
France's influence on the Union of Comoros: Negative impacts

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Abstract

This research aimed to determine the negative impact of France's influence on the Union of Comoros. The islands of Comoros have been officially affected by France's influence since its independence in 1975, when France remained the island of Mayotte on the pretext that its inhabitants refused the independence after the referendum in 1974 and since that time, the French administration has started focusing its influence on the other islands. It results that the Comorian politicians and army did not move positively in the defence of State borders or restoration of internal security since independence until now; but in some cases, even they participated in the success of coups d'états and threatening the security of the citizen, so it is no surprise that the Comorian army is trained by France mercenaries and then by France officers.

Keywords: Comoros, France, influence, colonization, independence, policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The question of France influence on both Africa and the Indian Ocean, in particularly on its former colonies in these two regions, as like Comoros Islands, raised a wide controversy, in recent times, for researchers who interested in international policy affairs. If we discussed the influence of European colonial powers in Africa in particular, we will find that the worsts of them, generally, is the French colonization. For example, if we want to compare France and England colonialism in Africa, we find that "The relating superiority of the British institutions is confirmed in several empirical studies

showing that the British ex-colonies have better performances in terms of growth than the France ex-colonies"¹.

States, which were under French colony, today, are suffering from more problems of security, political, economic and social, than others; till now, we see the continuation of France influence in all fields of these countries.

Here, we are talking about France's influence in the Comoros islands, in particular, and it is the only country, since the independence of African countries, till now, a large part of its territory stayed under France's control, making some scholars on African Affairs concerned with this case. Then, some scholars are taking attention on this issue.

France's interests in the Western Indian Ocean Islands, in particular in Comoros islands, are not new. Since France placed her foot on the Islands for the first time in 1839, by Captain Passot, France continues to take great interest in these islands. At that time, France quickly colonizes the Islands one by one, starting from Mayotte in 1841, and the closest one the island of Anjouan, then Mohéli Island and finally the Great Comoro (Ngazidja) that officially declared the year 1886 a France colony².

During the wave of independence of African States within the fifties and nineteen sixties of the 20th century, which the Comoros community in Tanzania, who were expelled owing to their attitudes against France colonialism, officially they took part in the campaign of independence. Despite the involvement of Comoros in this campaign, it could not take measures to follow African States throughout the first referendum for independence in 1958³; so, Comoros refused categorically the independence and they were argued that the country was not well equipped to demand the independence.

This argument is rejected for two main reasons:

First: because of the alone political party who was demanding independence, at that time, is the National Liberation Movement of the Comoros (NLMC or MOLINACO in France), cannot accept this a strange position. This movement was, as we have said, in Tanzania expelled by the colonizer because of their request for independence. Here, it's clear that those who took the decision to keep the islands under colonialism, at that time, were the France men.

Second: because of France entered and occupied the Islands long-time before its occupation of many African States, and stayed in the Islands nearly a century and a half, the Comoros people remained underdeveloped

¹ De Sousa, J. and J. Lochard (2009). "Histoire coloniale et commerce international." *Revue économique* 60(3): 635-645.

² Assoumani, M. S. (2011). Challenges of the Comoros National Security under Globalization for the period 1989-2007. *African Research and Studies Center*. Khartoum, International University of Africa. **Master**.

³ Barbey, A. (2009). "Les migrations comoriennes dans l'ouest de l'Océan indien." *Hommes & Migrations*(3): 154.

and uneducated. Here, it arises one question, how long will the Comorian people be ready to lead the country after this long period⁴?

After the second referendum on self-determination for independence in 22nd December of 1974, the international community proves the France's intention to stay in these strategic islands in the Mozambique Channel. Then, France took the decision to re-counting of the votes for each island, after seeing the global outcome is not in its favour, to take the argument that the inhabitants of the island of Mayotte refused to be independent. Indeed, the result of the referendum of self-determination came, in the island of Mayotte, as required by the French administration after asking the following question: "Would you like the territory of Comoros to become independent?"⁵

Here, there is no specific time if the results must be interpreted island by island or across the archipelago. Indeed the result of the referendum of self-determination on the Islands as a total 99.57% voted for independence, and are as follows:

Ngazidja: 99.98% in favour of independence

Anjouan: 99.93% in favour of independence

Moheli: 99.92% in favour of independence

Mayotte: 63.62% against independence (to maintain in the France Republic)⁶.

A year afterward, the unilateral independence decision was adopted in 1975; France accepted the independence of three islands and maintained the island of Mayotte on the pretext that it had not voted for independence, as if the Islands were composed of peoples and Confederation States, France took the argument of the right of the people to determine their own destiny, ignoring the same time the right of state origin borders of the former colony. Thus, France reorganized another Referendum in the island of Mayotte only On July 8, 1976 to achieve its goals; the result was not a surprise, 99.4% of the electors voted against independence.⁷ Or, the number 6 of the declaration of December 14, 1960 on the granting of independence to colonized countries and peoples stipulates that the territorial integrity of the former colonies must be preserved. However, in the case of the Comoros Islands, France has arbitrarily amputated its former colony a quarter of its territory⁸.

