



The Legacy of Colonialism and Ecological Genocide on Indigenous People of Nauru

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ABSTRACT

This paper explains the connection between colonialism, environmental destruction, capitalism, and dependency in Nauru. Nauru is an extreme example of how the legacy of colonialism has had a destructive impact on the indigenous people. In the case of Nauru, Pivot is the collapse of the symbiotic relationship between humans and the environment. There has been limited research on the impact of colonialism and ecological destruction on indigenous people, especially in international relations scholarship. The analysis of Nauru represents a microcosm of the conflict between environmental sustainability and the commercial economy. Nauru has undergone environmental injustice for decades and has delivered a prolonged impact of dietary problems and health crises. I argue that the current Nauruan national crisis and economic stagnation have resulted from its complex history of colonialism and the failure of post-colonial successive governments to escape from the former colonial ruler's structurally induced dependency.

INTRODUCTION

Situated in the Pacific Ocean to the northeast of Australia, the Republic of Nauru is 21 km, one of the smallest island nations in the world. Its population is approximately 11,000, of which ninety percent are indigenous people.

In 1905, the German Chancellor granted the Pacific Phosphate Company to mine Nauru's phosphate. From 1907 until the end of World War I (when Germany lost Nauru), approximately 630,000 tons of phosphate were mined from Nauru. The value of this phosphate was estimated to be about one million pounds sterling. The indigenous Nauruans received about 1300 or less than one seven-hundredth of its value from this amount. At the end of World War I, Nauru was under the mandate of the League of Nations. Three nations (Australia, New Zealand, and Great Britain) administered Nauru. Following World War II, the island's administration came under the trusteeship of the United Nations, also carried out by the three mandate nations. After almost two decades of negotiations, Nauru attained independence on January 31, 1968. From 1920 until 1968, Australia administered Nauru de facto throughout the mandate period. From 1919 until 1968, approximately 34 million tons of phosphate (valued at about 300 million Australian dollars) were mined from Nauru. The extraction continued after independence. The remaining phosphate reserves are estimated to be exhausted soon after 2000 (Gowdy & McDaniel, 1999, p. 334).

The story of Nauru in the 20th century is a story of phosphates, environmental damage, and the ups and downs of the economy. The 1900 discovery shaped Nauru's future: the presence of phosphate, a mineral widely used for fertilization. With the discovery of phosphate, Nauru became a nation of great interest to the big colonial powers of the time. The end of the 20th century is a tragic story of phosphate depletion exacerbated by an incompetent government squandering the

island nation's wealth through unproductive investments and corrupt practices. As a result, Nauru's culture has been destroyed, and its people have become dependent on the welfare state schemes and the destruction of its land. Excessive mining that did not consider the sustainability of the ecosystem, most of the land and vegetation had been stripped away by colonial powers working with local people, making it impossible to do agriculture, a life-sustaining activity as they did in the past. This practice left Nauru barren deserts and bare lands devoid of minerals, with most of the population suffering from various diseases due to poor diet.

Nauru was the first signatory to Vienna's Convention on Climate Change in 1985 (UNFCCC, 1999). The government has put concern for the environment, and sustainable development is at the top of the country's agenda. Nauru's environmental agenda is one of the first steps to address other issues. The signing of the convention must be followed by various concrete steps to overcome the national crisis, such as law enforcement, reducing corruption, increasing women's role, empowering community organizations, strengthening civil society, and the inclusion of local leaders, and improvement of education.

