

SECTION 1
THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE

1. MODERNISATION AND DEVELOPMENT
IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Vijay Naidu

The changes that Pacific island countries are currently experiencing can largely be attributed to the impacts of modernisation. Whether modernisation is conceptualised as a process of development and progress or as a more chaotic situation during which traditional and introduced systems meet or are forced together with the result that both systems have to adjust, modernisation connotes change. These changes are far reaching. It is not only legal systems that are put into a state of flux because of modernisation, but all social systems, including political systems, family systems, education systems and religious systems.

The chapter by Professor Naidu aims to provide readers with some appreciation of the broad nature of changes that are currently taking place throughout the Pacific region. Such an appreciation is necessary in order to put legal change into its wider context. There are, of course, many potential interpretations of the changes and many variations in the experiences of different countries. This chapter does not pretend to be exhaustive in its exploration of the topic.

Complementing this discussion of change in the Pacific is a discussion of various theoretical approaches or perspectives on the nature and process of modernisation and change. The multifaceted nature both of change in the Pacific and of theoretical perspectives for conceptualising this change is thereby highlighted.