

The Falklands/Malvinas conflict from the perspective of the Geopolitics of Natural Resources

El conflicto de las Malvinas a través del prisma de la Geopolítica de Recursos Naturales

Abstract: The objective of this exploratory, qualitative research is to provide a geopolitical view of the Falklands conflict, from the perspective of Strategic Natural Resources, to infer essential elements of analysis that may mark the course of the conflict in the coming years. The Falklands issue and its consequent projection towards the Antarctic continent may present new perspectives for South America in general, but mainly for Argentina, considering that the South Atlantic is prodigiously endowed with nature, with abundant and varied fishing, rich in minerals and hydrocarbons, and that, at the same time, the existence of overlapping demands of maritime jurisdictions by Argentina and Great Britain.

Keywords: Malvinas. Natural Resources. Antarctica. Exclusive Economic Zone. Maritime Jurisdictions.

Resumen: El objetivo de esta investigación cualitativa, exploratoria, es proporcionar una visión geopolítica del conflicto de Malvinas, desde la perspectiva de los Recursos Naturales Estratégicos, para inferir elementos esenciales de análisis que pueden marcar el derrotero del conflicto en los próximos años. La cuestión Malvinas y su consecuente proyección hacia el continente antártico pueden presentar nuevas perspectivas para América del Sur en general, pero principalmente para Argentina, teniendo en cuenta que el Atlántico Sur está prodigiosamente dotado de naturaleza, con una pesca abundante y variada, rica en minerales e hidrocarburos, y que, al mismo tiempo, existen demandas superpuestas de jurisdicciones marítimas por parte de Argentina y Gran Bretaña.

Palabras clave: Malvinas. Recursos Naturales. Antártida. Zona Económica Exclusiva. Jurisdicciones Marítimas

Jorge Gabriel Perez

Ejército Argentino, Estado Mayor General del Ejército. Buenos Aires, Argentina.
jorgegabrielperez@gmail.com

Received: Apr. 27, 2020

Accepted: Jun. 17, 2020

COLEÇÃO MEIRA MATTOS

ISSN on-line 2316-4891 / ISSN print 2316-4833

<http://ebrevistas.eb.mil.br/index.php/RMM/index>



1 Introduction

Under the auspices of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea – UNCLOS (Montego Bay, 1982), the value of natural resources and ocean spaces have not only increased their strategic importance, but also represent an essential contribution to national interests, starting with the economic development they provide (GANEAU, 2019).

In this sense, after that year, which coincided with the end of the War between United Kingdom and Argentina, the extension of the jurisdiction of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to 200 nautical miles, further increased the geopolitical and strategic value of the Malvinas Islands¹, South Georgia y South Sandwich. (KOUTOUDJIAN, 2011, p.72).

Terribile (2018, p. 97) states that it has been in the interest of the parties in conflict to privilege certain objectives that can be framed from a geostrategic perspective. Examples of this are the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity, the increase in exports, the development of the fishing industry, occupation, activation of regional ports and the strengthening of the presence at sea. Koutoudjian (2019, p. 11) adds that the situation of hydrocarbons in the Falkland Islands is becoming increasingly relevant, with the growing increase of the underwater section as a source of oil resources at a global level, and specifically with the intense explorations that are financed by the British government.

Battaleme *et al.* (2011, p. 103-104) states that each country, depending on its geographical location, its neighbors, its needs and its possibilities, will consider a given resource as strategic. Considerations on the relevance of a resource allow us to see that wherever it is found, there will be competition, either to keep that resource available or for the intention of obtaining the benefits of its control and exploitation.

In this context, the objective of this article **is to determine, from the particular approach of the Geopolitics of Natural Resources, which are the essential elements of analysis to be considered, in order to understand the Falklands Conflict until the end of the Antarctic Treaty (in 2041)**. Starting from the hypothesis that, until that moment, Great Britain was not interested in modifying the prevailing *Status Quo*, reason why Argentina can achieve an indirect approach to the treatment of the sovereignty, starting from a geostrategic maneuver based on the existing interests about the natural resources, present in the conflict zone.

For this reason, the paper analyses the situation of resources in the maritime areas of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, and how these are present in both Argentinean and British interests.

For the strategic analysis, the protagonist, the perspective of the analysis, starts from the Argentine Republic. The data that support the analysis correspond to the first two decades of the 21st century. The exploratory method was used (in terms of the purpose), documentary and bibliographic (in terms of the resources) (VERGARA, 2008, p. 44-45). The study was based on the debates about the origin of inter-state conflicts in South America: Long Peace versus Violent Peace (BATTAGLINO, 2008, 2012; CENTENO, 2002; FRANCHI; GLASER;

1 The Malvinas Islands are also known as the Falkland Islands. For this study, it was agreed to use only the term Falkland Islands.

VILLARREAL, 2017; KAKOWICZ, 1998; MARTÍN, 2006); and geopolitical disputes involving natural resources (ARNAUD, 2014; BLACKWILL; HARRIS, 2016; KLARE, 2003; KOUTOUDJIAN, 2019; SENHORAS; MOREIRA; VITTE, 2009; WIKTER, 2012, among others). To address the definition of actors and their interest within a conflict, the work relied on the definitions by Cal et al. (2016) and Frischknecht & Lanzarini (2015).

As sources, documents of treaties and agreements signed between Argentina and England under the framework of the UN; the Shackleton Report (1976) and international conventions on the use of resources and maritime spaces, mainly the UNCLOS (1982); scientific and technical guidelines of the CLCS² and the Antarctic Treaty (1961) were studied. Authors from different countries were used to give a historical support to the research about the Falklands War: Argentines (AYUSO; ANGUERA; PÉREZ SEOANE, 1985; DELGADO, 2012; RODRÍGUEZ, 2005; RUDA, 1964); English (BECK, 1983, 1988; FRANKS, 1983; FREEDMAN, 2005a, 2005b) and Brazilians (MARTINS, 2016; VALÉRIO; HENTZ, 2013).

2 The Geopolitics of Natural Resources

Michael Klare (2003, p. 24) says that since the end of the Cold War, resource issues have regained a central place in countries' planning. The author presents three factors related to disputes in the area of natural resources: increased demand, increased scarcity, and competition and tension to dominate resources. As resource consumption increases, scarcity will also increase more rapidly and governments will be under more pressure to solve the problem in any way they can (KLARE, 2003, p. 23).

Klare adds that when the U.S. Navy claims about the safety of "lines of maritime communication" in the United States (referring specifically to intercontinental trade lines), their argument generally derives from that presented by Admiral Mahan in the late nineteenth century. However, the current approach represents more than just a return to the past; above all, it reflects the growing importance of industrial energy, the economic dimensions of security and natural resources.

Specifically regarding resources, the author, a reference in terms of the Geopolitics of Natural Resources, points out:

While water, oil and natural gas cause more intense competition, there are other latent conflicts over minerals, precious stones and sawn timber, especially in developing countries that do not have many other domestic sources of wealth. Ethnic and political factions trying to exploit a lucrative resource, in a highly productive copper mine, for example, a diamond field or a wood plantation, are often drawn into bloody infighting that lasts several

2 The CLCS is the body responsible for considering claims with a view to the extension of coastal States beyond 200 nautical miles. It is an autonomous body composed of twenty-one members, experts in geology, geophysics and hydrography, elected by the States Parties to the Convention. The task of the Commission is twofold: on the one hand, to examine the submissions made by coastal States and make recommendations accordingly and, on the other hand, to provide scientific and technical advice for the formulation of submissions.

generations. As the demand for such resources increases and many poor countries are in an uncertain situation. The intensity of conflict over these disputed areas can only increase (KLARE, 2003, p. 15, our translation).

Entering the second decade of the 2000's, Klare (2008) highlights a common denominator that, for him, will be present in the coming wars: the search, hunting and appropriation of natural exhaustible resources: gas, oil, coal, forest reserves, minerals such as uranium, titanium, cobalt, copper, nickel, platinum and tin.

Authors like Blackwill and Harris (2016) say that the tendency to use energy and resources with geopolitical sense is not new. The authors argue that states use energy and commodities to help themselves out of geopolitical needs and that resource scarcity is a crucial factor in global politics in the post-Cold War era (BLACKWILL; HARRIS, 2016, p. 85-86).

Senhoras, Moreira and Vitte (2009, p. 3) suggest that from the moment natural resources became “fields of attraction and gravitation of human intervention for systematic exploration,” they have acquired a geopolitical and strategic connotation. Therefore, a strategic natural resource is essential for the functioning of the capitalist production system and the maintenance of regional and global hegemony.