The case of Nauru is unique in several respects. First, since phosphate is the primary source of state income, Nauru is utterly dependent on this natural resource, and the country has not diversified into other export sources. Secondly, excessive dependence on one resource makes Nauru a prosperous country; however, since phosphate ran out, Nauru has become one of the poorest countries in the world, which relies on state income through foreign debt. Third, cultural penetration through lifestyle changes, in this case, the habit of consuming food and drink, is a continuous colonization, which is not realized and is even widely accepted by society. Fourth, the ecological crisis resulting from excessive mining is a disaster caused by invaders, which leaves long-term damage to the local population, even threatening the country's future.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach by collecting data through library research. Qualitative methods I use in this research refer to data collection and analysis strategies that rely upon collecting and analyzing non-numeric data (Lamont, 2015). Data collection is primarily internet-based and document-based, including a visual method to help me illuminate and understand what has happened in Nauru. I employ library research through the internet to get in-depth information about a country where hard copy is rare or unavailable in the library due to the unpopularity of this topic or lack of scholarly research about this country. With this approach, I carefully examine relevant information to determine the data's usefulness and reliability regarding this research. The research takes Nauru as a case study to examine the nexus between several variables: colonialism, environmentalism, and crisis. Taking Nauru as a case study allows us to learn a lesson and how the experience of Nauru provides an example of a total loss should we ignore the environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Colonialism and Ecological Genocide

This section looks at available research on the connection between the long legacy of colonialism in the form of ecological injustices for the indigenous people. According to Wulf Kilmann, Chairperson of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Climate Change, if there is a natural food crisis, climate change will disrupt four dimensions of food, namely food availability,

access to food, food benefits, and food system stability (FAO, 2008b, iii). The food crisis will also impact health, living assets, food production, distribution channels, purchasing power, and market flows. The first victims of the food crisis are those in a condition of vulnerability and food insecurity. Agricultural systems already vulnerable to food insecurity face various threats, such as increased crop failures, new patterns of pests and diseases, loss of appropriate seeds, and loss of livestock. Food systems will also be affected by internal and international migration. In many places, climate change can cause resource conflicts and civil unrest. Even if this has not yet happened in Nauru, a similar conflict may hit this country if the symptoms stemming from food insecurity are not addressed immediately.

The Unequal Ecological Exchange shows that wealthy countries benefit from the global economy and are more likely to profit from trade (Hornborg & Martinez-Alier, 2016). (Shandra, Shor, & London, 2009) argue that this advantage facilitates an imbalance in the access of rich countries to natural resources and the erosion of the ecological capacity of poor countries. According to (Jorgenson, 2006) rich countries can shift many negative externalities to the environment related to their natural resource demands to poor countries (Keating, 2011). Rich colonial countries prefer to exploit the natural resources of poor countries to meet the needs of these resources but still maintain the environment of their home countries and allow environmental degradation in colonized countries such as Nauru.

This activity is mainly done through the "vertical flow" of raw materials and manufactured goods from poor to rich countries. Multinational companies or partnerships carry out these activities between indigenous elites and import companies in rich countries (Keating, 2011). When foreigners own the miners, they mine on a large scale and sell the phosphate at below-market prices to their own country. Jorgensen (2006) says that measured export flows significantly result in deforestation and natural degradation. To meet export needs, the mining process is carried out on a large scale or, according to Schnaiberg and Gould, called the "Treadmill of Production." (Schnaiberg & Gould, 1994) believe the "Treadmill of Production" is the leading cause of environmental problems (Shandra et al., 2009). To maintain increased profits, producers must continuously increase production. The government also supports increased production because it will increase tax revenues, thus funding government programs. A continuous increase in production will increase environmental degradation in various forms by placing more and more demands on natural resources and increasing natural degradation (Shandra et al., 2009).

There is a strong connection between ecocide and genocide (Crook et al., 2018; Dunlap, 2018). The extractive industries brought on ecological destruction. The primary driver of genocide is ecological collapse and dependency of the human race on the biosphere, which will lead to natural and manufactured ecocide. On the other side of the problem is the capitalist land grabs carried out by extractive industries by annexing indigenous land. The destruction of ecology, particularly by 'external' capitalist actors, severely damaged nature, society, and its culture. The industrial mining that destroyed nature and society represents industrial-structural forces. The criminology against nature in the form of overexploitation of land and water and disruption of the people, culture, and land of the indigenous people 'can all have ecocidal and genocidal consequences for vulnerable indigenous peoples who are materially and spiritually dependent upon endangered environments' (Dunlap, 2018, p. 557).

