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# Paradise Gone Nuclear: The Long Term Effects of Nuclear Testing in French Polynesia

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# Paradise Gone Nuclear: The Long Term Effects of Nuclear Testing



Kayla Adolph



## Introduction

The sociopolitical and environmental effects of French colonization of French Polynesia with a focus on 20th century nuclear testing. Remote islands in French Polynesia were used for French nuclear tests in the 1960s and again in the 1990s. Tangible outcomes of the French nuclear testing program include an array of devastating health issues such as cancer, that the French have acknowledged only recently.

## Abstract

The relationship between France and its overseas collectivity is a modern colony, marked by the legacy of nuclear testing. Those most affected by the tests have taken direct action to challenge the current political state.

## Learning Outcomes

Veterans in these groups have different objectives: reparations, acknowledgement of the effects of the testing, or information on veterans' rights. Each group actualizes these objectives through community outreach, but each group is unique in its approach to political change.

## Methodology

Completed interviews with military veterans who conducted nuclear tests and have gone on to form Moruroa e tatou, Tamarii Moruroa, and Association 193.



A mushroom cloud forms over the South Pacific atoll of Mururoa during one of numerous atmospheric tests France conducted in the region between 1966-1974.



Fangataufa Atoll, one of the testing sites.

## Conclusions

By not acknowledging the effects of nuclear testing, France has strained its relationship with French Polynesia, resulting in the islands being placed on the UN Decolonization Recommendation list, with little consequences on the tourism industry

## References

Kahn, Miriam *Tahiti Beyond the Postcard: Power, Place, and Everyday Life*  
*Service du Patrimoine Archivistique et Audiovisuel*  
Members of Moruroa e tatou, Tamarii Moruroa, and Association 193