This perspective also allows the Falklands conflict to be approached in the light of the regional (South American) vision of the conflict. An international consensus on the literature argues that South America is an area marked by a ‘long peace’ (BATTAGLINO, 2008, 2012; CENTENO, 2002; KACOWICZ, 1998; MARTÍN, 2006), compared to the magnitude of events in the rest of the world in the twentieth century, mainly the two world wars in 1914-1918; 1939-1945, or the intensity of the wars against Iraq in 1991 and 2003 (FRANCHI; GLASER; VILLARREAL, p. 8). The specialized literature suggests that inter-state conflicts in South America are of lesser importance, both in terms of their duration and the equipment and technology used. Therefore, according to Centeno (2002, p. 37, our translation), “the last two centuries did not see the level of warfare that was common in other regions.”

However, the Falklands conflict, which had its peak of violence with the 1982 War, but which continues to be unresolved, appears in an opposite line of argument to that of the South American “long peace” (FRANCHI; GLASER; VILLARREAL, 2017, p. 12). Referring to the Falklands conflict, among others, David Mares (2001, p. 255, our translation) notes: “the affirmation that Latin America is the most peaceful region in the world is empirically incorrect.” The present, and coming, dispute over the world's natural resources (KLARE, 2003) seems to correspond to this line of thought (“Violent Peace”) (MARES, 2001), especially regarding the natural wealth present in South America in general, and the specific situation in the Southwestern Atlantic.

3 Brief historical approach to the conflict: the perennial presence of natural resources

From 3 January 1833, when Great Britain took possession of the Falkland Islands, the conflict began and it is about to complete 200 years (AYUSO; ANGUERA;

PÉREZ-SEOANE, 1985; DELGADO, 2012, p. 25; FREEDMAN, 2005a, p. 7; RUDA, 1964). Until the definitive political and territorial consolidation of Argentina, already begun in the second half of the nineteenth century, except for some formal diplomatic protests (six in total) presented to the government of the United Kingdom, the Falklands question was largely absent from the Argentine agenda.³

Even since the origins of the conflict, Arnaud (2014) adds that every year, many English and American ships fished around the Falkland Islands and the Patagonian coast which they considered uninhabited. There was a depredation of fish stocks and an “abusive hunt for the whales from which they extracted the oil for the lighting in Europe and the United States; of the elephant seals; sea lions and seals” (ARNAUD, 2014, p. 7, our translation).

After 1880 and until practically 1945, with the accession of Perón to the Argentine presidency, the country became highly dependent on European, and mainly British, investments. This places Argentina, around 1920, among the most developed countries in the world Rodríguez (2005, p. 27, 29), Fiel (1973, p. 247) and Phelps (1938, p. 99). This reason (the dependence), can explain in some way why the Falklands question, in that period, did not occupy a central role in Argentine politics either, even in the vision of the main Argentine geopolitical of the first half of the 20th century: Admiral Storni (MARTINS, 2016a, p. 4, 10, 2016b, p. 49).

With the Perón presidencies (1946-1955), there was a change in that vision. The Argentine president not only enhanced the rights of Argentine sovereignty, thus representing its geographical position, and the resulting geostrategic importance, but also started to glimpse the importance that “food and raw material reserves” would have in the future (PERÓN, 1953).

Since 1960, with the approval by the United Nations of Resolution 1514, which established, on the one hand, the rapid end of colonialism, but at the same time, that all peoples have the right to self-determination, a period of two decades of diplomatic negotiations regarding the conflict began, which would end abruptly with the war, in 1982.

Precisely one of the most important turning points in that period of negotiations was the “Shackleton Report” (1976), directly linked to the natural resources surrounding the Falklands. The document estimated that the world’s largest unexploited protein resources could be located on the islands. This is true for fishing, as well as for seaweed and coastal shellfish harvesting. In relation to fisheries, it held that much of the fishing grounds in the southwest Atlantic were within a 200-mile radius of the islands. However, in addition, the expert Richard Johnson, who was part of the selected team of six specialists who accompanied Lord Shackleton⁴, based on the studies carried out in the region, assumed the existence of large oil deposits in the South Sea, near the Falkland Islands (VELASCO, 1977, p. 31-32).

3 The full texts of these “protests” are in “The Falkland Islands Dispute in International Law and Politics: A Documentary Sourcebook,” written by Raphael Perl in 1983.

4 English geographer. Since 1971, Shackleton was president of the Royal Geographic Society and later named Knight of the Order of the League in 1974. From 1976 to 1992, he was Chairman of the Joint Committee on Honors and Political Scrutiny. Lord Shackleton’s report, commissioned by James Callaghan, described the economic future of the Falkland Islands. That mission was described by the Argentine Government as a “unilateral action,” increasing tensions between the two countries (BECK, 1983).

The result of this report, added to a series of political events in both countries (renewal of authorities in the governing Military Council in Argentina and return of the Conservatives with Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom), produced a strong increase in tensions between both countries (BECK, 1983; FRANKS, 1983).

After the end of the war, and after a period of stagnation in the negotiations. Following the Madrid agreements (1989 and 1990), there was a rapprochement that led to bilateral negotiations, promoted by the United States (BECK, 1988), where the importance of natural resources in the region would return to the agenda of both countries, being one of the main elements to be considered in the continuity of the negotiations.

4 The actors in the conflict

According to Cal et al. (2016, p. 75), we should consider as an actor every entity that has an interest in a conflict. The structure of interests of an actor within a given conflict allows us to understand the plot of the conflict (CAL et al., 2016, p. 76).

While it is true that the Falklands conflict is a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Martin (2015, p. 296) states that, in the South West Atlantic, Brazil's presence is also noteworthy for having the longest coastline and military capacity to exercise presence and influence in the region (ESPÓSITO NETO, 2006). He adds that, naturally, the United States also has interests in the South Atlantic since, in addition to being a strategic ally of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A fact that confirms the interest of this actor is the reactivation of the IV American Fleet (2008), with a seat and primary influence in the Caribbean, but with clear projection towards the South Atlantic.

On the other hand, as Zurutuza (2017, p. 61) states, it must join China, with an increasing presence in the South Atlantic, in principle developing an intense fishing activity, not always in international waters, and with a growing global projection.

To delimit and better focus on the work, the interests of the two main actors in the conflict will be analyzed.

5 Argentine and British interests in the Falklands Issue

An interest is an object that has a certain value (CAL et al., 2016, p. 62). At the same time, these objects can be ideal (intangible) or real (tangible). However, it is important to understand that, on these valued objects, the wish of the actors are present and it becomes an interest of each one (FRISCHKNECHT; LANZARINI, 2015, p. 24-26).

5.1 Argentinean interests

Based on the work of Vaca (2017, p. 7), Terribile (2018); Zurutuza (2017) and Ganeau (2019), and on the bibliographical analysis and interviews conducted for this work, the following structure of interests of the Argentine Republic is inferred, within the framework of the Falklands issue:

Table 1 – Argentine interests in the Falkland Islands Issue

Interest (valuable object)	Description
National Sovereignty	Full exercise of sovereign rights over land and sea areas occupied by Great Britain.
Territorial Integrity	Indivisibility of the territories and maritime spaces claimed from the rest of the Argentine territory.
Continental Shelf	Natural extension of the continent according to the definition of the UNCLOS, as presented by Argentina to the External Commission of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), intended by the United Kingdom.
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)	Maritime Space, intended by the United Kingdom, in accordance with the definition of the UNCLOS and Argentine submission to the CLCS.
Fishing	Fish resource in the EEZ intended and marketed by the United Kingdom.
Hydrocarbons	Oil and gas reserves in maritime and terrestrial areas held by the United Kingdom.
Presence in the South Atlantic	Influence of the Argentine state in the South Atlantic
Antarctic Projection	Relatively favorable position to influence future claims of sovereignty over Antarctica.
Kelper's	Inhabitants of the Falkland Islands.
International Public Opinion	International Public Opinion favorable to the Argentine cause.
Naval Forces	Components of the Argentine Naval Power (current and potential capacities) in conditions to control the maritime space.

Source: The author, based on data from Vaca (2017), Terribile (2018); Zurutuza (2017) and Ganeau (2019).