The environmental crisis in the colonies' ecology is a consequence of colonialism. Imperial expansion heavily relied on the widespread exploitation of colonies' natural resources, thus creating environmental destruction. The ecological damage carried out by the colonial power is often

referred to as 'environmental colonialism.' Environmental studies scholars sometimes use the terms "environmental colonialism," "neocolonialism," and "ecological imperialism" interchangeably. This concept refers to the various ways colonial practices have impacted the natural environments of indigenous peoples. The colonialists succeeded partly because they could amend the native ecosystems (Crosby, 1993). Similarly, Stoll (2018) asserts that colonial powers exacerbated the problem by creating a global infrastructure that encouraged wealthier countries to extract natural resources from poorer peripheral countries while simultaneously destabilizing what were often sustainable native cultures. The colonial power introduced the indigenous people to capitalism through the foreign market while also restricting the natives from the ability to defend themselves against foreign intervention. Environmental damage caused by colonialism is not always intentional, but its effects cannot be undermined. Recovery from the damage done to native ecosystems proved difficult for indigenous populations. (Nixon, 2011) explains how Western environmentalists inadvertently harmed native ecosystems through preservation efforts intended to repair the harm done by colonialism.

As an illustration of the severity of environmental crime in Nauru, the Nauru area is generally divided into two parts, namely 'topside' and 'bottom side.' Before phosphate mining began, the topside was covered by a lush tropical rainforest dominated by mahogany and pandanus trees. Meanwhile, the bottom side is where the people of Nauru live. Today, the topside leaves nothing but a barren desert that does not allow vegetation to grow. These small exploited countries are, in fact, "locked" into ecological collapse to supply overconsumption to the affluent of the capitalist world economy (Howell, 2007). Rich countries enjoy the results of resources; conversely, poor, exploited countries suffer tremendous damage to nature.

Colonialism has prevented the Nauruans from enjoying everyday life since they no longer have fertile soil for agriculture. In the long run, this problem has resulted in a national crisis, which raises dependency questions against its colonial ruler. The nexus between colonialism and ecological destruction in Nauru is clear.

The Mining Industry and Ecological Crisis

Colonization harms the ecosystems of colonizing territory. It is not uncommon for indigenous people to be forced to confront settlers who use land, animals, and natural resources excessively, and the population cannot fight back. Colonists who focused on exploiting natural resources rather than settling are referred to as 'mercantile colonialism,' as happened during France's occupation of Haiti and Vietnam (Sennott, 2020), the same thing happened in Nauru. The impact of global imperialism is vast on the ecology of colonizing territory since the colonizers did not care about the welfare of the native population (Rawat & Gaurav, 2023). Even the climate emergency directly impacted colonial activities, which continued under the post-colonial regime, with active support (material and logistical) from previous colonial countries (Castellino, 2020).

The discovery of phosphates and large-scale mining has permanently destroyed the culture and traditional way of life of the Nauruan people (Shenon, 1995). Continuous phosphate mining leaves the country almost empty land. Tropical vegetation and humus have been suspended for decades, bringing people about limestone corals (Fraser & Nguyen, 2005). This imbalance also refers to "ecological dumping," which means selling a resource whose price does not include compensation funds for damage to natural resources (Martinez-Alier, 2004). As a result, the natural environment in Nauru is damaged, and it is hard to rehabilitate. The ex-mining land has been turned into limestone rock. Most of the land has turned arid, dusty, and barren, so this area is

uninhabitable. The loss of vegetation has created a sweltering interior. Rising hot air has prevented the settling of rain clouds that can rain, which in turn contributes to frequent droughts on the island. In addition, natural forest microclimates have transformed into new types of microclimates that increase sunlight and decrease humidity (Weeramantry, 1992). These changes have altered vegetation patterns and endangered many native plant species. Due to soil erosion, the way of life of the Nauruans and their surroundings has also been eroded. Climate change in Nauru is primarily the result of environmental damage through excessive human intervention.

