more abbreviated fashion.

To date, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has published a total of 14 issues of *Inspire* magazine, which first appeared on the Internet in 2010 (Droogan and Peattie 2016). *Inspire* is the second attempt at publishing an English language *jihad* magazine aimed specifically at Muslims in the West. The first magazine was (American) Samir Khan's *Jihad Recollections,* which managed four issues before Khan departed the United States for Yemen where he joined AQAP in 2009 (Droogan and Peattie). Khan collaborated with another American, Anwar Al-Awlaki, in the creation and publication of *Inspire.* They produced nine issues (the last two were published posthumously) in the span of one year before they were killed in a drone strike in Yemen in 2011 (Droogan and Peattie 2016). As the title implies, the goal of *Inspire* magazine is to encourage its readers to wage war against the West in their home countries, but especially in the United States (Lemieux et al. 2014). AQAP is widely considered to be the strongest and most capable branch of al Qaeda (Karmon 2015).

For the purpose of this validation, the first five issues of *Inspire* are selected as the data sample. The issues were selected without prior knowledge of their content or length with the assumption that the first five issues would be a representative sample of the complete body of work. The source for the magazine issues (.pdf format) was

Jihadology.net, a website dedicated to the collection of jihadi materials. Table 4.4

displays the publication information for the issues of *Inspire* used in this research.

4.5.1 Results of the Computer-Aided

Content Analysis

The *Inspire* issues are subjected to the same format conversion in preparation for

processing in the text mining software. Furthermore, the same R code (adapted for the al

Qaeda files) is used in the creation of the term document matrices from the text files. The

average number of unique terms per issue is 2,673.6, with 3,476 terms (Issue 5)

registering as the maximum value and 837 individual terms (Issue 3) as the minimum

value. As with *Dabiq*, the most frequently used term over all five issues is "Allah" with

1,137 individual occurrences. Table 4.5 displays the number of unique terms that

appeared in each issue of the magazine along with its highest frequency term.

Word clouds are also generated from the *Inspire* data. The minimum frequency

for these visualizations is also set to 15, except for Issue 3. Because the page count (and

subsequent individual word count) is relatively low for that issue, the 15-count minimum

Table 4.4

Issues of *Inspire* Magazine

Issue	Hijri (Islamic) Date	Gregorian Date	Length (pages)
1	Summer 1431	January 2010	67
2	Fall 1431	October 2010	74
3	November 1431	November 2010	23
4	Winter 1431	January 2011	67
5	Spring 1436	March 2011	70

Table 4.5

Number of unique terms and highest frequency terms in *Inspire*

Issue	Length (pages)	Unique Terms	Highest Frequency Term	Frequency
1	67	3139	Allah	189
2	74	3017	Allah	277
3	23	837	Allah	37
4	67	2899	Allah	277
5	70	3476	Allah	357

produces a word cloud with very few terms. Setting the minimum frequency

to five results in a more useful visualization. Figures 4.37 and 4.38 are the word clouds

for the *Inspire* data.

There are some similarities between the word clouds of *Inspire* and *Dabiq*. The

highest frequency words of *Inspire* also include "Allah," "will," and "Muslim" in the top

tier (blue font), indicating the ideological importance of religious identity in al Qaeda's

narrative. The second tier consists of "Islam," "jihad," "people," "one," "fight," and

"brother." Notably, there are fewer place names among the highest frequency terms in

comparison to ISIS. Only Yemen appears in the second tier, and America in the next tier

down. Like ISIS, however, AQAP refers to the United States using various place names.

Accordingly, the frequencies for each term are not high enough individually, but together

make the United States the most frequently used place name in *Inspire*. Also of note is

the shorter length of Issue 3, which is a special issue outlining the details of AQAP's plot

to send printer bombs via FedEx and UPS. "Package" appears 24 times and "operation"

(stemmed to "oper") appears 23 times in the issue. Because the issue is singularly

focused, there are fewer opportunities for the usual ideological themes and associated

place names to appear in the text.

Figure 4.37 Word clouds for *Inspire* issues 1 through 3

Issue 4

Issue 5

Figure 4.38 Word clouds for *Inspire* issues 4 and 5

4.5.2 Results of the Manual Content Analysis

As previously mentioned, there are no preexisting data dictionaries to assist in the computer-aided content analysis. However, for the manual coding process applied to the *Inspire* data, the dictionary of Arabic terms and proper names contributed to overall efficiency. Naturally, the text of *Inspire* included names and terms that did not appear in *Dabiq*, and those new terms were added to the dictionary as the manual coding process progressed. Furthermore, the context for each term is verified using the original magazine issue to ensure that its usage and meaning (in the al Qaeda context) are not derived from the ISIS context.

AQAP also utilizes multiple place names in referring to a single geographic location. The most common occurrence is the use of "America," "USA," "US," or "United States" interchangeably. As before, the sum of each term's frequency is used in generating the cartographic visualizations. Furthermore, each instance of "us" is verified in the original text to distinguish between the plural pronoun and the place. Other multiple-term place name examples from the magazine include the use of "Jerusalem" and its Arabic name, "al Quds," as well as "England," "UK," and "Britain" in various contexts. Each multiple-term place name is reduced to a single term for cartographic representation. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula refers to the White House in only one instance over the span of five issues. As with ISIS's usage, *Inspire* employs the White House as a proxy for Washington, DC as the geographic place of the head of the US government. Accordingly, the one occurrence of White House is combined with the six occurrences of Washington, DC.

Table 4.6 displays the total number of individual place names occurring in each

Table 4.6

Number of unique terms and highest frequency terms in *Inspire*

Issue	Length (pages)	Place Names	Highest Frequency Place	Frequency
1	67	81	America	72
2	74	87	America	51
3	23	22	Arabian Peninsula / USA	7
4	67	75	America	21
5	70	67	Yemen	78

issue, as well as the place name from each issue with the highest frequency. The average

number of place names per issue is 66.4, which represents a much lower figure than

ISIS's total of eighty-one names per issue. The next five issues of *Inspire* would need to

average 95.6 place names each in order to match the average number of place names

occurring in an issue of *Dabiq.* The maximum number of place names occurring in a

single issue is eighty-seven in Issue 2. The minimum number of place names is twenty-

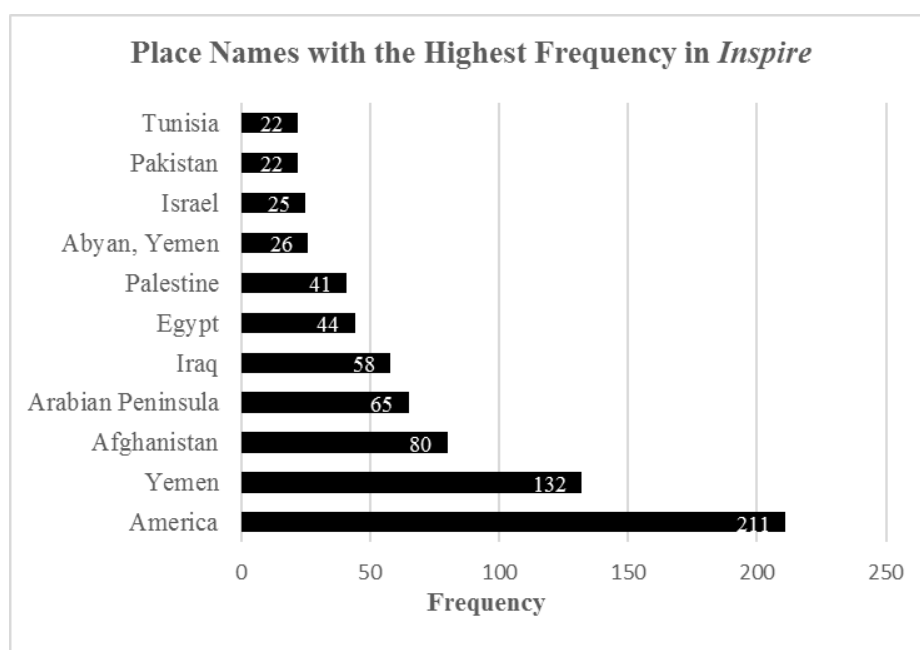two in Issue 3 (the special issue). Figure 4.39 displays a bar chart of the eleven highest

Figure 4.39 Highest frequency place names occurring in *Inspire* issues 1-5

frequency place names in *Inspire* (two places had twenty-two mentions). The frequencies shown in the bar chart represent the sum of all place name variants associated with each term. Interestingly, ISIS and al Qaeda share only four of the top eleven highest frequency place names: Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, and the United States.

The context for each place name is also verified for correct categorization in the event that a term could fall into more than one category (city vs. province, etc.). Geographic directional terms like "north" and "central" are noted and recorded as different place names when they modify place names like "America" or "Africa." The categorization process yields at total of 179 distinct place names classified in one of four spatial scale categories. There are twenty-seven place names in the regions category, forty-nine place names in the countries category, twenty-two place names in the provinces category, and eighty-one place names in the cities category, as shown in Table 4.7. The complete listings of place names by category are found in Appendices G, H, I, and J.

As with *Dabiq,* the majority of the place names occurring in *Inspire* have a low frequency. Of the 179 place names, 131 (73%) appear less than five times throughout the

Table 4.7

Number of place names and highest frequency places in *Inspire* by category

Category	Place Names	Highest Frequency Place	Frequency
Regions	27	Arabian Peninsula	65
Countries	49	America	211
Provinces	22	Abyan, Yemen	26
Cities	81	Guantanamo / Sana'a	12

issues. One hundred fourteen (64%) place names occur only two times or less in the text.

The changes in usage over the span of five issues, the frequencies of the eleven most

mentioned place names are plotted by issue in a series of bar plot visualizations. Figures

4.40, 4.41 and 4.42 present bar plots of each place name accompanied by its trend line

(dotted line) for reference. Six of the terms show an increasing trend while five of the

terms show a decreasing trend.

A geographic analysis of *Inspire* magazine shares the same challenges and

limitations as encountered with the *Dabiq* data—defining the West and the East. The

treatment of "the West" as a nonspatial reference to ideology, socio-religious beliefs, and

governments continues in the analysis of AQAP. Because ISIS can trace its origin and

ideological lineage through al Qaeda, a shared parent organization, it would be expected

to find many similarities in the narratives of two groups. Like ISIS, al Qaeda Central

sees the West as the root of the problems in the Muslim world for a number of reasons

including the Western occupation of Muslim holy lands, Western support for Israel, and

negative sociocultural influences which have corrupted Islam (Blanchard 2007).

Consequently, "the West" plays the central role of the Other in Al Qaeda's ideology as

well. "The West" appeared 129 times in the first five issues of Inspire magazine. If this

term were treated as a place name, it would be the third most frequently used geographic

place, behind only the United States and Yemen. As expected, AQAP's narrative

includes the premodern Islamic tradition of dividing the world into the "Land of Islam"

and its opposing twin, the "Land of War" (harb). AQAP's definition of each term,

however, differs significantly from ISIS's interpretation. Inspire describes the Land of

Islam as the traditional lands of the Muslims, or in other words, (presumably) places
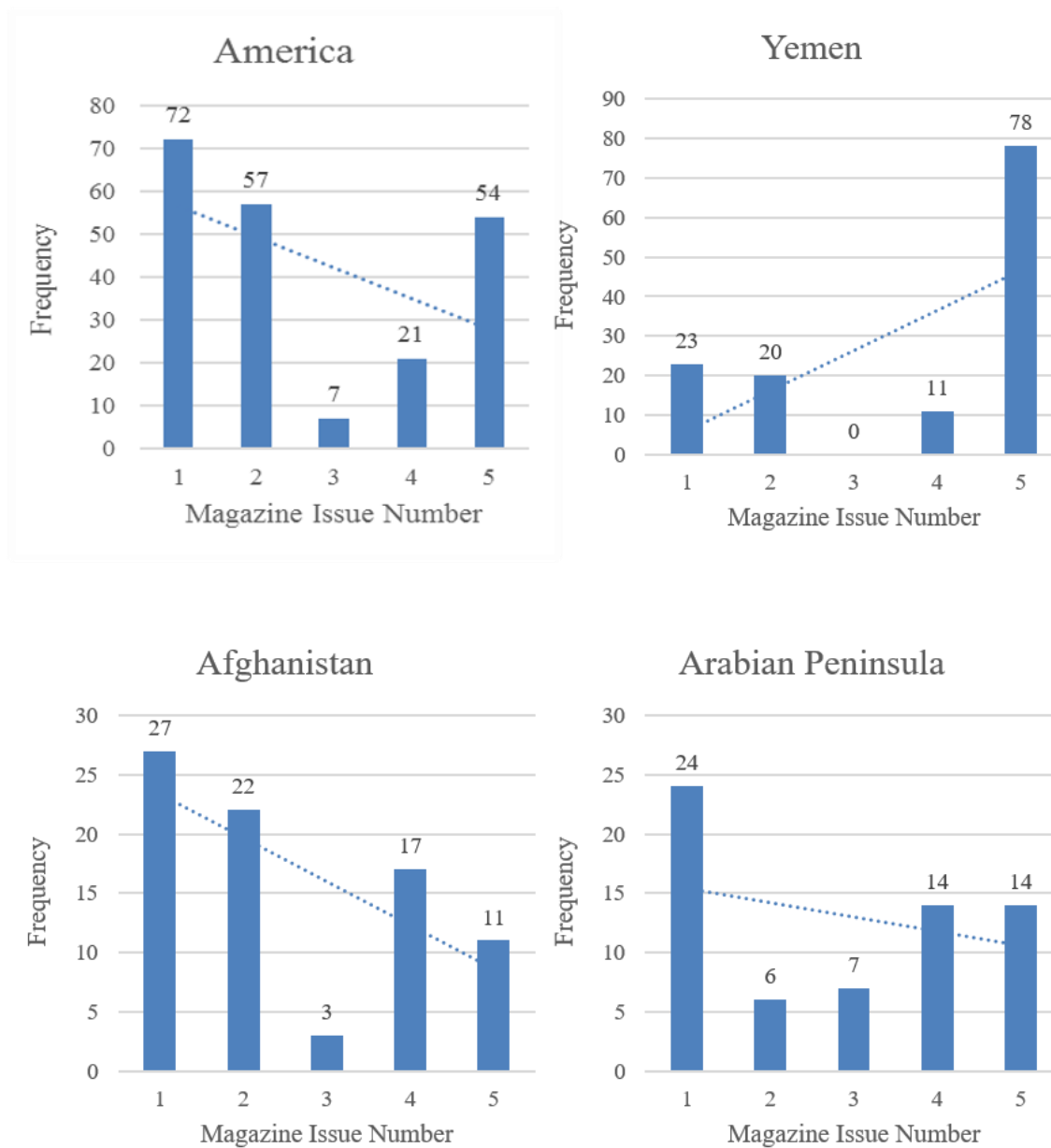
Figure 4.40 Bar plots of the four highest frequency place names occurring in *Inspire* issues 1-5. The dotted line is the trend line for each place name.
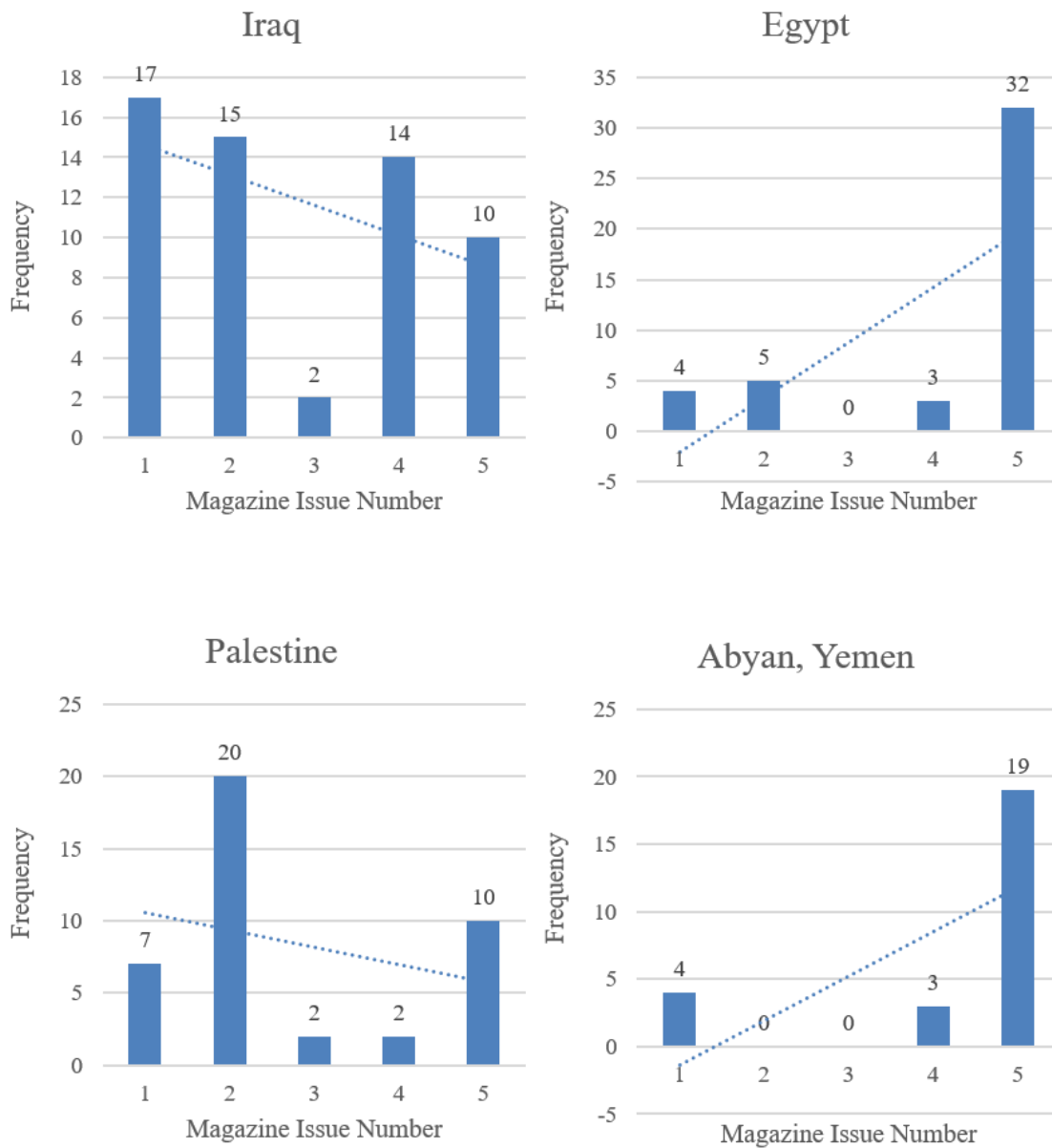
Figure 4.41 Bar plots of the fifth through the eighth highest frequency place names occurring in *Inspire* issues 1-5. The dotted line is the trend line for each place name.
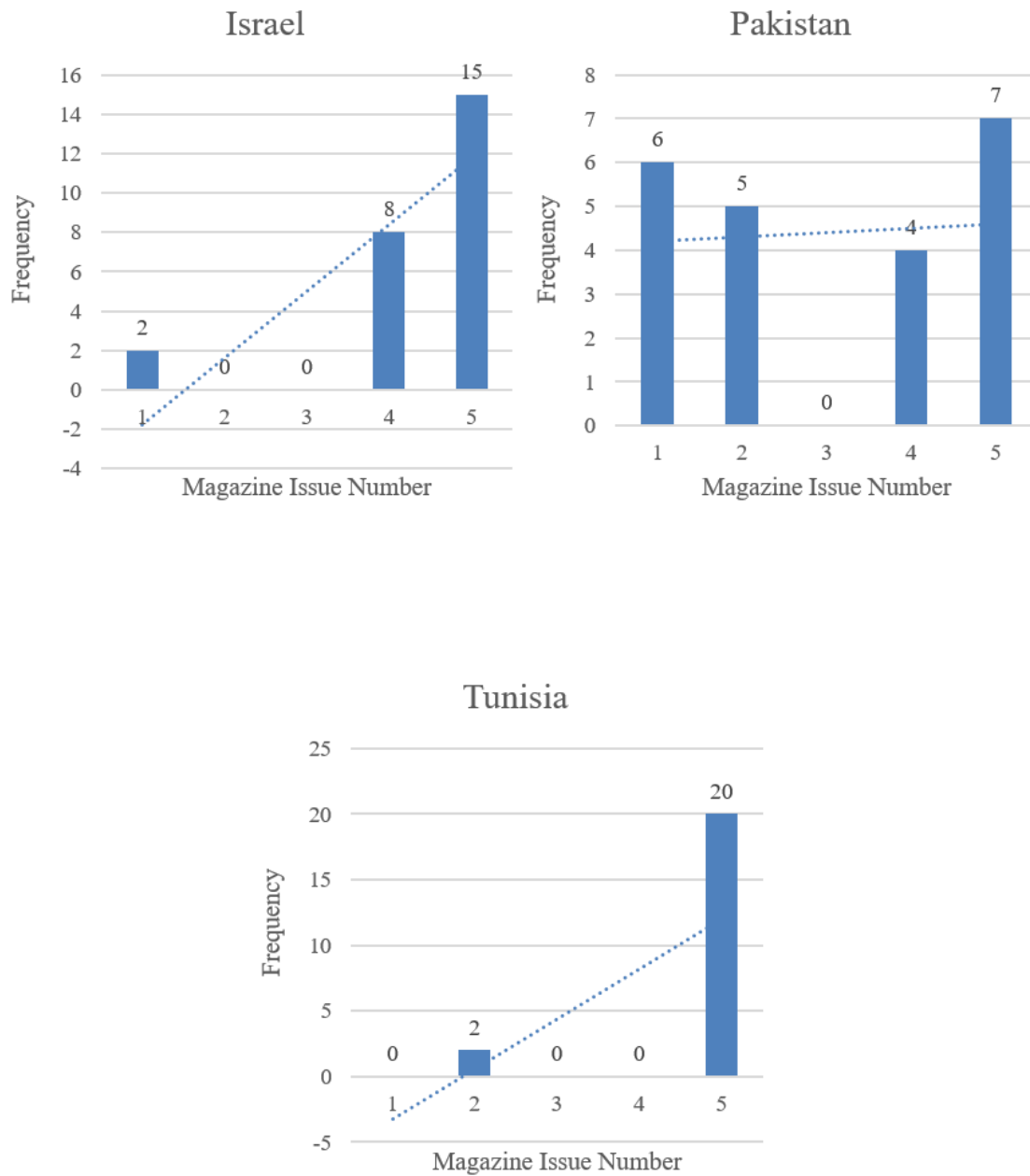
Figure 4.42 Bar plots of the ninth and tenth highest frequency place names occurring in *Inspire* issues 1-5. The dotted line is the trend line for each place name.

where Islam is the most prevalent religion today (Inspire Issue 4).