5.2 British interests

On the basis of the work of Vaca (2017, p. 11) and Pansa (2015), the following structure of interests of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland can be inferred in the context of the Falklands issue:

Table 2 – British interests in the Falklands issue

Interest (valuable object)	Description
British Strategic Stature	A determined attitude of the British state to maintain its rigid position on sovereignty and to protect its interests.
Kelper's	Inhabitants, British citizens of the Falklands/Malvinas
Sovereignty	Full exercise of sovereign rights over land and sea.
Right to Self-Determination	Kelper's right to decide their own form of government and to structure themselves freely without outside interference.
Exclusive Economic Zone	Maritime Space, claimed by the United Kingdom, in accordance with the UNCLOS definition for archipelagic states.
Fishing	Fishing as a resource and in the process of commercialization.
Continental Shelf	Natural extension of the archipelago according to the definition of the UNCLOS, as presented by the United Kingdom to the CLCS. ⁵
Hydrocarbons	Resources that are being analyzed as part of an exploration process.
Antarctic Projection	Island position in the South Atlantic that favors its future territorial claims on the Antarctic continent.
Armed Forces	Military forces in the Falkland Islands and in the other overseas islands (in the Atlantic), in reinforcement capacity.

Source: The author, based on data from Vaca (2017) and Pansa (2015).

5 The United Kingdom occupies 438,000 km² around the Falklands; 1,200,000 km² around South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands; claims before the UN a continental shelf of 350 miles around the southern islands (several million km²); claims as its own part of Antarctica and consequently the Southern Ocean which is more than 3,500,000 km² (PANSA, 2015, p. 13)

6 The Scenario

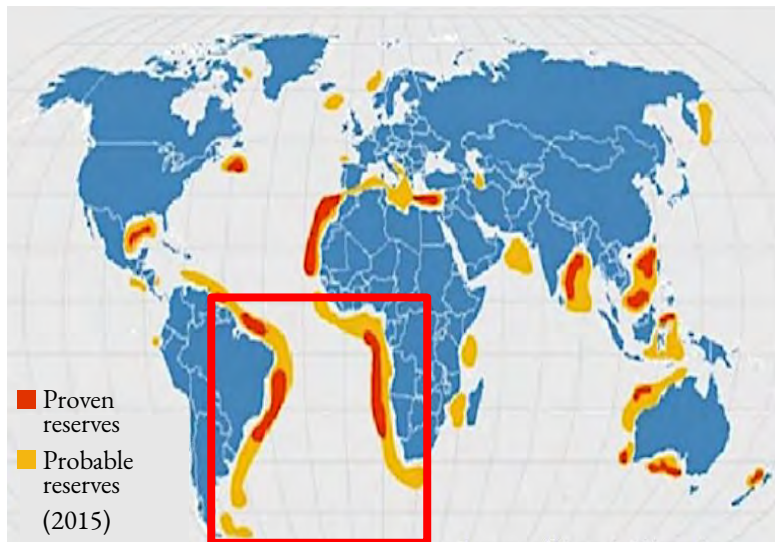
6.1 The Southwest Atlantic and Natural Resources

The Southwest Atlantic is an almost empty ocean of human presence that tends to densify very slowly, far from the alterations of the seas of the northern hemisphere (KOUTOUDJIAN, 2019). For Koutoudjian, in the South Atlantic there are no longer geopolitical games, but geoeconomic interests, due to its energy, food and mining potential. It makes this geographic space a board of particular global attention.

In the same line of thought, Arnaud (2014, p.7) argues that countries are governed by need, interest and greed. However, he finds nothing new when talking about the wealth of the South Atlantic. In fact, he asserts that at the beginning of the 19th century there was a great interest in the region, motivated by “the same objectives, with their variants, that exist today: strategic, food and energy sources.”

For Witker (2012, p. 7), the main axis around which the Falklands conflict revolves is the existence of offshore oil fields and the technological possibility of exploiting them profitably (unlike in the 1980s). This central axis has in its vertex another element that was absent in 1982, a Brazil that possesses one of the “largest oil mantles in the world and that puts that country in a very expectant position in the world market of hydrocarbons.”

Figure 1 – Graph of verified and probable offshore oil reserves

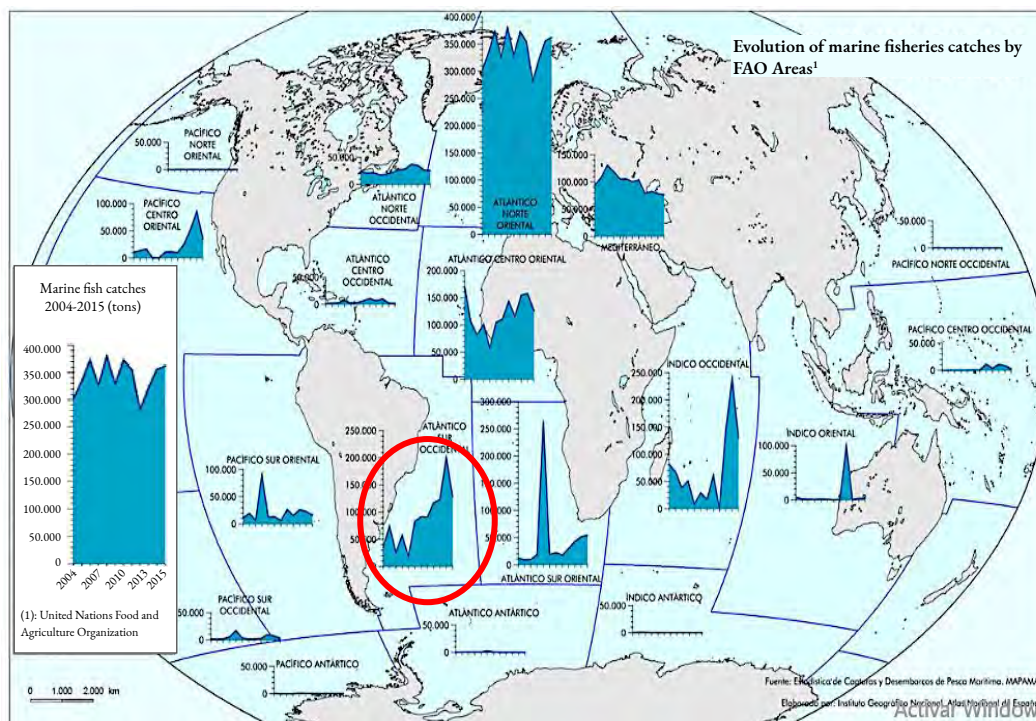


Source: Dupuy et al. (2015, p. 7).

Another aspect, not less important for the aforementioned author, lies in the region’s fish farming wealth, which has gradually become a preponderant part of the economic life of the inhabitants of the Falklands and has aroused the interest of companies from several countries, in view of the emergence of a large business which, although not negligible at present,

has even greater potential. It is in the data provided by the National Atlas of Spain (2020) (based on information from the FAO for the period 2004/2015), where the South West Atlantic is located as the region with the greatest sustained growth in catches in the world, rising from 50 thousand tons (2004), to a peak of 200 thousand tons in 2014.

Figure 2 – Evolution of fishing catches in the world (period 2004-2015)



Source: Atlas Nacional de España (2020).

6.2 The Argentine Sea and the Falkland Islands

Altieri (2015, p. 14, our translation) quotes Koutoudjian (2011, p. 25) for an approach to the definition of the Argentine Sea:

It is the defensive glacis of central-southern Argentina, especially the main economic and political nucleus of the country, located in the estuary of the Plata and in the peninsula of Patagonia. The Argentine Sea, in the Southwestern Atlantic, is the link of projection towards Antarctica. In addition, in the geographical center of our sea, the Falkland Islands are located, with their legal and administrative extension towards the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, which constitute the main geopolitical and strategic problem of the Argentine Republic.

Figure 4 – Argentinean Sea Nowadays



Source: Telam (SE PRESENTÓ..., 2016)⁶.

