Spanish-English contact in the Falkland Islands: an ethnographic approach to loanwords & place names

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Chapter 3

3. Spanish Place Names of the Falkland Islands: A Novel Classification System

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Abstract

It has been argued that no Spanish toponymic inventory is used in the Falkland Islands (Woodman, 2016). Nonetheless, maps attest to the presence of several Spanish names. The existence of these place names reflects the history of the area. Even though the Falklands currently host an English-speaking community, the Islands have a long history of Spanish-speaking settlers. The former Spanish administration as well as contact with 19th-century Spanish-speaking gauchos left quite a few Hispanic toponyms. Mostly coined after 1833, these toponyms collectively reflect the need for orientation, delimitation, and land management for livestock. However, there is another group of Spanish place names that is not used in the Islands. These toponyms are partly a result of the ongoing Argentinian claim of sovereignty over the Falklands. The objective of this chapter is twofold: to account for the existence of Spanish place names used locally to refer to the Islands, and to present a novel classification system for the Spanish-language toponymic inventories of the Falklands into Gaucho-heritage and Argentinian. For these purposes, both traditional and modern approaches of toponomastic analyses were employed.

3.1 Introduction

The Falkland Islands, or Islas Malvinas for Argentina, is an internally self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom. The territory is composed of two main islands: West Falkland and East Falkland. In Argentina, these islands are referred to as *Gran Malvina* 'Great Malvina' and *Isla Soledad* 'soledad Island', respectively. Fewer than a dozen of the islands are inhabited. The Islands are located 344 kilometres from Argentina and 12,173 kilometres from the United Kingdom. Stanley is the capital[40]. With about 2,000 residents, Stanley accounts for nearly three-quarters of the total population. The rest of the Islands inhabitants live in small settlements. The population density of the archipelago amounts to only 0.24 per square kilometre. Since the beginning of the English settlement in 1833, the Islands have been continuously inhabited by an English-speaking community. Today, Falkland Islands English (FIE) is one of the most recently developed World Englishes (Kachru,1985). It arose primarily from contact between English varieties of the south and southwest of England, and the northwest of Scotland (Britain and Sudbury, 2010)[41]. However, Spanish was also present in the emerging phase of this variety.

During the 19th century, Spanish-speaking South Americans came into contact with English-speaking Islanders who relied on the expertise of South American gauchos for cattle raising, then the economic engine of the Islands. This contact resulted in Falkland Islands English (FIE) borrowing a considerable number of Spanish terms. These loanwords were mainly, although not exclusively, related to country life and livestock. Interestingly, the borrowing process involved several place names and gave rise to a fair number of Spanish toponyms that are still in use today. However, Spanish place names in the Falkland Islands have not received much attention in onomastic research. Until now they have only been mentioned in gazetteers (see Munro, 1998). The lack of toponymic research conducted is curious, especially when one considers the political importance of the Islands.

The Falklands has been an enclave of great controversy since the British took control of the archipelago. Importantly, the Argentinian government, which insists the Islands are theirs, never relinquished its sovereignty claim. In 1982, the two countries went to war over the Islands. At the end of the

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[40] Argentina does not regard Stanley as the capital of the Islands. Instead, Argentina considers the capital to be Ushuaia. The Argentinians based this assertion on their claim that the Islands are part of their Tierra del Fuego province (see the website of Instituto Geográfico Nacional). Furthermore, Argentina has been officially calling Stanley *Puerto Argentino* 'Argentinian Port', since a 1982 military decree (Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos de Argentina).