Conversely, the Land of War is any country that has entered into war with or invaded the Land of Islam. AQAP asserts that "…all of the Western nations that have an active participation in the occupation of Afghanistan or Iraq or any other Muslim land are considered to be *dar al-harb*" (Issue 4, 56). These definitions of each land are more static and quantifiable than those of ISIS which shift with every military confrontation that results in ground gained or lost. Moreover, it suggests that states not involved in any way in operations in Muslim lands may comprise a third category of neutral lands, indicating that al Qaeda may not view the world in the same binary fashion as ISIS. However, AQAP's use of the terms aligns with its use of "the West" as the Other. Thus, in the AQAP context, Land of Islam and Land of War are ideological cues evoked in the construction of the *jihadi* identity. They do not inform the follower *where* he/she, should be. Rather, they tell the reader *how* they should be. Again, these terms are not mapped due to their nonspatial application. "Land of War" appears twenty-seven times in the first five issues of *Inspire* and "Land of Islam" appears four times.

4.5.3 Results of the Cartographic Visualization

The results of the manual categorization of the place names occurring in *Inspire* are used in the production of a series of 18 maps. The same cartographic strategy used in the mapping of ISIS's place names is applied to the list of AQAP place names. Accordingly, the lists of places in each geographic scale category are mapped according to their spatial distribution. Thus, the data play a key role in determining the number of maps required to efficiently and effectively visualize the place names. Not surprisingly, the number and areas covered by the maps of AQAP's data differ from the ISIS maps.

The following sections show and discuss the cartographic visualization results of the regions, countries, provinces, and cities categories.

4.5.3.1 Cartographic Visualization Results

of the Regions in *Inspire*

The manual classification process yields twenty-seven distinct place names in the regions category. These results were further categorized as either continents, current regions in Africa and the Middle East, current regions in Asia, historical regions, or hydrologic features. The same considerations that applied to the projections, color schemes, map background information, and data classification scheme (natural breaks) for the *Dabiq* data also apply in the case of the *Inspire* data. The following paragraphs discuss only the deviations from these norms rather than repeating the information presented previously.

Figure 4.43 is the map of continent place names occurring in *Inspire* magazine. All of the frequencies on this map are relatively low. Europe accumulates the most mentions with four. Asia garners three mentions and Africa and Australia each appear just two times in the text. North and South America are only mentioned one time, and Antarctica is not mentioned at all in the first five issues of *Inspire*. In fact, the entire regions category has relatively lower frequencies with the exception of its most often occurring place name, the Arabian Peninsula (sixty-five mentions). It appears that, aside from its homeland of the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP favors using place names at the country scale over the larger regional (including continents) scale.

Figure 4.44 is a map of the current region place names in Africa and the Middle East. The Arabian Peninsula accumulates the most mentions in *Inspire* by more than

Frequency of Continents in Inspire Issues 1- 5

AUSTRALIA
(2)

ASIA (3)

Indian Ocean

EUROPE (4)

AFRICA
(2)

ANTARCTICA

NORTH
AMERICA
(1)

Atlantic Ocean

SOUTH
AMERICA
(1)

Pacific Ocean

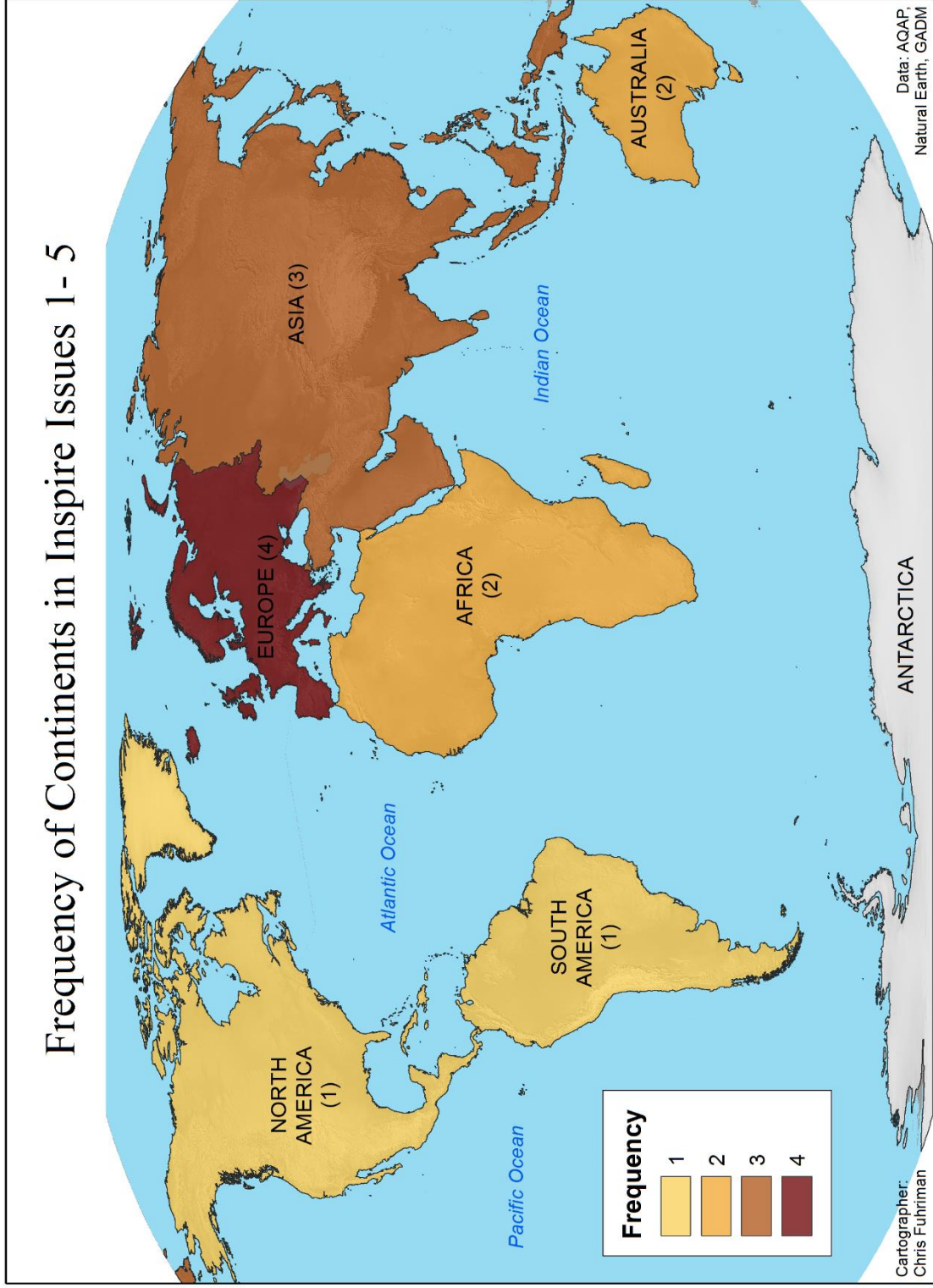**Frequency**

1
2
3
4

Cartographer:
Chris Fuhriman

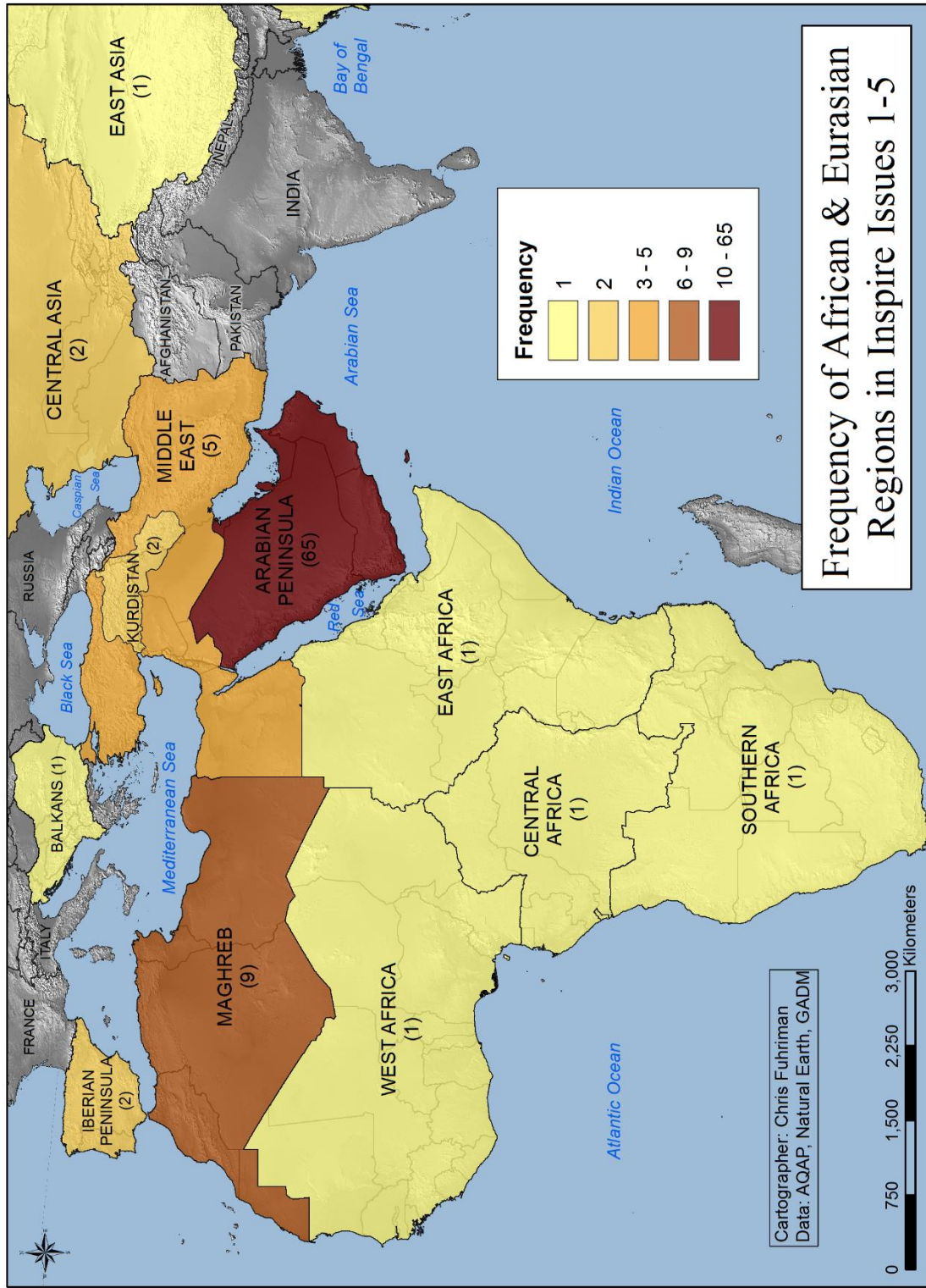Figure 4.43 Continent place names occurring in *Inspire*

Figure 4.44 Region place names in Africa and Eurasia occurring in *Inspire*

seven times the frequency of the next highest place name. None of the sixty-five occurrences is from the acronym "AQAP." As with ISIS, the name of the group refers to an organization and not a place, even though the name contains a geographic reference. It should be noted once more that while some regions have relatively clear, uncontested definitions (like the Arabian Peninsula), other regions have more fluid, ambiguous definitions (like the Middle East or Western Europe). With the previously discussed limitations of constructing and defining regions in mind, *Inspire's* treatment of African regions is considered within the range of accepted regional conventions for Africa. Al Qaeda mentions all of the regions of Africa by name at least one time. This research acknowledges that the regional boundaries selected for cartographic visualization are simply one of many ways to group the various countries into the regions on the map. It is important to note that aside from the Maghreb (North Africa), each region in Africa only garners one mention in the first five issues. Thus, whether Angola (or any given African country outside the Maghreb) is in Central or Southern Africa is less important because each region has an equal frequency.

Some definitions of the Maghreb include Egypt while others do not. However, as Egypt is also generally considered to be part of the Middle East (culturally and geographically), this research excludes Egypt from the Maghreb in favor of mapping the country as part of the Middle East. The Maghreb (nine occurrences) has the second highest frequency in the current regions category. The Middle East is next with five mentions. Like ISIS, AQAP also refers to Kurdistan by name in the text of *Inspire*. The boundaries for this polygon are the same used in the ISIS maps (based on the Kurdish Institute's estimation of the Kurdish population).

Figure 4.45 is a map of the current regions in Asia that occur in the first five issues of *Inspire*. The focus regions of this map all have low frequencies, reinforcing the observance that AQAP appears to favor country place names over regional place names. The conspicuous absence of South Asia in the text of *Inspire* also underscores this tendency of the magazine authors. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan (which are generally considered part of South Asia) accumulate high frequencies at the country scale with 80 and 22 respectively. This indicates a preference to refer to these ideologically important place names at the country scale instead of the region scale. Curiously, AQAP only refers to Southeast Asia one time as a region. Yet, this area is home to the world's largest Muslim country, Indonesia, which only manages two mentions by name in the magazine. Furthermore, al Qaeda Central has established a working relationship with jihadi organizations in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, and the Philippines through the years (Joscelyn 2013). AQAP mentions none of these countries by name with the exception of Indonesia. It is possible that these areas do not garner mentions in *Inspire* simply because it is the magazine of a regional branch of al Qaeda as opposed to al Qaeda Central. However, AQAP mentions Afghanistan and Pakistan very frequently, despite their locations outside the Arabian Peninsula. For whatever reason, this region appears to be less important in the ideological narrative of AQAP (and ISIS as well).

Figure 4.46 is a map of the historical regions occurring in *Inspire* magazine. AQAP references six historical place names, all of which occurred in *Dabiq* as well. Sham accumulates the highest frequency of ten. Most of those references occur in the context of direct quotes from the *hadith*. Only one occurrence of Sham is a modern reference which criticized Israel's actions within the borders of Sham. Haramayn had the
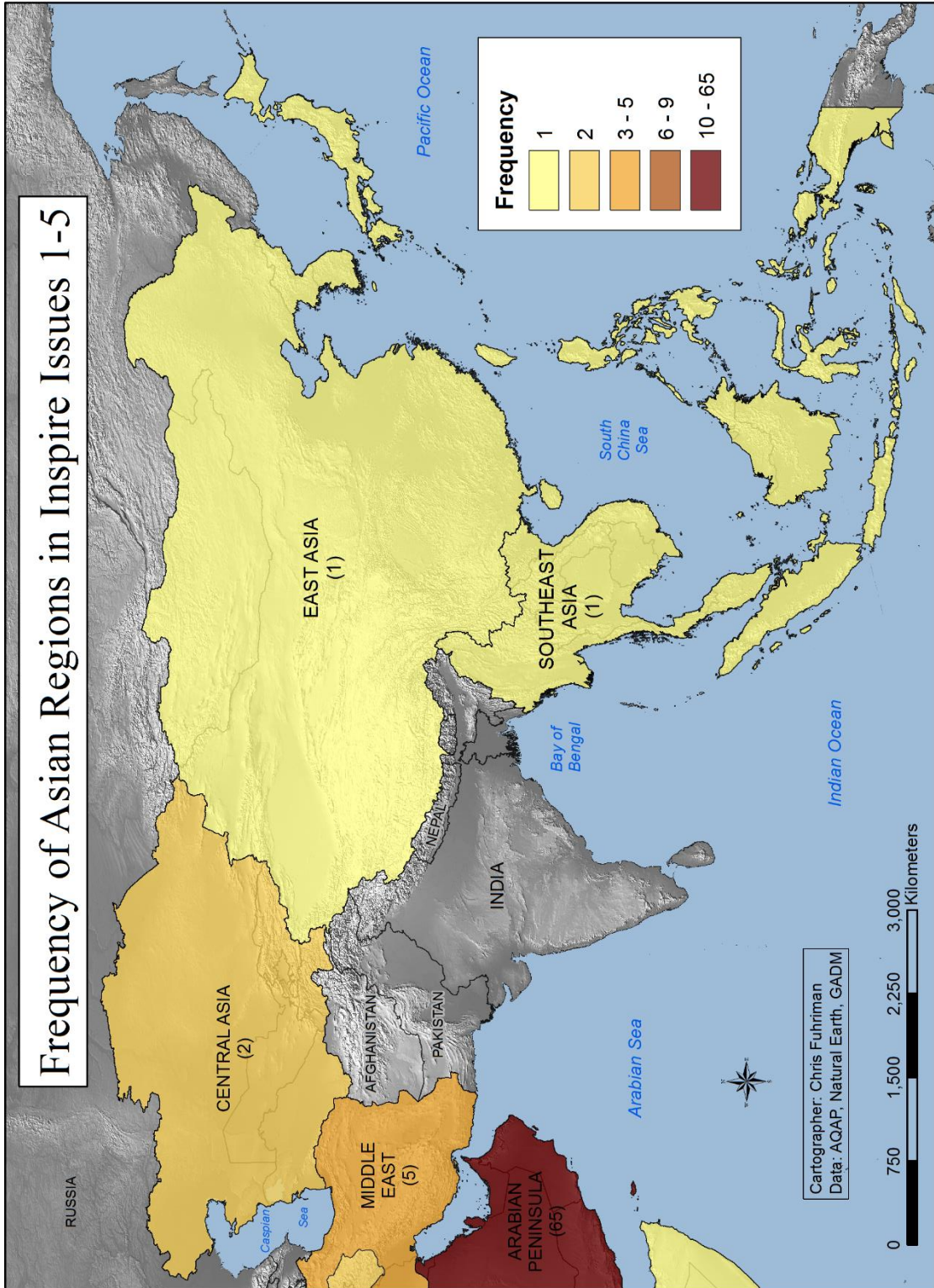
Figure 4.45 Region place names in Asia occurring in *Inspire*
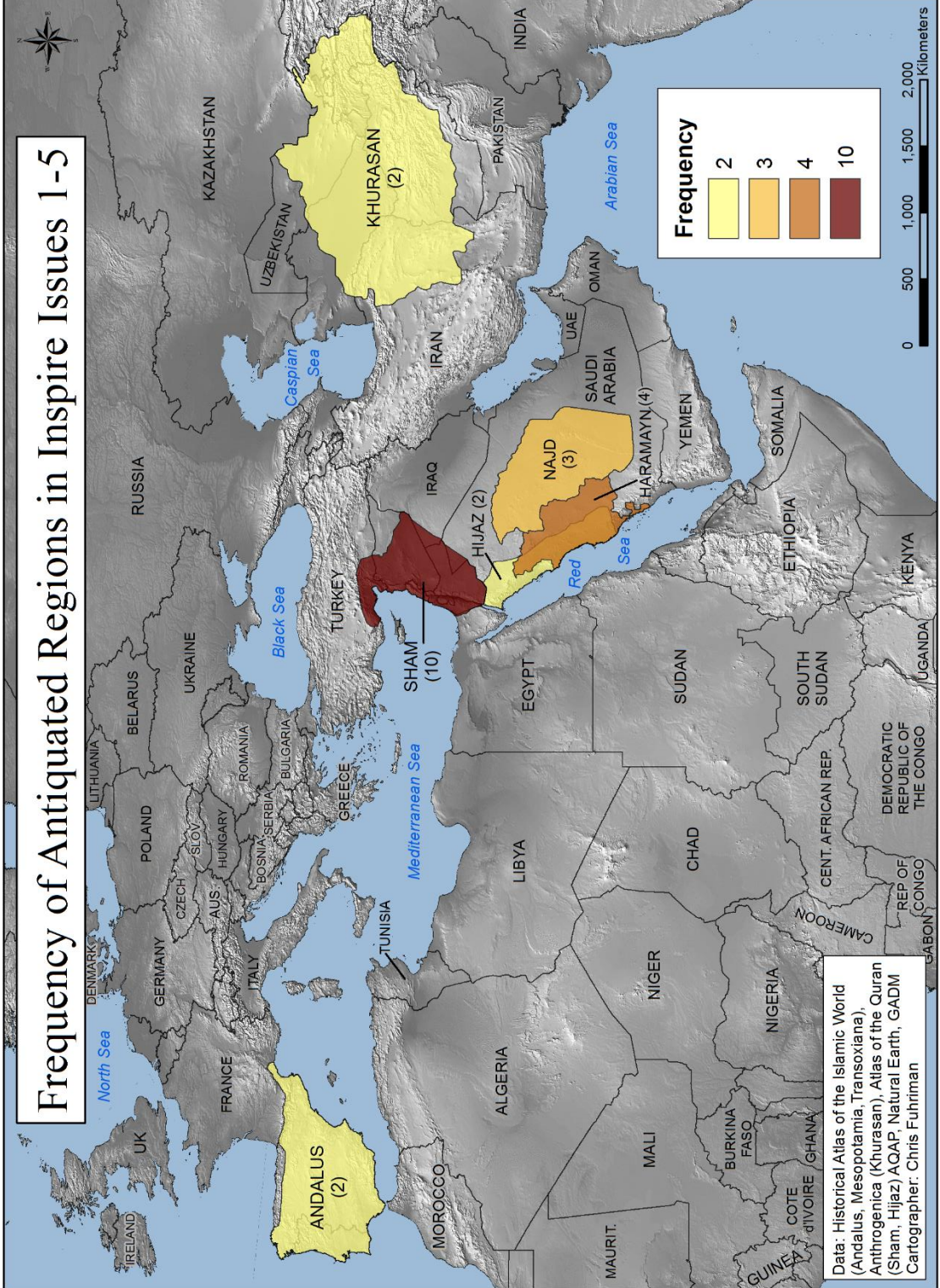
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Figure 4.46 Historical region place names occurring in *Inspire*

next highest total frequency of four. Each of these mentions is a modern usage of the

classical Islamic name for the land surrounding Mecca and Medina. Najd has three

occurrences, all in the context of direct quotes from the hadith. Khurasan has two

mentions in the context of an interview with a top AQAP official, Said Ali al-Shihri, who

later died in 2013 from injuries sustained from a US drone strike in Yemen (Mazzetti

2013). Al-Shihri most likely uses the term Khurasan as a proxy for Afghanistan, but the

context is somewhat vague in the magazine. Finally, AQAP uses the terms Andalus and

Hijaz two times each. Andalus appears in an article about the history of Islam in that area

of the world. One of the Hijaz references occurs in a direct quote from the *hadith* while

the other is a modern reference to coastal area of Saudi Arabia.