The depletion of phosphates leaves limited political and economic options available to the people of Nauru as they bear the direct burden associated with seemingly irreparable environmental damage. The devastating impact of environmental degradation on the health and future well-being of the people of Nauru is also tragic. The problem of land shortages due to mining is one of the many pressing social problems in Nauru. Almost all environmental problems faced by Nauru resulted from colonial practices in the past. Nearly all of Nauru has been mined to provide phosphate for fertilizer, and it was an economical source for Australia.

Due to the confiscation of resources, Nauru is now nothing more than dry land with the highest population of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes worldwide (Nazzal, 2005, p. 16). Nauru's ecosystem is currently experiencing destruction compared to other Pacific islands, and several native species are extinct. Despite the loss of biodiversity, phosphate mines continue to operate under the supervision of the Nauruan government. What has been done by the Nauruan government is proof that there is nothing left of Nauru other than phosphate residues, which are still being mined because they no longer have natural resources that they can use to survive. In other words, they no longer choose to support themselves other than utilizing the remnants of phosphate, which is still the foundation of their hope for life. The environmental damage to the island was so severe that Nauru sued Australia in the International Court of Justice. As a result of 'crimes against the environment, Nauru took the case to the International Court of Justice in The Hague (ICJ, 1990). However, Australia settled the dispute with Nauru 1990 over compensation for 90 years of phosphate mining on the tiny Pacific island. Australia will pay Nauru \$120 million over 20 years as an out-of-court settlement (newscientist.com, 1993). However, the money was insufficient to repair all damages, and entering 2000, Nauru was bankrupt. The island remains beset by financial hardship. The government has no money to pay the salaries of civil servants or to fund the welfare state they established when they had all the money. Nauru has no tax, so acquiring public funds is complex without reliable exports (diabetes.co.uk., 2019).

The ecological damage by the mining industry has been irreversible. The Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) reported that environmental issues in Nauru include limited natural freshwater resources. The indigenous population depends on roof rainwater tanks and an aging desalination plant. In addition, excessive phosphate mining in almost a century has left 90% of the center of Nauru a mining wasteland. Primary phosphate resources were exhausted in 2006; however, deep-layer secondary phosphates will continue to be mined over the next 30 years. The rehabilitation of mined land and the replacement of income from phosphate exportation are severe pressures Nauru faces (The Pacific Regional Environment Programme/SPREP, 2016).

The Reliefweb (2021) noted that climate change in Nauru has resulted from severe conditions, including warming, and is expected to warm throughout the 21st century. The sea level in Nauru has been rising faster than the global average and is projected to increase throughout the 21st century. While Nauru has a higher elevation than some Pacific Island nations, long-term sea-level rise threatens coastal livelihoods and infrastructure. Furthermore, due to climate change, coral

bleaching is a significant risk to the country's ecology and economy and is part of a global picture of coral loss. The near-shore fisheries are likely to decline, while deep-sea fisheries face an uncertain future. In addition, Nauru has an unusual and precarious socioeconomic situation, leading to poverty and poor health issues. Adaptation and disaster risk reduction efforts are hampered by Nauru's lack of economic independence and its inaccessible location.

The Beginning of Recolonisation

Nauru gained independence on 31 January 1968, making it the world's smallest republic. The founding president was Hammer DeRoburt. In 1967, he purchased the assets of the British Phosphate Commissioners and passed control to the locally owned Nauru Phosphate Corporation in 1970. Through the money made from phosphate extraction, Nauru became the second most prosperous country in the world per capita. It had the highest living standards in the Third World, which made the country prosper during this period.

Like many other post-colonial countries, Nauru continued its colonial strategy of natural resource extraction. Colonialism symbolizes destroying the symbiotic relationship between the people and their land. It undermines the inherent belief that previous generations had instilled in them the importance of preserving natural resources. This section highlights the interrelated changing lifestyle in Nauru: the 'westernization' and dietary habits.