[41] Sudbury (2001) cautions that it is impossible to give precise dialect origins for the early Falkland Islands settlers, but points to two regions as being especially influential in the populating of the Islands: Scotland and the southwest of England.

armed conflict, the British were able to retain control of the disputed area. As mentioned above, the Republic of Argentina continues to refer to the archipelago as Islas Malvinas. The Argentinian National Geographic Institute also includes the archipelago on the Republic's map. Argentinian and British maps feature different place names. Woodman (2016) argues that while dual toponymies are not uncommon across the globe, what is exceptional about the Falkland Islands case is that only an English toponymic inventory is used *in situ*. Woodman claims the Spanish-language names are only used outside the Islands, chiefly in Argentina. However, this assertion is only true to a certain extent. As the current chapter will demonstrate, some Spanish place names do appear in British maps and are used in the Islands. Most of them originated in the gaucho era and are embraced by locals. To acquaint the readership with Falklands history, an introductory section is provided below.

3.2 An overview of Falkland Islands history and its Spanish naming practices

The sociolinguistic history of the Falkland Islands is highly complex, due in part to the many nations that influenced the archipelago (i.e., the Dutch, French, Portuguese, British, Spanish, Argentinians). Today, the archipelago has residents from over 60 nations. At present, the Islanders speak FIE. South American migration has played a major role in the evolution of this English variety. More precisely, contact with Spanish left its footprint on the Islands lexicon (see Blake et al., 2011). This influence can be seen in a legion of Spanish place names.

The main socio-historical aspect that favoured contact between English and Spanish is the frequent transit of supplies and people to and from the South American continent. The Islands' cattle business was primarily run by South American gauchos who made their way mainly from Montevideo. Descriptions of the gauchos' activities in the Falkland Islands can be obtained from numerous historical documents (see, for example, FitzRoy, 1839; Darwin, 1979; Destéfani, 1982; Lasserre, 1869; Falkland Islands Government Census Archives). The gauchos' presence died out when the Islands transitioned to the sheep farming industry. However, their early presence on the Islands is still remembered in the many place names of Spanish origin (e.g., *Boca* 'Mouth', *Dos Lomas* 'Two Hills', *Rincón de los Indios* 'Indians' corner') (Boumphrey, 1967). Spruce states that the largest group of words that are the most characteristic of the Falklands is made up of borrowings from these early gauchos who "gave their names for streams, valleys and camps" (2011, 1).

In addition to this local linguistic toponymy, there is another group of Spanish place names that are used to label the archipelago's locations and topographical attributes. This group is made up of toponyms featured on the maps produced in Argentina for the Islands and its former dependencies:

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands[42]. Many of these place names developed as a result of the ongoing conflict between Britain and Argentina over the Islands (Woodman, 2006). In the 20th century, in an attempt to resolve the dispute, the United Nations invited Great Britain and Argentina to formal negotiations over the jurisdiction of the Islands. Unfortunately, before any agreement could be reached, on April 2, 1982, war broke out. Following dictator Galtieri's instructions, Argentinian troops landed on the Islands with the intention of taking possession of the territory. A total of 649 Argentinian military personnel, 255 British military personnel, and three Falkland Islanders died during the confrontation. Seventy-four days later, the British proclaimed victory in the 10-week war and recovered control of the archipelago. At present, the website of the Islands' government states that "[t]he Falkland Islands is a self-sufficient country with a long history and unique culture. The people of the Falkland Islands have the right to self-determination, enshrined in international law". This is a statement that Argentina rejects. One of the ways in which Argentina showcases its disagreement is by using Spanish place names for the Islands. Coining Spanish place names has been a medium for strengthening their sovereignty claim.

When studying British and Argentinian maps of the Falklands, the impact of Spanish is immediately apparent in the abundance of Spanish toponymy. Some are related to the Argentinian sovereignty claim (e.g., *Puerto Giménez* 'Giménez Port', *Isla Trinidad* 'Trinity Island', and *Puerto Argentino* 'Argentinian Port'), while others do not seem to have a political motivation at all (e.g., *Bombilla Hill* 'straw Hill', and *Laguna Seca* 'Dry Pond').This chapter presents a novel classification system that efficiently accommodates the two major sub-groups of Spanish-language place names: (1) those that resulted from the influence of the gauchos and appear in local Falklands maps (Gaucho-heritage place names); and (2) those coined and used by the Argentinian Government but largely rejected by the Falkland Islanders (Argentinian place names).