Figure 4.47 is a map of the hydrologic features occurring in al Qaeda's magazine.

This map is the final installment in the regions category. The Persian Gulf and Gulf of

Aden polygons are exported from the Natural Earth oceans shapefile. The Amu Darya

and Jordan rivers are digitized from ESRI's National Geographic base map layer

available in ArcMap. The same mapping convention described in ISIS's hydrologic

features map is employed for the coloring of the polygons and the line width of the rivers

in this map. As two polygon features occur in the map, two differing shades of blue are

employed to distinguish the frequencies of the features. AQAP's usage of the Persian

Gulf occurs primarily in the context of the political region surrounding the body of water.

The occurrences of the Jordan River and the Amu Darya river appear in the context of

using the rivers as geographic reference points in narratives about military operations in
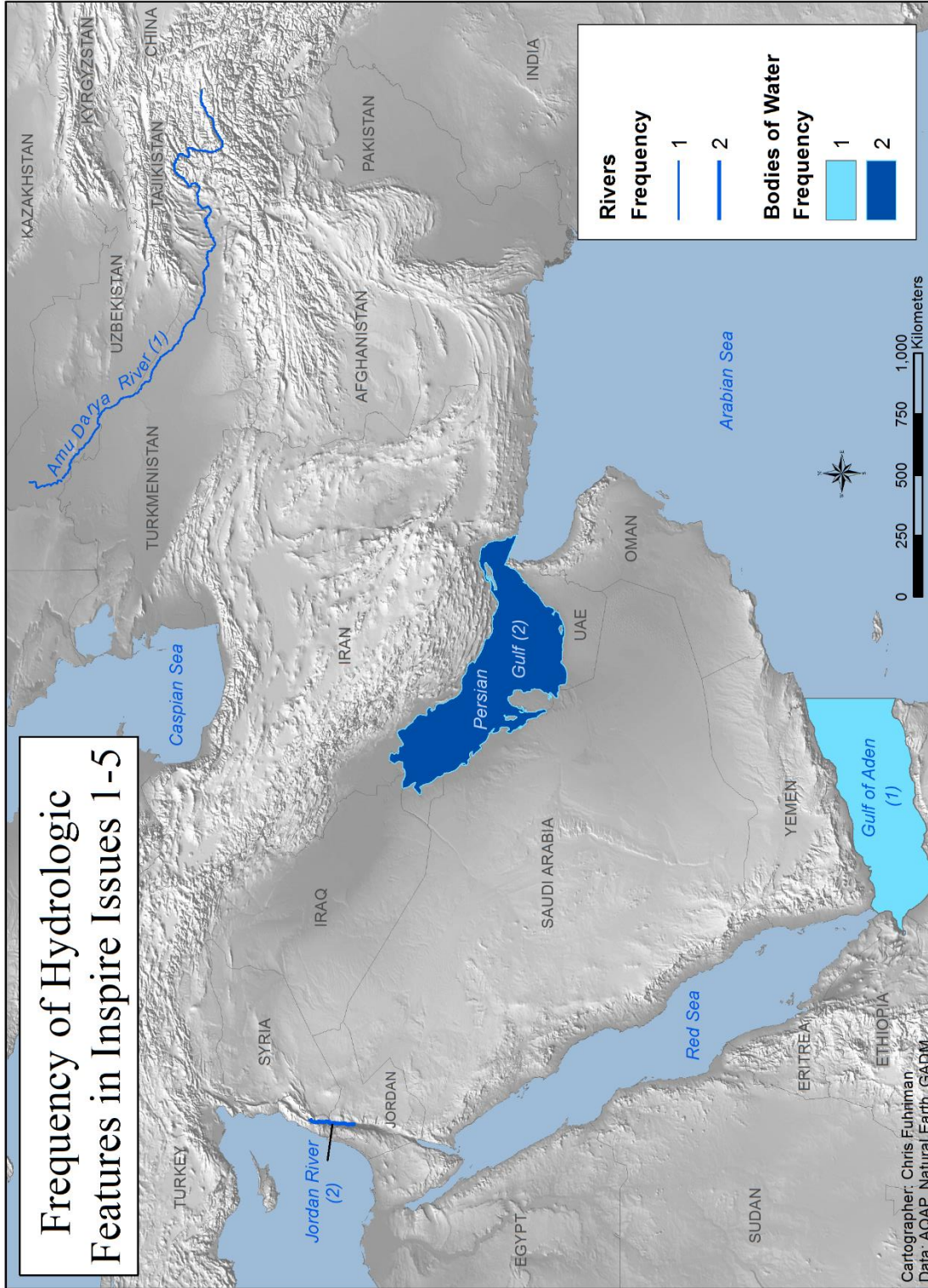
the regions surrounding the rivers.

Figure 4.47 Hydrologic features occurring in *Inspire*

4.5.3.2 Cartographic Visualization Results

of the Countries in *Inspire*

The manual categorization process yields forty-nine country place names in the first five issues of *Inspire* magazine. To optimize the visualization of the country place names, the maps display the results in a series of four maps. Based on the spatial distribution of the data, the four maps are the countries of the Western Hemisphere, Europe, Africa and Middle East, and Asia. The same sequential color scheme (light yellow through brown) denotes the frequencies of the country place names.

Figure 4.48 is a map of countries in the Western Hemisphere which occur in the text of *Inspire* magazine. The USA contiguous Lambert conformal conic projection provides the best visualization for this map. The United States is the most frequently mentioned country on the map, with 211 occurrences in just five issues. This high frequency underscores the importance of positioning the United States as the evil Other in AQAP's *jihadi* narrative. AQAP's total number of references to the United States in five issues is sixty-eight higher than ISIS's total in ten issues. The only other countries mentioned in the Western Hemisphere are Cuba (two occurrences) and Canada (one occurrence). Not surprisingly, the references to Cuba arise in the context of al Qaeda personnel imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay Naval Base's detention camp, which ties for the most occurrences in the cities category. The relatively high frequency for Guantanamo Bay demonstrates the ideological magnitude of that place as a symbol of injustice and struggle against the Other. Canada is mentioned as one of the countries in which a lone attacker could use a pickup truck with steel blades mounted on the front to drive through crowded pedestrian areas.
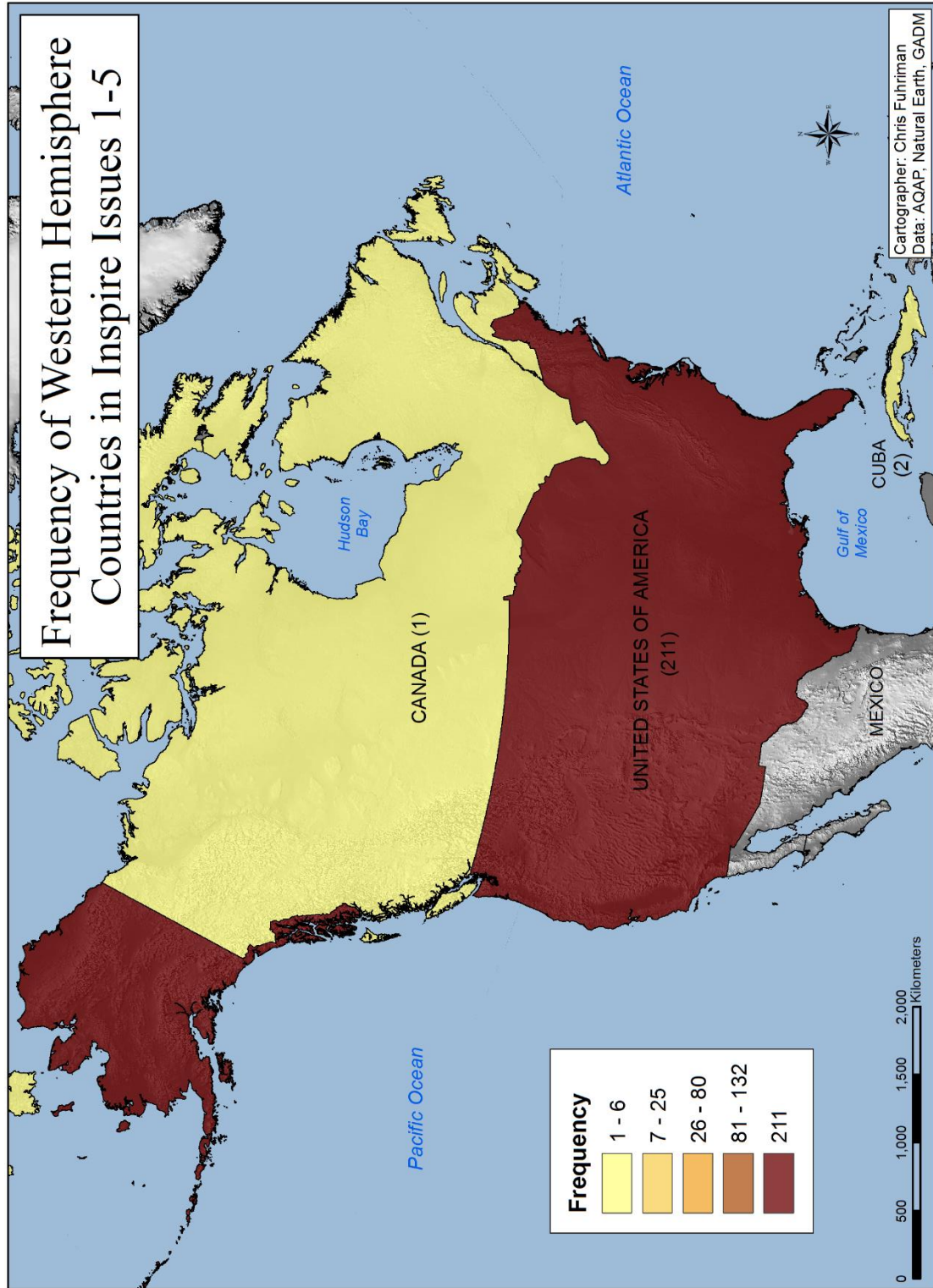
Figure 4.48 Western Hemisphere country place names occurring in *Inspire*

Figure 4.49 is a map of European country place names occurring in the first five issues of Inspire. The United Kingdom scores the highest frequency among European countries with nine occurrences. This total includes the sum of the frequencies of four individual terms: England, the UK, United Kingdom, and Britain. In each case, the reference to the UK positions the place name as the enemy or the Other. A close second is Bosnia with eight occurrences. In the ideological discourse of AQAP, Bosnia is the place of a missed opportunity. While a Muslim genocide was largely prevented, the efforts to establish an Islamic state fizzled out (or never really started) before making any real progress in that direction—a missed opportunity al Qaeda regrets (Issue 2). Russia garners five mentions, usually in the context of an enemy of Islam, but also more specifically as the antagonist and aggressor in the Chechen conflict. AQAP generally presents the remaining European countries it mentioned in *Inspire* as lands of the West, places of the enemy, and targets of future attacks. However, the relatively low frequencies indicate that AQAP's ideological focus is elsewhere.

Figure 4.50 is a map of the countries in Africa and the Middle East occurring in the first five issues of *Inspire* magazine. Although the United States boasts the highest frequency of any country (or any place name for that matter) by far, this map displays the area of the highest spatial concentration of high frequency country place names. Fourteen of the top fifteen place names are at least partially visible on this map. As the territorial home (albeit without sovereign control like ISIS in Syria and Iraq) of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen predictably tallies a high frequency of 132 mentions. Iraq is second with fifty-eight occurrences, all in the context of the ongoing war and the Muslim struggle against the invading crusaders. Similarly, Egypt (forty-four mentions)

Figure 4.49 European country place names occurring in *Inspire*

Figure 4.50 African and Middle Eastern country place names occurring in *Inspire*

and Palestine (forty-one mentions) occupy a central position in the ideology of AQAP (discussed later in the narrative analysis section) which is reflected in their high frequencies. With twenty-five occurrences, Israel also holds a key position in AQAP's political agenda to rid the Levant of the Zionists and restore Muslim rule to Jerusalem (Blanchard 2007).

Figure 4.51 is a map of the Asian countries occurring in *Inspire*. This map is the final installment of maps in the countries category. Afghanistan is the third highest country place name with eighty occurrences over five issues. As the birth place and first trial run of al Qaeda's *jihadi* ideology, Afghanistan plays a central role in AQAP's organizational identity and its more recent anti-Western narrative. Al Qaeda views NATO's involvement in Afghanistan as a crusade against the whole of the Muslim world (Blanchard 2007). The same logic applies to Pakistan (twenty-two mentions), which AQAP often lumps together with Afghanistan in the context of the crusade against Muslims. Curiously low is the total number of occurrences of Iran in AQAP's magazine. Bin Laden's vision for the future did not include the Shia perspective within the caliphate, and the early days of al Qaeda in Iraq saw attacks on Shiites (for which al-Zawahiri later reprimanded al-Zarqawi) (Atwan 2008). Thus, as a non-Western Other, Iran seemingly should garner more mentions. However, dealing with heretics within Islam has become a lower priority to the immediate fight against the West in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other places.

Figure 4.51 Asian country place names occurring in *Inspire*

4.5.3.3 Cartographic Visualization Results

of the Provinces in *Inspire*

The manual categorization process yields only twenty-two province (or equivalent areal unit) place names. The spatial groupings of the place names mentioned in this category yielded a series of four maps: Western Hemisphere, Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, the Middle East, and South Asia. Unlike ISIS, AQAP only refers to existing provinces, states, or districts, allowing for the use of the GADM feature classes for all of the polygons mapped. For consistency, the previously employed color scheme applies to the frequencies in this series of maps.

Figure 4.52 is a map of the provinces in the Western Hemisphere that occur in *Inspire* magazine. This map makes use of the USA Contiguous Lambert Conformal Conic projection to minimize the distortion in North America. AQAP references five American states over the span of five issues. The California reference was in the context of Muslims defending their beliefs from the pulpit in America. AQAP mentions Arizona in the context of racial profiling by government agencies along the border with Mexico. The Texas reference relates to AQAP's criticism of corporate America and the "harmful actions against humanity" (Issue 1). The authors of *Inspire* allude to a judge in Georgia who jailed a Muslim woman in 2008 for refusing to remove her headscarf while in his courtroom (Nasaw 2008). Finally, the North Carolina references arise in Samir Khan's feature article on his decision to leave the United States behind forever to join al Qaeda in Yemen. According to his version of events, he departed the United States from North Carolina, where his family lives (Issue 2, Brown and Severson 2011).

Figure 4.53 is a map of the provinces in Africa and the Arabian Peninsula
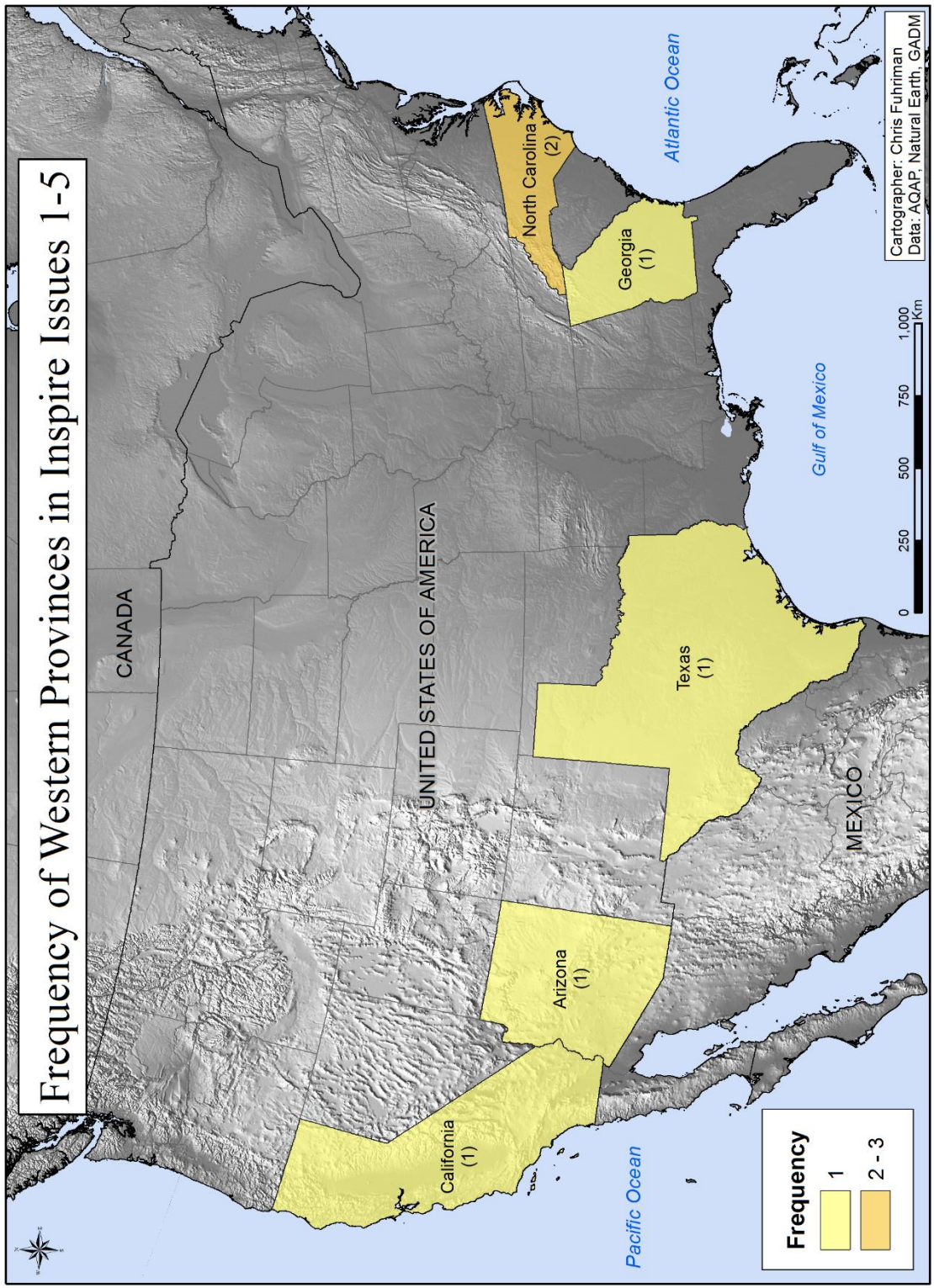
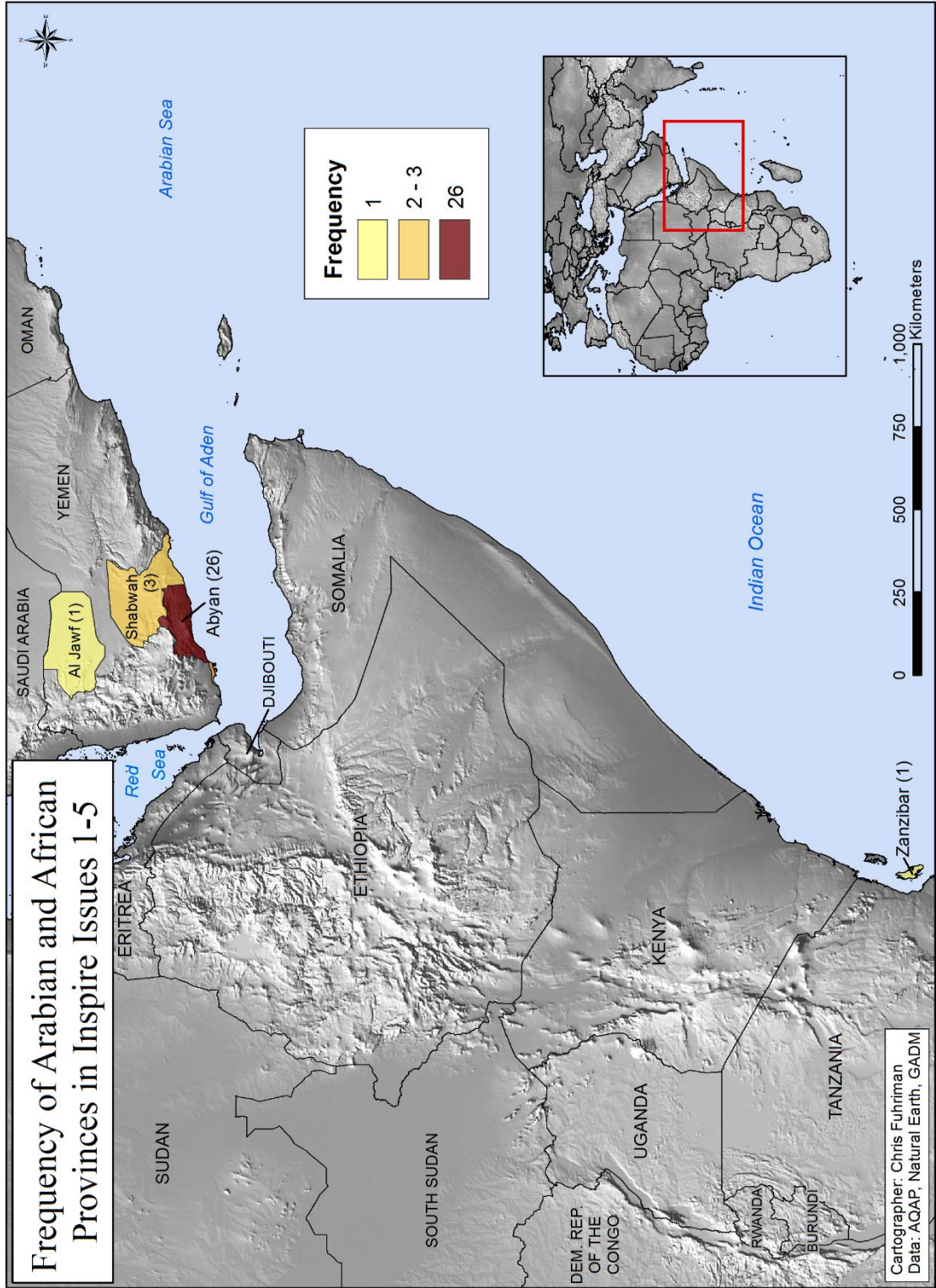Figure 4.52 Western Hemisphere province place names occurring in *Inspire*