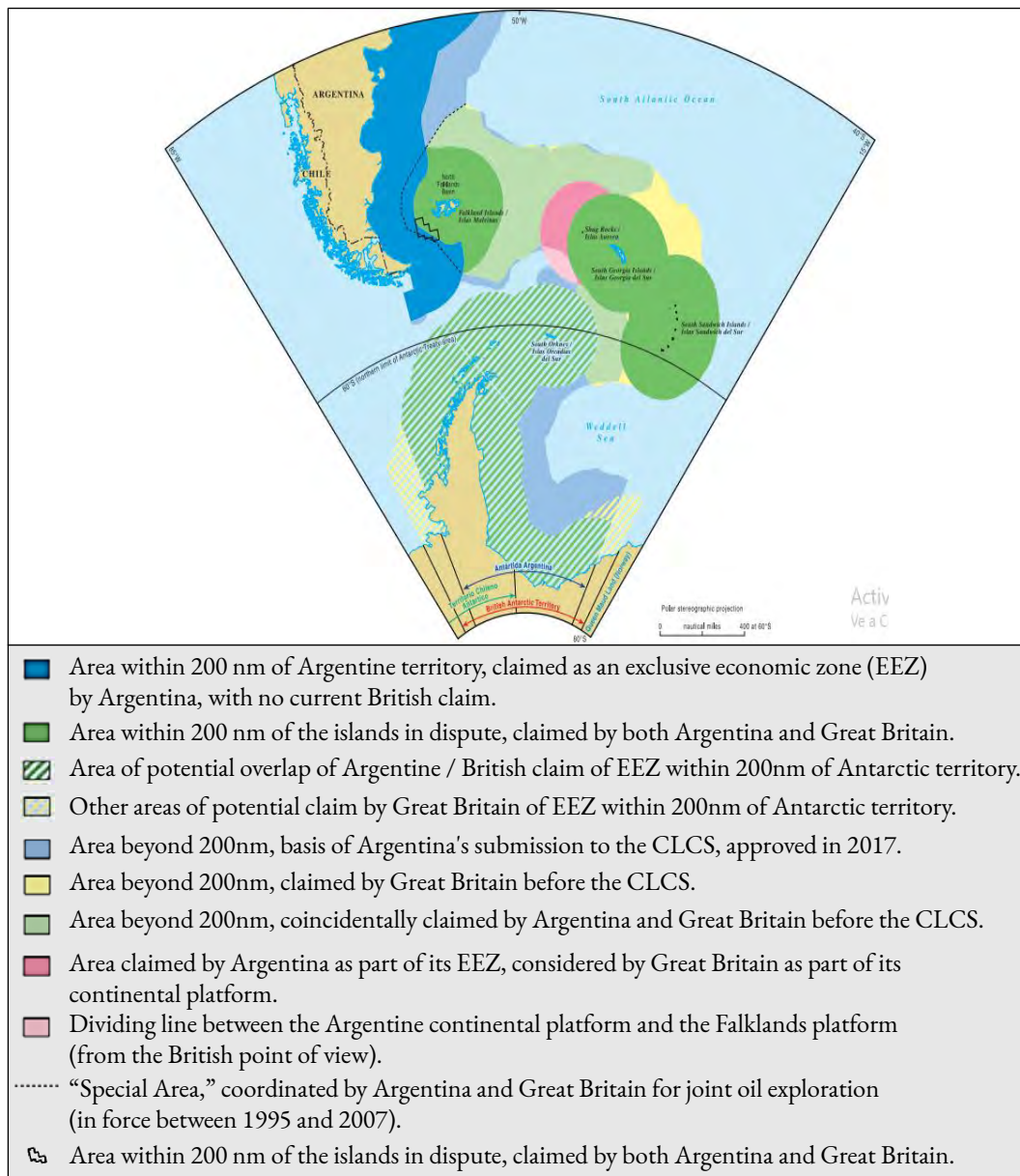
This definition allows us to address two central issues in relation to the geographical space in which the Falklands issue is developed: the economic aspects (based on natural resources) and the projection from the Islands to the Antarctic continent, which, in short, also revolves around the natural resources that exist there.

In relation to space and economic impacts, with the advent of the Sea Convention in 1982 and the recent extension of the Argentine continental shelf, as shown in Figure 4, there is an overlap of sovereign claims between Argentina and the UK. This implies a discussion on the control and usufruct of approximately 2,600,000 Km² including the islands and adjacent maritime spaces (GANEAU, 2019). The author adds that:

⁶ According to data from Argentina's final presentation in 2016 (the first was submitted in 2009) to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, approved by the UN in 2017, from which an increase of 1,700,000 km² to Argentina's maritime surface is recognized.

The value of island and maritime jurisdiction [of Falkland Islands and adjacent maritime areas] increased as the “law of the sea” expanded the sovereignty and the sovereign and economic rights of coastal countries with increasing distances from baselines. In the last century the rights were within the range of a cannon shot, but since the 1982 Convention on the Sea the economic limits have been extended to 200 nautical miles and, with the recognition of the extended continental shelf, the jurisdiction can be extended to distances close to 350 nautical miles. Thus, the value of the disputed Southwest Atlantic island jurisdictions, their adjacent maritime spaces and the maritime interests therein increased exponentially with the increase in maximum distances. (GANEAU, 2019, p. 7-8, our translation)

Figure 4 – Overlapping British and Argentine territorial claims in the Southwest Atlantic



Source: International Boundaries Research Unit (2010).

Beyond the geopolitical focus on natural resources, the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands cannot be ignored as a strategic point, since they are located opposite the Magellan section and next to the Drake Passage and the Beagle Channel, giving rise to the control of the bioceanic Atlantic-Pacific passes through the South. This is important both in the control of the islands, which allows the dominance of maritime traffic from South Africa and South America to the North Atlantic, as well as in the communication of the Indian Ocean with the South Atlantic and the South Pacific, a commercial shipping route that is becoming increasingly important (FORMENTO et al., 2017, p. 3). From the logical interpretation of Figure 3, the projection to the Antarctic continent is added, which provides, as can be seen in Figure 4, the overlapping of territories on that continent claimed by both countries, based on the geographical position of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich.

7 The analysis of interests related to Natural Resources

The interests, as ideal or real objects, acquire different value given by each actor and it is from them that the situation can be defined as a conflict. Thus, the relationship that is generated between the actors to control related interests is the cause of the existence of the conflict. Therefore, the conflict is idealized, represented, painted in the minds of the actors by interests (CAL et al., 2016; FRISCHKNECHT; LANZARINI, 2015).

For Ganeau (2019, p. 3), marine resources can be living or non-living, renewable or non-renewable, such as hydrocarbons, minerals or fisheries, among others. According to the above interpretation of the meaning of interest, “value” is the measure of the importance that an actor attaches to the object under attention. Under this interpretation, different criteria can be considered to represent the value of the uses and resources mentioned, which goes considerably beyond the known economic value.

The analysis of the value of maritime interests must consider a “maritime scenario” that includes the seabed, the water body, its surface and the atmospheric mass that interacts with the water, as well as the coasts that are the transition between land and water. Hence, a mind usually located in large continental spaces has difficulty in fully interpreting the complexities and needs of the sea (GANEAU, 2019, p. 3, our translation).

The analysis will focus on hydrocarbons and fisheries, as well as on the Antarctic projection, due to its interests from the geopolitical vision of natural resources.

7.1 Hydrocarbons

Because of the growing importance of the undersea section as a source of oil resources (offshore watersheds), the Falklands region began to be explored in the mid of 1970s (Shackleton mission)⁷. At a global level, it had an exponential increase from 1980, going from 4% of the total oil extracted in the world, to more than 22% at

⁷ By 1975, the Falklands began to be considered as a hydrocarbon export pole by the British crown. As the biotechnologist Federico Bernal points out, “the clear turning point in British diplomatic strategy regarding the islands, moving from ambiguity to increasing intransigence, is from 1975” (PANSÁ, 2015, p. 77, our translation).

present, thus contextualizing the situation of hydrocarbons in the South West Atlantic (KOUTOUDJIAN, 2019, p. 11).

The exploration process in the adjacent seas of the Malvinas Islands started in 1993 but did not last until 2008. Based on new studies, that the theoretical possibility of obtaining 60 billion barrels offshore was visualized, which meant potential stocks greater than the reserves that the United Kingdom has in the North Sea (WITKER, 2012, p. 7). It led the British authorities in February 2010 to authorize the Desire, Falklands Oil and Rockhopper to carry out new studies focused on the north coast of the islands, the sector that appeared to be most promising. A year later, Rockhopper Exploration announced that, in the four areas awarded, in the north of the islands, there would be more than 400 billion barrels, equivalent to 15% of the British availability in the North Sea. The most important deposit in the northern watershed is the “Sea Lion” (KOUTOUDJIAN, 2019). Currently, the area where drilling is taking place is close to starting to produce oil.