3.3 Methodology

Both traditional and contemporary toponomastic methods were employed for this investigation. No database exists of local Falkland Islands place names. Hence, British and Argentinian post-colonization digital and paper maps from 1966, 1987, and 1995 were carefully analysed to identify place names. All Argentinian place names were examined using the official Argentinian list of 686 Spanish place names for the archipelago. Only Spanish place names associated with gaucho culture were extracted from the British maps. Those

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[42] In 1985, the Falkland Islands Dependencies ceased to exist and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands became UK overseas territories.

names potentially related to Saints and personal proper names were omitted to exclude toponymy from either Spanish (e.g., San Carlos Settlement, River Pedro) or British colonialism (e.g., Victor Creek).

3.4 Findings

3.4.1 Argentinian place names

The long-standing international dispute between Argentina and the UK is evident in the competing names used to refer to the archipelago as a whole (i.e., *Malvinas*), and extends to names used for topographic attributes and settlements (see Fourches, 2016). The use of Spanish place names from the Republic of Argentina is partly a reflection of its rejection of British settlement in the Falklands since 1833 when the Islands began to be administered by the United Kingdom. Examples of such Spanish place names are *Islas Malvinas* 'Malvinas Islands' (or its variations, *Malvinas*, *Las Malvinas* 'The Malvinas'), *Isla Soledad* 'soledad Island', *Gran Malvina* 'Great Malvina', and *Puerto Argentino* 'Argentinian Port' (see more examples in Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Places named differently in Argentinian maps than in British ones.
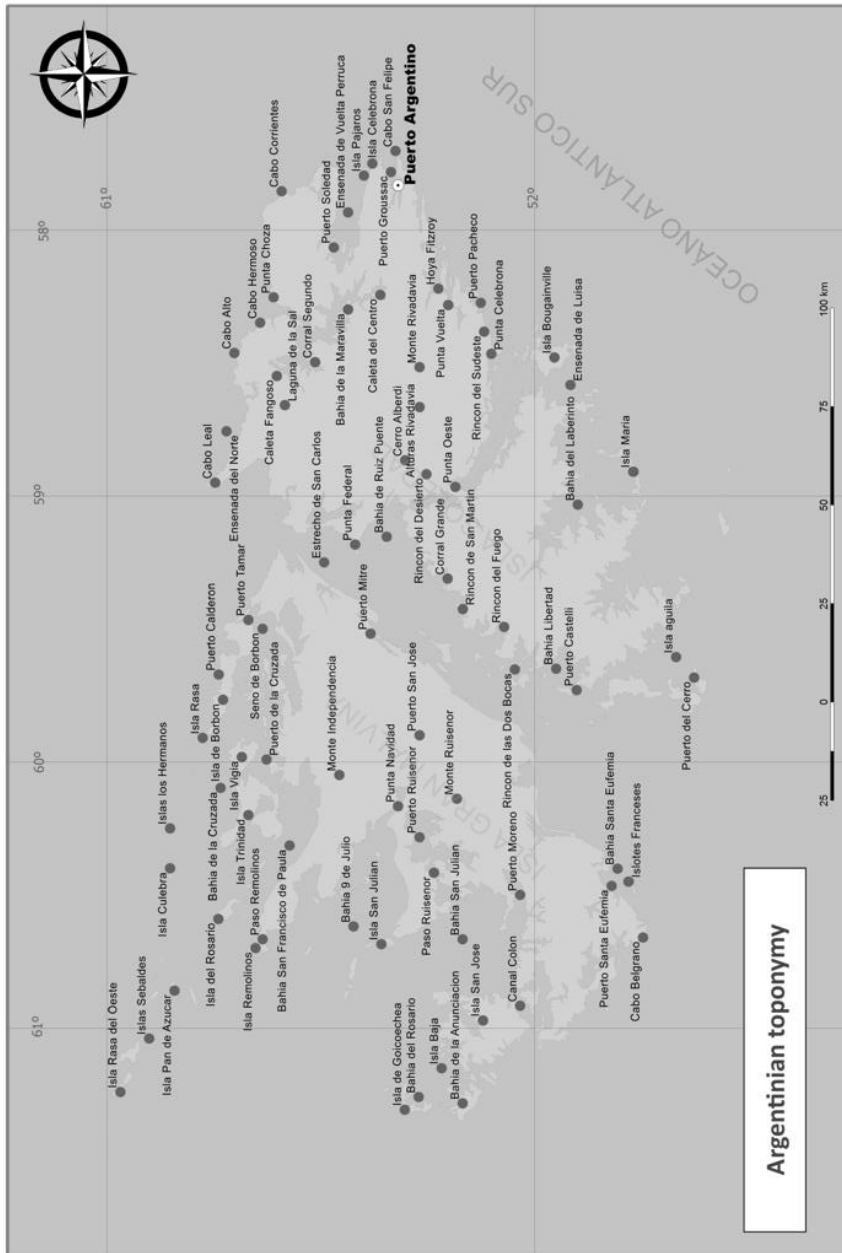
The official Argentinian toponymic inventory of the Islands is under the purview of the Instituto Geográfico Nacional (National Geographic Institute). However, before 2009, Argentinian cartography was in the hands of the Instituto Geográfico Militar (Military Geographic Institute). Despite this transfer of authority, official Argentinian maps have continued to present the Islands as National territory through their marked use of non-English toponymy. Furthermore, a map produced by the Argentinian National Geographic Institute is required for use by the entire education system by law (Ley 26.651) (see Figure 3.2). Apart from reaffirming a territorial claim to part of the Antarctic, the map places the Islands at the very centre of the map, calling them *Islas Malvinas* and giving them a key position in the mental map of the reader (Fourches, 2016, p. 4).[43]