And anyway, the quirks and arguments presented by the France administration to the international community on the issue of Mayotte, is due to of the dominance of the region in order to protect its interests. Therefore,

⁴ (2005). "La consultation du 22 décembre 1974. Les Comoriens votent pour l'indépendance." in Tarehi n°11.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Caminade, P. (2003). Comores-Mayotte: une histoire néocoloniale. Agone.

⁸ admin (2011). "Non, non, non, Mayotte, ce n'est pas la France !". from <http://cheuzeville.net/non-non-non-mayotte-ce-n%E2%80%99est-pas-la-france/>.

the France administration, since its introduction to the islands, has adopted various methods to achieve its objectives and attain its aims behind this influence, which is as follows:

2. FRANCE'S INFLUENCE FIELD, OBJECTIVES & ITS WAYS ON UNION OF COMOROS

2.1. FRANCE INFLUENCE FIELDS ON THE UNION OF COMOROS

On the way to influence on the islands, France has taken on vital areas that have included the domestic political arena by providing support to political parties and influential leaders in the country. As well as the economic, social, cultural, educational, defense and security fields, France uses these areas to control the country in long times.

2.2. FRANCE INFLUENCE OBJECTIVES ON THE UNION OF COMOROS

2.2.1. POLITIC & DIPLOMATIC

France aims to influence the Comoros islands in order to maintain its influential role in world politics, especially under international competition represented by America, Russia, China, India... etc., in Africa and in Comoros islands particularly. According to Stéphane Dupont, France was able to preserve a decisive influence on the African continent. Because, as had told general de Gaulle that the former France colonies in Africa are since Yalta, one of the only ways to keep a place in the Organization of the United Nations⁹.

It is known that States which were under French colony, are the most eager to practice that the former colonizer dictates them about many international issues, so France had to gain respect for other countries, and equal treatment in international meetings.

In addition to providing opportunities for its presence in the region intensively, and enables to him a rapid deployment, and make a system to counter any threats detrimental to its strategic interests, which France seeks to preserve them by any ways, and taking a number of pretexts to pass its influence in the region, including preserving its national security.

It should be noted that the national security of the super and great powers has two main meanings: the internal, namely to save its territory, and external, which concerns the saving of its interests outside its territory, especially in weak states. This concept has been confirmed by K. J. Holsty, that national security allows the state to intervene in the affairs of other states for the intention of expanding influence, behaviour change and the

⁹ Stéphane, D. (1988). "Pierre Biarnes. Les Français en Afrique noire de Richelieu à Mitterrand. 350 ans de présence au sud du Sahara." *Politique étrangère* 53(2): 528-529.

ability to influence; which would mean recognition of States that have significant military capability to intervene in the internal affairs of other States¹⁰.

Therefore, we see the blatant interference of France in Comoros in order to overthrow the leaders who oppose its influence or maintain the person, who cooperates with it since independence until now. There have been more than twenty military coups in the country, most of them unsuccessfully, and were then orchestrated by the French administration and French mercenaries, with the contribution of some Comorian officials.

So, the main objective behind French influence in Comoros islands is to push Comorian officials not to claim the return of the Comorian island of Mayotte.

2.2.2. STRATEGIC

The France's influence in Comoros is not new; it runs since the 19th century, this is due to the correlation between France and its interests in these islands, which they remained an important strategic country for major, world powers; The geographical and strategic location of Comoros, stimulated the Western countries to compete on these islands a long time ago. Finally, they joined the French camp.

In the beginning, in July 1839, France sent Captains (Passot) to Comoros for a reconnaissance mission in Mayotte, Anjouan and Mohéli; during the visit, he was able to stand on the importance of the islands and strategy. In August 1840, the Captain (Jéhenne) made a second visit to Mayotte, the governor of France in (Reunion) Admiral (de Hill) has been assigned to both (Passot) and (Jéhenne), after conducting the necessary studies on Mayotte, the need to accelerate the occupation of Mayotte at the earliest opportunity¹¹.

In 1841, Admiral (de Hell), governor of Réunion, sent an officer to the island of Mayotte and with its authority (Andriantsoly) signed a treaty to place the island under the protection of France. Mayotte was the first island attached by France to its colonies because of its geographical location near the Northwest Madagascar; the rest of the Islands were under French protection until 1912 when all the Islands became a France colony¹².

Thus, today, France wants to maintain and strengthen its position in the world. Which shows the extension of its Navy in the world, especially in

¹⁰ Farouk, A. K. Review of prevailing concepts in national security. ; Yoo, H. S. (1996). An analysis of United States security policy towards a third world state during the Cold War era: case study of US-Iran relations, Durham University.

¹¹ Boina, Y. A. (2007). Political Conflict in the Comoros and Peace Between 1985 and 2005. African Research and Studies Center. Khartoum, International University of Africa, Khartoum. **Master**.