Figure 5 – Location of Sea Lion Oilfield (North Falkland Islands watershed)

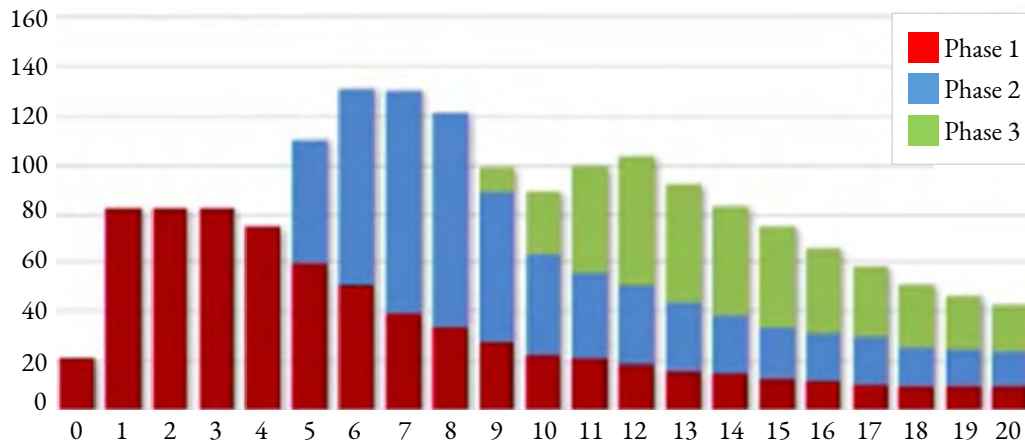


Source: Compañía... (2018).

The attraction of investment in hydrocarbon exploration on the islands was not considerable until 2010. The turning point came precisely after the discovery of crude oil in the Sea Lion field. In 2016, Rockhopper announced the beginning of the development of the first of the 3 phases projected in the Sea Lion Development Project. Although the technically recoverable production, discovered and audited, is around a minimum of 500 million barrels, the scenario officially presented by the operators' projects a number close to 1 billion barrels to be extracted in 20 years (ROCKHOPPER, 2017)⁸. According to Figure 6, by May 2019, the company maintained, just for Phase 1, estimates of 85 000 barrels per day and a total of at least 250 million barrels (ROCKHOPPER, 2020).

⁸ According to data obtained from the presentation of Rockhopper's CEO, in September 2017, at the Oil Capital Conference.

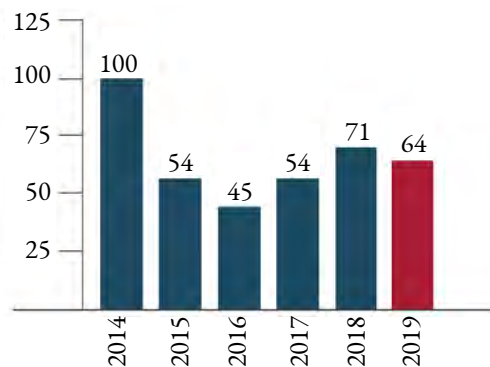
Figure 6 – Estimated production from the first year of operation in millions of barrels per phase (Rockhopper estimates to start in 2020)



Source: Rockhopper (2016).

However, even today, hydrocarbon work in the South Atlantic, and particularly in the sea around the Falklands, is onerous and represents a high risk. The uncertainty is even greater in relation to the quantity and quality of the crude oil and, above all, its commercial viability. The cost of the barrel that makes Phase 1 of Sea Lion viable is US\$35 (Rockhopper, 2016). At the time of writing, the price of the Brent barrel is quoted at US\$37 (June 15, 2020), having recovered from historically low values as a result of the global economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (it was quoted at less than US\$20⁹).

Figure 7 – Average price of the Brent Barrel in USD. Period 2014-2019



Source: Rockhopper (2020).

⁹ According to information available at: <https://br.investing.com/commodities/brent-oil-streaming-chart>.

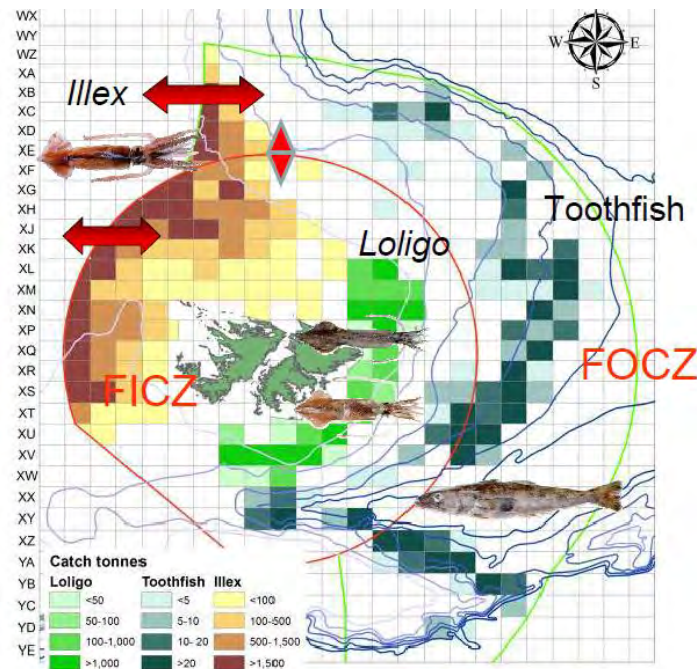
These perspectives require an active strategy on the part of the Argentine Republic, understanding that within the framework of the Madrid Treaties (1989 and 1990)¹⁰ additional agreements could be established to reach an understanding that fully protects the current legal positions, but also allows the extension of cooperation to new areas to be explored (such as the Southern watershed), as a way of initial approximation that allows a more advantageous repositioning for a future comprehensive approach to the Falklands issue, where the situation of hydrocarbons is called to occupy a central position. In fact, the Sea Lion watershed is the fifth most important discovery in shallow waters in the last decade (ROCKHOPPER, 2020).

7.2 Fishing wealth

The areas around Falklands and the South Atlantic islands have increasingly important fishery resources: squid (illex and loligo), hake (toothfish), krill, seaweed, mollusks, cetaceans, pollock and cod, among others (CAMARGO, 2014, p. 602; KOTOUDJIAN, 2019).

The fisheries sector in the Islands has grown exponentially since the United Kingdom established in 1986 the “first interim Falkland Islands Conservation and Management Zone” or FICZ (Falkland Islands Conservation Zone) of 150 miles, equivalent to about 210km² (CAMARGO, 2014, p. 602; PANSA, 2015, p. 73).

Figure 8 – Falkland Islands Fisheries Conservation and Management Zone
(geographical distribution of catches of the main species – September 2014)

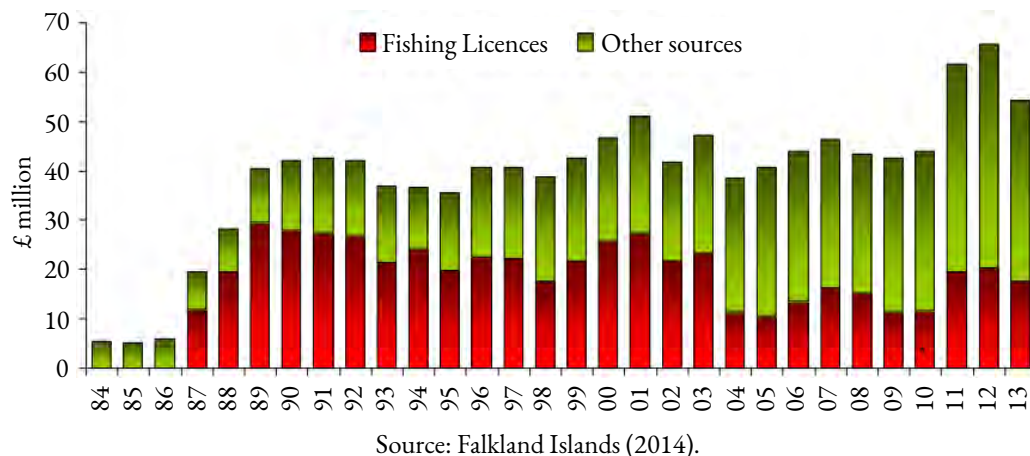


Source: Falkland Islands (2014).

¹⁰ In both treaties, Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain restored diplomatic relations after the Falklands War.

Since then, fishing has become a big business, which has brought great benefits to the inhabitants of the islands. In fact, the Falkland Islands' GDP in 1986 was 9.8 million pounds and in 1987, after the liberalization of fishing, it jumped to 30.7 million pounds (13.7 million of that total directly related to fishing). With an average catch of 260 000 tons of fish per year in the islands (BARTON, 2002, p. 127) and revenues averaging 20 million pounds out of a total of between 40 and 65 million pounds since 1987, fishing was the most profitable source of resources in the Falklands (CAMARGO, 2014), until the start of oil exploitation, as can be seen in Figure 9.