Figure 4.53 African and Arabian province place names occurring in *Inspire*

occurring in AQAP's magazine. This map features only four provinces, but one of them is the highest frequency place name in the provinces category. Abyan Governate, Yemen garnered 26 mentions in the first five issues of Inspire. The site of militant attacks against the Yemeni government for nearly a decade, Abyan Governate has been an AQAP stronghold in recent times (Kasinof 2011). It is also mentioned in a hadith as the place from which an army of 12,000 will come to fight for the caliphate (which does not exist yet for al Qaeda) (Issue 5). Thus, as a battleground and as the place name mentioned in the hadith, Abyan is an ideologically important place. The Yemeni province of Shabwa occurs three times, all in reference to US bombings of militants (Issue 1). Al Jawf Province in Yemen is mentioned in reference to AQAP's attack on the Shiite Houthi rebels who also seek power in Yemen (Issue 4). Finally, Zanzibar (a semiautonomous region in Tanzania) occurs in the context of AQAP's demand for the United States and the rest of the West to remove their troops and interests from all Muslim lands from Afghanistan to Zanzibar (Issue 2).

Figure 4.54 is a map of the Middle Eastern and Russian provinces evoked by AQAP in *Inspire*. The Russian Republic of Chechnya has the highest frequency on this map with ten mentions in the first five issues. The textual references to Chechnya arise mostly in the context of places of international jihad in which al Qaeda operatives have played a role. *Inspire* mentions only three provinces in Iraq and one in Egypt, all with low frequencies. The general lack of references to place names in these areas indicates that AQAP's operations and permanent presence are limited here, and that its focus may be in other areas with higher frequencies (such as Yemen).

Figure 4.55 is a map of South Asian provinces mentioned in the first five issues of
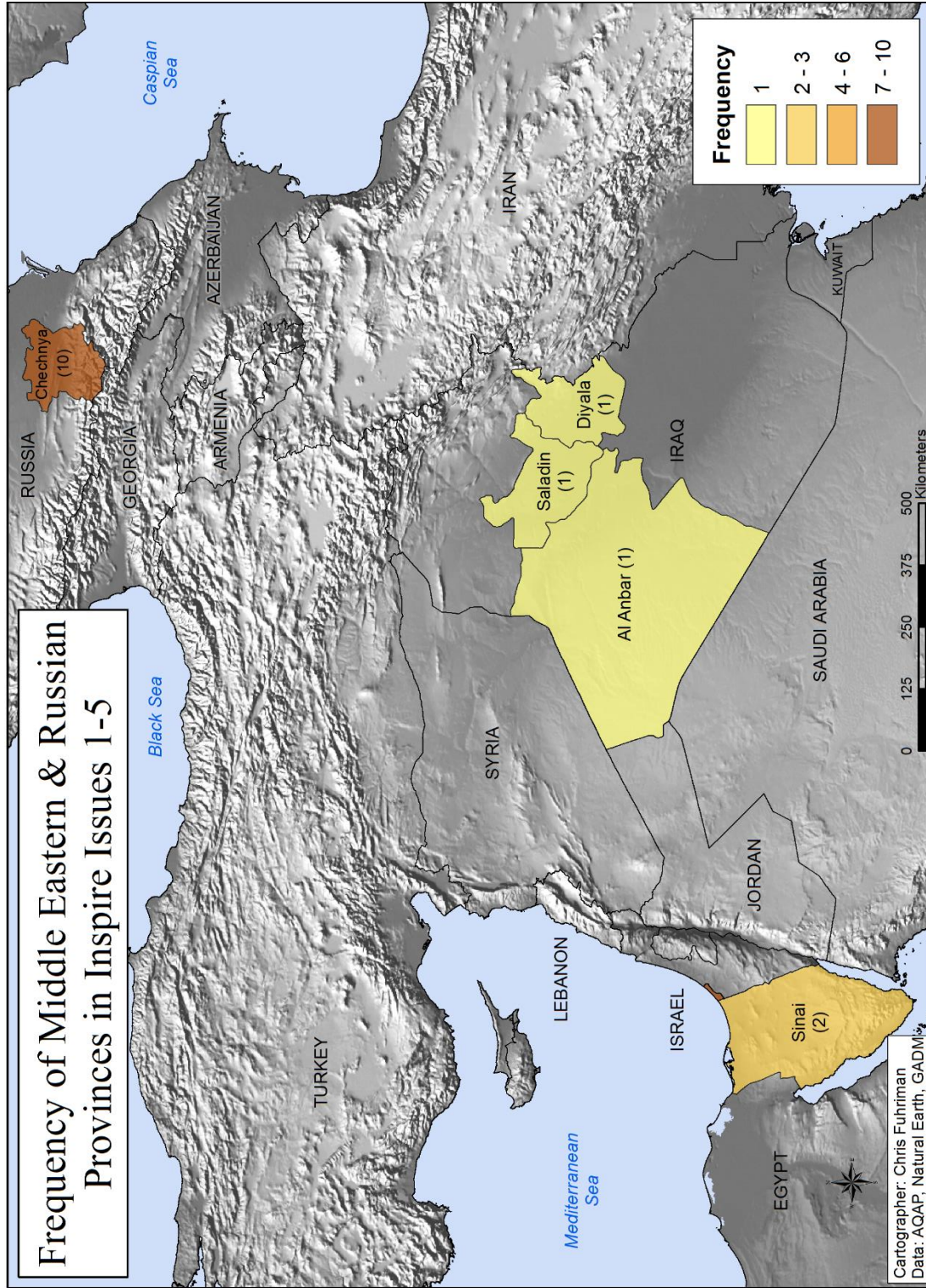
Figure 4.54 Middle Eastern and Russian province place names occurring in *Inspire*
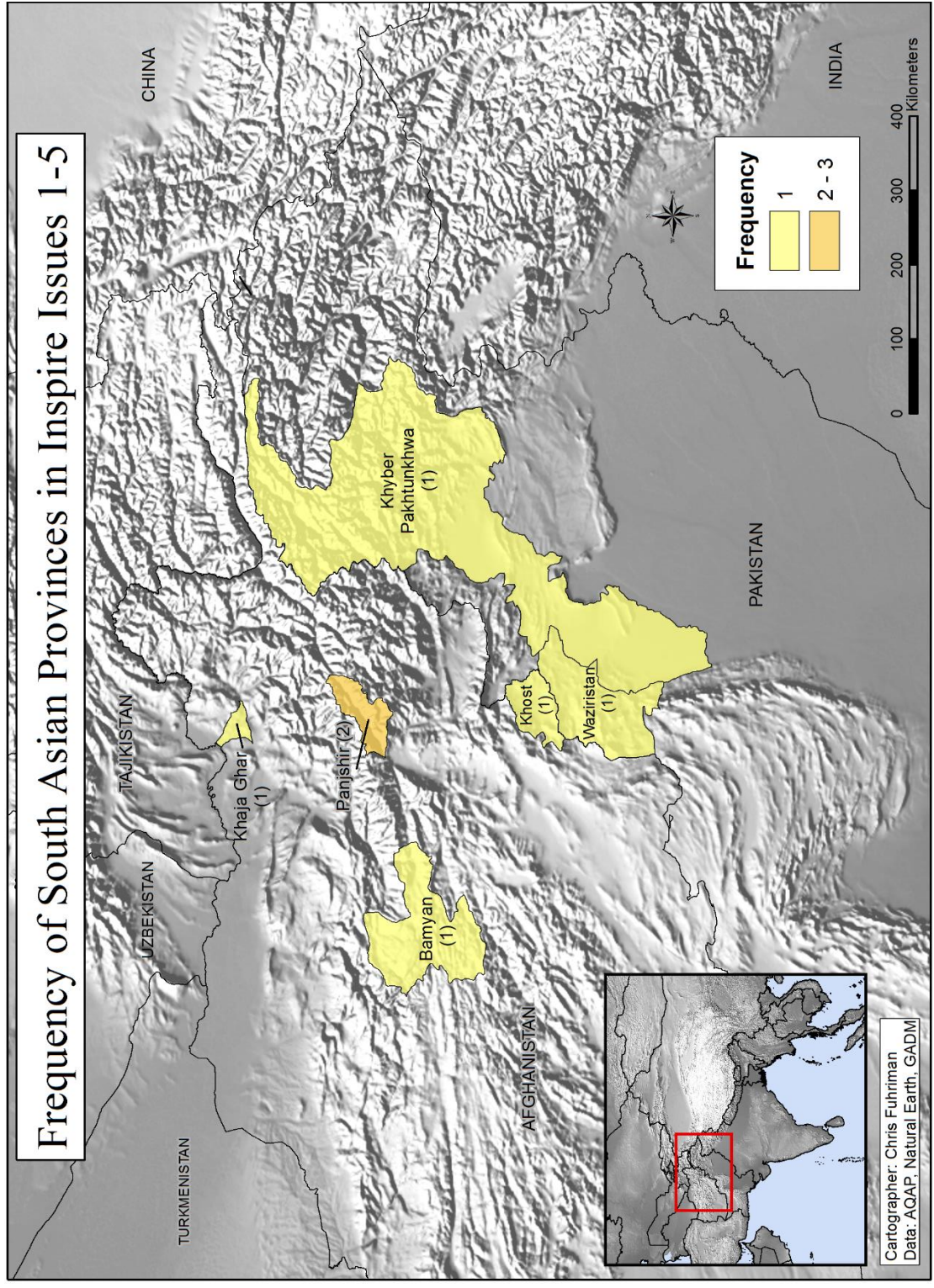
Figure 4.55 South Asian province place names occurring in *Inspire*

Inspire magazine. This map is the final installment in the provinces category. The highest frequency place name on this map is Panjshir Province, Afghanistan with two occurrences. Three other Afghan place names are mapped along with two Pakistani provinces, each with only one instance in the magazine. The low frequency totals in the provinces category indicate that AQAP favors country-level place names in advancing its narrative. For example, Afghanistan accrues eighty mentions and Pakistan accrues twenty-two, while their provinces amass just seven total mentions combined. Furthermore, because the category only tallies twenty-two total place names, the indication is that AQAP largely avoids using province place names in favor of using either country or city place names.

4.5.3.4 Cartographic Visualization Results

of the Cities in *Inspire*

The manual categorization process yields eighty-one place names in the cities category. The spatial groupings of these place names result in a series of five maps in the cities category: Western Hemisphere, Europe and North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Yemen and Somalia. Like the ISIS maps before, these maps rely on a point feature class for the spatial representation of the city locations. Graduated symbols (circles) denote the frequencies using the cartographic convention of larger circles equals higher frequencies. Although the cities category yields the highest number of individual place names in any category (eighty-one different locations), its highest frequency of twelve is also the lowest total among the most frequently mentioned names in each category.

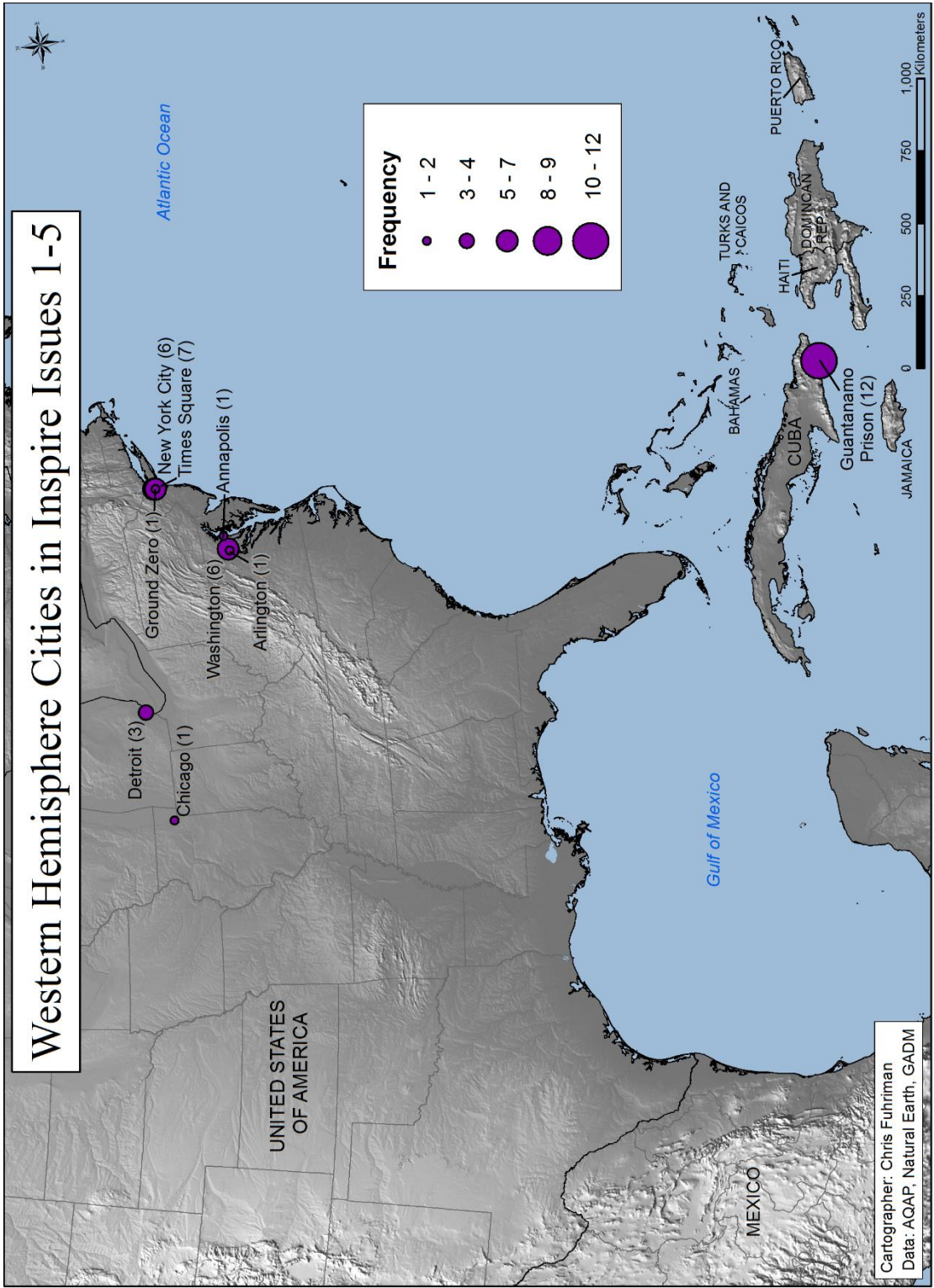Figure 4.56 is a map of the cities in the Western Hemisphere. Like most of the

Figure 4.56 Western Hemisphere city place names occurring in *Inspire*

other maps of this part of the world, this map uses the USA Contiguous Lambert

Conformal Conical projection to minimize distortion. Guantanamo Prison garners the

most attention in *Inspire* magazine with twelve mentions over five issues. Tied with

Sana'a, Yemen for the highest in the cities category, Guantanamo Prison is an important

location in the ideological narrative of al Qaeda. As described in the previous section on

the countries category, Guantanamo Prison perfectly embodies the repression of the

Muslim self by the evil American Other in the eyes of al Qaeda. Notwithstanding the

magnitude of al Qaeda's success in the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon,

Guantanamo Prison's frequency doubles both New York City and Washington, DC (six

mentions each). AQAP mentions Times Square seven times in the context of Pakistani-

American Faisal Shahzad's failed bombing attempt of the popular tourist destination in

New York City in 2010 (Mazzetti et al. 2010). Ground Zero (at the World Trade Center

site in New York City) also appears by name one time in the text. Detroit, Michigan

appears in the magazine twice in the context of the failed attempt to detonate a bomb on

an international flight from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day, 2009 (O'Connor

and Schmitt 2009). The other mention of Detroit is a reference to ghettos where Muslims

live in the United States. Chicago emerges as the target city of Operation Hemorrhage,

the attempt to send two package explosives via FedEx and UPS as outlined in Issue 3.

AQAP references Annapolis in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian peace conference

that took place at the United States Naval Academy in 2007 (Myers and Cooper 2007).

Finally, Arlington, Virginia emerges in passing as the location of a terrorism think tank.

Figure 4.57 is a map of the European and North African cities mentioned *Inspire*

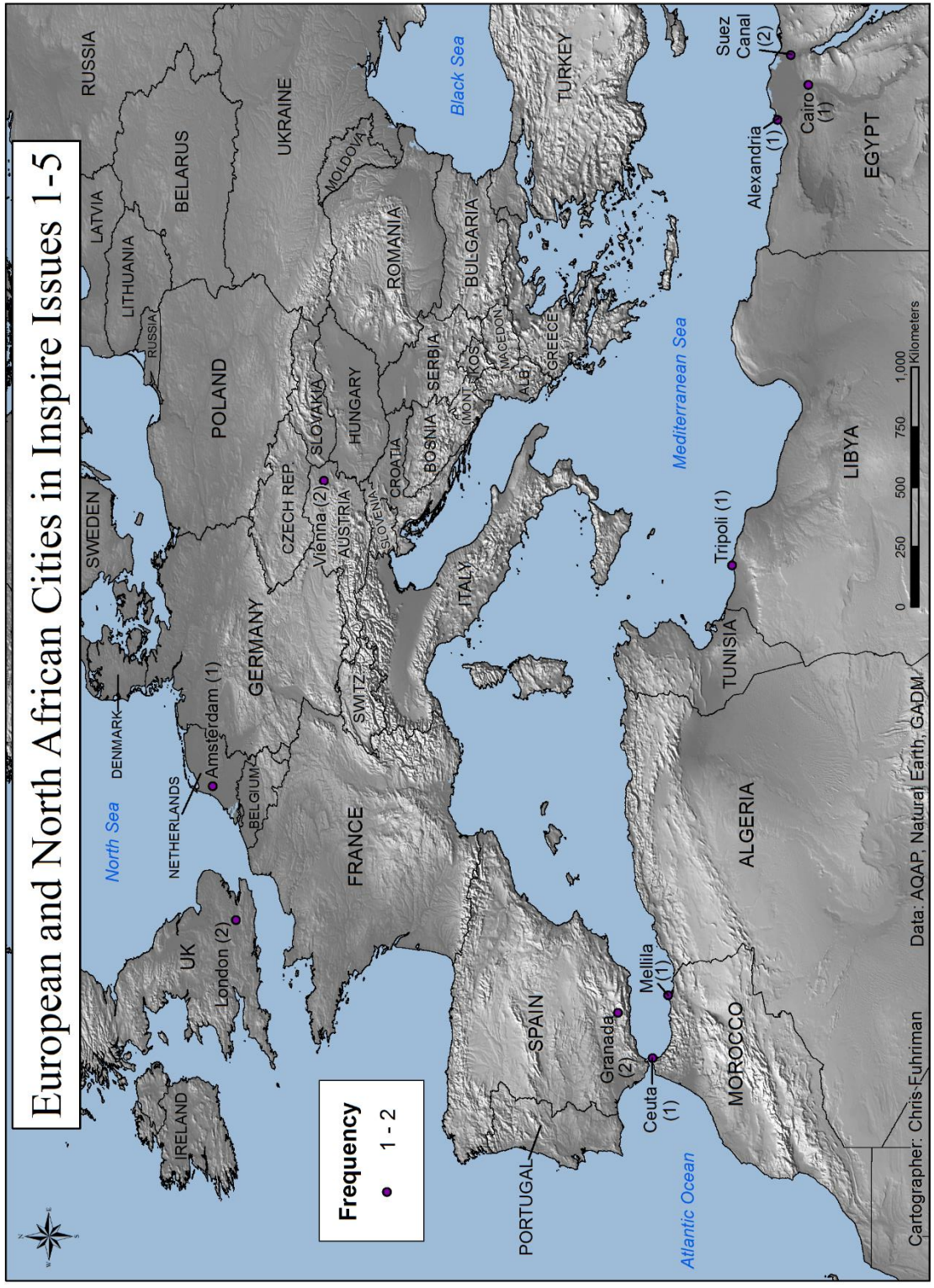magazine. The highest frequency on this map is two, which is shared by London,

Figure 4.57 European and North African city place names occurring in *Inspire*

Granada, Vienna, and the Suez Canal. The other cities mapped manage only a single

mention over the span of five issues. London has a different context for each mention.