Conceptually, Westernization is defined as "the adoption of the practices and culture of Western Europe by societies and countries in other parts of the world, whether through compulsion or influence. Westernization reached much of the world as part of the process of colonialism and continues to be a significant cultural phenomenon as a result of globalization" (Britannica Dictionary (online), 2018). Another definition of Westernization is "the process of westernizing a person or a country (= causing ideas or ways of life that are common in North America and Western Europe to be more used and accepted)" (Cambridge Dictionary (online), 2020).

Entering independence, Nauru did not have the autonomy to set up as an independent country. Nauru is heavily dependent on Australia. Intense market penetration causes the people of Nauru to dare to adopt the Western lifestyle. To a certain extent, Westernization has become the lifestyle desired by the people of Nauru. The declining phosphate deposits, high dependence on these natural resources, and extravagant lifestyles make Nauru's economy bleak. They face difficulty choosing between maintaining phosphates or creating a more durable lifestyle without becoming dependent on phosphate. If the chain of dependence on phosphates cannot be broken, then Nauru will forever be in a state of crisis, a condition that holds no hope for future generations.

Changing natural conditions lead to changing lifestyles. In early February 2011, The Lancet British Medical Journal stated that obesity rates worldwide had increased significantly over the last three decades (Keating, 2011). The phenomenon of overweight and obesity is common in countries with an unhealthy diet. Nauru is known to have the highest rates of obese inhabitants globally. Studies by (Streib, 2007), (Marks, 2013), (Laurance, 2011) and (Nishiyama, 2017) showed that obesity is a significant problem in Nauru. The WHO estimated that 94.5% of Nauruans were identified as overweight and obese, with an obesity rate of 71.7%.

According to the World Health Organization, obesity in Nauru is estimated at over 70% of the island nation's population. In addition, the island is plagued by high rates of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, and over 40% of the country's population suffers from type 2 diabetes

(Kageyama, 2021). Furthermore, Marks (2010) and Nishiyama (2012) noted that from the 1980s, Nauruans led a sedentary lifestyle with an unhealthy diet. This diet has contributed to the worst health problems in the Pacific. In the past, the food sources of Nauruans were fishing and gardening. However, the traditional Nauruan diet was taken directly from nature, including marine fish, fruits, root vegetables, and coconuts.

The diet of the Nauruans naturally changed as drastic changes influenced its vegetation. The indigenous Nauruan people are very dependent on nature, where food sources are usually obtained from nature. When nature is destroyed, the native community will no longer obtain food from nature. The people of Nauru experienced a change in acquiring food sources that initially came from nature to imported food, mainly fast food or junk food. As a result of the phosphate industry, fish and coconut, once the Nauruans' daily diet, have been replaced mainly by salty and fatty canned foods.

The change in consumption patterns through environmental and cultural channels due to the entry of foreign phosphate mining companies to Nauru impacts the current state of Nauru. Significant changes occurred in the level of health, especially in terms of weight. As previously stated, the local people of Nauru have a biological tendency to eat large amounts of food (Owen, 2011). For indigenous Nauruan, being big is a traditional symbol of prosperity. This is the original culture of the local Nauruan people and has become a hereditary belief. They assume that the fatter a person is, the richer they look. However, this local belief is not the core issue. In the past, the people of Nauru ate healthy and naturally derived foods such as vegetables, fruit, and fish. In addition, the culture of the people of Nauru is unique. Clive Moore, a Pacific Region specialist from the University of Queensland, said that the Micronesian population on Nauru has a biological predisposition to overeat (Owen, 2011). However, in the past, they consumed natural and healthy food. They fed the family according to their livelihood at that time. Their original livelihood is farming and fishing. Even though they consume much food, their posture remains stable and healthy.

The consumption culture of the indigenous Nauruan people with natural foods such as seafood and agricultural products began to shift slowly with the entry of low-quality imported food. Healthy and natural foods such as fruit, vegetables, and fish, which have initially been staple foods for Nauruans, have shifted to fast food such as processed canned meat, fried chicken, potato chips (snacks and the like), soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, and other products.

