Peace, Power-Sharing and Citizen Inclusion

Lessons for and from Bosnia and Herzegovina

7 October 2025 - University of Mostar
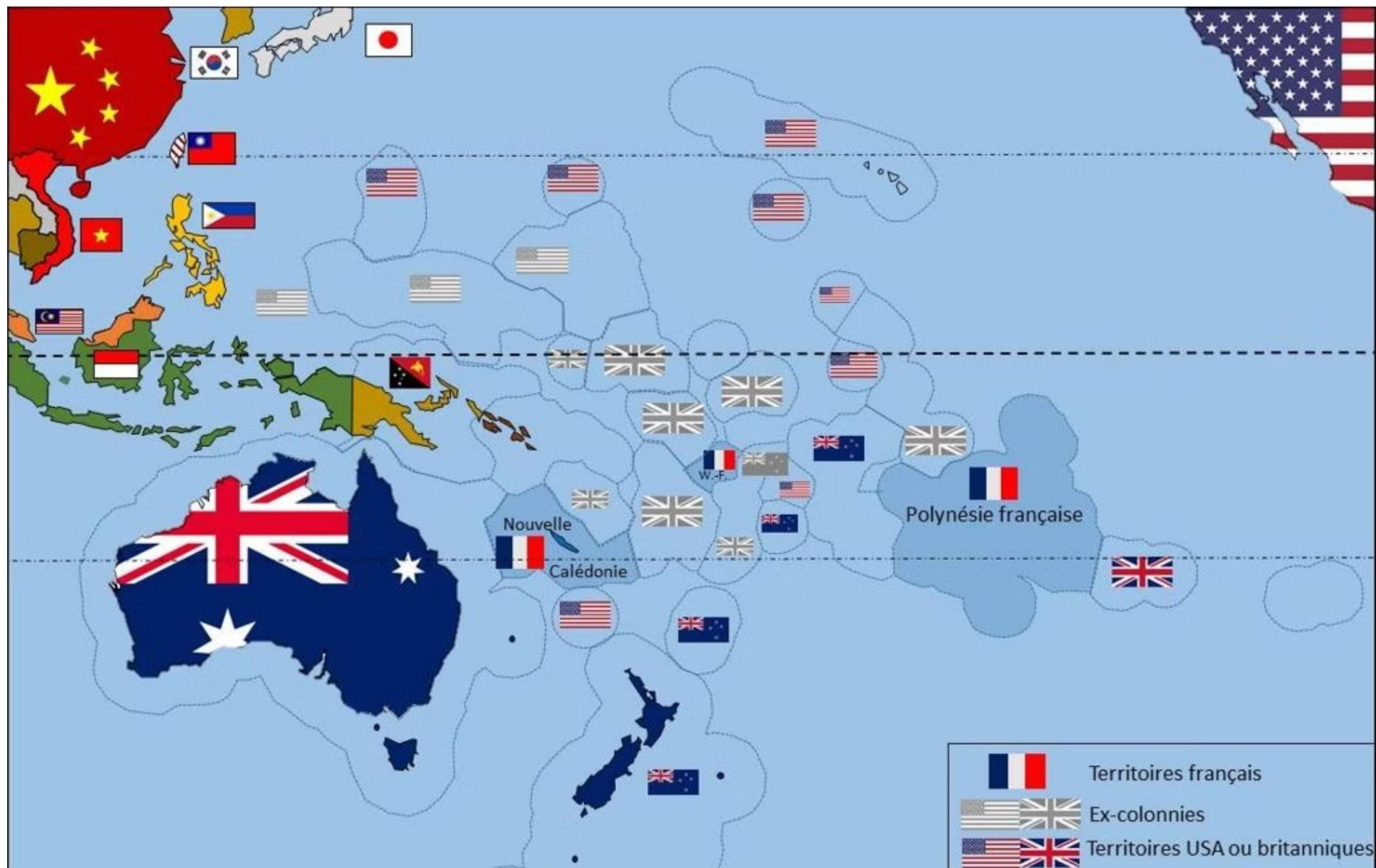
9-10 October 2025 - University of Sarajevo

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Power-Sharing in Kanaky–New Caledonia: Between Internal and External Decolonization

