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978-0-521-13805-5 - International Student Security

Simon Marginson, Christopher Nyland, Erlenawati Sawir and Helen Forbes-Mewett

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SECURITY

More than three million students globally are on the move each year, crossing borders for their tertiary education. Many travel from Asia and Africa to English speaking countries, led by the United States. The provider countries include the UK, Australia and New Zealand, where students pay tuition fees at commercial rates and prop up an education export sector that has become lucrative for the host nations. But the 'no frills' commercial form of tertiary education for international students, designed to minimise costs and maximise revenues, leaves many students feeling under-protected and disenfranchised.

International Student Security, which draws on a close study of international students in Australia, exposes opportunity, difficulty, danger and courage on a massive scale in the global student market. It works through many unresolved issues confronting students and their families, including personal safety, language proficiency, finances, abuses at work, sub-standard housing, dealings with immigration authorities and universities, student networks and personal support, and issues of loneliness, racism and segregation. It calls for closer and more student-centred forms of regulation and support, and for an education that brings international and local students closer together. The authors' underlying purpose is ambitious and far-sighted. It is nothing less than to extend liberal humanism beyond national borders to globally mobile populations; and to support a cosmopolitan international education that facilitates intercultural exchange on equal terms between the West, emerging Asia and the developing world, foreshadowing the future global society.

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SIMON MARGINSON,
CHRISTOPHER NYLAND,
ERLENAWATI SAWIR AND
HELEN FORBES-MEWETT

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF GABY RAMIA AND
SHARON SMITH

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SECURITY



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PREFACE

The journey of a thousand miles begins beneath one's feet.

~ attributed to Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu, 614–531 BCE.

International Student Security has been built on a full engagement with its topic. It has been nurtured by four research projects, a commissioned literature review and much reading and discussion. It is the product of planning sessions, research data collection, conference papers, policy interventions and participation in media and public debate in several Asia–Pacific countries. Often it has been controversial. The \$16 billion international education industry in Australia is good at market research and image management but uncomfortable when critical research findings are discussed. Researchers not owned by the industry create a strategic dilemma for it. In the process of the research we, the authors, have been alternatively abused, invited, enticed and ignored. None of this blocked the research or changed our findings. Nor did the industry assist. None of our efforts to raise research money from industry sources worked, though we do sense there is now more interest in our research than there was before, and it might be contributing to industry reassessment. We are deeply grateful to the Australian Research Council whose unstinting support for critically minded scholarly research made this book possible.

From 2003–6 the research was carried out from Monash University. We sincerely thank the Monash Institute for Global Movements, which supported the first two projects in Australia and New Zealand in which perspectives and methods were developed. An Australian Research Council Discovery Grant (Nyland, Marginson, Ramia, with Michael Gallagher) underpinned the empirical work. Simon Marginson was supported by an ARC Professorial Fellowship, which provided invaluable scholarship time. The Queensland government funded a 2007 literature review on student safety. The Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne hosted meetings of the project group in 2006–9.

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Above all, the research, book preparation and forays into the public and policy arenas were sustained by involvement with our subjects, the international students we interviewed. Research on international education rarely foregrounds the voices of the students themselves. It should. They have much to say. We are deeply grateful to the 200 voluntary student interviewees from 35 nations. We trust the book is worthy of them. (Of course none are responsible for its interpretations.) Each of us has been changed by our encounter with the thoughts, ideas and feelings of the interviewees. International students in Australia are engaged in a challenging project of self-formation. We are in awe of what they achieve. We know that if the circumstances were more favourable to them they could achieve more. In preparing *International Student Security* we have been conscious that they deserve more respect and that their self-determining freedoms should be advanced.

The work program was developed in productive research program meetings attended by the authors, Gaby Ramia and Sharon Smith. Gaby was at the core of the work. His ideas on policy and regulation helped shaped the book. Sharon joined us for the second half of the work. Her knowledge of policy and regulation and forensic research assistance on housing, employment and safety were invaluable. Joint grant holder Ana Deumert provided early wisdom before moving to South Africa. Felicity Rawlings-Sanaei was joint grant holder for the research in New Zealand. Ly Tran, who is researching internationalisation in vocational education, provided valued research assistance on student safety.

Simon Marginson prepared first drafts of chapters 1–4, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 16, as well as the introductions to parts 2 and 3; he also edited the manuscript. Chris Nyland provided first drafts of chapters 6, 7 and 9. Erlenawati Sawir provided first drafts of chapters 12 and 14. Helen Forbes-Mewett drafted chapter 5 and assisted with the final edits. Chris led the focus on human security across a larger program of research on global markets and assembled the research team. Erlenawati conducted all the interviews with international students and managed most of the project administration. Other interviews were conducted by Gaby and Felicity in Australia and New Zealand, and Chris and Helen in China. Helen provided access to her PhD study of international student security at Monash, now completed.

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In preparation of the book Simon drew on work on globalisation and international education prepared for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Commission and the Australian government, and data from other ARC-supported research, including a 1998–2000 Large Grant project with Fazal Rizvi on the internationalisation of Australian higher education. He would also like to thank Professor Yamamoto Shinichi and the staff of the Research Institute for Higher Education at Hiroshima University, a generous scholarly setting for completion of the last four chapters.

In this total body of work, there is a further book by Simon Marginson and Erlenawati Sawir, *Intercultural Education and Self-formation*, which focuses on intercultural relations in international education, including teaching and learning. That book was prepared simultaneously with the present volume. Gaby Ramia is anchoring another jointly authored volume on student security and national and global governance, drawing on the empirical work in Australia and New Zealand.

We are most grateful to our publisher, Debbie Lee at Cambridge University Press. Debbie's wisdom and enthusiasm have been essential. We also thank Sandra Goldbloom Zurbo for splendid editing, and David Thomas for the cover design.

We also sincerely thank for their help at different times and in various ways Phil Altbach, Sophie Arkoudis, Catherine Armitage, Melissa Banks, Fiona Buffinton, Shanton Chang, Tony Crooks, Sushi Das, Paula Dunstan, Julie Hare, Jeroen Huisman, Richard James, Jane Kenway, Jenny Lee, Allan Luke, Joanne Mather, Grant McBurnie, Dennis Murray, Rajani Naidoo, Tony Pollock, Field Rickards, Fazal Rizvi, Luke Slattery, Sue Willis, Hans de Wit, Adrian Wong and Christopher Ziguas. None are responsible for the contents of the book.

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- Loneliness (chapter 14): Sawir, E., Marginson, S., Deumert, A., Nyland, C. & Ramia, G., ‘Loneliness and international students – an Australian study’, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12 (2), 148–80 (2008).
- Intercultural relations (chapter 15): Marginson, S., ‘Sojourning students and creative cosmopolitans’, in M. Peters, S. Marginson and P. Murphy, *Creativity and the Global Knowledge Economy*. New York: Peter Lang, 217–56 (2009).