The people of Nauru grew extravagant by importing basic foodstuffs such as rice, sugar, flour, soda, beer, and other western fast food to meet their needs (Keating 2011). Most food imported into Nauru is fast food in canned, various soft drinks, and alcoholic beverages. Sources adapt this data from FAOSTAT (Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations). Foodstuffs imported to Nauru are pretty typical of Western food consumption patterns. This indirectly affects the food consumption patterns of the local people of Nauru. Colonized people tend to imitate modern labels and slowly begin to be acculturated.

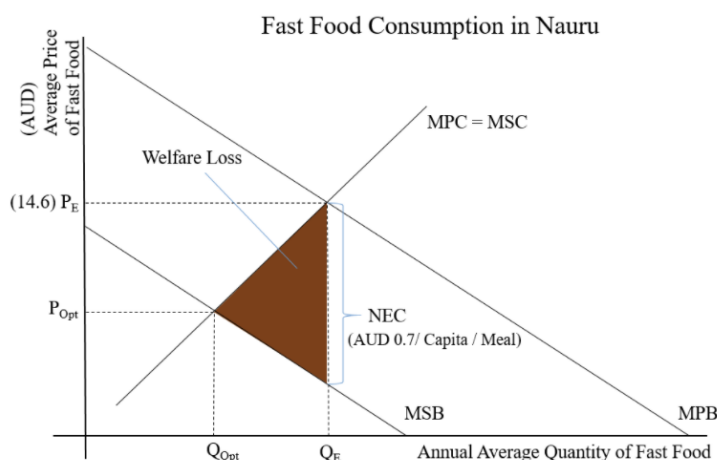
However, since the vegetation and the entire ecosystem were disrupted, the consumption pattern of the Nauruan people changed to fast food, processed food, alcoholic beverages, and soda, which caused various diseases. After experiencing acute environmental degradation, imports are the only way to meet the basic needs of food for the people of Nauru. Imported food import shifts the consumption pattern of the Nauruan people in terms of the type of food to be consumed—Nauru imports almost all necessities of life and finished goods, including foodstuffs. In 1996, imports of

goods to Nauru reached US\$ 15.5 million, most of which were imported from Australia and New Zealand (Asian Development Bank. n.d). Over time, the number of importing countries to Nauru increased until 2002. Australia was in first place with a percentage of 47 percent as the country that imported the most to Nauru, followed by the United States in second place with a percentage of 20 percent. Britain is in third place with a percentage of 11 percent, Indonesia is third with 7 percent, and India is fourth with 4 percent. The remaining 11 percent are imported from a mixture of several countries.

The ‘western’ market penetration results in market failure, especially for the indigenous population. According to an investigation by the Boden Institute of Obesity and the Nauruan Ministry of Health and Medical Services (2021), market failure happens “when the market equilibrium for good does not translate to the societal optimum.” Furthermore, the investigation found that “an individual’s benefits derived from fast food might not equate to the society’s benefits derived from that act of consumption.” Consuming junk food in Nauru is less beneficial for the Nauruan society than for a Nauruan individual. Thus, the consumption of it is less desirable from the societal perspective. Obesity impacts public health care costs, loss of workforce capabilities, and any other relevant factors. It is estimated that the current obesity problem is costing the Nauruan society AUD 1.2 Million annually (AUD 747/ Capita / Year) or (AUD 0.7 / Capita / Meal). The figure below incorporates those as mentioned earlier. (nlcshub., 2021)

Figure 1.

Source: <https://nlcshub.com/humanities/1769/> (2021)



Lifestyles and food consumption patterns that tend to follow unhealthy lifestyles are gradually changing the nature of the local Nauruan society until now, which then brought Nauru as a country with the highest obesity rate in the world, which causes various diseases. After the 1960s, the number of beverage imports experienced a somewhat visible dynamic but remained high every year until the early 1990s and began to decline significantly in the late 1990s. The number of imports continued to increase from the late 1960s to the late 1990s because, at that time, Nauru was still a prosperous country and could import fast food ingredients, including soft drinks and beer, which were included in the beverage category. The people who consumed fast food at that time now suffered from obesity. Therefore, the majority were older people and adults recorded in 2010. The culture of consuming fast food and sugary and alcoholic beverages has increased the need to import such foodstuffs and maintained high levels during this period. At this level, the people of Nauru are

already very dependent on and accustomed to foreign food consumption patterns that have undergone a long acculturation process with Nauruan culture. The lifestyle of the indigenous community has been dramatically affected by the consumption pattern of foods high in fat and sugar.