¹² Ayana, F. M. A. (1987). Geography of Africa, a regional Study of the Continent with Application to Sub-Saharan States. Alexandria.

the Indian Ocean; this explains the importance of France domination in this maritime space which it has 2.8 million km² of ZEE among the Comorian island of Mayotte¹³.

Finally, Mayotte gives France access to the Mozambican channel, as well as, to the key strategic maritime routes in the southern Indian Ocean¹⁴. This shows us the declaration of general de Gaulle, on July 10, 1959, during his visit to Moroni, the Comoros are located has a strategic point of the world¹⁵, and that “the sea has always been, and above all, an element of communication and through communication, an element of domination”¹⁶

According to Raphael de Benito, “the sea-arm of the Indian Ocean separating the island of Madagascar from Mozambique would shelter important energy resources, France is about to get its hands on this new oil and gas Eldorado.”¹⁷

2.2.3. ECONOMIC

To secure supplies crossing this space or the threat of piracy is important, and to acquire the wealth of fish, oil and natural gas that is found in large quantities in the Mozambique Channel where the Comoros Islands are located.

According to the commission of the Indian Ocean (COI), this region “is the second largest provider of tuna worldwide with its cumulative domestic production of 280,000 tons per year”¹⁸.

Thus, it is worth to mention here that Comoros exported to France the types of flowers that make the most expensive and most luxurious perfume in the world, representing 17% of these resources of Ylang-Ylang, vanilla...etc¹⁹.

3. FRANCE INFLUENCE WAYS ON UNION OF COMOROS

France uses different ways of influence in the Union of Comoros to achieve its objectives and they fall under two categories including the direct and indirect influence.

¹³ Bezama-Mantes, c. (2014). "géopolitique de l'océan indien."

¹⁴ Institute, C. (1977). *Inquiry*. Cato Institute.

¹⁵ Souef, M. e.-A. (2009). *Les grands défis de la politique étrangère des Comores*. Les éditions De La Lune.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Benito, R. d. (2012). "Le canal du Mozambique, un enjeu stratégique pour la France."

¹⁸ commissionoceanindien. from <http://www.commissionoceanindien.org>.

¹⁹ MADAGASCAR, A. D. F. A. (2016). "LE COMMERCE EXTERIEUR DE L'UNION DES COMORES EN 2015." *SERVICE ECONOMIQUE. AMBASSADE DE FRANCE A MADAGASCAR*.

3.1. THE WAYS OF THE DIRECT INFLUENCE

The essential elements that France uses directly by imposing its influence in the union of the Comoros are:

3.1.1. MERCENARIES AND SO-CALLED FRANCE SPECIALISTS

Comoros people doesn't ignore the role played by France in the Union of Comoros. Since its independence, Comoros are destabilized by a coup led by the famous French mercenary Bob Denard. The latter led, between 1975 and 1995, many coup d'états which four presidents were overthrown. He was overthrown the father of independence president Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane after a few days of the independence of Comoros. In 1978, the second president, Mr Ali Soilih was also reversed and beheaded in a few weeks of his arrest, and then Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane was returned to the power after his stay in Paris. It has ruled the country since 1978 until November 1989; date that he is killed, after torturing by French mercenaries headed by Bob Denard. In 1995 the latter was returned to the Comoros Islands to accomplish its mission again. He has overthrown, the father of democracy in Comoros the president Said Mohamed Djohar, then deported by France troops to the French island of Réunion. Since independence until 2015, there was more than twenty successful or unsuccessful coup d'états; we remember the period of president Djohar in August 1990 that there was an attempt of coup d'état led by Max Vieillard, old accomplice of Bob Denard (and former officer of France). This one is killed on October 18, 1990 in Anjouan by the Comorian army after trying to overthrow the President Saïd Mohamed Djohar²⁰.

In another context, if France can't overthrow a president, she moves back to other forms of destabilization. For example, she is supported to the rebellions in Anjouan in the period of President Mohamed Taki Abdoukarime until 2008 year of military landing in this island. During this period, there were France specialists on the island who helped the separatists. We remember the crash of a helicopter at the village of Sima (Anjouan), coming from Mayotte, a few days before the military landing by Comorian and African forces, and "According to sources close to the presidency of the Union of Comoros, a helicopter of the France Air and Border Police (PAF) from Mayotte landed in disaster in Anjouan more precisely in Sima (a city very close to Mwali)",²¹ and "it's the same helicopter that had helped the director of customs of the autonomous island of Anjouan Mrs "Bibi" Rukia Ahmed, to return Anjouan on the sly on Thursday, December 20, 2007, after a short (and

²⁰ Chatain, J. (1999). "cour d'assises. le procès de bob Denard s'ouvre aujourd'hui à paris." L'HUMANITÉ.

²¹ comores4.skyrock (2008). "Un accident d'un hélicoptère français à Sima (Anjouan)." from <http://comores4.skyrock.com/1625688794-Derniere-minuteUn-accident-d-un-helicoptere-francais-a-Sima-Anjouan.html>.

mysterious) trip to Mayotte, despite the ban which had been to her made by the AU”²².