AQAP mentions London as a location through which a package bomb transited (Issue 3)

and as an example of a European ghetto wherein Muslims live (Issue 4). Both Vienna

instances refer to the place where interim Egyptian leader, Mohamed El Baradei, resided

(Issue 5). Both references to the Suez Canal come in the context of its regional location

which held great strategic importance in the past as well as in the current geopolitical

environment (Issue 5). Each of the Granada occurrences recalls the fall of the last

Muslim stronghold in Spain in 1492. The Fall of Granada marked the end of more than

seven centuries of Muslim rule in the Iberian Peninsula (Nicolle 2003).

Figure 4.58 is a map of the Middle Eastern cities occurring in the first five issues

of *Inspire* magazine. The highest frequency cities are Mecca and Medina, each with nine

occurrences. Jerusalem is next with eight mentions, and Islam's holy site of Al Aqsa

Mosque in Jerusalem has seven occurrences. These four place names occur in the

context of linking al Qaeda's ideology to broader Islamic theology in an effort to

legitimize the cause. Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, also garners seven mentions in

the first five issues. Fallujah draws the most attention of the Iraqi cities mentioned,

amassing a frequency of five. AQAP refers to several Koranic locations as well, such as

the Battle of Uhud, the Battle of Badr, the Battle of Tabuk, and the Ka'aba in Mecca.

Also of note are the prisons of Abu Ghraib in Iraq (two instances) and Al Hair in Saudi

Arabia (one instance). These prisons hold ideological value as detention centers for al

Qaeda personnel.

Figure 4.59 is a map of the South Asian cities mentioned in the first five issues of

Figure 4.58 Middle Eastern city place names occurring in *Inspire*

Figure 4.59 South Asian city place names occurring in *Inspire*

Inspire magazine. The cities of Afghanistan dominate this visualization. As the site of

the modern era's first international jihad, Afghanistan commands considerable attention

from al Qaeda and its affiliates, which sought diplomatic shelter there in 1996 after being

expelled from Sudan (Astill 2001). The relatively high frequencies and high volume of

cities mentioned in the magazine illustrate this point. Three Pakistani cities also receive

treatment: Quetta (four mentions), Karachi (three mentions), and Kohat (two mentions).

Tashkent, Uzbekistan arises during a discussion of the Muslim identity versus the

national identity. AQAP mentions Mumbai, India as the site of the 2008 terror attacks

during which more than one hundred people died and hundreds more received injuries

(Sengupta 2008).

Figure 4.60 is a map of the Yemeni and Somali cities occurring in the first five

issues of *Inspire* magazine. This map is the final installment of the cities category, and

the final map in the series of eighteen maps generated from the content analysis. Sana'a,

the capital of Yemen, boasts the highest frequency of any city place name with twelve

occurrences—a distinction it shares with Guantanamo Prison. Including Sana'a, eleven

Yemeni cities appear in the pages of the magazine, mostly in the context of AQAP's

operations and presence in those areas. Because Yemen is the home of AQAP, the high

concentration of city place names is not unusual, especially because al Qaeda has stated

that regional involvement of its affiliates is a key concern (Blanchard 2007). The Somali

capital, Mogadishu, appears only in the context of a footnote in one of the feature stories.

The author of the piece quotes a book with Mogadishu in the title.

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Figure 4.60 Yemeni and Somali city place names occurring in *Inspire*

4.5.4 Results of the Narrative Analysis

The analysis of AQAP's geographic narrative in this section follows the same outline as applied previously in this study. The categorized list of place names, the resulting maps, the original *Inspire* text, and external analysis of al Qaeda's ideology inform the geographic narrative analysis that follows. As before, Clandinin and Connelly's (1999) framework consisting of actions/interactions, time, and space provides the theoretical structure for this portion of the research. The following sections offer no further discussion of the underlying theory, as this received treatment in the geographic narrative analysis of ISIS's ideology.

4.5.4.1 Elements of Geographic Narrative

Analysis: Actions and Interactions

The language, religion, rhetoric, and mythology of al Qaeda bears great resemblance to those of ISIS, and many other *jihadi* groups for that matter. However, there are some important differences as well. First, al Qaeda's cultural community is far more inclusive than ISIS's binary with-or-against approach. Al Qaeda views all Sunni Muslims as its cultural community, not just those who pledge allegiance to the cause. While both have sanctioned attacks against secular Muslim governments, al Qaeda stops short of killing innocent Muslim civilians to advance its ideology. In fact, when ISIS was still an al Qaeda affiliate in Iraq, al-Zawahiri admonished al-Zarqawi for his brutality against other Muslims (al-Zawahiri 2005). Moreover, when ISIS attacked mosques and (Muslim) civilians in Yemen in March 2015, AQAP quickly denied any involvement because those tactics do not reflect al Qaeda's philosophical approach to *jihad* (Joscelyn 2015). Still, al Qaeda appropriates the larger Muslim narrative in its effort to create a

terrorist identity based on the cultural foundation of Islam in the same way as ISIS, even if the tactics differ widely.

 Recalling that the terrorist identity is a product of the culture from which it emerges, the examination turns to al Qaeda's construction of its ideal Muslim self as viewed through the lens of structural symbolic interactionism (SSI) and its five principles (symbols, meaning of symbols, roles, socialization and role taking, and emergence of self). Long before ISIS hoisted its black flag over the spoils of war, al Qaeda deliberately designed its standard to resemble the black banner of the *hadith* (McCants 2015). The color of al Qaeda's flag and the *shahada* (Muslim profession of faith) tell the faithful who they are (a fulfillment to prophecy) and for what purpose they are fighting (the will of Allah). Al Qaeda also makes use of places as identity-forming symbols. Places of oppression, struggle, and injustice like Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Prison serve to unite the faithful (and potential recruits) against an immoral, unjust enemy. Places of victory and martyrdom like Ground Zero and New York City stimulate feelings of pride and determination to carry on in the battle for the cause. Assigning meaning to these symbols occurs in the pages of *Inspire* as authors quote famous Islamic scholars of the past and present, feature stories tell of victories gained in places all over the world, and the Other is exposed for crimes against Muslims. The reader learns about his/her cultural community and comes to understand how Islam and al Qaeda intersect.

The identity becomes more clear as the role-taking process progresses. AQAP pioneered the English-language *jihad* magazine when it published *Inspire*. For the intended audience, this magazine represents the formal training in theology, history, ideology, and tactical applications. Like *Dabiq*, the layout and production quality of

Inspire are excellent. The message is clear, effective, and demonstrably influential among its target audience of lone wolf terrorists. Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, one of the Boston Marathon bombers, disclosed to investigators that he and his brother learned how to make the bombs they used in the attack from *Inspire* (Cooper et al. 2013). The next issue of *Inspire* touted its own success in a special issue (Issue 11) dedicated to the incident. This issue emphasized the chaos, loss of life, and inability of the American government to stop this and other similar attacks. Thus, the magazine authenticates the terrorist narrative and defines the social roles of the ideal *mujahid* and his targets. The emergence of the new self completes the formation of the terrorist identity. Like *Dabiq*, *Inspire* seeks to introduce potential followers to the cultural narrative, social roles, and ideology of the group. The goal is to facilitate the emergence of the new terrorist self.

Recalling Janz's (2008) psychological features of places of terror, the place names of *Inspire* also contribute significantly to the development and advancement of al Qaeda's ideological narrative. For al Qaeda, New York City remains the place of its greatest success against its enemies (Riedel 2010). It stands as the beacon of *jihadi* accomplishment, and frequent mentions in *Inspire* reinforce the ideological importance. Serving as the epitome of al Qaeda's places of the Other, Guantanamo Bay detention facility represents the evils of the US and its policies toward the Muslim world. Its cells are full of Muslims taken from the fields of battle in Muslim lands as "unlawful combatants" (Elsea 2006, 71). The torture narratives associate this and other places with the Other, simultaneously reinforcing al Qaeda's justification for defensive *jihad* and showcasing to the Muslim world the immorality of the enemy (Malinowski 2008). Establishing the United States of America (and also the West in general) as the evil Other

is a central component of al Qaeda's ideological aims to: 1) create an Islamic state wherein *sharia* law governs; 2) rid all Muslim lands of foreign influence; 3) free the Muslim people from their own leaders (allowing them to depose governments that cease to follow Islamic law) (Blanchard 2007). The existence of the Other gives purpose to al Qaeda's narrative. For example, the reason a unified Muslim homeland does not exist today is because of the West and its corrosive influence. Furthermore, the West has invaded traditional Muslim lands, bringing shame to the occupied territories. Finally, the West has corrupted Muslim governments with ideals of democracy, nationalism, and Western thought, rendering Islamic law secondary to the Other's ideals.

The third psychological feature of places of terror is that attack sites must become triumphalist in the wake of an attack. Unlike ISIS, al Qaeda does not practice governance in any territory with sovereign borders. As such, any attack on al Qaeda cannot be in its homeland. Nevertheless, al Qaeda creates a triumphalist narrative based on places that could have been considered a homeland in the past. Specifically, places in Afghanistan such as Tora Bora, Kandahar, Kabul, and Al Farouq Training Camp evoke memories of a time when al Qaeda could operate openly in society under the protection of the Taliban. These place names appear in articles that romanticize the lives of various al Qaeda fighters, idealizing the battles against the Soviets in Afghanistan, or recalling the military training during the Taliban years. These memories fuel the narrative of *jihad* and underscore the defensive nature of al Qaeda's struggle against the West. Related to this narrative of lost homelands is the death of public space for al Qaeda. After 9/11, the Global War on Terror forced the central leadership of al Qaeda underground, where it has been since the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001. However, along with the

loss of public space came a transformation from a centralized organization of terrorists to a decentralized network of loosely-affiliated, self-sufficient groups connected by enduring ideology (Hoffman 2004).

Al Qaeda's ideology, like that of ISIS, fixes the meaning of places by connecting them to religious texts and events from Islam's past. While AQAP has not attached itself to geographically specific prophecies in the same way ISIS has, the meanings of places still become nonnegotiable in the *jihadi* narrative. For example, Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem require liberation from the apostate and Zionist governments that hold them captive. Israel must be restored to Muslim rule and an Islamic state must rise in the Middle East. Because these places are inseparably connected to ideology, their meanings cannot change until the terrorist goals become reality.

If the byproduct of a terror attack is "cultural stage fright" as Janz (2008) contends, then al Qaeda's cultural stage fright manifests in its reaction to the drone program in Pakistan and Yemen. The Pentagon reported that drone strikes killed more than four hundred militants in the first two years of the program (Williams 2010). The controversial program decimated the upper level of al Qaeda leadership as well, killing more than half of the high-ranking officials from twenty most-wanted terrorists list (Williams 2010). As a result, the one-time sanctuary in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in northwestern Pakistan became a landscape of fear for terrorists. Al Qaeda's response was an internal witch hunt to root out the sources of intelligence leaks and informants that made the drone strikes so effective (Williams 2010).

Finally, as the narratives which define places of terror begin to shift, meanings of those places must be renegotiated. For al Qaeda, ideologically important places like

Ground Zero can be created in new locales with a single attack. Moreover, any forceful response can bolster the terrorist narrative of the foreign invaders fighting against the whole of Islam, or the lack of response can fuel feelings of victory. In its magazine, *Inspire*, AQAP defines its cultural community, constructs both the Other and the terrorist identity, and imbues meaning on places of terror (targets and the targeted). Once again, these cues inform the reader of who they should be (terrorist self) and how they should experience place.

4.5.4.2 Elements of Geographic Narrative

Analysis: Time and Space

As in *Dabiq*, not all of the place names occurring in *Inspire* share equal significance or even importance in the ideological narrative of al Qaeda. Applying the time element of geographic analysis, however, sheds light on the ways in which AQAP utilizes place names to advance its ideological discourse as well as its vision for the future. *Inspire* makes use of the past, present, and future aspects of place names in different ways than *Dabiq*, resulting in a different means of conceptualizing geopolitical space.

Like ISIS, AQAP's usage of place names can also be classified into three groups. However, AQAP's categories are not the same as ISIS's categories. AQAP's explanation of the Land of Islam versus the Land of War provides the framework for these categories. As previously discussed, Issue 4 defines the Land of Islam—the first category—as any country in which Muslims make up the largest religious percentage of the population. Absent from this definition is the condition of controlling geographic space. Al Qaeda does not require sovereignty in the Lands of Islam in the same way that ISIS requires

sovereignty to satisfy its definition of Muslim lands. According to Issue 4, the Land of War (the Other)—the second category—is any country that either invades or supports the invasion of Muslim lands. Most often, these are the countries of the West. While this definition is somewhat broad and certainly open to interpretation, it leaves room for a third category—the neutral countries which are neither invaders/supporters nor lands of Islam. These places are largely ignored as they serve no ideological purpose. Of the twenty-one highest frequency places (ten or more mentions), 96% were places within the Lands of Islam and 4% were places of the Other. None of the highest frequency terms were neutral places (Only four of the 179 place names fall into this category: Cuba, Vietnam, Southern Africa, and South America).

However, broad categorizations of place names do not necessarily reveal the ways in which a terror group employs geographic terms to advance its ideology. Rather, viewing how the terror group conceptualizes the time (past, present, future) components of place is a more useful approach. The *Inspire* data reveal two patterns of place name usage. First, like ISIS, AQAP makes use of historical place names to position its narrative as organically Islamic and theologically justified. Yet, AQAP's references to historical place names are not shackled to literal interpretations of specific prophecies, and therefore, have no explicit connection to the future for AQAP. Second, AQAP's rhetoric deals mostly with the present. As a result, "the Other versus Islam" is a central theme that dominates the usage of place names in their present context. An analysis of each of these patterns follows.

Generally speaking, AQAP's usage of historical place names has a primary purpose of grounding the group's ideology in Islamic doctrine and a secondary purpose

of making political statements about regimes it opposes. The most frequently used historical term was Sham (10 occurrences). In every instance except one, Sham emerges in the context of scriptural references. AQAP selects verses from the Koran or quotes from the *hadith* to connect the reader's religious sentiments with the group's political agenda. The aim is to fuse the Muslim self to the ideology of al Qaeda via familiar passages and quotations laden with the places of Islam. Thus, an Islamic sense of place lends credibility to al Qaeda's message and bridges the gap between the reader's identity and the terrorist identity. In one case, however, Sham appears in the present context. AQAP refers to Jerusalem as existing in Sham, not Israel. The distinction is important ideologically because the use of the term "Sham" effectively dissolves the state of Israel and restores Muslim rule to Jerusalem—a major goal/grievance of al Qaeda.

The second most used historical place name was the Battle of Badr with six occurrences. This reference showcases AQAP's link to the Salafi concept of religious authenticity as a function of proximity to Mohammad. Mohammad ordered the raid at Badr himself, leaving no room for doubting the authenticity of the place or events which unfolded. According to AQAP, the Badr narrative teaches the virtues of *jihad* and patience (Issue 2), and carries with it a promise of victory that extends to today's *jihad* (Issue 4). Thus, for the reader, Islam's earliest battle lends credibility to al Qaeda's cause when the two are presented together in the text of *Inspire* magazine. Similarly, Mohammad also led his armies in the expedition of Tabuk (one mention) against the Byzantine army, which never arrived at the battle (Belyaev 1969). Some of the men of Medina refused to go on the expedition, ignoring their duty to the community of Muslims

(Shah 2013). AQAP employs Tabuk as an example of dereliction of duty—a charge it lays at the feet of Muslims who do not engage in *jihad* today.

Haramayn, Najd, and the Hijaz also appear in the text of the magazine, albeit with a relatively low frequency (four, three, and two occurrences, respectively). Each of these terms has two usages in the text. First, each appears in the magazine in its original scriptural context as a place of the Koran. This usage serves to link the places of authentic Islam to al Qaeda's ideology in the same way as Sham and the Battle of Badr. The geographic terms are instantly familiar to students of Islamic holy texts, legitimizing the narrative with which the places are intertwined. There is also a secondary use of Haramayn, Najd, and the Hijaz. AQAP uses each as a substitute for "Saudi Arabia," an Arab country (and familial regime) with which the terror group shares a complicated past. Osama bin Laden blamed the Saud family for its involvement in facilitating the West's entry into the Muslim world at the end of World War 1 as well as the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine (Riedel and Saab 2008). Accordingly, one of al Qaeda's goals is to end the House of Saud's rule on the way to establishing an Islamic state (Blanchard 2007).

But the relationship between Saudi Arabia and al Qaeda is not quite as simple as it seems. A political rift divides the Wahhabi clerics who argue for *sharia* law and the elite class of pro-West Saudis who favor some distance between religion and rule of law. The ideological gap has also divided the royal family, which is sympathetic to both sides of the debate (Doran 2004). As a result, Saudi Arabia's treatment of al Qaeda is schizophrenic: in foreign dilemmas, the Saudis have cooperated with al Qaeda (in Syria against Assad and in Yemen against the Houthi rebels); in domestic issues, the Saud

dynasty's security force all but eliminated al Qaeda from Saudi Arabia following the 2003 attacks in Riyadh (Hubbard 2016). While al Qaeda takes no issue with accepting assistance from the Saudis for operations in Syria and Yemen, the Saud regime still stands in the way of al Qaeda's vision for the future. Thus, by using place names that do not include the House of Saud when referring to Saudi Arabia, AQAP simultaneously marginalizes the monarchy and bolsters its anti-West narrative.

Two additional historical place names appear in the pages of *Inspire*. AQAP evokes al Andalus, but unlike the ISIS reference to the Umayyad Caliphate's territory, this usage refers to the loss of al Andalus as the beginning of the obligatory defensive *jihad* (Issue 4). In the same vein as the reference to Tabuk and the hypocrites who refused their divine duties, the fall of Andalus (1492 CE) serves as the starting point for obligatory defensive *jihad.* Therefore, AQAP's reference to Andalus is meant to be an admonition to carry out one's duty to Islam, not as a place which was once Muslim and therefore must be reconquered.

The second historical place name also appeared in *Dabiq* magazine: Khurasan. There is little doubt that al Qaeda subscribes to and propagates *jihadi* apocalyptic narratives. Some *jihadi* scholars have even argued that Osama bin Laden's organization is the army that will come from Khurasan carrying its black banners (Paz 2008). Former FBI agent Ali Soufan (2011) suggests that al Qaeda (and ISIS by extension) deliberately designed its flag to resemble the prophetic images of the army of the *Mahdi*. However, in the context of *Inspire,* the term Khurasan emerges only as synonym for Afghanistan in the present. The context (in the first five issues) did not include an obvious historical analogy or lesson from the past. Still, the use of this historical place name is a subtle

allusion to the well-known apocalyptic discourse of the black banners of the *Mahdi*.

The second pattern of place name usage in *Inspire* centers on al Qaeda's narrative of the West's war against Islam. Positioning the West (especially the United States) as the enemy of Islam gives its message meaning in the current geopolitical landscape.   Al Qaeda can point to the first Gulf War as the beginning of aggression against the Muslim world, and to Somalia, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq as a continuation of that aggression. It can also pin the blame for corrupt Muslim governments across the world on the influence from the West and its ideals which do not align with al Qaeda's version of Islam. Thus, as Osama bin Laden termed al Qaeda's adversaries, the "far enemy" is the West and the "near enemy" is the collective of corrupt Muslim regimes (particularly Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia) and Israel (Riedel 2007).   In order to realize its geopolitical goals, al Qaeda has developed a strategic plan comprised of seven phases or stages which span twenty years, beginning with the 9/11 attacks (Rudner 2013).

Each stage of the plan has specific tactical aims and timelines. The first stage, the "Awakening," began on September 1, 2001 with the attacks on the United States. The goal was damaging the US economy and provoking a response against Muslim countries that could be seen as American aggression (Rudner 2013). The second stage, "Opening the Eyes," was planned for 2002-2006 with the purpose of establishing *jihadism* as a viable threat to the West through continued attacks (Roggio 2005). The third stage, "Arising and Standing Up," was planned for 2007-2010 with the focus on destabilizing the near enemy in Israel, Syria, Turkey, and Jordan (Rudner 2013). The fourth stage, "Downfall of the Apostate Muslim Regimes," aimed to overthrow the targeted Muslim governments (including Saudi Arabia) between 2010-2013.

