

ABSTRACT

TROUBLES IN A MICROSTATE: INSTABILITY, VIOLENCE AND FEDERAL ARRANGEMENTS IN COMORO ISLANDS.

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Since independence in the early seventies, Comoro Islands suffered an instability political situation. This microstate reached independence from France in 1974. Since that date, Mayotte, one of the four islands of the archipelago, belongs to France. The people of Mayotte opted in two referenda for that option. The Comoro Islands State has never accepted this situation and reclaims its sovereignty over Mayotte. In its beginning as a new state, Comoro adopted an a Unitary and centralized Constitution that never have been well accepted by two of the three islands that conform it. In its thirty years of independence, Comoros have had different political regimes from left to right wing. The democratic experiences have been the exception, and violence, and military and mercenaries interventions have been one of the characteristics of these country. Weak parties, strong leaderships in each island, and the mistrust among its political class provided instability in a very homogeneous society in religious, ethnic and cultural terms. In recent years, Comoros adopted a federal Constitution (the new name of the state is Union of Comoros) and a quite delicate political balance between the political elites of the three islands. This Constitutional arrangement is based in the rotating election of the President of the Union who represented one of the three islands in each mandate, and a constitutional strong federalism and high posts in the national Government for the island presidents. In spite of these constitutional arrangements, instability and violence remains and only the international mediation and intervention has achieved the precarious stability of the national government and the Union of the Comoros as a state.