Furthermore, The President Mohamed Taki Abdoukarime will also be, “at the time when he was returning from travel (abroad) - died, apparently of a heart attack, but which would in fact be a poisoning according to some rumours - the truth will never be known, no autopsy having been made on the body”²³.

Here we can consider the thesis of poisoning; because, even before to return to the country, and after completing his trip in Turkey, country to which he would be poisoned by the France secret service, he wished to go through Paris, but it seems that Paris refused its passage that's the same day after his return will be dead. In addition, the Radio France Internationale RFI has broadcasted the death of President Mohamed Taki Abdoukarime even before he died.

In addition to that, in 2001, after the re-establishment of the Union of Comoros, which ended the rebellion, another failed disembarkation of a dozen of mercenaries on the small island of the Comoros archipelago has held and nine of them were killed or arrested by the National Development Army. So, an investigation opened by the government has confirmed the hypothesis of the “coup d'État”. According to Hamada Madi Bolero (Head of Cabinet of the Presidency of the Union of Comoros in charge of defense) the mercenaries were thirteen in total, and they were left “Nosy Be” in Madagascar in zodiacs to take power in Moroni. They stopped at the island of Mohéli due to failure of fuel.²⁴

Thus, the government assured the population that the situation is being taken over by the National Development Army on the island of Mohéli after disembarkation and taking control of an unknown armed commando. “According to several sources, it would be a hundred men, white and black, who were apparently led by a man speaking perfect French. After entering the island, they have circulated leaflets in which they claimed to be the army of the United States and that they operated as part of the fight against terrorism. But the American Embassy of Kenya indicated that it was unaware of this disembarkation. And The Comoros' Minister of information told that it was of mercenaries, and he denounced “a new Act of destabilization at the same time where ends the process of national reconciliation”²⁵. The result was “Only one injured in the defense units of the (AND), while there were three

²² comores4.skyrock (2008). "Accident d'hélico français à Anjouan: En attendant l'enquête", les circonstances du crash sont assez mystérieuses." from <http://comores4.skyrock.com/1628889814-Accident-d-helico-francais-a-Anjouan-En-attendant-l-enquete-les.html>.

²³ comores-online. "Histoire des Comores, les grands Dates." from <http://www.comores-online.com/mwezinet/histoire/siecle.htm>.

²⁴ SUR, N. and S. ELBADAWI (2001). "un bien étrange coup de force." www1.rfi.fr.

²⁵ Ibid.

mercenaries killed and three others taken prisoner in Mohéli as well as a fugitive assailant was arrested in Anjouan”²⁶.

We observe that these mercenaries, after transferred to the prison in Moroni, they were released in discreet because of the influence of the Embassy of France in Moroni, as in the case of the “France mercenary Daniel Clérino, called also the ‘Angel’, was discreetly released and has immediately flown to the island of Réunion, where he was born. Mr. Clérino spent almost 11 months in prison after he was accused of being involved in an attempted coup d’état of March 21, 2000, conducted, according to the (Comorian) authorities, by the Captain Abdérémane Ahmed Abdallah, son of the former president Ahmed Abdallah Abdérémane assassinated in November 1989”²⁷.

In fact, we still remember the assassination of Lieutenant-Colonel Combo Ayouba, who was the head of the security of the president Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi, whose, the main objective is the destabilization of the country’s peace.

In 2013 there was an attempt to destabilize the power of which President IKILILOU DHOININE was targeted; this coup is led by “about 15 people, including foreigners, (France and Congolese from RDC citizens), have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the attempt of coup d’état failed in the Comoros”.

Of this fact, France has taken advantage of the weakness and fragility, which she has a great responsibility as the colonial Power, of the State of Comoros since its accession to independence to the present day, by sending, the so-called, ‘specialists’ in all areas. These ‘specialists’ play a very important role for the France intelligence service. The most astonishing it is that most of the Comorian authorities know that, but they are afraid to take decisions against France, because they will lose their jobs or even killed as in the case of the past presidents.

3.1.2. THE FRANCOPHILES²⁸

Francophiles play a very important role in preserving France’s interests in the Comoros Islands. A large number of them are specially trained for this. This began even before independence, especially in Mayotte, for the first time against the independents. After independence, France was able to control the other independent Islands from these persons.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ comores-online. "libération du mercenaire français Daniel Clerino." from <http://www.comores-online.com/Comores-infosweb/archives/Com33/article9.htm>

²⁸ These are persons of both France and Comorian nationalities or only of Comorian nationality, which France uses them to achieve its aims in the Comoros Islands. In short, they are Comorians who have France culture and they are ready to defend it in their own country. So they are Comorians of colonial mentalities.