Figure 9 – Income from economic activities in the Falkland Islands (1984-2013)



Source: Falkland Islands (2014).

For a better understanding of what has been expressed, in all the Argentine coast the fishing reaches 800 thousand tons per year, while in the Islands it exceeds 200 thousand tons per year, which allows to dimension the fishing potential of the region (KOUTOUDJIAN, 2019).

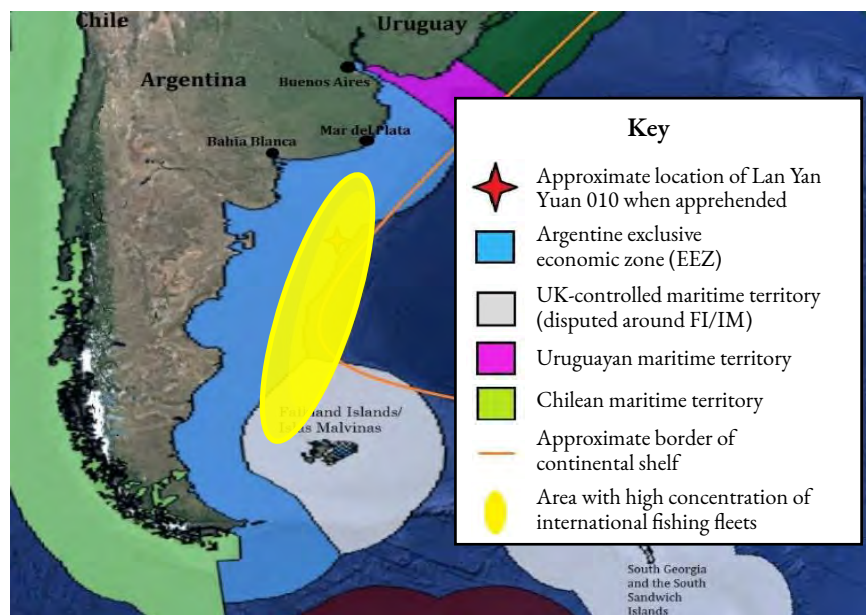
For Testa (2015, p. 69), the strategic uniqueness of the region lies, among other things, in its current and enormous fish resources, which are the result of depletion in other seas of the world, generating concern about the overexploitation to which the Southwest Atlantic can be submitted. For this reason, this enormous maritime space is becoming increasingly important in the global fishing business.

This situation attracts the presence of numerous foreign fleets in the vicinity of the Argentine Sea, fishing in the limit of the Exclusive Economic Zones of the Argentine Sea and Falklands (often within them, illegally) among which the Chinese presence cannot be avoided, which has generated an alarm in the Argentine authorities. In fact, while this article is being written, the Argentinean Executive is sending a bill to the National Congress

“[...] to raise the limitations and fines on those who engage in illegal fishing in Argentine waters, including those around the Falkland Islands. The regulation seeks to prevent the plundering by fishing vessels that enter Argentine maritime spaces without permission, with the aim of defending natural resources in the South Atlantic” (ARGENTINA, 2020, n.p., our translation).

This situation is also present in the Falkland Islands authorities. The Islands' Director of Natural Resources, John Barton¹¹ made public the concerns of the islanders' government in 2018, following the notable increase in foreign fishing vessels in the region (FALKLANDS CONCERN..., 2012).

Figure 10 – Area with high presence of international fishing vessels



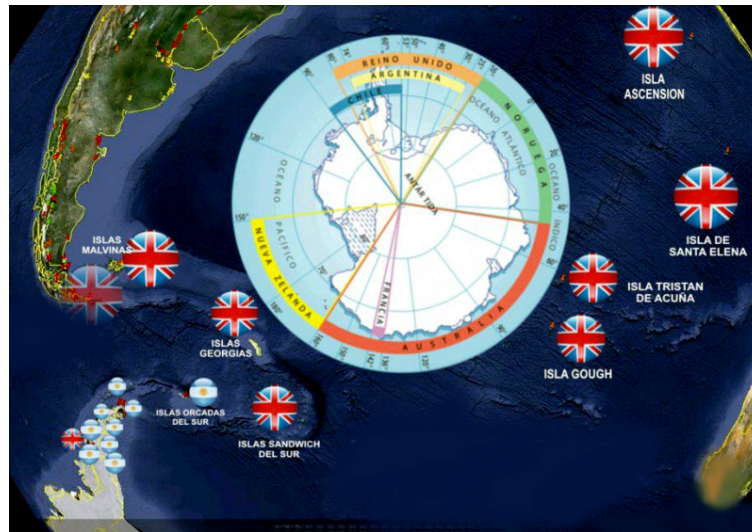
Source: China... (2016).

7.3 The Antarctic projection

It is important to understand that, for Great Britain, in the succession of bases it has in the South Atlantic, the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands are one more link in that chain, although of crucial importance. From the classical geopolitical viewpoint, it not only assures Great Britain the control of the South Atlantic and the communication between the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, but also provides it with a projection to the Antarctic continent and, therefore, the possibility of claiming territory over it. It is clear that, in the systemic complex of overseas possessions, the Falklands are the “key” to access to Antarctica.

¹¹ After 33 years in this function, in 2019 the Falkland Islands government appointed Andrea Clausen, an expert in marine biology, to the post.

Figure 11 – British bases in the South Atlantic and territorial claims in Antarctica



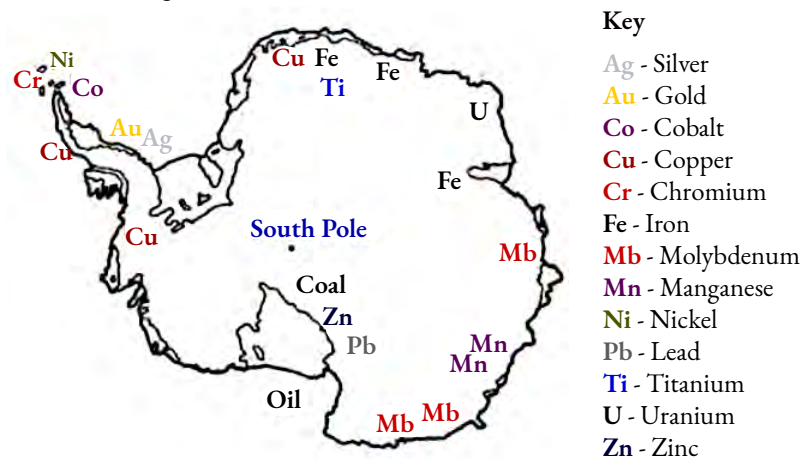
Source: Juventud Marítima (2019).

From the point of view of natural resources, this projection opens the door to a source of renewable resources (fish wealth), non-renewable resources (hydrocarbons and minerals) and an immense reserve of fresh water.

It is precisely the enormous masses of ice (water) present in Antarctica that represent one of the Continent's great riches, with its reserves estimated to constitute nearly 80% of the planet's total fresh water, making it a major potential resource for supplying the world's population, in addition to many other uses.

Regarding non-renewable resources, only in the Antarctic Peninsula (a region of the continent where there are overlapping claims to sovereignty by Argentina, Chile and Great Britain), is there evidence of the existence of nickel, cobalt, chrome, copper, gold and silver deposits¹².

Figure 12 – Proven mineral deposits in Antarctica

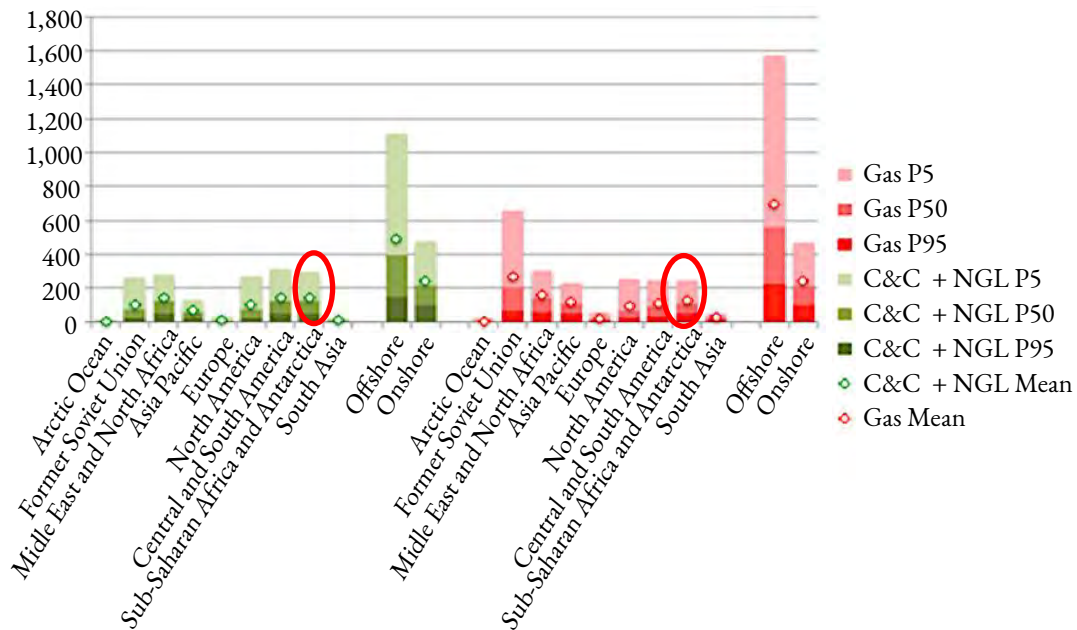


Source: Minerals (2014).

