



Options for Bougainville's Autonomy Arrangement: A Study from a Global Comparative Perspective

This study aims to provide insights regarding the substance of autonomy regimes worldwide with a view considering autonomy arrangements including independence for Bougainville.

First, we will examine the question why and how autonomy arrangements come into being. This requires a discussion of the arguments that national governments commonly use in favor or against the establishment of autonomy regimes, as well as an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of such regimes. This part of the study will be followed by a comparative overview of the manifold types of autonomy: mainland and island autonomies, asymmetrical and symmetrical autonomy, as well as owned and shared autonomy.

Being aware of the defining characteristics and constraints of these types seems crucial for any discussion of Bougainville's status. On this basis, we will then assess its current autonomy arrangement within Papua New Guinea from a comparative perspective. This assessment will provide a basis for us to highlight alternative options between this status quo and full independence.

As we do not believe, based on our experience, that a transplantation of any "model" arrangement as a whole is feasible, the exploration of alternative options focuses on three key elements of autonomy that appear to be particularly relevant for Bougainville: (1) the entrenchment and implementation of autonomy, (2) autonomous powers, as well as (3) intergovernmental cooperation and conflict management.

At last, we will offer some final considerations on the options for Bougainville's future status in the concluding remarks. This study is undertaken by three (3) authors.