

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the comparison of four selected territorial disputes and on the analysis of their related realities with an emphasis on the strategic importance of these disputed areas. The chosen topics were the territorial dispute between Russia and Japan over the Kuril Islands, the dispute between Argentina and Great Britain over the Falkland Islands, and then two multilateral territorial disputes over the Paracel and Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. This work presents these researched disputes not only from their historical point of view but also with regard to valid international regulations, especially with regard to the rules based on the regulation of the law of the sea, which was adopted in 1982 by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Last but not least, the development of such disputes was studied as close as possible to the present time, when the main time period of the presented research was the period from the beginning of the 21st century. The studied territorial disputes were first analyzed separately and then compared together in order to discover mutual macro-causal connections and key similarities. The biggest similarity is the potential for conflict, which is evident from the actions that national states use to dominate their area of interest. Another similarity is the resource and transport strategic context, which amplifies the factual importance of these territories and also provides the interested states with an argumentative basis for their non-standard geopolitical behavior, power politics, and their cumulative interest in the disputed area. This doctoral thesis therefore compares these territorial disputes with each other and tries to identify not only the reasons why local nations but also other international powers are interested in those disputed areas, but also tries to find out which of the territorial disputes is most likely to escalate into open armed conflict. The main goal of this work is to find out which of the disputes could develop into a war over resources located in a specific disputed territory.

Keywords

Territorial Disputes, Energy and Resource Security, Kuril Islands, Spratly Islands, Paracel Island, Falkland Islands, Resource War, Geopolitics and Geography