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[43] On the 'power of the center' see Arnheim (1982, p. 73) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001, p. 201). On the strategic centering in maps, see Thurlow and Jaworski (2003, p. 588).

Figure 3.2: Bicontinental map of Argentina, downloaded from the website of Argenina's Instituto Geográfico Nacional
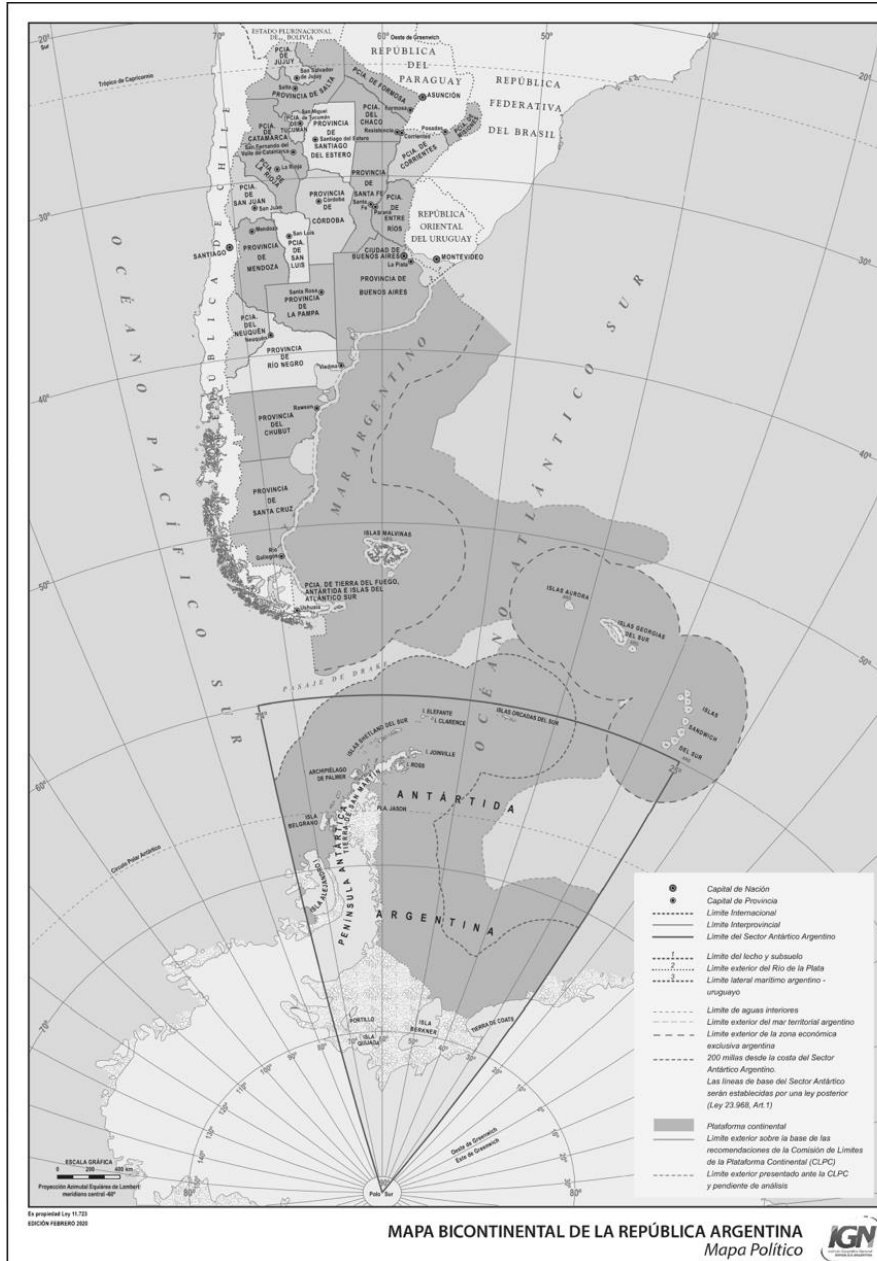
Not a single fully English toponym appears on the present official Argentinian maps issued by the Instituto Geográfico Nacional. All 686 place names in the Argentinian database of the Islands are either (a) fully in Spanish or (b) carry a specific with a potentially English origin. The first group comprises 617 place names (89.94%), while the second group contains 69 place names (10.06%).

Some toponyms in the official Argentinian maps are probably nationalist in nature. Expertise in Argentinian history would be needed to provide a solid list, but some reasonable nationalist examples include *Puerto Mitre* 'Mitre Port', *Rincón de San Martín* 'san Martín Corner'; *Bahía Nueve de Julio* 'Ninth of July Bay', and *Monte Independencia* 'Mount Independence'. Bartolomé Mitre was president of Argentina from 1862 to 1868, and San Martín was a famous general who fought for Argentina's and South America's independence (Ministerio de la Nación Argentina, 2015) and the 9th of July is Argentina's Independence Day. With regards to *Monte Independencia*, an anecdote that is familiar on both the Islands and in Argentinia is worth mentioning in this context as it illustrates how international rivalries over the Islands affect the local toponymy. The two highest peaks on West Falkland are locally known as Mount Adam and Mount Robinson. Argentina used to call the second *Monte Independencia* 'Mount Independence'. However, when a survey revealed that the highest peak was actually Mount Adam and not Mount Robinson, Argentina revised its toponymy and started calling Mount Adam *Monte Independencia* 'Mount Independence'. Technically speaking, the highest peak of the archipelago is Mount Usborne on East Falkland (marked as *Cerro Alberdi* 'Alberdi Hill' on Argentinian maps, in honour of Juan Bautista Alberdi, primary author of the 1853 Argentinian Constitution).