12 Information available at https://www.coolantarctica.com/Antarctica%20fact%20file/science/threats_mining_oil.php

Similarly, Kaplan (2017), using data from the United States Geological Survey (USGS), places Antarctica among the regions of the planet with the largest estimated reserves of gas and oil in the world.

Figure 13 – Estimated world reserves of gas and oil undiscovered circa 2017



Unit of measurement Gb (Gigabarrels = 10^9 barrels).

Source: Kaplan (2017).

While it is true that, in the short term, the Antarctic Treaty (1961) serves to contain the claims of countries and protect all the resources of the Antarctic, the proximity of the end of the aforementioned treaty (in 2041¹³), may give rise to numerous conflicts which are waiting to be defined.

For this reason, and with great adherence to what Cisneros (2013) has said, the Falklands and the Antarctic should not be considered independent issues, at least by Argentine foreign policy. A thorough territorial awareness, from which a geopolitical vision must be derived, may allow us to understand that both disputes have the same nature.

8 Conclusions

As expressed by Bégarie (1988), an acute geostrategic vision must be based on the systematic exploration of the possibilities offered by large spaces, where resources have a transcendental role. This forces nations to work on the permanent exploration of their interests in all sovereign spaces. This process, which is born in ideas, must move to action, in a coordinated and synergic way, among all the factors of the National Power.

¹³ At the international meeting held in 1991 (Madrid), it was agreed to extend for 50 years the Original Treaty, which declares the Antarctic to be the heritage of all mankind.

In the attempt to obtain essential elements for the future analysis of the Falklands issue (objective of the work), and in accordance with what was stated in the development of the work, we appreciate the following:

- From the strict point of view of natural resources, there are two central elements in the evolution of the conflict: hydrocarbons and fishing. This aspect coincides with the postulates of Klare (2003, 2008), in relation to the war for resources that is presented as the main focus of conflict between states, after the end of the Cold War.

With regard to hydrocarbons, in the next few years there will be two crucial indicators on the general conflict board: that the extraction (by phases) of the estimates of the Sea Lion oilfield (North Falklands Watershed) be carried out and, at the same time, the results of other explorations that may be carried out in the South Falklands Watershed. Simultaneously, Argentina could again attempt a rapprochement to establish joint exploration areas with Great Britain, considering the difficulties and costs associated with this task in the South West Atlantic and the low margin of profitability that the current price of oil provides for British companies.

In terms of fisheries, the incipient signs of a decrease in total catches must be closely monitored, not only in the waters around Falkland Islands, but also in the Argentine Sea. Thus, it is imperative to recover the strict control of fishing in the southern fishing area, by Argentina, but also by the islanders. This aspect can be a point of connection towards which Argentine and British efforts converge, to coordinate strategies to defend the southern sea in general from foreign predators.

- From the classic point of view of geopolitics, but with undeniable points of connection with natural resources, there are two aspects of central importance: the demarcation of the Exclusive Economic Zones claimed by both countries and the question of Antarctica.

With respect to the first point, the clear existing overlaps, especially since the recognition by the UN of Argentina's claim on the extension of its maritime jurisdiction, may generate an increase in the existing tensions in the decade that is beginning, which will surely demand an active strategy from both countries, where Diplomacy and Defense will have to be intelligently articulated in order to arrive at rational solutions.

Finally, it should be noted that the completion of the Antarctic Treaty is on the horizon. The main basis for Britain's claim to sovereignty on that continent is based on its overseas possessions in the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. Undoubtedly, the estimated and undiscovered natural resources on the Antarctic continent make it difficult for any negotiations focused on sovereignty (of the Falkland Islands) to be proposed by Argentina in the short term.

Finally, the need to deepen territorial awareness is noted, without which no geopolitical vision is possible. This also applies to natural resources, which implies

rethinking and resignifying Falkland Islands geopolitically from that perspective; conflict that in its past, present and future allows us to approach to the conceptualization of the “Violent Peace” prevailing in the region, than that of “Long Peace.” The evolution of the Falklands issue in the 21st century (and its associated interests) will be crucial to tip the balance towards one of the sides.

References

- ALTIERI, M. Poder naval en el Atlántico Sur Occidental del siglo XXI: nuevo escenario mundial y competencia por el control del espacio marítimo entre los años 2002 Y 2015. *In: ENCONTRO NACIONAL DA ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE ESTUDOS DE DEFESA*, 10., 2015, São Paulo. **Anais** [...]. São Paulo: Abed, 2015.
- MINERALS. **Antarctica Information**, [s.l.], 13 jun. 2014. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3filaER>. Access on: June 12, 2020.
- ARGENTINA. Presidencia. **El Presidente enviará tres proyectos de ley para darle estatus de política de Estado al reclamo argentino de soberanía sobre las Malvinas**. Buenos Aires, 2020. Available at: <https://bit.ly/39yFMH8>. Access on: June 16, 2020
- ARNAUD, V. G. Malvinas, Atlántico Sur y Antártida: la realidad actual. *In: ANTICIPO DE ANALES DE LA ACADEMIA NACIONAL DE CIENCIAS DE BUENOS AIRES*, 8 abr. 2014, Buenos Aires: **Anais** [...]. Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Buenos Aires, 2014.
- ATLAS NACIONAL DE ESPAÑA. **Instituto Geográfico Nacional**, 2020. Available at: <http://atlasnacional.ign.es/wane/Pesca_y_acuicultura>. Access on: June 16, 2020.
- AYUSO, F. B.; ANGUERA, M. M.; PÉREZ-SEOANE, S. **La campaña de Malvinas**. Madrid: San Martín, 1985. (Colección historia del siglo de la violencia: campañas).
- BARTON, J. Fisheries and fisheries management in Falkland Islands conservation zones. **Aquatic Conservation**, Hoboken, v. 12, n. 1, p. 127-135, 2002. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3iSeO1t>. Access on: June 8, 2020.
- BATTAGLINO, J. M. Palabras mortales: ¿rearme y carrera armamentista en América del Sur? **Nueva Sociedad**, [s. l.], n. 15, p. 23-34, 2008.
- BATTAGLINO, J. M. The coexistence of peace and conflict in South America: toward a new conceptualization of types of peace. **Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional**, Rio de Janeiro, v. 55, n. 2, p. 131-151, 2012. ISSN 0034-7329.
- BATTALEME, J. et al. La Geopolítica de los Recursos Naturales Estratégicos: del mito a la realidad. **Revista de la Escuela Superior de Guerra**, Buenos Aires, n. 577, p. 102-115, enero-abril 2011. ISSN 0327-1137.
- BECK, P. The Anglo-Argentine dispute over title to the Falkland Islands: changing British perceptions on sovereignty since 1910. **Millennium Journal of International Studies**, London, v. 12, n. 1, p. 6-24, 1983.

BECK, P. **The Falkland Islands as an international problem**. London: Routledge, 1988.

BÉGARIE, H. C. **Geoestrategia del Atlántico Sur**. Buenos Aires: Instituto de Publicaciones Navales, 1988.

BLACKWILL, R.; HARRIS, J. **War by other means**. Geoeconomics and Statecraft.

CAL, C. et al. **La cuestión estratégica**. Análisis y conducción. Buenos Aires: Escuela de Guerra Naval, 2016.

CAMARGO, F. R. D. Ilhas Falklands: o despertar econômico. *In*: CONGRESSO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA POLÍTICA, GEOPOLÍTICA E GESTÃO DO TERRITÓRIO, 1., 2014, Rio de Janeiro. **Anais** [...]. Porto Alegre: Ed. Letra1, 2014. p. 599-611. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3ecGuKM>. Access on: July 10, 2020.