The odd thing is that, between these persons, we have those who are working in very important places in the Comorian administration. So, this shows us the fragility of the Comorian state towards its former colonizer. But that, which wanted this colonial power towards this small state, to do what she wants at the moment she wants. Thus, the designations of these persons, in different places in the country, are due to the intervention of the France Embassy in the Union of Comoros, and which sometimes dictates their nominations.

3.2. THE WAYS OF INDIRECT INFLUENCE

The indirect methods that France uses to influence the Comoros Islands are numerous, but we can talk about those that are very important in the following:

3.2.1. THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF THE COMORIAN ISLAND OF MAYOTTE

The occupation of the Comorian island of Mayotte by France has allowed the latter to have a very significant influence on the other independent islands. In fact, France is flouting all UN resolutions about this occupation. It will be remembered that “on November, 12, 1975, on the basis of Security Council Resolution No. 376 (adopted at the 1848th meeting by 14 votes against zero), the United Nations General Assembly, in its Resolution No. 3385 (xxx) admits (unanimously, France was not taking part in the vote) the Comoros to the United Nations as a country composed of 4 islands: Mayotte, Anjouan, Mohéli, and greater Comoros”²⁹.

Unfortunately, France maintains until today, illegally, the Comorian island of Mayotte by violating international law. Subsequently, the sanction of this violation of international law contained in a resolution adopted by the plenary of the United Nations on November 28, 1994, by 87 votes to 2 (France and Monaco). After recalling that, in accordance to the agreements Franco-Comoros agreements on June, 15, 1973, relating to the accession of the Comoros to independence, the results of the referendum of December, 22, 1974 should be considered on a global basis not an island by island, the resolution 49/18 request the France government to accelerate the negotiation process with the Government of Comoros in order to give back effective the return of the island of Mayotte in the Comoros together³⁰.

But, no effort is recorded between the two parties; however, France imposes bilateral agreements to the Comorian government to ensure that the

²⁹ Inzouddine, B. (2007). "l'UE donne des "fessées" à la Crimée et des "bonbons" à Mayotte !". from <http://wongo.skyrock.com/3211728619-L-UE-donne-des-fessees-a-la-Crimée-et-des-bonbons-a-Mayotte.html>.

³⁰ André, O. (2016). "La confédération bilatérale : La solution pour résoudre le différend franco-comorien à Mayotte." *Journal de l'île de la Réunion (Périodique)*.

responsible Comorian are afraid to break the relations Franco-Comoros. On the other hand, France strengthens its manoeuvres to make difficult the return of Mayotte. In effect, this island plays a role of destabilization to the other islands, because the France military base which is located in this island has allowed into France all conspiracies and attempts to undermine security and to realize coup d'état and rebellions in the union of the Comoros; by European mercenaries led by the famous France mercenary 'Bob Denard'

Mayotte also played the role of the rear base of the secessionist movement that took place in Anjouan on August 3, 1997, and the France authorities imposed in 1994 a visa³¹ to the island of Mayotte to the inhabitants of the other islands of Comoros.

For taking an example, at the time of the disembarkation army in 2008 by the Comorian and Tanzanian and Sudan forces, rebels in Anjouan fled to Mayotte. Or France refused to return them to Moroni to judge them, after the official request of the Comorian authorities to the France government. France participated in this disembarkation by sending planes that transported Tanzanian troops to Moroni³².

This shows us the contradiction of France in this affair. In the end, France will be able to use them in other destabilization of the country in the future.

3.2.2. THE FRANCE CULTURE

Cultures play a notable role between societies in order to exchange with each other; but they are also a tool for the great powers to dominate the other weak countries, especially when it comes to the relationship between colonial countries and their former colonies. According to Mawuna Remarque Koutonin, in his article published in the site web www.rougemidi.fr, titled: "50 years after independence, 14 African countries always forced by France to pay colonial taxes", said that the former France colonies are obliged to making French the official language of the country and language for education; especially that The French language and an organization of diffusion of the culture was created and called "Francophonie" which includes with several branches and affiliated organizations all controlled by the France Minister of Foreign Affairs"³³.

Comoros Islands, before the colonization, use the Arabic language in the contracts between the people themselves, as well as, international correspondences. After colonization to the present day, there has been a shift from Arabic to the colonial language, which is the French language. It

³¹ it bears the name of Balladur, the former France Prime Minister who introduced this famous visa.

³² Berthemet, T. (2008). "La Grande Comore s'apprête à envahir l'île rebelle d'Anjouan." *Le Figaro*.

³³ Koutouin, M. R. "African countries forced by France to pay colonial tax for the benefits of slavery and colonization." *Silicon Africa* 28.

remains the official language alongside Arabic and the 'shicomor' (language of communication).

Even though the Arabic language and the 'shicomor' are also official languages, as stipulated, in article 1 of title I of the Constitution of the Union of the Comoros, of December 23, 2001, that "the official languages are the 'Shikomor' national language, French and Arabic"³⁴; but the French language dominates the others so that if someone had a foreign diploma written in Arabic, he must translate it into French in order that he has a training or a job³⁵. What is worse is that, when you are called to justice in a civil case against another person, you will be obliged to translate the archives that you have of the Comorian language or Arabic to the French language.