3.4.2 Gaucho-heritage place names

British map analyses resulted in the identification of 222 Gaucho-heritage place names (see Table 3.1 in Appendix), reflecting the gauchos' early presence in the archipelago. Three examples are *Piedra Sola* 'Lonely Stone', *Los Cerritos* 'Little Hills', and *Campito* 'Little field'. Concerning the last two examples, the suffix '-ito' is a hallmark of Rioplatense Spanish, and there are analogous names in both Argentina and Uruguay from where the gauchos came (see Boumphrey, 1967). These toponyms can be further classified as (a) fully in Spanish or (b) Spanish-English hybrids (place names composed of lexical components of both languages) (see Table 3.2). Of the 222 Gaucho-heritage place names, 44 (19.81%) place names are completely in Spanish (for instance, *Cantera* 'Quarry' and *Laguna Isla* 'Lagoon Island'). However, 178 toponyms (80.18% of the 222) are Spanish-English hybrids with either the generic or the specific in Spanish. For example, Rio Verde Bay 'Green River Bay', and Hunters Arroyo 'Hunters Stream' (see Figure 3.3). It is worth noting that hybrids' underlying structure responds to the English logic. When it comes to the Spanish generics in this group, rincon 'corner' and arroyo 'stream', are by far the most productive, with 71 (31.98%) and 33 (14.86%) cases each

(see Table 3.1 in Appendix). Table 3.3 shows the most common generics and their English counterpart.

Table 3.2: Examples of hybrid and Spanish Gaucho-heritage toponyms in the Falklands.

Gaucho-heritage fully Spanish place names	Gaucho-heritage hybrid place names
Arroyo Malo	*Poncho Hill*
Brazo del Mar	*Chancho point*
Camapamenta	*Manada Paddock*
Campito	*Playa Ridge*
Cerro Montevideo	*Little Rincon*
Chata Rincon	*Colorado Bay*
Corral Brazo	*Dos Lomas House*
Estancia	*Ponchos Pond*
Gaucho Corral	*Torcida Point*
Laguna Isla	*Swan Pond Arroyo*
Laguna Seca	*The Verde Mts.*
Los Cerritos	*Bombilla Hill*
Piedra Sola	*Paso Grande Creek*
Rincon de los Indios	*Ponchos Pond*
Rincon Grande	*Piojo Gate*
Rincón del Moro	*Triste Point*
Saladero	*Rum Arroyo*
Tranquilidad	*Cuero Brook*
Zaino Rincon	*Malo Creek*

Figure 3.3: Some examples of Gaucho-heritage place names in local Falkland Islands maps.
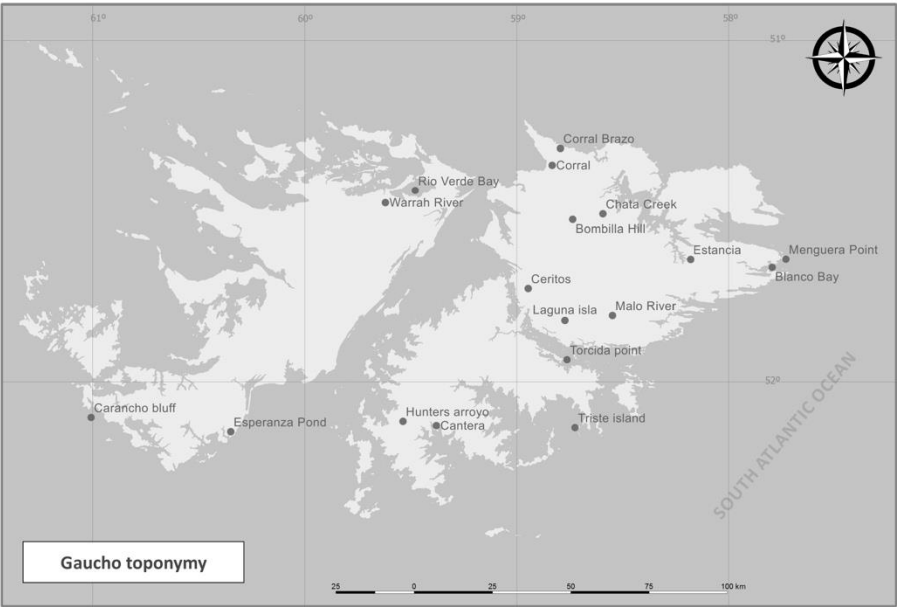

