Abstract

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This study aims at investigating Dabiq front covers as an example of popular geopolitics through which ISIS visualizes its geopolitical imagination. Employing iconographical references, ISIS, the ‘stateless’ Islamic State, attempts to move out of the conceptual frame of traditional geopolitics with its insistence on physical space. Accordingly, Dabiq magazine is not a mere call for Hijrah, Jihad, establishing a Khilafah, rather it is a domain where geopolitical imagination can be infused and circulated. This calls for the importance of studying Dabiq through the lens of critical geopolitics. The paper draws on political iconography (Panofsky, 1970, 1982 Muller, 2011) and resemiotization (Iedema 2003) to investigate ISIS’s geopolitical ideology with its workings of identification, social affiliation and in-groupness as well as disidentification, out-groupness and otherness. It is found that ISIS, as a non-state actor, utilizes the covers of Dabiq to convey its geopolitical imagination that it strives to realize. The analysis reveals that in the process of iconographical resemiotization, actual contexts and original meanings of the iconographical patterns are concealed and backgrounded. New meanings of Khilafah, Hijrah and Jihad are then instantiated to serve ISIS’s geopolitical agenda.