In another context, France culture in UC is manifested through the Franco-Comorian Alliance (AFC), the France cultural centre in Moroni, which participates in the promotion of the Arts, cinema, literature and music. This cultural cooperation between France and the Union of the Comoros is expressed in the wider field, including the Francophonie. In a book entitled "France, Algeria and colony", the geographer Onésime Recluse (1837-1916) invented the term "Francophonie" in the context of the end of the XIX century, he advocates the France colonial expression and in the framework focuses on the Linguistic factor³⁶, which is a very important tool for France to influence its former colonies.

3.2.3. THE AID AND FRANCE DEBTS IN THE UNION OF COMOROS

The aid, whatever its form, from one country to another country is a very important way of a country's foreign policy. Especially, when it comes to a colonial country toward its former colonies; it takes another meaning and more than significant about two countries who have conflicts.

Since 1978, the France and, in recent years, the EU, reinforced its aid toward Comoros, in almost all areas, educational, educational, economic, environmental, agriculture and fishing . . . Etc. on the other hand, these aids are not direct, but pass through the (FDA or AFD), that the U.C is part of the 17 priority countries of France aid. The (FDA) assists it in three areas: health, water and the private sector³⁷.

Indeed, FDA is taking more and more importance in the France system of aid to development, with a financial envelope more important,

³⁴ . "Comores - Constitution de l'Union des Comores du 23 decembre 2001." from <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/72696/74026/F-92095240/COM-72696.pdf>.

³⁵ When I got my master's degree, it was written in Arabic language, the Comoros administration has refused to grant me a job or training, without being translated into French, so I was obliged to translate it.

³⁶ "For more information." from www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/dossiers/francophonie/chronologie.shtml.

³⁷ (AFD), A. f. d. d. from <https://www.afd.fr/fr/page-region-pays/comores>.

according to Ms. Girardin³⁸: “The priority for France is to fight against poverty and not against corruption which is only its consequence”, and she adds that the goal of France is before any all to “combat against poverty” and “improve the daily lives of populations”; In brief to save Africa³⁹. Indeed, “at the Donors Conference in Mauritius in December 2005, which was provided for in the agreement of national reconciliation in Fomboni, Comoros has collected the commitments of donors in the order of 158M\$ for the realization of a financing plan over four years (2006-2009). On his contribution, France is committed to increase its aid to the development of 60% for a total of 65 M€ over the next few years. This assistance will focus on the areas of agriculture, health and the support to private initiative”⁴⁰.

On the other hand, a large part of the aid return to France and the EU; because it would be used by European specialists who put unnecessary formations and training with projects dictated by the governments of EU countries. Of this fact, some indignant on the interest of employed many persons with the aid, that will not stay in the country, with a large number of expatriates very well paid of this aid!⁴¹ In brief, there was not a real project that can solve a big problem in the country.

On the other hand, the France control aid from other countries, such as China, Libya's Kaddafi, Sudan, towards the Comoros, particularly in the domain of the army, and the economy.

In another context, Comorian debt to the France is estimated at some 12 million euros and under different categories: bilateral debt, postal debt, a debt of Comorian Chancery in France. Moreover, Comoros cannot delete this debt, because its interest rises every time. So, most of the interest on this debt has become greater than the debt itself, so that Comorian Islands cannot support. Indeed, France forces Comoros to delete this debt, but with many requirements.

3.2.4. BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

African countries got independence from colonial powers, and inherited a colonial legacy, including military and security agreements, economic and cultural ties which make these countries incomplete sovereignty⁴²; such as the Comoros, where France still has influence on the islands because of such agreements mentioned above.

³⁸ Secretary of State for Development and Francophonie. For More information see https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annick_Girardin

³⁹ Thimonier, O. (2006). "Aide française au développement : communiquer avant tout." [survie.org](#).

⁴⁰ wikipedia.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Sheikh, R. G. (1997). *Challenges of African Unity, The African Conference and Challenges of the 21st Century, 27-29 May 1997*. Cairo African Research and Studies Institute.

Indeed, bilateral agreements between the C.U and the France are starting from November 10, 1978. Like other African countries, the Comoros was obliged, after independence, to sign an agreement of defense with the colonial power. The agreement comes after the coups led by France mercenary Bob Denard. So, it is automatic for France to sign this agreement to better control the country, as well as maintaining the closure regime of France. This agreement allows France to intervene militarily in the country in case of foreign military invasion. This agreement was revised in 2010. According to Bernard Kouchner, former France Foreign Minister, "Defense Minister Hervé Morin and his Comorian counterpart, Fahmi Saïd Ibrahim, signed a defense agreement on September 27th. "Renovated", revising that of November 10, 1978 and reviving, at the same time, the military cooperation between the two countries, suspended in 1999"⁴³ .