Table 3.3: Falklands Generic and its Standard English correspondent according to Munro (1998).

Falklands Generic generics according to Munro (1998)

Arroyo	'stream'	*Isla*	'island'
Cerro	'hill'	*Laguna*	'pool'
Monte	'mount'	*Río*	'river'
Morro	'bluff'	*Roca*	'rock'
Rincón	'corner'		

East Falkland was found to have the highest number of Spanish place names (i.e., 72.52% of 222), while in West Falkland there were only 61 Spanish place names (27.47%) (see Table 3.1 in Appendix). The distribution of the gaucho toponymy within coastal and inland areas was found to be quite even: 125 (56.30%) and 97 (43.69%), respectively. Furthermore, 163 toponyms (73.42%) name geomorphic features (for instance, 'hill, 'mount', 'rock'), and

the remaining 59 (26.57%) name water-related features (for example, 'island', 'beach', 'bay', 'lagoon').

3.5 Summary and discussion

The findings presented in this study reveal the existence of a Spanish toponymic inventory to name the Falklands locally, proving that Woodman's 2016 statement that there is no Spanish inventory in the archipelago is inaccurate. Over two hundred Spanish place names were identified in pre- and post-war British and local Falklands maps as gaucho-heritage. More potentially Spanish toponyms were identified but were not included in this group since their historical origin is unclear, i.e., they could be either English or Spanish in origin (e.g., Victor Creek, Lorenzo Pond).

This point directly relates to one of the limitations of this study: a detailed etymological examination of each and every place name of interest would have been desirable but was beyond the scope of this preliminary investigation. Consequently, it was not possible to make a differentiation between English, Spanish, and Gaucho anthroponyms. Finding maps of the Falklands also proved to be a difficult endeavour. A further limitation of this investigation, therefore, involved the limited store of maps utilised. Military maps, for example, were not accessed, since they are restricted. Replicating the present investigation with such maps would be necessary to strengthen the present chapter's argument.

However, the role of competing place names in the historical conflict between Argentina and the UK is not unique. It is also present in other political conflict scenarios of the world. For instance, Cohen and Kliot (1992) explore the process of naming places as a mechanism for landscape transformation in the territories captured by Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967. Based on their experience in conflict zones, they clearly state:

> Place names are intrinsic components of the political landscape, and their study should be an important part of political geography. The spatial distributional patterns of names by categories, origin, and specific meaning, when set within the context of related aspects of the natural and built environment, are sensitive indicators of the general link between political process and landscape. Affixing names to places is inextricably linked with nation building and state formation. Sweeping changes in the naming process reflect ideological upheavals and are often expressions of revolutionary values. (p. 653)

Future researchers should not underestimate the importance of becoming well-acquainted with the complex political history of the Islands. With this caution in mind, subsequent onomastic research of the Falklands could explore demographic differences in the reception of competing Spanish and English toponyms amongst Falkland Islanders. Looking into Argentinians'

attitudes towards competing Spanish and English place names would also be a fruitful area of research. The current work presents the etymology of some Falkland Islands place names. However, more work is needed on this subject. The same is true for Argentinian names for the archipelago. The novel classification presented in this chapter could also be further developed by identifying and analysing other types of place names for the Islands (e.g., those resulting from French, Spanish, and British colonialism). Moreover, by comparing this case study with other conflicting scenarios, important light could be shone on the intersection between onomastic policies and politics.