CENTENO, M. A. **Blood and debt**: war and the nation-state in Latin America. Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2002.

CHINA on the brink of fishing conflict in South America. **Diálogo Chino**, London, 11 May 2016. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2Oh8hyY>. Access on: June 10, 2020.

CISNEROS, A. Antártida y Malvinas: ¿un mismo conflicto? **Boletín del Centro Naval**, Buenos Aires, n. 836, p. 277-286, 2013.

COMPAÑÍA británica confirmó proyecto de explotación de petróleo en Malvinas. **Lavoz**, [S. l.], 21 mayo 2018.

DELGADO, C. A. B. Cuestión Malvinas. Atlántico Sur, Plataforma Continental y Antártida. **Relaciones Internacionales**, La Plata, v. 21, n. 42, p. 177-195, 2012.

DUPUY, H. A. et al. **La cuenca del Atlántico Sur**: una región geopolítica en transición. La Plata: Sedici, 2015.

ESPÓSITO NETO, T. A política externa brasileira frente ao Conflito das Falklands/Malvinas. **História**: Debates e Tendências, Passo Fundo, v. 6, p. 111-131, 2006.

FALKLANDS CONCERN with vast fishing fleet gathering on high seas. **Mercopress**, 12 jan. 2012. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2DDKass>. Access on: July 13, 2020.

FALKLAND ISLANDS. **Natural Resources**: fisheries. Falkland Islands: Falkland Islands Government, 2014.

FIEL, F. D. I. R. L. **Las inversiones extranjeras en la Argentina**. [S. l.: s. n.], 1973.

FORMENTO, W. et al. Malvinas: relevancia geoestratégica en las relaciones globales de poder del Siglo XXI. **Memoria Académica**, La Plata, 10 nov. 2017.

FRANCHI, T.; GLASER, E. F.; VILLARREAL, R. X. Taxonomy of interstate conflicts: is South America a peaceful region? **Brazilian Political Science Review**, São Paulo, v. 11, n. 2, e0008, 2017.

FRANKS, O. S. **Franks Report**. London: Falkland Islands Review Committee, 1983.

FREEDMAN, L. **The official history of the Falklands Campaign**. London: Routledge, 2005a. v. 1.

FREEDMAN, L. **The Official History of the Falklands Campaign**. London: Routledge, 2005b. v. 2.

FRISCHKNECHT, F.; LANZARINI, M. **Lógica, teoría y práctica de la estrategia**. Buenos Aires: Instituto Universitario Naval, 2015.

GANEAU, E. L. Las jurisdicciones marítimas como sustento de los intereses marítimos argentinos y sus necesidades de protección. **Primero Bahía**, Buenos Aires, 2019.

JUVENTUD-MARÍTIMA. Juventud Marítima Juan Ocampo, 2019. Available at: <<https://juventudmaritimasomu.com/2019/09/06/el-dominio-total-de-gran-bretana-en-el-atlantico-sur/>>. Access on: June 20, 2020.

INTERNACIONAL BOUNDARIES RESEARCH UNIT. **Claims and potential claims to retimeme jurisdiction in the South Atlantic and Southern Oceans by Argentina and the UK**. Durham: IBRU, 2010.

KACOWICZ, A. M. **Zones of peace in the third world**. New York: Sunny Press, 1998.

KAPLAN, G. Non-OPEC Mid-size Oil Producers. **Peak Oil Barrel**, [S. l.], 29 nov. 2017. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3iX7j9f>. Access on: June 10, 2020.

KLARE, M. T. **Guerra por los Recursos: el Futuro escenario del conflicto global**. Barcelona: Urano, 2003.

KLARE, M. T. **Planeta sediento, recursos menguantes: la nueva geopolítica de la energía**. [S. l.]: Tendencias, 2008.

KOUTOUDJIAN, A. Geopolítica del Mar Argentino. **Revista de la Escuela de Guerra Naval**, Buenos Aires, n. 57, p. 69-93, oct. 2011.

KOUTOUDJIAN, A. Las Malvinas, Georgias y Sandwich del Atlántico Sur: un camino necesario para la soberanía argentina. 2019. Artigo não publicado.

MARES, D. **Violent peace**: militarized interstate bargaining in Latin America. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

MARTÍN, F. E. **Militarist peace in South America**: conditions for war and peace. New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2006.

MARTIN, J. M. Geopolítica del Atlántico Sur. *In*: KOUTOUDJIAN, A. **Geopolítica del Mar Argentino**. Buenos Aires: Instituto de Publicaciones Navales, 2015.

MARTINS, M. A. F. Sobre a geopolítica de Segundo Storni: raízes epistemológicas do seu pensamento e percepção da política sul-americana. *In*: Simpósio Internacional Pensar e Repensar a América Latina, 2., 2016, São Paulo. **Anais [...]**. São Paulo, Prolam, 2016a.

MARTINS, M. A. F. **Terra e mar no pensamento geopolítico argentino**: da disputa hegemônica no cenário doméstico a sua influência sobre a Geopolítica do Brasil. 2016. Tese (Doutorado em Integração da América Latina) – Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2016b.

PANSA, R. **Los intereses británicos en las islas Malvinas, Georgias del Sur y Sándwich del Sur en el siglo XXI**. Tesina (Grado) – Facultad de Ciencia Política y Relaciones Internacionales, Universidad Nacional de Rosario. Rosario, p. 1-126. 2015.

PERÓN, J. D. **Discurso en la Escuela Superior de Guerra**. Buenos Aires: ESG, 1953.

PHELPS, V. L. **The international economic position of Argentina**. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1938.

ROCKHOPPER. **Building a well-funded, full-cycle, exploration-led E&P company**. London: Rockhopper, 2016.

ROCKHOPPER. **Creating value through building a well-funded, full-cycle, exploration-led E&P company**. Rockhopper Exploration PLC. London. 2020. Oil Capital Presentation. Available at: <https://bit.ly/305I0dV>. Access on: July 13, 2020.

RODRÍGUEZ, A. B. **La vinculación internacional de Argentina 1880-1930: las relaciones internacionales y la ideología de la elite gobernante.** 2005. Tese (Mestrado em Facultad de Ciencias Económicas, Universidad de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires, 2005.

RUDA, J. M. **Alegato Ruda.** Islas Malvinas. Nueva York: ONU, 1964. Intervención del representante argentino, embajador José María Ruda, en el Subcomité III del Comité Especial de la ONU.

SE PRESENTÓ el nuevo límite exterior de la plataforma continental argentina. **Telam**, Buenos Aires, 28 mar. 2016. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2Wbds88>. Access on: July 13, 2020.

SENHORAS, E.; MOREIRA, F.; VITTE, C. S. A agenda exploratória de recursos naturais na América do Sul: da empiria à teorização geoestratégica de assimetrias nas relações internacionais. In: ENCUENTRO INTERNACIONAL DE GEÓGRAFOS DE AMÉRICA LATINA, 12., Montevideu, 2009. **Anais [...]**. Madri: AGE, 2009.

TERRÍBILE, H. **Enfoque estratégico para una prospectiva naval.** Buenos Aires: [s. n.], 2018.

TESTA, A. **La Guerra de Malvinas 02 abr/14 jun 1982** – Argentina y RUGB y la importancia geoestratégica del archipiélago en el Atlántico Sur. Buenos Aires: Escuela Superior de Guerra, 2015.

VACA, M. A. **Influencia del poder naval en la cuestión estratégica Malvinas.** Buenos Aires: Escuela de Guerra Naval, 2017.

VALÉRIO, M. A. G.; HENTZ, L. A. S. Islas Malvinas versus Falkland Islands: o arquipélago da discórdia. **Revista de Informação Legislativa**, Brasília, DF, n. 198, p. 189-209, 2013.

VELASCO, J. E. G. El Informe Shackleton sobre las Islas Malvinas. **Revista de Política Internacional**, Madrid, n. 153, p. 31-56, sect./oct. 1977.

VERGARA, S. **Métodos de pesquisa em administração.** São Paulo: Atlas, 2008.

WITKER, I. Claves geopolíticas en torno al conflicto del Atlántico Sur. **Revista Política y Estrategia**, Santiago, n. 119, p. 69-88, 2012.

ZURUTUZA, S. **La cuestión de Malvinas: hacia la construcción de un nuevo periodo estratégico mediante una estrategia nacional.** Buenos Aires: Escuela de Guerra Naval, 2017.