Then, several agreements are signed between the two parties to reinforce the France influence on the islands. Like that of the security and humanitarian aspect and the circulation of the people signed in 2011. This agreement "established a partnership of defense between the Government of France and the Government of the Union of Comoros, ratified in May 7, 2012 and published by order on May 27, 2013.

In this context, military training was provided by France to train Comorians to control the departure of their citizens in "kwassa-kwassa"⁴⁴.

We note that, the main objective of this agreement is to force the Comorian authorities to stop their citizens to not go to Mayotte by small embarkations, but rather to take visas at the France embassy in Moroni. So to recognize the Comorian island of Mayotte as belongs to France.

Indeed, "Several training activities, implemented by the France Embassy, relying on two major France regional actors, the FAZSOI (France Armed Forces stationed in the South Indian Ocean area) and the Command of the Gendarmerie for the southern zone of the Indian Ocean, have just been conducted, in particular for the benefit of the Gendarmerie and Coast Guard components of the National Development Army"⁴⁵. As well as "From May 5 to 14, 2014, a hundred soldiers of the 4th and 6th Company of the Comorian Defense Force were trained in peacekeeping operations by a detachment of the Foreign Legion"⁴⁶.

These agreements do not only focus on defense and security, but also on fishing. Here is an example of the fisheries agreement between the EU and the UC signed in 2013, the content of which is as follows:

⁴³ Caminade, P. (2010). "Comores-France : l'insoutenable légèreté du pouvoir."

⁴⁴ Comorian name fast fishing boats of 7 m long, flat bottom equipped with two engines.

⁴⁵ (2014). "Mayotte Coopération franco-comorienne relative à la circulation des personnes Un projet d'accord bilatéral et les étapes préliminaires." from <http://www.gisti.org/spip.php?article4656>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The first Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Comoros dates from 1988⁴⁷.

The Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Comoros covers the period from 1.1.2005 to 31.12.2011. It has been tacitly renewed for seven years. The protocol covers the period from 1.1.2014 to 30.12.2016. This agreement allows EU watercraft to come mainly from Spain, France and Portugal to fish in Comorian seas. It is part of the network of agreements on tuna fishing in the Indian Ocean⁴⁸.

This agreement allows 62 watercrafts (42 tuna seiners and 20 long liners) from the EU to fish in Comorian seas for a renewable period of 7 years⁴⁹.

It can be seen that Union of Comoros does not control European boats fishing in Comorian seas because of lack of logistical means. So the Comorian government does not exactly know the amount of tuna fished by Europeans. In addition the EU is not committed to developing the Comorian fishing industry, because from time to time, it will be lost this wealth.

This is the reason that the EU is opposed to any Comorian project used to develop the Comorian fishing industry. The fishing project of the Arab League, which is used to industrialize cormorant fishing, is a concrete example. As a result, the EU is obliged to do everything possible to prevent this project by influencing direct and indirect the Comorian authorities to abandon this project.

It can be said, therefore, that the support agreements for the development, peace, and defense of the UC by France and the EU are understandings that allow to the UC to follow the demands of France and the EU, and to make the Comorian population increasingly poor. Thus, to convince the international opinion that the Comoros island of Mayotte belongs to France.

3.2.5. USE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

It is no secret that international organizations became tools of influence of the super and the great powers toward small States. These super and great powers seek to divide among them top offices for those international organizations, began from the UN Secretary General to other organizations such as the World Bank and FMI. Each organization is headed by citizens of those super and great powers or those who accomplish the agendas of them.

If we turn to the role of France in these organizations, she plays a big role in controlling the policies of small countries, especially their former colonies. For example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was previously

⁴⁷ européenne, c. "Accord de partenariat dans le secteur de la pêche, Comores." from https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/international/agreements/comoros_fr

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ali, Y. B. (2015). "accords de pêche conclu entre l'UE et les Comores : un vrai fiasco."

headed by both France citizens (Dominique Strauss-Kahn, and then by Christian La Garde). So, France accomplishes its agenda in their former colonies (including the state of the Comoros) across the organization.

Through these organizations, France imposes programs on their former colonies that they cannot support them, such as the structural adjustment program imposed by the IMF in Comoros, which serves to limit public service employers in the 1990s.

In addition, regarding the crisis of separatism in the island of Anjouan, France could bring weapons to help the separatists to persist in front of the AND, in this island, by using a helicopter bearing the logo of the France red cross.

On the other hand, in 2011, the small ports program is provided by the Fatma Foundation in Dubai; as he confirmed the President A.A.M. Sambu in Mutsamudu, capital of the island of Anjouan, a few weeks before he leave the power to his successor President Ikililou Dhoinine, he said that "I say to you today, as President of the Union of Comoros, that the Comorian Government has benefited a donation from the Foundation Fatma based in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, headed by Iranians, for an amount of EURO 2 billion"⁵⁰.

