

Crime Prevention and Security Management

Series Editor

Martin Gill

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Helen Forbes-Mewett

The New Security

Individual, Community and Cultural
Experiences

palgrave
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Helen Forbes-Mewett
School of Social Sciences
Monash University
Melbourne, Australia

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*Dedicated in memory of my parents,
Gregor Charles and Margaret Grace Forbes, for the security they provided
throughout my life.*

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Series Editor's Introduction

This book tackles the complex subject of what is meant by the term 'security' in a modern context. Many of us have tended to skate around the issue, often uneasily. As the author summarises, the word 'security' has previously been referred to as 'slippery', 'contested' and 'confused'. In this book, 'security' is analysed from the viewpoint of different disciplines, extending beyond the author's sociological home. The inevitable conclusion is that while there are some common elements, it encompasses a wide variety of meanings and values that render it an important and perhaps urgently needed study.

Helen Forbes-Mewett presents the concept of the 'New Security' which she argues is 'fluid and changing'. She covers territory rarely incorporated within one volume. The contexts vary, including university campuses and off campus environments but it would be limiting to see this book as just about security in education settings. Of course, campuses encompass large communities of young people typically from a range of countries providing cultural characteristics that are often associated with a range of threats and insecurity. This renders it an interesting and relevant focus for the development of her ideas. Other contexts in the book are far broader and include community settings and more individual perspectives relating to everyday life.

The book covers related but diverse topics such as the relationships between security and rights and security and religion, which the author

refers to as the 'wideners' of security. It also includes broader discussions of security such as employment security, variously interpreted by different stakeholders; housing security and how different types of provision have implications for different forms of security; food security, and issues relating to the availability of culturally acceptable types of food; as well as subjective and objective personal security that incorporates, physical, material, social relationship, cultural and institutional aspects.

The points made are supported by and drawn from the author's own original research undertaken in Australia, the UK, the US and China. The research incorporates the experiences of a variety of stakeholders including communities, workers, law enforcement and students, both local and international. Through these studies, issues of trust, legitimacy, barriers to collaboration between the different nodes of governance, the challenges posed by different cultures and religions, and keeping pace with the threats and opportunities offered by technology, are debated within a broader context of the challenges generated by resource constraints.

This book invites us to think of security in new and different ways reflecting changes in contemporary society. It also provides a new research base for examining how security is thought of in a community and campus context. Forbes-Mewett's positioning of the 'New Security' challenges boundaries of traditional security studies and in so doing demonstrates that this is an area where critical thinking is paramount. This book highlights just how wide the thinking about security needs to be.

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Martin Gill

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