Obesity caused the health level of the residents to decline. Diabetes and other chronic diseases infect people, most of whom are obese. The life expectancy of Nauruans is only 59 years for men and 64 years for women (Owen, 2011). After years of being spoiled by abundant natural wealth, Nauru is now one of the poorest countries. This is a concern for the Nauruan government and a national issue, and this story has become an international concern. Nauru's prosperity is finally just an old story that will never be repeated. Now, they are a society living with a poor quality of life. This is caused by the Nauruans' lifestyle and food consumption patterns, which have turned unhealthy.

Food and eating are cultural products that produce a particular food culture and generally reflect the local culture (Douglas, 1972) (Mäkelä, 2001). Acculturation occurs when foreign cultures can influence diet style. Acculturation is defined as "cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture" and "a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact" (Merriam-Webster.com). In a post-colonial perspective, eating patterns in many countries have changed after people in certain places experienced interactions with 'foreign' cultures, especially the West. Changing eating patterns has health implications, both positive and negative. Modifying diet aimed to adopt a Western diet at a particular stage along with changes in lifestyle, large or small, in certain groups of people. Food acculturation is a form of dietary adjustment from an urban or rural culture that has been adapted to the surrounding environment.

Specifically, acculturation of food patterns is defined as "...the process that occurs when members of a migrating group adopt the eating patterns/food choices of their new environment" (Satia-Abouta, 2003, p. 71). In many cases, acculturation of food patterns occurs when the community adopts "Western" dietary patterns, which tend to be high in fat and low in fruits and vegetables, which is of concern since diet is a potent contributor to chronic disease risk." (Satia-Abouta 2003, 71). The acculturation of food patterns is multidimensional, dynamic, and complex and varies depending on each individual, cultural characteristics, and the surrounding environment. Therefore, to address the negative impacts of food acculturation, it is essential to understand the process and identify the factors that influence and cause food acculturation to occur. Generally, acculturation of food patterns occurs in immigrant communities from non-Western communities who need to adjust to their surroundings. Food acculturation is not a linear process from one end to the other, which is a continuum; that is, acculturation of food patterns is a process that does not eliminate traditional food patterns towards a completely different food pattern. In the case of Nauru, this process took place in such extreme dimensions that it became a national issue. It is undeniable that changes in food patterns are caused by various factors, such as advertisements or shows on television that introduce certain types of food, reading magazines/books, through friends, or listening to the radio. However, the presence of these factors also varies in each community group. The people of Nauru, in general, are not significantly affected by these factors but by ecological crimes and the failure to manage the environment, a phenomenon that can be said to be an anomaly in the issue of food acculturation.

For most of the people of the South Pacific, food has a symbolic economic function. The Pacific Islands were isolated for thousands of years, and the outside world's social, cultural, and

economic patterns were relatively untouched (Zimmet 1979, in Curtis, n.d). When Europeans started arriving in the 17th and 18th centuries, people in the Pacific were described as intense, muscular, and mostly in good health (Hughes, 2003, Curtis, 2004). For local people, food has a symbolic and economic function. In other words, the more significant and vital a person's body symbolizes good socioeconomic conditions. The more they can feed their families, the better their social status. This belief is symbiotic with the entry of Europeans, who brought new habits in food patterns. According to research conducted by Curtis (n.d) and (Hodge, Dowse, & Zimmet, n.d), obesity has become increasingly increasing after the arrival of Europeans to Nauru and other Oceania countries. They came with a diet reinforcing traditional Nauruan beliefs about the parallel relationship between physical and social status. Curtis (n.d, 38) argues,

As the indigenous island populations have replaced their traditional subsistence lifestyle with a more modern way of life, dramatic changes have occurred. Consequently, commercial island ventures tend to stock these high-fat, energy-dense foods. Over time, purchasing these imported goods has become a sign of social status in the community, and traditional foods have decreased in importance.