The President A.A.M.Sambu insisted in his speech the objective and the conditions of the grant of this fund:

"What I would like to insist on is the conditions for the granting of these funds, among these conditions, of course, it was necessary first, that it is the State which is the applicant; Secondly, these funds are intended to help the people of Comoros and the basic infrastructure of our country that I keep talking about in areas where we have the most difficulty. Among the conditions, there is, thirdly, the realization of the projects by foreign companies [...] we have been granted funds, but we are not given funds, that's mean, this billion will reach us in the form of projects but not in the form of remittance. I accepted this because the essential for us is to see the realization of the ports, airports, hospitals, schools, roads. So, I accepted that we do not even get a penny. Therefore, these funds will be used to:

1. Develop a comprehensive education system for the country from primary school to university to ensure sufficient education for future generations.
2. Develop several hospital centres in the Union of Comoros capable of providing a minimum of health care for the population.

⁵⁰ Speech of Missiri" pronounced in national language by the President of the Republic, on the occasion of the Maoulid Barzangui ceremony organized in Mutsamudu Anjouan on May 20, 2011, Translated from the Comorian in French by the communication services of the Presidency of the Union of Comoros, you find the full speech in this website: <http://archives-lepost.huffingtonpost.fr/article/2011/05/25/2506047-comores-integralite-du-discours-de-missiri-du-president-sambu.html>

3. Develop a public system matures and robust of maritime transport between the islands of the Union, to improve new routes in the islands of the Union.
4. Develop geothermal and hydraulic energy to ensure clean and green energy.
5. Develop a mature and robust air transport network.
6. This project will provide to the public capability of communication at the national and international level.

Thus, among the selected projects, it is the construction of four small ports in the islands”⁵¹.

Henceforth, these projects are failure by the France through the IMF, who's Executive Director was Dominique Strauss Kahn. The IMF has forced the Comorian government to open a bank account in France for good control of this money. Whereas the deposit of the money was directed, as he confirmed the president A.A.M.Sambi on its conditions, from this foundation, to the bank accounts of the companies which ensured the progress of these projects. So, this is the way for France to stop these projects.

Add to that, France does not only utilize the international organizations to keep the interests of the international fund, but sometimes, France used the United Nations Development Program, which is in the capital, to enforce its projects in the country. According to the (UNDP) guardian, there was clear coordination between France and (UNDP) in a coup d'état that overthrown by President Said Mohamed Djohar in 1995⁵².

On the other hand, for using international organizations, in 2016, France was finally designated coordinating body of the global partnership for education in Comoros. At the end of several hours of meeting, Mr. Robby Judes, (former Ambassador of France to the Comoros union) said to Comorian responsible that “you can count on the Embassy of France to look hard for new partners and get the best for the Development of Comoros, particularly in the education”⁵³.

4. CONCLUSION

To sum up, France's influence in the Comoros was included in all vital administrations, taking a variety of different methods, depending on the

⁵¹ SAMBI, A. A. M. (2011). Speech of MISSIRI. C. people. MISSIRI Mutsamudu Anjouan the communication services of the Presidency of the Union of Comoros.

⁵² Mahamoud Ahamada (Papa Jean-Marie), among the guards of UNDP at this time, he explained that they were warned by the responsible for the UNDP before the night of the coup of states, it has informed not to be afraid if they have heard a strange thing in the night, Words collected by the author in the public place of Mirereni, May 2014, between 12H to 14h.

⁵³ Comores, A. d. a. e. U. d. (2016). "La France désignée agence de coordination du Partenariat Mondial pour l'Education aux Comores." from <http://www.ambafrance-km.org/La-France-designee-agence-de-coordination-du-Partenariat-Mondial-pour-l>.

objectives fixed by the France administration. This influence has led to intimidation and threats, and sometimes, killing anyone who says no to France influence in internal affairs. Some former presidents have tried to oppose this influence, or simply to soften it after asserting that France has no intention to help really the islands, but they didn't resist; the President Ali Soilih was killed because he exposed France in the country in 1975 to 1978, and he adopted its policy toward socialism, then the father of independence, President Ahmed Abdallah Abdourahmane, was killed as soon as he intended to move his policy toward the East. The president was then arrested and then expelled from the country. Then, The President Mr. Said Mohammed Djohar arrested and then expelled his policy towards the Arabs. Finally, Lieutenant-Colonel Combo Ayouba who was the chief of guard of President A.A.M.Sambi assassinated, because of his refusal to execute outside agendas, according to President A.A.M.Sambi.

It is known to the Comoros citizens that France has destabilized the country since independence by implementing or supporting unsuccessful coup d'état and rebellion, and joint cooperation agreements between the two countries which are in favour of the colonizer.

On the other hand, this influence has been included in government departments; so that, those who want to oppose France policy are dismissed from office if they are ministers, directors or secretaries.

Finally, the voices of the new generation have recently begun to rise against this influence. But the road is long, especially the discovery of natural gas in a huge amount with other minerals in the islands, and a great potential for the presence of oil. For that, France will not be able to abandon easily this wealth in the country.

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Mohamed Said Assoumani, Abdallah Mourtafhoi– **France's influence on the Union of Comoros: Negative impacts**

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