Success in Stage 4 would allow for the "Declaration of the Caliphate" in Stage 5, lasting from 2013-2016. At this point, al Qaeda believes that Israel will be unable to defend itself and the Western stranglehold on the Muslim world will be loosened (Rudner 2013; Roggio 2005). Stage 6, "Total Confrontation," lasts from 2016-2020 during which time the strength of the Muslim people will coalesce in the newly-declared caliphate, which will wage total war on the West (Runder 2013). When the caliphate has defeated the West in war in 2020, Stage 7, "Definitive Victory" will begin with the caliphate as the top global power (Rudner 2013; Roggio 2005).

At the time of the research, the twenty-year plan is only partially realized. The first stage was clearly a success for al Qaeda, as the attacks on the US provoked the exact response the group hoped to elicit. Fifteen years later, the West is still fighting the long, drawn-out war bin Laden envisioned (Rudner 2013). Stage 2 can also be scored a success for al Qaeda. The Western world is certainly more aware of the group's capabilities and political aims. Somewhere in the third phase, however, is where al Qaeda's plan seems to have stalled. Attacks on Israel, Turkey, and Jordan have failed to achieve any measure of destabilization (Zelin 2013). Furthermore, while the Arab Spring has introduced unstable conditions and even regime change in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya al Qaeda cannot claim any influence in those movements (Rudner 2013). The group has, however, been very active in fighting against Assad's regime in Syria and in the civil strife in Egypt (Rudner 2013). Still, by any measure, al Qaeda has not achieved its goals for Stage 4 (2010-2013) or Stage 5 (2013-2016), nor is it likely to in the near future. Since 2014, ISIS has hijacked the caliphate movement, and al Qaeda seems to have refocused its efforts on exploiting the civil wars and unease in the Muslim world as part

of a longer-term plan to establish an eventual Islamic caliphate (Gartenstein-Ross and Barr 2016).

Although al Qaeda's original two-year plan may not have proceeded as anticipated by its leaders, the group's near and far enemies have remained the same since the plan's inception. Accordingly, the place names of its enemies should have higher frequencies in *Inspire* due to the prominence of the Other in al Qaeda's geopolitical narrative. The data from AQAP's magazine are consistent with the group's *jihadi* discourse as evidenced by the ten highest frequency place names. The United States (and variant place names) was by far the highest frequency term with 212 mentions (eighty more than second-place Yemen). As the main antagonist in al Qaeda's narrative, the United States plays an important role. First, America (along with the rest of the West) is the cause of Muslim hardship in the world according to al Qaeda. Second, America is the aggressor bent on destroying Islam as a belief system and usurping the lands of the Muslims. Al Qaeda needs the United States to play the role of the evil Other, and therefore, refers to America more often than any other place name.

Yemen (132 mentions) is the second most-frequently used place name in *Inspire,* and is the de facto home of AQAP. It is also the scene of a bloody civil war pitting the Shiite Houthis against the deposed Yemeni government as the main belligerents, and AQAP and ISIS among the nonstate actors also contributing to the chaos (Mazzetti et al. 2016). The circumstances of Yemen resemble the conditions al Qaeda seeks to incite during phases 3 and 4 of its strategic plan, but once again, AQAP did not initiate civil war. Still, AQAP views Yemen as a place of *jihad* and the potential birthplace of its own caliphate movement based on a *hadith* which predicts an army of twelve thousand will

come out of Aden-Abyan (see Issue 5). Incidentally, this scriptural reference and the strategic importance of Abyan Province in the Yemeni civil war account for Abyan's eighth-highest frequency of twenty-six occurrences.

Afghanistan garners the third-highest frequency total at eighty mentions. As a former home to al Qaeda Central and ongoing *jihad* battleground, Afghanistan is an important piece of the ideological narrative. It can be imagined as both a place of victory for the *mujahidin* over two invading powers and as the scene of current imperial overreach by the West. Either narrative is useful to al Qaeda. The Arabian Peninsula has the next highest frequency of sixty-five mentions. American occupation of the Arabian Peninsula during and after the Gulf War is arguably the largest factor in al Qaeda's anti-West sentiment. Moreover, any future caliphate must control Mecca and Medina if any claim to legitimacy is to be made. Therefore, this place is of great importance in the overall discourse of al Qaeda's Islamic *jihad*.

Iraq had the fifth-highest frequency total, with fifty-eight mentions in five issues. It is important to al Qaeda because like Afghanistan, Iraq represents American aggression against Muslims. Iraq's failing government, which al Qaeda has helped destabilize, represents a failure of the Western ideals of government and interference in the Muslim world. Moreover, Iraq's absolute location guarantees it will be key terrain for a future caliphate. Egypt is next with forty-four occurrences in five issues. The Arab Spring brought about two regime changes in five years, priming the conditions for the rise of Islamist militancy in the Sinai Peninsula (Raghavan and Habib 2016). In addition to these factors, the current leader of al Qaeda Central, Ayman al-Zawahiri, hails from Egypt which has been an integral place in the group's geographic aspirations (Medina

and Hepner 2013).

Palestine is the seventh-most frequently used place name in *Inspire* magazine with forty-one mentions in five issues. This place is at the heart of al Qaeda's political goals—one of which is to restore the land of Palestine to Muslim rule by removing the Jews and destroying the government of Israel (Blanchard 2007). Israel is the ninth-highest frequency place name with twenty-five mentions in the first five issues of *Inspire*. For AQAP, invoking the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a very effective method of fomenting anti-Western sentiment in Muslim countries (Karon 2002). Although al Qaeda's success in Israel has been limited, the Jewish state remains one of its primary targets for terrorism and for eventual conquest.

Two final place names round out the top ten mentions in the first five issues of *Inspire*: Pakistan and Tunisia, each with twenty-two occurrences. Pakistan is believed to be the current locus of command and control for al Qaeda Central (Ayman al-Zawahiri is probably in hiding along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border) in the continuing Afghan *jihad* (Scarborough 2016). It is also on al Qaeda's list of "near enemy" regimes which the group intends to depose (Riedel 2007). Finally, the Arab Spring began in Tunisia when a merchant set himself on fire after feuding with a government official about the location of his vegetable cart in the town of Sidi Bouzid (Day 2011). Al Qaeda cites the pan-Arab civil unrest as a sign that Muslims will no longer tolerate apostate secular regimes (Issue 5).

While al Qaeda's efforts did not precipitate the events of the Arab Spring across the Middle East, the resulting destabilization benefits the cause of the group. However, al Qaeda needs more than a destabilized Middle East to advance its agenda. It also needs

a weakened or nonexistent Israel combined with complete indifference from the West and Russia for Stage 4 of its strategic plan to materialize. Although al Qaeda's aggressive twenty-year plan to establish a global caliphate has apparently stalled in Stage 3, the group continues to advance its ideology and accompanying geographic aspirations, albeit at a less aggressive pace. The top ten place names appearing in *Inspire* coincide with al Qaeda's ideological narrative within the larger discourse of *jihadi* terrorism.

4.5.4.3 The Reimagined Territory of al Qaeda

In a letter written to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2004, Ayman al-Zawahiri outlined his vision for a future Islamic state in what he termed, "the heart of the Islamic world" (al-Zawahiri 2004). Unlike ISIS's ambiguously-stated territorial aspirations, al-Zawahiri specified the exact extent of al Qaeda Central's reimagined caliphate. He named Egypt, the Levant (Sham), the states of the Arabian Peninsula, and Iraq as the location for the future Islamic state (al-Zawahiri 2004). Some have pointed out, however, that earlier statements from bin Laden seem to indicate that the concept of a caliphate is an ideal, a motivational talking point, or a political reality for the distant future, not a concrete statement of geographic ambition (Pankhurst 2010). Yet, bin Laden certainly called for the establishment of an actual caliphate in a video message taped sometime in 2001. He stated, "Today, with the grace of Allah, we are redrawing the map of the Islamic world to become one state under the banner of the caliphate" (Joscelyn 2014).

Following ISIS's declaration of its caliphate in 2014, al Qaeda tweeted the link to that video, which also warns of the dangers of establishing a caliphate without the proper pillars of support (Joscelyn 2014). With that tweet, Al Qaeda rejected ISIS's claim to the

caliphate and reiterated its position on its own future caliphate. Still, the vision of the

caliphate seems to differ at the highest levels of leadership in al Qaeda. Moreover, these

views represent al Qaeda central, but not necessarily the regional groups that have

assumed the al Qaeda brand. Thus, to arrive at a more complete picture of AQAP's

reimagined territory vis-à-vis al Qaeda Central's reimagined territory, this research

combines the results from the computer-aided content analysis, the manual content

analysis, the cartographic visualization, and the geographic narrative analysis of AQAP's

ideology.

Unlike ISIS, al Qaeda does not seek to recreate the Rashidun, Umayyad, and

Abbasid Caliphate's territorial borders for its reimagined state. Rather, it seeks to unite

the Muslim world in a single state centered on the Levant, Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula,

and Iraq. By comparing and/or overlaying the place name frequency results from *Inspire*

with these conceptualizations of space, we observe the congruence between AQAP's

reimagined territory and al Qaeda Central's stated objectives. Here again, the regions

and countries categories require side-by-side comparison maps to avoid obscuring

information with overlapping polygons. For the provinces and cities categories, an

overlay method best represents the data.

Figure 4.61 is a map of the historical and current regions occurring in *Inspire*

magazine compared to a map of the Muslim-dominant countries of today. Al-Zawahiri's

"heart of Islam" lands are superimposed on the Muslim countries for reference. The

continent frequencies were omitted from this map for simplicity (the highest frequency

continent was Europe with four instances). The spatial distribution of the high-frequency

regions aligns with both bin Laden's vision of a united Muslim world and al-Zawahiri's

Figure 4.61 Historical and modern regions mentioned in *Inspire* magazine compared with the boundaries of modern Islam and al Qaeda's proposed caliphate

"heart of Islam" conceptualization of an Islamic state. Only East Asia, Central Africa, and Southern Africa fall completely outside these areas, and each of those regions had only one instance in the first five issues of *Inspire*.

Figure 4.62 compares the countries (excluding the Western Hemisphere) occurring in *Inspire* magazine to the current Muslim-dominant lands and al Qaeda's proposed caliphate. As with ISIS's circumstances, the places of the West represent the Other for al Qaeda (and AQAP). The high frequency in the magazine (and other statements, social media messages, videos, etc.) relates to the ideological requirement for an enemy of Islam, not as place which the groups seek to conquer. Indeed, both ISIS and al Qaeda wish to bring the West down, but only in terms of power and influence in the Muslim world. Moreover, al Qaeda's agenda lacks the strongly apocalyptic tone of ISIS's ideology. In the three highest frequency data classes, only two are outside of the Muslim lands/proposed caliphate areas—the United States and the United Kingdom. The UK's high frequency can also be attributed to its status as the Other in al Qaeda's ideology. Thus, accounting for the prominence of the places of the Other, the spatial distribution of the highest frequency countries generally follows al Qaeda's stated agenda. Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, and Israel comprise five of the top seven country place names. Each of these lies entirely within both bin Laden's concept and al-Zawahiri's concept of the caliphate. Afghanistan (third-most occurrences), Pakistan, Tunisia, and Somalia round out the top ten countries. Each of these countries is within bin Laden's envisioned boundaries for an Islamic state. The remaining countries in the three highest data classes each lie within the same area, demonstrating that the ideologically important places tend to garner the highest frequencies in *Inspire* magazine.

Countries Mentioned in Inspire

Frequency
1 - 6
7 - 25
26 - 80
81 - 132

Cartograher: Chris Fuhriman
Data: GADM, Natural Earth, AQAP

0   1,000   2,000   3,000   4,000
Kilometers

Muslim Lands & al Qaeda's Caliphate

al Qaeda's Future
Caliphate

Islam is largest
religion (% pop)

Cartograher: Chris Fuhriman
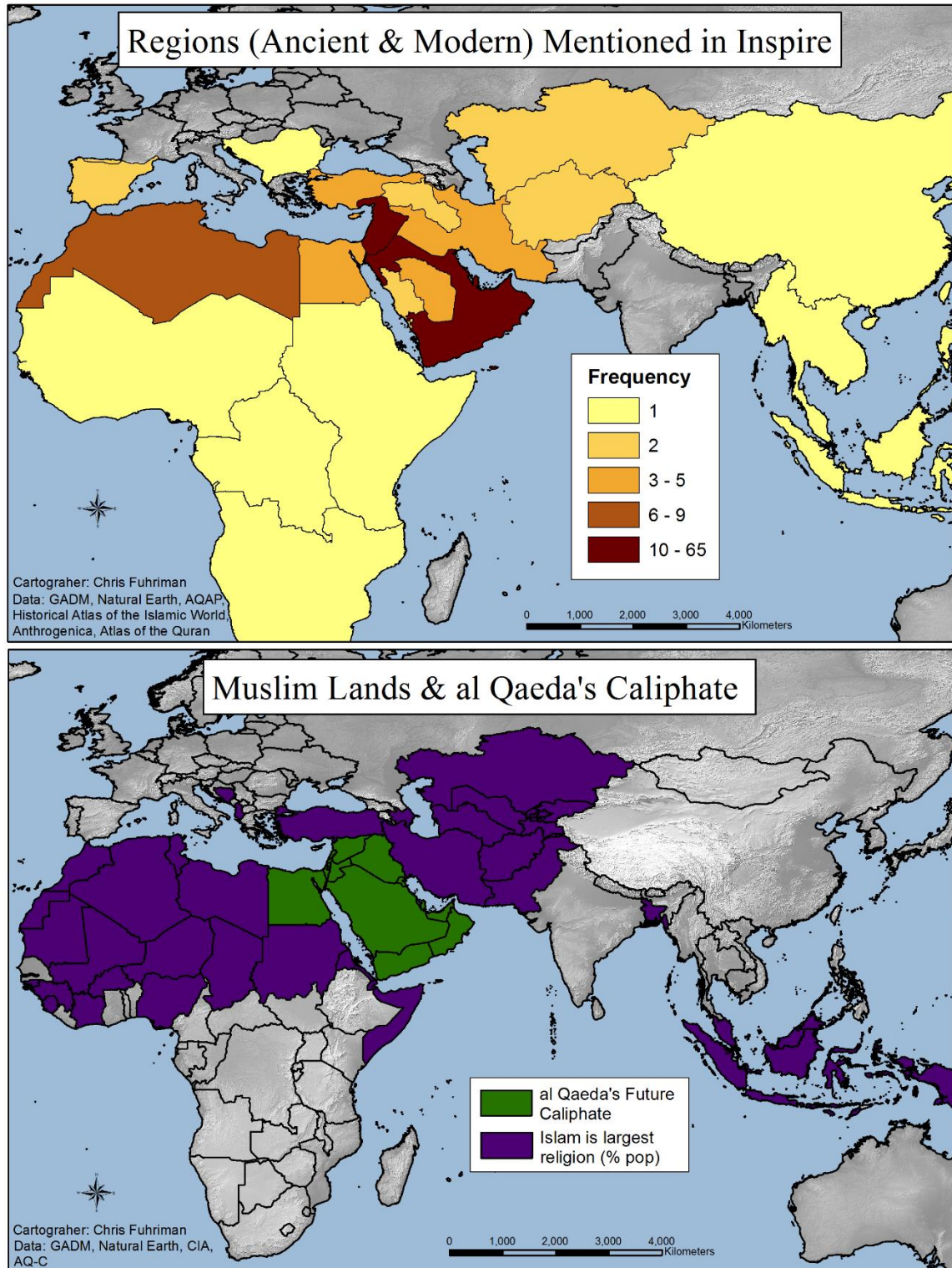Data: GADM, Natural Earth, CIA,
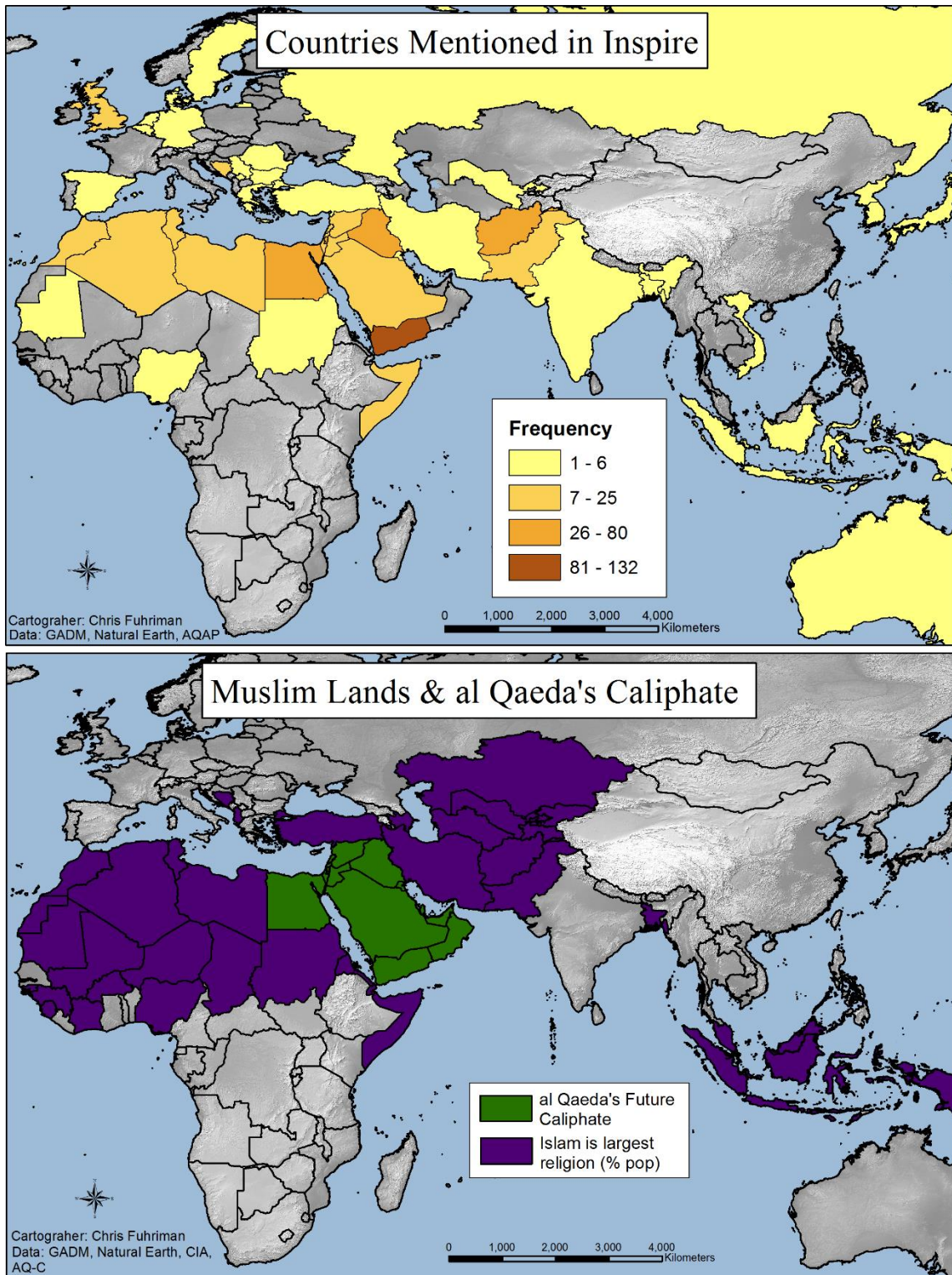AQ-C

0   1,000   2,000   3,000   4,000
Kilometers

Figure 4.62 Countries mentioned in *Inspire* magazine compared with the boundaries of
modern Islam and al Qaeda's proposed caliphate

Figure 4.63 is a map of the provinces and cities of *Inspire* superimposed on the maps of the Muslim-dominated countries and al Qaeda's conceptualization of a future caliphate. The provinces category produced the fewest total number of place names with twenty-two. Five of those were US states (North Carolina with two occurrences and California, Georgia, Texas, and Arizona with one mention each) mentioned in the context of places of the Other. Of the seventeen remaining province place names, fifteen are in countries where Islam is the dominant religion, which is consistent with the spatial distribution of the previous geographic scales. Of particular note, two provinces are neither places of the Other nor inside countries with a Muslim-dominated society—Chechnya, Russia and Zanzibar, Tanzania. However, at the provincial scale both Chechnya's and Zanzibar's populations are majority Muslim. Only five of the provinces accumulated more than two mentions in the first five issues. The highest, Abyan Province, is a contested place in Yemen where AQAP has had a considerable presence, but no governance. A likely explanation for AQAP's diminished emphasis on geographic place names at the provincial scale is the group's general lack of sovereign control of territory. Thus, the fact that AQAP has avoided seizing geographic space with the intent to govern is reflected in its place name frequency in *Inspire*.