The loss of traditional food as a supplier of daily intake needs is replaced by the entry of various imported products that dominate most Oceania countries.

Furthermore, the extravagant lifestyle of the Nauruans hastened the country's bankruptcy. The low habit of saving and liking parties and celebrations leaves almost no material to support a sustainable future. The depletion of natural resources combined with luxury lifestyles causes them to sell their assets and holdings, including satellite use rights, passports, banking licenses, and fishing companies, to China, South Korea, and Taiwan. To earn money, Nauru took the controversial action of leasing its land to Australia, which needed shelter for asylum seekers coming to Australia (Cross, 2010). This agreement is known as 'offshore processing' or 'Pacific Solution'.¹ Some of Nauru's financial problems can be temporarily resolved by leasing the land to Australia. However, this is not a sustainable strategy.

Nauru has to experience phosphate exhaustion and an economic crisis. To overcome the economic crisis, Australia provides foreign aid. Since the 1990s, aid began to experience a significant increase in the 2000s. Australia's Trust Fund, established in 2015, contributes up to \$2.5 million annually to the Nauru Trust Fund (dfat.gov.au, 2021). However, the increasing number of Australian foreign aid grants ultimately could not overcome Nauru's economic crisis. Nauru's dependence on Australian assistance makes foreign aid an instrument for protecting and expanding rich countries to poor countries, perpetuating dependence. The historical relationship between Australia and Nauru and the asymmetrical relationship make the Pacific Solution reflect Australia's neocolonialism to Nauru because the government controls the land, especially in strategic sectors. Pacific Solution succeeded in making Australia' control' the Nauru government by taking over positions in government related to strategic sectors.

CONCLUSION

¹ Rather than allowing them to land on the Australian mainland, Australia 'rent' Nauru as a detention centre in Nauru, which is known as The Pacific Solution. This name is given to the Government of Australia policy of transporting asylum seekers to detention centres on island nations in the Pacific Ocean. Initially implemented from 2001 to 2007. Australia has had two detention centres, in Manus Island (PNG) and Nauru.

Nauru is a clear example of the climate change nexus. The ecology crisis and penetration of capitalism triggered lifestyle changes, including diet. Environmental damage occurs when phosphate mining is carried out excessively by foreign companies. Excessive phosphate mining has triggered drought and poor soil quality. Climate change causes the indigenous people of Nauru to have no access to plant vegetation on their land due to various natural disturbances and reduced soil fertility. Poor land quality rendered a food crisis that altered Nauruans' lifestyle and consumption patterns from 'traditional' to 'modern' due to (re)colonization and penetration of capitalism. Imported low-quality food products have caused various health problems, an indicator of a crisis in Nauru.

Only the food crisis the economic crisis, is another major issue, causing Nauru to seek a financial crisis. Australia feels obliged to 'help' Nauru as a former colonial power. By providing a large amount of foreign aid, Australia has become a significant donor for Nauru, and thus, Australia is controlling Nauru. Through this complete control, Australia is also imposing the creation of Nauru's political compliance on Australia. In addition, there has been an increase in Australian foreign aid grants to ensure Nauru does not break away from the Pacific Solution agreement, reflecting Australia's failure to negotiate with other South Pacific countries. This foreign aid is an unmitigated bribe to ensure that Nauru continues implementing the Pacific Solution.

Even though it is an exaggeration to say that Nauru is a virtually failed state, it is undeniably trapped in a 'resource curse' situation. The gradual destruction of the whole interior of the island has had both short-term and long-term impacts. Nauruans themselves have had to address the damage. The lesson is that malnutrition and obesity sit side by side, resulting from colonialism and capitalism, a catastrophe for the indigenous Nauruans.

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