By Pr Mathias Chauchat - University of New Caledonia

Examining comparative lessons from peace agreements through the lens of institutional deadlock, reform implementation failures, and growing public distrust within the Nouméa Accord's legacy. Despite ongoing crisis, pathways to resolution remain.
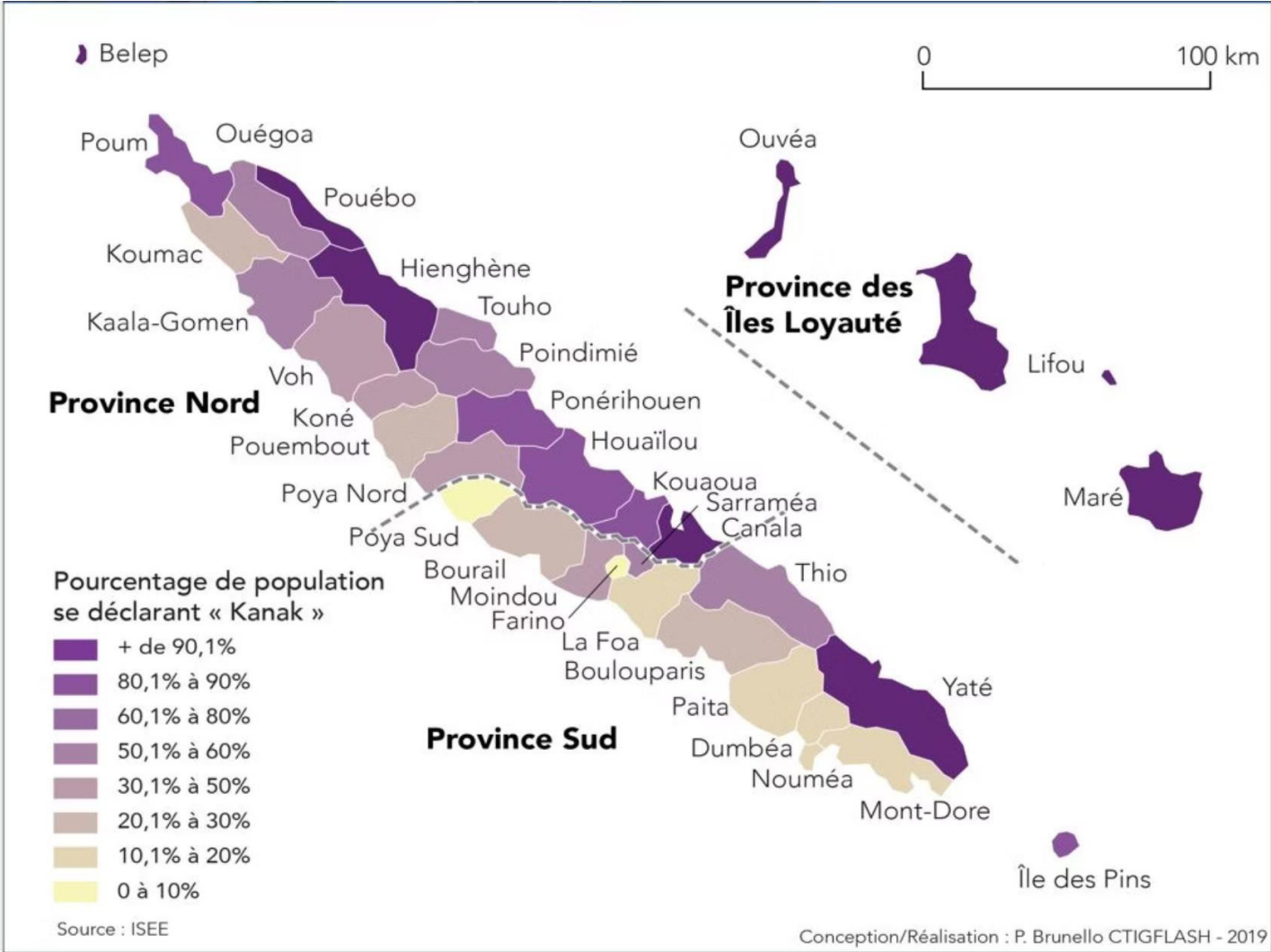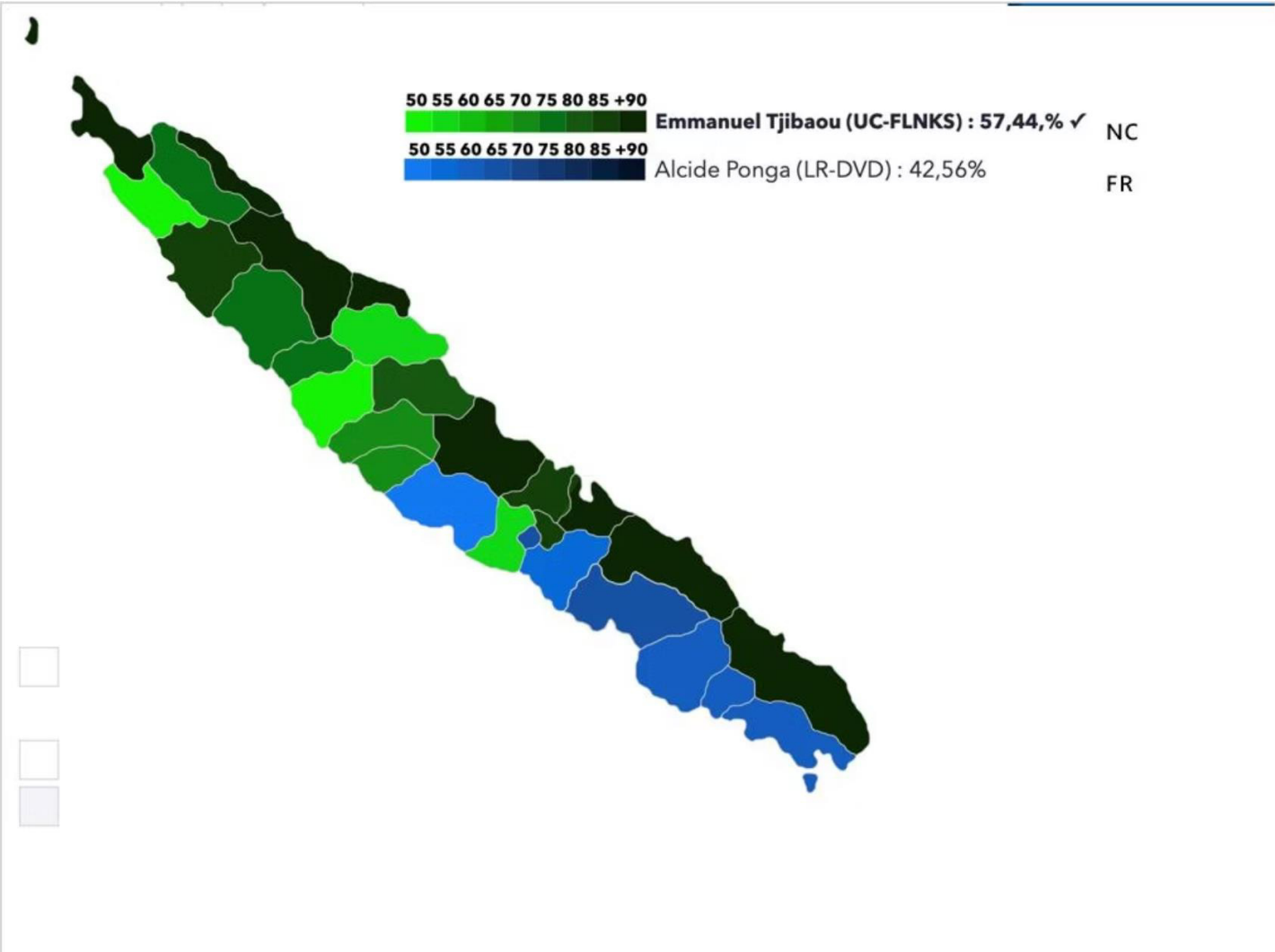
Kanaky–New Caledonia in the Pacific Context