At the city scale, four place names in the highest three data classes fall outside of the lands of Islam—Guantanamo Bay, Times Square, New York City, and Washington, DC. As previously discussed, the ideological value of these place names lies in the construction of the evil Other and its threat to Islam. The remaining high-frequency city place names fall within the lands of Islam. As Figure 4.63 shows, the majority of the place names in all data classes at this scale fall within the lands of Islam, with noticeable
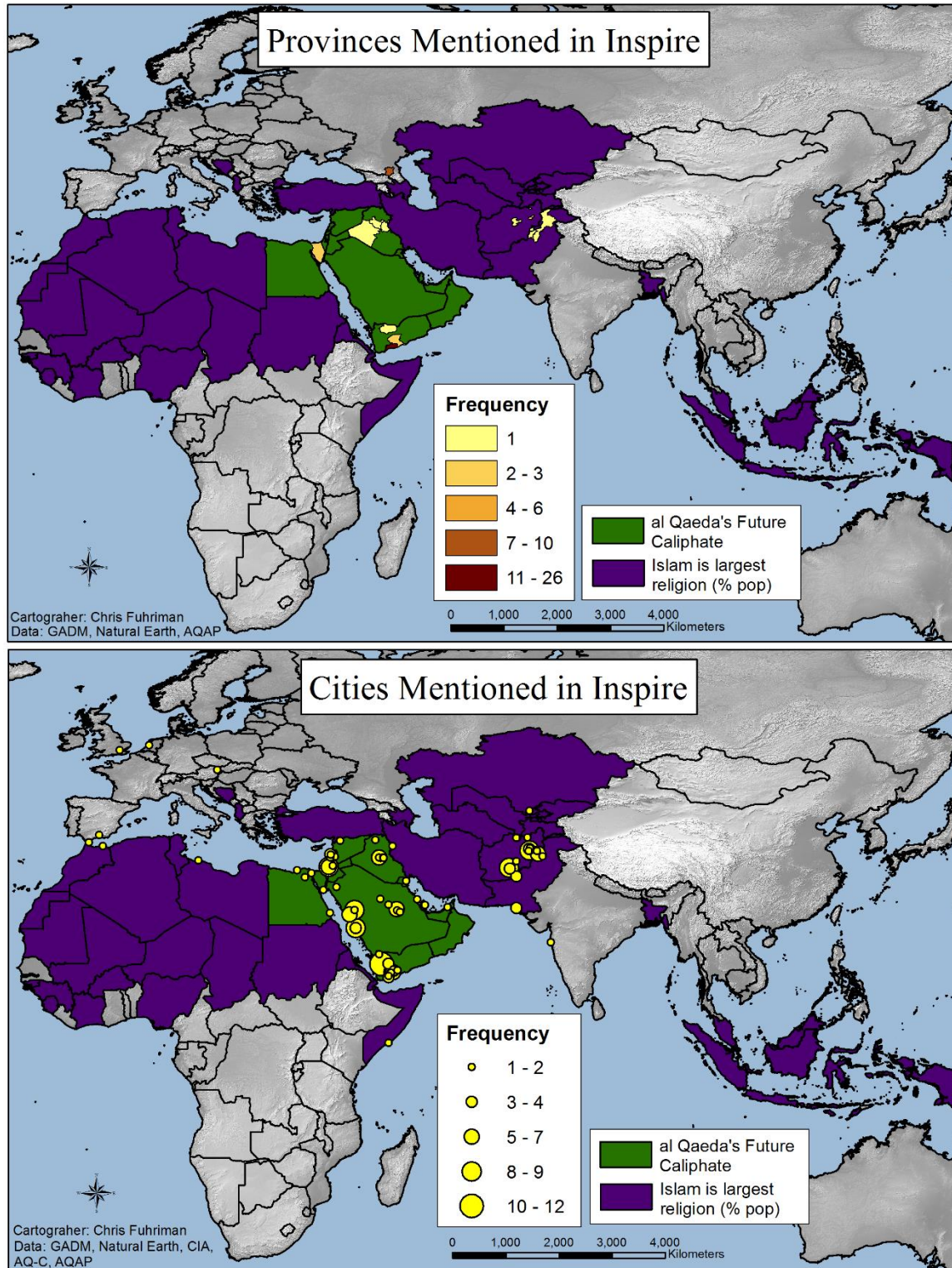
Figure 4.63 Provinces and cities mentioned in *Inspire* magazine compared with the
boundaries of modern Islam and al Qaeda's proposed caliphate

clusters of place names inside al-Zawahiri's proposed caliphate, and a second grouping of place names in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. Here again, the spatial distribution of place names in this category follows the pattern of the other scale categories.

Each spatial scale category of place names from *Inspire* magazine follows the general pattern of falling inside the proposed caliphates of al Qaeda Central. The data demonstrate that AQAP's reimagined territory as expressed via its ideological narrative aligns with the previous statements and geographic aspirations of al Qaeda's top-level leadership. The data also indicate that while al Qaeda and its affiliates have a general geographic vision for the future, they have not progressed enough in their long-term plans to seize territory and lay the geographic foundations for an Islamic state. In his letter to al-Zarqawi, al-Zawahiri outlined four incremental goals which would lead to an enduring Islamic state. The first stage was expelling the US forces from Iraq and the second stage was establishing governance over large areas of Iraq after the US troops withdrew (al-Zawahiri 2004). The third stage was to extend the *jihad* to Iraq's neighboring secular Muslim governments and the fourth and final stage was the destruction of Israel (al-Zawahiri 2004). Of course, al Qaeda's plan for Iraq imploded when its affiliate there broke away from the parent organization and declared itself a caliphate. Still, the plan gives insight into the group's strategy in establishing a caliphate, a process it sees as a long-term affair. Since being outmaneuvered in Iraq by ISIS, al Qaeda Central seems to have shifted its focus on Syria, but the plan to establish an Islamic state remains at the center of the group's ideological goals (Schmitt 2015).

Without a substantial presence in Iraq, al Qaeda must turn to another country in

the "heart of Islam" in order to achieve its geographic ambitions. The most likely candidates seem to be Yemen, Syria, or Egypt wherein al Qaeda enjoys significant influence and/or presence. Furthermore, each of these countries currently has the necessary political and civil conditions to incite disaffection and discord directed towards the secular regimes. If ISIS loses influence in Iraq, the conditions there could also allow for an al Qaeda resurgence. Whatever the place for stage one of al-Zawahiri's plan for the establishment of a caliphate, the short-term goals remain to expel the US from the Middle East and establish an emerging Islamic state in the "heart of Islam." The long-term goal is to unite the Muslim world under the banner of the caliphate until it covers the Islamic lands.

Al Qaeda Central has not declared a caliphate to date. Therefore, it is valid to assume that the group has not progressed beyond the first stage of its plan to establish a caliphate. As a result, al Qaeda's geographic goals remain futuristic ambitions, but as the evidence from *Inspire* has shown, they are discernable from the text. Figure 4.64 depicts the reimagined territory of al Qaeda Central (and by extension, AQAP). The countries wherein al Qaeda could possibly gain enough control to declare a caliphate are shown in light green polygons. Al-Zawahiri's vision for the caliphate is shown in dark green, and bin Laden's vision is shown in purple. The underlying assumptions with bin Laden's caliphate are that 1) the Muslim world consists of countries with a Muslim-dominated religious landscape; 2) the caliphate will conform to current borders between Muslim and non-Muslim lands.

The purpose of this section of the dissertation was to validate the methods and application of the theoretical concept of reimagined territory on a second data set. The

analysis of AQAP's *Inspire* magazine produced meaningful results in all spatial categories when compared to statements by al Qaeda officials. As with the ISIS case study, the AQAP abbreviated case study clearly demonstrates the utility and general applicability of the reimagined territory theoretical concept in understanding the ideology and political goals of terror groups. Given the official writings, statements, speeches, or other authentic sources of any terrorist group, a researcher can use these methods and concepts to render an accurate picture of the goals of that group.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND AGENDA FOR

FURTHER RESEARCH

The objectives of this research are to 1) develop the theoretical concept of

reimagined territory and position it at the intersection of geopolitics and theories of place

and space; 2) analyze the content of the first ten issues of *Dabiq* magazine for the

frequency of use and context of geographic place names; 3) visualize the results of the

content analyses (computer-aided and manual) by applying the qualitative GIS techniques

of choropleth and proportional symbol mapping; 4) perform a geographic narrative

analysis of ISIS's conceptualization of political boundaries (present and future). In

addition to these central objectives, the dissertation also applies the methodology to a

second data set, demonstrating the overall utility and generalizability of the theoretical

concept of reimagined territory. Section 5.1 discusses the methodological findings of this

research as well as their application in the study of terrorism and terrorist ideologies.

Section 5.2 discusses the implications of the theoretical concept of reimagined territory

and its position in the greater context of political violence studies, geographic theories of

space and place, and geopolitics. Section 5.3 discusses possible directions of further

research related to reimagined territory.

5.1 Methodological Findings

This dissertation harnesses the scientific rigor of three well-known methods commonly applied to geographic research: content analysis, cartographic visualization, and narrative analysis. As Chapter 3 outlines, the computer-aided content analysis yielded a set of ten term document matrices (one per magazine issue) which sorts words by frequency of use. Through a manual content analysis of these matrices, a list of geographic place names is compiled for each issue of the magazine. Each term is then classified into one of four predetermined, scale-based geographic categories. The results are subsequently visualized using ESRI's ArcGIS software package. Finally, the results from each of the previous stages are combined and subjected to a geographic narrative analysis process which reveals the territorial aims of the terror group in question. Each method employed produces meaningful results which contribute to the development of the theoretical concept of reimagined territory. The findings for each method are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The computer-aided content analysis proves to be an efficient, effective way to deconstruct a document and present the text in list format. The R code used in this research can easily be modified to read in and process any English-language text document. To achieve the most accurate results, however, it is recommended that the raw text files be examined and treated for any special characters which could confuse the software. Still, with minimal adjustments in the data preparation phase of research, the method used in this study can be applied to any document or set of documents (including transcripts from speeches or videos). For the analysis of *Dabiq*, the computer-aided content analysis sorted 26,908 individual terms from 604 pages of text in a matter of

seconds. This method (combined with manual content analysis) has widespread

application within the field of terrorism studies. As much of what is known about terror

groups emerges from official publications, letters, or other forms of communication, the

ability to process and categorize the information quickly is essential in both

understanding the terror groups and developing effective ways to counter the violent

actions of those groups.

In the case of *Dabiq* magazine, the computer-aided content analysis results

required human intervention to produce a meaningful list of geographic place names. As

previously discussed, computer-aided categorization is an emerging technology which

relies heavily on human-coded documents which teach the software how to categorize.

Since this study is the first of its kind, however, such documents are not available.

Therefore, the results of the computer-aided content analysis are subjected to line-by-line

manual categorization of the 29,908 individual terms. While the process is time-

consuming, it is a necessary effort to ensure the most accurate results, especially given

the writing style of the magazine. ISIS chooses to present religious concepts in a

Romanized Arabic format in the magazine, resulting in a myriad of non-English words in

each of the ten matrices. Each of the terms must be verified in its original context in the

magazine to discover if the term is a place name, a proper name, or religious vocabulary.

The same effort would be necessary to ensure accuracy in future studies of this kind.

Additionally, the creation of an Arabic data dictionary comprised of non-English

religious terms and proper names hastened the categorization process with later issues.

Each new issue added many terms to the dictionary, which ultimately amassed 1723

entries. Although the dictionary provides a relatively quick reference for categorization,

each term was still examined in its original context to avoid any omission, double counting (e.g., counting Hollywood, California in both the provinces and cities categories) or conflation of geographic place names. The process requires assiduous attention to detail through tens of thousands of terms, but the iterative nature of validating terms in their original context ensures the highest accuracy in identification and categorization of geographic place names.

Using four categories based on geographic scale proves to be an effective way to organize the place names occurring in the text. This classification system ensures that each data point (place name) could only be sorted into one category—an essential element in maintaining scientific rigor. Furthermore, the categories reflect the commonly accepted conceptualization of space as political/administrative units at different scales. Accordingly, a different researcher would likely reach very similar categorization results with the same data. (The only ambiguous place names are the geographic features such as rivers, lakes, gulfs, and mountains). At the very least, the transparency of the classification process employed in this study allows the reader to understand the rationale for the categorization. In sum, it is reasonable to conclude that the combination of computer-aided and manual content analysis is an effective means of extracting and categorizing meaningful geographic data from a relatively large corpus of text.

Successful cartographic visualization of the *Dabiq* place names allows the reader to immediately understand the spatial distribution of the data. Furthermore, the use of choropleth mapping presents the frequencies of the place names in the recognizable format of "darker equals more; lighter equals less" for the polygon features. Graduated symbols communicate the same concept for the point data wherein the convention of

"larger circle equals more; smaller circle equals less" applies. These cartographic

visualization techniques produce a series of maps that reveal the spatial aspects of ISIS's

ideological narrative. This research has shown that mapping a terror group's important

places brings about a deeper understanding of the group's ultimate goals. The

cartographic visualization process unveils the places wherein a terror group wishes to

gain, exert, or diminish political power in a way that textual lists or tables of places

cannot. Thus, in analyzing any terror group, it is essential to visualize (cartographically)

where that group aims to exercise influence in the present and in the future. For cases in

which terror groups do not explicitly communicate their geographic aspirations either

textually or graphically, the combined methods of content analysis and cartographic

visualization can uncover and visualize the extent of the sought-after territory.

Geographic narrative analysis also proves to be an effective method in

discovering the ways in which terror groups view current and future political boundaries.

The actions/interactions aspect of geographic narrative analysis provides the basis for

understanding the construction of the terrorist identity and the formation of the Other.

These distinct identities not only tell potential recruits who they are, but how they should

experience place (homeland or sacred place vs. lands of war or lands of the Other). The

space element is simply comprised of the place names themselves. The time aspect of

geographic narrative analysis demonstrates that terror groups can successfully use

historical place names to evoke theological legitimacy and indicate future borders. The

narrative analysis combines the results from each previous method to form a more

complete view of ISIS's (and later al Qaeda's) geographic goals as outlined in its

magazine. Without the narrative analysis methodology, the full context of the

ideologically important place names would either be lost or undiscovered. For example, the narrative analysis revealed why ISIS prefers province-level place names to country-level place names—because the "rightly-guided" caliphates declared provinces and appointed governors to oversee them.

The three methods employed in this research yield meaningful results from the *Dabiq* data, and again when applied to the *Inspire* data. The applicability of these methods is not restricted to studying Islamist terror groups, even though both data sets fall into this category of terror. Rather, the methods can be applied to any terror group's (or any group that aspires to political change in a given space) official statements, publications, websites, etc. As all terror groups have geographic goals (even if the group only wants political change within existing borders), the resulting reimagined territory emerges as the narrative analysis gives context to the results of the content analysis and cartographic visualization.

5.2 Implications to Theory and the

Study of Terrorism

In the past, multidisciplinary studies of terrorism have borrowed from theories of political violence, place and space, psychology, and sociology in an effort to analyze terror groups and their motivations, ideologies, and goals. However, lacking from each of the past endeavors is an in-depth treatment of their geographic goals. This research has proposed the theoretical concept of reimagined territory as a way of better understanding the ideology, goals, and actions of terror groups. This new concept fills the void in previous research endeavors which have largely ignored geographic analyses of territorial goals. Reimagined territory lies at the intersection of geographic theories of

geopolitics and space and place. The analysis in this dissertation asserts that imbuing recruits and followers with a specific sense of place is an integral element in identity-building within terrorist ideologies. The sense of place contributes to the "us vs. them" divide, and delineates what is homeland and what is enemy territory. This dissertation has also shown that the official publications of terror groups contain indicators of territorial aspirations (in the form of high-frequency place names), even if the group does not explicitly state the goals or lay out a geographic agenda. Discovering which places are important to a specific group and why they are important leads to a greater understanding of the terror organizations and their goals. Understanding a terror group's reimagined territory can also help policy makers formulate more effective responses, find solutions, and prevent or mitigate further problems. (Note: this research has focused on some of the theories and methods of terrorism studies using two known terror groups as case studies. None of the findings or conclusions should be interpreted as recommendations for a specific policy or political agenda, nor should they be interpreted as a call for policy change).

This dissertation proposes that future studies of terror organizations include the concept of reimagined territory as an integral component of the overall analysis. Using two different groups and their publications, this research demonstrates the utility of reimagined territory as it successfully connects ideology and identity to place. Previous studies tended to treat terrorist ideologies and motivations as psychological, social, political, or cultural subjects which may or may not include a discussion of territorial considerations. Aside from Medina and Hepner's (2013) discussion of aspirational geographies of terror groups, no academic research has attempted to explore the

connections between ideology and place in the context of political violence. In this dissertation, however, the theoretical concept of reimagined territory unites ideology, identity, and place in terrorism studies, substantively demonstrating that the goals of terror groups have definitive geographic underpinnings. Furthermore, the concept of reimagined territories illuminates and visualizes the process of simultaneously creating a sense of place and a group/individual identity, which are inseparably linked to a specific geographic context within a given ideology. Thus, in order to understand the motivations, goals, and ideologies of terror groups, one must understand the ways in which those groups conceptualize territory. In developing the theoretical concept of reimagined territories, this research has shown the importance of identifying and analyzing the geographic context of terror groups.

The methods and theoretical concept apply to any terror organization simply because all terror groups seek to control or influence bounded geographic space. In cases of terror organizations with understated or ill-defined territorial goals, the methods applied in this study will lead to accurate conclusions regarding ideologically important places and future limits of territorial control for those groups. In cases of terror organizations which explicitly define their geographic aspirations, these methods can corroborate the ways in which the terror groups reimagine geopolitical boundaries, and can reveal other unstated territorial goals. In any case, the theoretical concept of reimagined territory is a valuable analytical tool for researchers and policy makers in understanding the spatial aspects of terrorism.

5.3 Further Research

As reimagined territory is a newly-proposed theoretical concept, there are many potential applications for future studies. First, this dissertation is limited to two terror groups, both of which fall into the religious/cultural category as explained by Medina and Hepner (2013). The methods and theoretical concept should also be applied in cases of terror groups from the nationalist/separatist and the ideological categories. Moreover, both ISIS and al Qaeda (including AQAP) are international terrorist organizations with (arguably) more complex geographic agendas because they involve restructuring the current geopolitical environment on the global level. However, reimagined territory also applies to national and subnational terror groups which have no international ambitions. The goal of achieving political control of space still exists for these groups, even if the desired space does not cross international boundaries. In these cases, the groups' reimagined territory may be relatively simple, but the concept of understanding an organization's territorial vision is still of great importance.

Future studies would do well to restrict the analyses of terror groups' territorial ambitions to official documents, statements, videos, or other media formats. Although social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook provide nearly unlimited amounts of data, it is very difficult to determine the authenticity of messages claiming to be from terror groups themselves. ISIS and al Qaeda have undoubtedly exploited the far reach of social media in recruiting, sending political messages, and making announcements. However, determining which tweets come from ISIS and which come from copycats or supporters would be nearly impossible to achieve. For this reason, further research regarding ideology and territorial goals should focus on

publications, statements, and media releases that are verifiably official. The inadvertent inclusion of nonofficial data could potentially skew the results and lead to false conclusions.

Another question for further examination is the conceptualization of categories of place names. This study relied on a geographic scale-based system of classification from continents to cities, which it proved to be effective in the treatment of two separate data sets. However, other forms of classifying place names or other geographic scales might also be useful in determining territorial goals, especially in nationalist or subnationalist groups. Alternative classification schemes might focus more neighborhoods or census blocks as opposed to cities and provinces. A cursory knowledge of a given terror organization and its ideology may help researchers identify more useful classification schemes.

Future studies might also include the exploration of quantitative ways to test the visualized results of the computer-aided and manual content analysis. One example would be comparing the frequency results of *Dabiq* to a set of expected results. In this scenario, the researcher would compare the observed frequencies from the magazine with a uniform distribution of frequencies obtained by dividing the sum of all frequencies by the total number of place names mentioned in the magazine. The comparison of these two distributions would reveal any preference among locations in the observed data, as the expected distribution assumes that each location is as frequently mentioned as all other locations. Another model could test for spatial decay in frequencies as measured from a central location (presumably the areas which ISIS maintains sovereign control). In this model, preference (higher frequencies) would be expected in locations closer to

the ISIS areas of control, while locations spatially removed from these areas would yield lower frequencies. This type of decaying curve model, however, would need to account for the high frequency place names like "America" and "Europe" which are known to be far from ISIS areas, yet still occur very frequently in the text of the magazine.

As a new theoretical concept in multidisciplinary terrorism studies, reimagined territory offers insight into the spatiality of terrorism which previous analyses have lacked. This research underscores the importance of understanding the limits of a given terror organization's territorial aspirations, and it provides a reproducible mixed methods approach to achieve that understanding for any terror organization. It is therefore proposed that future multidisciplinary analyses of terrorist organizations consider the ways in which these groups envision current and future political space—their reimagined territory.

Lastly, the utility of the theoretical concept of reimagined territory need not be limited to studies of terrorist or extremist organizations. Reimagined territory applies in any case wherein human control of geographic space occurs. Thus, the ways in which groups of people conceptualize territorial limits of power in any context should be considered in analyzing geographic phenomena. This new approach to looking at the territorial aspirations of cultural groups, nonviolent political groups, governments, or international businesses could lead to conclusions across multiple academic disciplines. The findings of this dissertation suggest that reimagined territory can apply to any situation in which human actors seek to exert influence, power, or control over geographic space for any reason. Territorial aspirations have always been an integral aspect of a given group's agenda. Researchers need only recognize the existence of

geographic dimensions of power and ask the questions which lead to the discovery of a

given group's conceptualization of that power and its corresponding limits.

APPENDIX A

R CODE FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS:

SINGLE ISSUE

```
##load the required packages
library(tm)
library(RColorBrewer)
library(wordcloud)
library(SnowballC)

##read in text file and prep for TDM for Issue 1
i1  <-Corpus(DirSource("D://Dissertation/ISIS/ISIS/Text/Issue 1/"), readerControl =
list(language="lat"))
i1 <- tm_map(i1, removeNumbers)
i1 <- tm_map(i1, removePunctuation)
i1 <- tm_map(i1 , stripWhitespace)
i1 <- tm_map(i1, content_transformer(tolower))
i1 <- tm_map(i1, removeWords, stopwords("english"))
i1 <- tm_map(i1, stemDocument, language="english")
i1 <- tm_map(i1, stemCompletion, dictionary=i1, type="prevalent")
i1dtm <- TermDocumentMatrix(i1, control=list(wordLengths=c(1, Inf)))
options(max.print=1000000)

##wordcloud for Issue 1
m1 <- as.matrix(i1dtm)
v1 <- sort(rowSums(m1), decreasing=TRUE)
myNames <- names(v1)
d1 <- data.frame(word=myNames, freq=v1)
wordcloud(d1$word, colors=c(3,4), random.color=FALSE, d1$freq,  scale=c(4,0.3),
min.freq=15)

##save .csv file with freq terms for Issue 1
write.csv(d1, file = "issue1.csv")
```

APPENDIX B

R CODE FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS:

ALL ISSUES


```
##load the required packages
library(tm)
library(RColorBrewer)
library(wordcloud)
library(SnowballC)

##read in all text files into single corpus
all.i  <-Corpus(DirSource("D://Dissertation/ISIS/ISIS/Text/All Issues/"), readerControl =
list(language="lat"))
all.i <- tm_map(all.i, removeNumbers)
all.i <- tm_map(all.i, removePunctuation)
all.i <- tm_map(all.i, stripWhitespace)
all.i <- tm_map(all.i, content_transformer(tolower))
all.i <- tm_map(all.i, removeWords, stopwords("english"))
all.i <- tm_map(all.i, stemDocument, language="english")
all.i <- tm_map(all.i, stemCompletion, dictionary=all.i, type="prevalent")
all.idtm <- TermDocumentMatrix(all.i, control=list(wordLengths=c(1, Inf)))
options(max.print=1000000)

##all issues wordcloud
m.all <- as.matrix(all.idtm)
v.all <- sort(rowSums(m.all), decreasing=TRUE)
myNamesAll <- names(v.all)
d.all <- data.frame(word=myNamesAll, freq=v.all)
wordcloud(d.all$word, colors=c(3,4), random.color=FALSE, d.all$freq,  scale=c(2,0.3),
min.freq=15)
```

APPENDIX C

LIST OF ISIS PLACE NAMES IN THE

REGIONS CATEGORY

	Place Name	Frequency
1	Sham	277
2	Arabian Peninsula	49
3	Europe	30
4	Khurasan	28
5	Caucasus	21
6	West Africa	21
7	Middle East	20
8	Kurdistan	16
9	Persian Gulf	11
10	Africa	8
11	Hijaz (Arabia)	8
12	Euphrates (Furat) River	4
13	North Africa	4
14	Tigris (Dijlah) River	4
15	Andalus	3
16	Asia	3
17	South Asia	3
18	Mesopotamia	2
19	Western Europe	2
20	Central America	1
21	Iberian Peninsula	1
22	Indus River	1
23	North America	1
24	South America	1
25	Transoxiana	1

APPENDIX D

LIST OF ISIS PLACE NAMES IN THE

COUNTRIES CATEGORY

	Place Name	Freq.		Place Name	Freq.
1	Iraq	236	31	India	5
2	US/USA/America	144	32	Indonesia	5
3	Syria	128	33	Israel	5
4	Yemen	92	34	Morocco	5
5	Afghanistan	75	35	Bahrain	4
6	Persia/Iran	58	36	Germany	4
7	Turkey	55	37	Sudan	4
8	Libya	48	38	Chad	3
9	Qatar	34	39	Italy	3
10	Jordan	29	40	Philippines	3
11	Algeria	22	41	Bangladesh	2
12	Egypt	22	42	Burma/Myanmar	2
13	Tunisia	21	43	Ethiopia	2
14	Pakistan	17	44	Oman	2
15	Kuwait	14	45	Ukraine	2
16	Britain/UK	13	46	Austria	1
17	Japan	13	47	Cameroon	1
18	Russia/USSR	13	48	Colombia	1
19	Australia	12	49	Cyprus	1
20	Belgium	11	50	Ecuador	1
21	Palestine	11	51	Kosovo	1
22	Saudi Arabia	11	52	Mali	1
23	Canada	10	53	Mexico	1
24	Nigeria	10	54	Niger	1
25	Somalia	10	55	Poland	1
26	France	8	56	Senegal	1
27	China	7	57	Switzerland	1
28	Spain	7	58	Tajikistan	1
29	Lebanon	6	59	Turkmenistan	1
30	Denmark	5	60	United Arab Emirates	1

	Place Name	Freq.		Place Name	Freq.
61	Uzbekistan	1	62	Venezuela	1

APPENDIX E

LIST OF ISIS PLACE NAMES IN THE

PROVINCES CATEGORY

	Place Name	Freq.		Place Name	Freq.
1	Waziristan, Pakistan	52	31	Babil, Iraq (ISIS: Junub)	2
2	Halab, Syria	48	32	Golan Heights, Israel	2
3	Sinai, Egypt	42	33	Helmand, Afghanistan	2
4	Al-Raqqah, Syria	35	34	Ingushetia, Russia	2
5	Ninawa, Iraq	30	35	Latakia, Syria	2
6	Al Anbar, Iraq	28	36	Swat, Pakistan	2
7	Khurasan (ISIS)	18	37	Tabasaran, Dagestan	2
8	Idlib, Syria	17	38	West Bank, Israel	2
9	Damascus, Syria	13	39	Abyan, Yemen	1
10	Deir al-Zour, Syria	13	40	al-Jawf, Yemen	1
11	Hasakah, Syria	12	41	As Suwayda, Syria	1
12	Saladin, Iraq	9	42	Babayurtovsky, Dagestan	1
13	An Nabek, Syria	7	43	Bajaur, Pakistan	1
14	Barqah, Libya (ISIS)	7	44	Balochistan, Pakistan	1
15	Homs, Syria	7	45	California, USA	1
16	Haramayn, Arabia (ISIS)	6	46	Eastern Province, S. Arabia	1
17	Al-Fallujah, Iraq (ISIS)	5	47	Fezzan, Libya (ISIS)	1
18	Al-Qawqaz (ISIS)	5	48	Gaza, Israel (or Palestine)	1
19	Chechnya, Russia	5	49	Ghazni, Afghanistan	1
20	Daraa, Syria	5	50	Hadhramaut, Yemen	1
21	Furat, Iraq (ISIS)	5	51	Hangu, Pakistan	1
22	Kirkuk, Iraq	5	52	Kabardino-Balkaria, Russia	1
23	Dagestan, Russia	4	53	Kandahar, Afghanistan	1
24	Shamal Baghdad, Iraq (ISIS)	4	54	Khost, Afghanistan	1
25	Tripoli, Libya (ISIS)	4	55	Kunar, Afghanistan	1
26	Dijlah, Iraq (ISIS)	3	56	Kunduz, Afghanistan	1
27	Diyala, Iraq	3	57	Kurram, Pakistan	1
28	Hama, Syria	3	58	Lakki Marwat, Pakistan	1
29	Khyber, Pakistan	3	59	Logar, Afghanistan	1
30	Al Jazira, Iraq (ISIS)	2	60	Martha's Vineyard, USA	1

	Place Name	Freq.		Place Name	Freq.
61	Missouri, USA	1	68	Quebec, Canada	1
62	Najd, Saudi Arabia	1	69	Quneitra, Syria	1
63	Nangarhar, Afghanistan	1	70	Sana'a, Yemen	1
64	Nuristan, Afghanistan	1	71	Virginia, USA	1
65	Orakzai, Pakistan	1	72	Wardak, Afghanistan	1
66	Paktia, Afghanistan	1	73	Zarqa, Jordan	1
67	Paktika, Afghanistan	1			

APPENDIX F

LIST OF ISIS PLACE NAMES IN THE

CITIES CATEGORY

	Place Name	Freq.		Place Name	Freq.
1	Dabiq, Syria	430	31	Al Sukhnah, Syria	5
2	Yarmouk, Syria	55	32	Idlib, Syria	5
3	Medina, Saudi Arabia	47	33	Masjid al-Aqsa Mosque	5
4	Mecca, Saudi Arabia	45	34	Mount Sinai, Egypt	5
5	Damascus, Syria	42	35	Muwaffaq Salti Airbase	5
6	Baghdad, Iraq	24	36	Sa'dah, Yemen	5
7	Mosul, Iraq	24	37	Tikrit, Iraq	5
8	Rome, Italy	18	38	Yalda, Syria	5
9	Washington, DC	17	39	Al Judi Mountain, Turkey	4
10	Jerusalem, Israel	15	40	Erbil, Iraq	4
11	Raqqa, Syria	15	41	Guantanamo Prison, Cuba	4
12	Constantinople, Turkey	12	42	Halab, Syria (Aleppo)	4
13	Fallujah, Iraq	12	43	Kabul, Afghanistan	4
14	Miran Shah, Pakistan	11	44	Khaybar (Arabia)	4
15	Azaz, Syria	10	45	London, England	4
16	Ghouta, Syria	9	46	Lyon, France	4
17	Kobani, Syria	9	47	Maidan, Pakistan	4
18	Al-Bukamal, Syria	8	48	Najran, Saudi Arabia	4
19	Sinjar, Iraq	8	49	New York, New York	4
20	Al Hajar Al Aswad, Syria	7	50	Palmyra (Tadmur), Syria	4
21	Al-Tabqa Airbase, Syria	7	51	Saqlawiyyah, Iraq	4
22	Paris, France	7	52	Tell Abbyad, Syria	4
23	Sana'a, Yemen	7	53	Al Adhim, Iraq	3
24	Baiji, Iraq	6	54	Al Qaim, Iraq	3
25	Jarablus, Syria	6	55	Amiriyah Fallujah, Iraq	3
26	Qalb Loze, Syria	6	56	Battle of Al Harrah, Arabia	3
27	Ramadi, Iraq	6	57	Beit Sahem, Syria	3
28	Tunis, Tunisia	6	58	Benghazi, Libya	3
29	Al Amaq, Turkey	5	59	Huwar-al-Nahr, Syria	3
30	Al Mukalla, Yemen	5	60	Khalkhalah Airbase, Syria	3

	Place Name	Freq.		Place Name	Freq.
61	Khukai, Pakistan	3	105	Amman, Jordan	1
62	Sydney, Australia	3	106	Anatawt Camp, Israel	1
63	Ta'if, Saudi Arabia	3	107	Aqabah, Jordan	1
64	Tal Afar, Iraq	3	108	Aqraba, Syria	1
65	Tehran, Iran	3	109	Arar Airport, Saudi Arabia	1
66	Zur Maghar, Syria	3	110	Ash Sharqat, Iraq	1
67	Akhtarin, Syria	2	111	Atme, Syria	1
68	Al Hayl Gas Field, Syria	2	112	At-Tahiya, Iraq	1
69	Al Khaldiyyah, Iraq	2	113	Baqirda, Turkey	1
70	Ankara, Turkey	2	114	Bashiriyyah, Syria	1
71	Arish, Egypt	2	115	Batn Idam, Saudi Arabia	1
72	Ashkelon, Israel	2	116	Battle of al-Qadisiyyah, Iraq	1
73	Babila, Syria	2	117	Battle of Badr, Saudi Arabia	1
74	Baghdad Intl. Airport, Iraq	2	118	Battle of Dayr al-Jamājim	1
75	Battle of Buzakhah, Arabia	2	119	Battle of Nahavand (Iran)	1
76	Beirut, Lebanon	2	120	Battle of Tabuk, Arabia	1
77	Daquq, Iraq	2	121	Battle of Uhud, Arabia	1
78	Doha, Qatar	2	122	Binnish, Syria	1
79	Duluiyyah, Iraq	2	123	Camp Bucca, Iraq	1
80	Hawija, Iraq	2	124	Dammam, Saudi Arabia	1
81	Homs, Syria	2	125	Dar es Salaam, Tanzania	1
82	Jawatha Mosque, Arabia	2	126	Dir, Pakistan	1
83	Madrid, Spain	2	127	Douma, Syria	1
84	Mir Ali, Pakistan	2	128	Fadak (Arabia)	1
85	Muqdadiya, Iraq	2	129	Garland, Texas	1
86	Samarra, Iraq	2	130	Geneva, Switzerland	1
87	Sidi Miqdad, Syria	2	131	Haditha, Iraq	1
88	Tadamon, Syria	2	132	Hammam al-'Alil, Iraq	1
89	Yusufiyah, Iraq	2	133	Harran, Turkey	1
90	Zummar, Iraq	2	134	Hasaka, Syria	1
91	Al Ajrawi, Syria	1	135	Herat, Afghanistan	1
92	Al Baaj, Iraq	1	136	Hiroshima, Japan	1
93	Al Baqi Cemetery, Medina	1	137	Hollywood, California	1
94	Al Hatra, Iraq	1	138	Hunayn, Saudi Arabia	1
95	Al Jazrah, Syria	1	139	Irbid, Jordan	1
96	Al Khafsah, Syria	1	140	Islamabad, Pakistan	1
97	Al Mushallal, Arabia	1	141	Jazah, Iraq	1
98	Al Qura Valley, Arabia	1	142	Kamishly Airport, Syria	1
99	Al Rusafah, Baghdad, Iraq	1	143	Kendal, Syria	1
100	Al Zab, Iraq	1	144	Kessab, Syria	1
101	al-Azraq, Jordan	1	145	Khasavyurt, Dagestan	1
102	al-Hayir Prison, S. Arabia	1	146	Kirkuk, Iraq	1
103	Al-Karak, Jordan	1	147	Kizilyurt, Dagestan	1
104	al-Mada'in, Persia	1	148	Kizlyar, Dagestan	1

	Place Name	Freq.		Place Name	Freq.
149	Kuwait Intl. Airport	1	171	Salqin, Syria	1
150	Lake Hulah, Israel	1	172	Sarrin, Syria	1
151	Lake Tiberias, Israel	1	173	Sha'er Gas Field, Syria	1
152	Latakia, Syria	1	174	Shamil Kaminsk, Dagestan	1
153	Manbij, Syria	1	175	Shar Asiyat, Afghanistan	1
154	Maskanah, Syria	1	176	Sinsil, Iraq	1
155	Mintaqat Albu Shihab, Iraq	1	177	Sulaiman Bek, Iraq	1
156	Moscow, Russia	1	178	Sulaymaniyah, Iraq	1
157	Mount Adah, Syria	1	179	Suluk, Syria	1
158	Nagasaki, Japan	1	180	Tabalah, Saudi Arabia	1
159	Nairobi, Kenya	1	181	Taji, Iraq	1
160	Nakhlah Valley (Arabia)	1	182	Tal Abtah, Iraq	1
161	Ottawa, Canada	1	183	Tel Malid, Syria	1
162	Peshawar, Pakistan	1	184	Tokyo, Japan	1
163	Qatif, Saudi Arabia	1	185	Tura, Pakistan	1
164	Qayyarah, Iraq	1	186	Umm Qasr, Iraq	1
165	Quetta, Pakistan	1	187	Valley of Taymullah, Syria	1
166	Rabia, Iraq	1	188	Wanah, Iraq	1
167	Rafa, Egpyt	1	189	West Point, New York	1
168	Rasin El Aboud Airport	1	190	Yanbu Al Nakhal, Arabia	1
169	Rawa, Iraq	1	191	Zarqa, Jordan	1
170	Rutbah, Iraq	1	192	Zawiyyah, Iraq	1

APPENDIX G

LIST OF AL QAEDA PLACE NAMES IN

THE REGIONS CATEGORY

	Place Name	Frequency
1	Arabian Peninsula	65
2	Sham/Levant	10
3	North Africa/Maghreb	9
4	Middle East	5
5	Europe	4
6	Haramayn, Arabia	4
7	Asia	3
8	Najd, Saudi Arabia	3
9	Africa	2
10	Andalus	2
11	Central Asia	2
12	Hijaz, Arabia	2
13	Iberian Peninsula	2
14	Jordan River	2
15	Khurasan	2
16	Kurdistan	2
17	Persian Gulf	2
18	Amu Darya River	1
19	Balkans	1
20	Central Africa	1
21	East Africa	1
22	Gulf of Aden	1
23	North America	1
24	South America	1
25	Southeast Asia	1
26	Southern Africa	1
27	West Africa	1

APPENDIX H

LIST OF AL QAEDA PLACE NAMES IN

THE COUNTRIES CATEGORY

	Place Name	Freq.		Place Name	Freq.
1	America/US	186	26	Sweden	3
2	Yemen	132	27	Australia	2
3	Afghanistan	80	28	Bahrain	2
4	Iraq	58	29	Cuba	2
5	Egypt	44	30	Indonesia	2
6	Palestine	41	31	Japan	2
7	Israel	25	32	Kuwait	2
8	Pakistan	22	33	Spain	2
9	Tunisia	22	34	Sudan	2
10	Somalia	15	35	Vietnam	2
11	Syria	15	36	Bangladesh	1
12	Lebanon	11	37	Belgium	1
13	Libya	11	38	Bulgaria	1
14	Saudi Arabia	10	39	Canada	1
15	Algeria	9	40	Greece	1
16	England/UK/Britain	9	41	Netherlands	1
17	Morocco	9	42	Korea	1
18	Bosnia	8	43	Kosovo	1
19	Jordan	8	44	Mauritania	1
20	Iran/Persia	6	45	Nigeria	1
21	India	5	46	Qatar	1
22	Russia	5	47	Romania	1
23	Turkey	5	48	Serbia	1
24	Denmark	4	49	Uzbekistan	1
25	Germany	4			

APPENDIX I

LIST OF AL QAEDA PLACE NAMES IN

THE PROVINCES CATEGORY

	Place Name	Frequency
1	Abyan, Yemen	26
2	Chechnya, Russia	10
3	Gaza, Israel	10
4	Aden, Yemen	6
5	Shabwah, Yemen	3
6	North Carolina	2
7	Panjshir Province	2
8	Sinai, Egypt	2
9	Al Anbar, Iraq	1
10	Al Jawf, Yemen	1
11	Arizona	1
12	Bamyan, Afghanistan	1
13	California	1
14	Diyala, Iraq	1
15	Georgia	1
16	Khost, Afghanistan	1
17	Khwaja Ghar, Afghan.	1
18	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	1
19	Saladin, Iraq	1
20	Texas	1
21	Waziristan, Pakistan	1
22	Zanzibar, Tanzania	1

APPENDIX J

LIST OF AL QAEDA PLACE NAMES IN

THE CITIES CATEGORY

	Place Name	Freq.		Place Name	Freq.
1	Guantanamo Prison	12	31	Baghdad, Iraq	2
2	Sana'a, Yemen	12	32	Bagram, Afghanistan	2
3	Kabul, Afghanistan	9	33	Dubai, UAE	2
4	Mecca, Saudi Arabia	9	34	Granada, Spain	2
5	Medina, Saudi Arabia	9	35	Hawtah Sudayr, Arabia	2
6	Jerusalem/Quds	8	36	Jalalabad, Afghanistan	2
7	Kandahar, Afghanistan	8	37	Kohat, Pakistan	2
8	Masjid al-Aqsā, Jerusalem	7	38	London, England	2
9	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	7	39	Sadah, Yemen	2
10	Times Square, NYC	7	40	Suez Canal, Egypt	2
11	Washington, DC	7	41	Vienna, Austria	2
12	Battle of Badr, Arabia	6	42	Al Hair Prison, Saudi Arabia	1
13	Lawdar, Yemen	6	43	Al Hawtah, Yemen	1
14	New York City	6	44	Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia	1
15	Fallujah, Iraq	5	45	Aleppo, Syria	1
16	Mudiyah, Yemen	5	46	Alexandria, Egypt	1
17	Tora Bora, Afghanistan	5	47	Amsterdam, Netherlands	1
18	Beirut, Lebanon	4	48	Annapolis, Maryland	1
19	Karabagh Afghanistan	4	49	Arlington, Virginia	1
20	Marib, Yemen	4	50	Battle of Tabuk, Arabia	1
21	Quetta, Pakistan	4	51	Battle of Uhud, Arabia	1
22	Zinjibar, Yemen	4	52	Buraidah, Saudi Arabia	1
23	Al Farouq Training Camp	3	53	Cairo, Egypt	1
24	Detroit Michigan	3	54	Ceuta, Spain	1
25	Karachi, Pakistan	3	55	Chicago, Illinois	1
26	Masjid al-Haram (Kaaba)	3	56	Damascus, Syria	1
27	Abu Ghraib Prison	2	57	Doha, Qatar	1
28	Al Jolan, Fallujah, Iraq	2	58	Failaka Island, Kuwait	1
29	Al Majalah, Yemen	2	59	Ground Zero (NYC)	1
30	Amman, Jordan	2	60	Hatat, Yemen	1

	Place Name	Freq.		Place Name	Freq.
61	Khobar, Saudi Arabia	1	72	Rafdh, Yemen	1
62	Khurmal, Iraq	1	73	Ras Banas, Egypt	1
63	Kunduz, Afghanistan	1	74	Rasheed Air Base, Baghdad	1
64	Masjid an-Nabawi	1	75	Sabir Mountain, Kabul	1
65	Mazar-E-Sharif, Afghanistan	1	76	Sharm al-Shaykh, Egpyt	1
66	Mellila, Spain	1	77	Tal al-Zataar, Lebanon	1
67	Mogadishu, Somalia	1	78	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	1
68	Mosul, Iraq	1	79	Thirah, Yemen	1
69	Mumbai, India	1	80	Tor Ghar, Afghanistan	1
70	Nabatieh, Lebanon	1	81	Tripoli, Libya	1
71	Qala-i-Jangi, Afghanistan	1			

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