A French collectivity situated in the heart of Melanesia,
New Caledonia represents a unique case study in decolonisation processes within the Pacific region.

Electoral Geography and Identity

The correlation between demographic distribution and voting patterns reveals the profound ethnic dimensions of Kanaky-New Caledonian politics.

Kanak Population Distribution
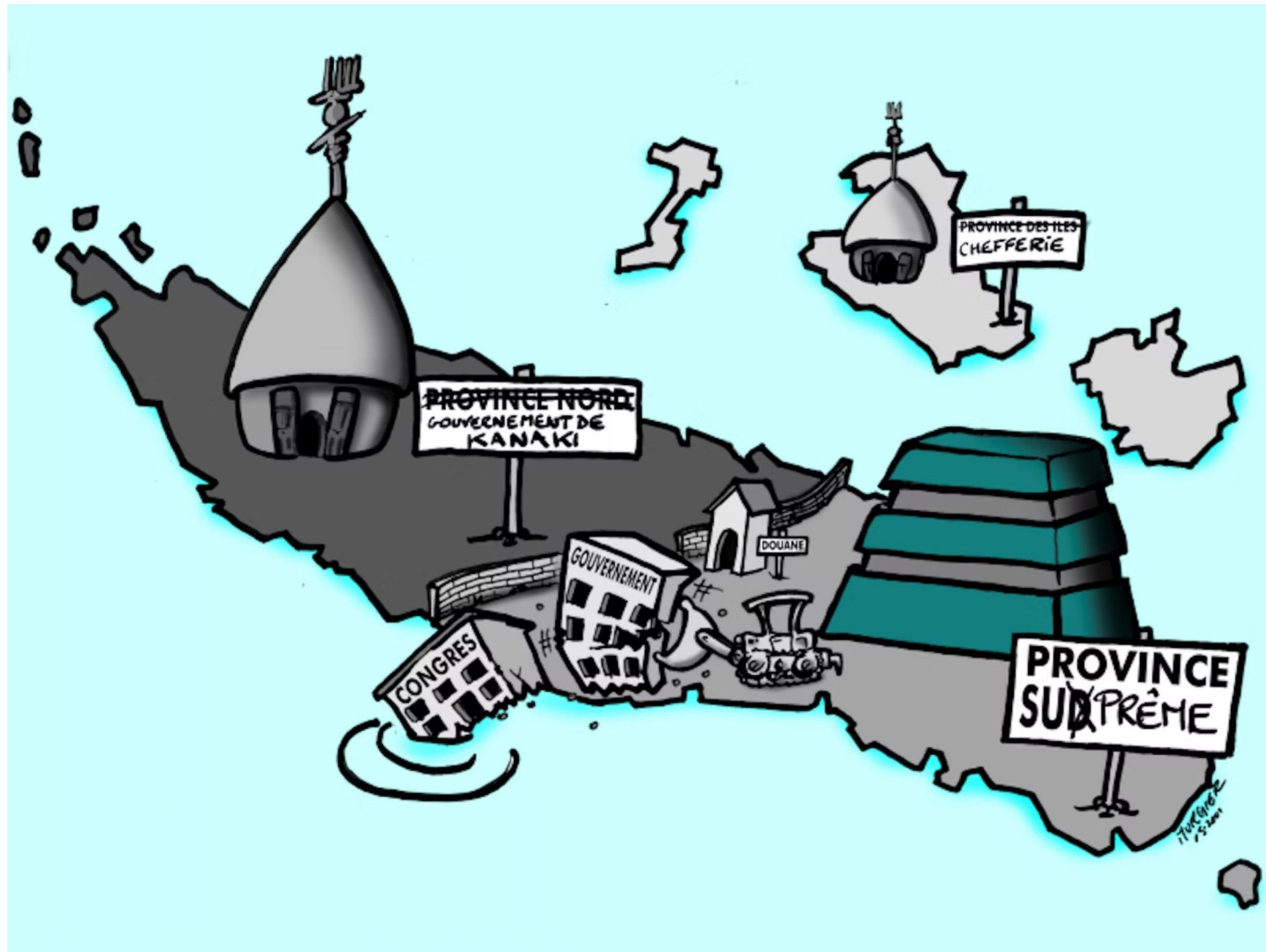
Independence vs Loyalist Vote

Recent Events and Social Tensions

The events of May 2024 marked a significant escalation in Kanaky-New Caledonia's ongoing political crisis, highlighting the fragility of existing arrangements.

Provincial System and Institutional Architecture

New Caledonia's three-province structure represents an attempt to balance ethnic representation with territorial governance

Key Research Findings

Research on Kanaky–New Caledonia resonates strongly with studies on divided societies, revealing universal patterns and unique challenges.

1

Unity Challenges

The difficulty of forging a unified people.
Faced with the risk of "separate development", priority should be given to building a civic identity rather than ethnonationalism.

2

Political Deadlock

Systematic institutional paralysis occurs without political agreement. The only viable path forward lies in fostering consensus while avoiding any forced timetable.

3

The impossibility of resolving political conflicts through voting

Elections must be maintained under the existing rules, while resisting the temptation to alter the system in advance of each vote, which only deepens mistrust.

4

A costly and dysfunctional governance system

The most reasonable approach is to reconstruct a functional political system centered on the country's common institutions, thereby fostering a shared Oceanian identity.

5

A pathological relationship with France

It is now time to uphold international law and UN resolutions by seeking a political compromise between the country's two identities, in the form of an independent-associated State.

May 2024: A Turning Point

The events of May 2024 crystallised long-simmering tensions and exposed the limitations of existing institutional arrangements.

May 2024: Confrontation

Lessons for Public Policy

1

Civic Identity Over Ethnonationalism

Prioritise coexistence through solidarity policies, historical education, and cultural exchanges rather than ethnic separation.

2

Consensus Without Imposed Timetables

Embrace Oceania's deliberative culture where consultation prevents costly mistakes and builds lasting agreements.

3

Electoral Stability

Maintain consistent electoral rules to preserve democratic vitality whilst avoiding pre-election manipulation.

4

Functional Governance

Rebuild political systems around common institutions to foster shared Oceanian identity and social cohesion.

5

Independence in Association

Accept the principle of free association as demonstrated in successful Oceanian decolonisations.