

Preface and Acknowledgments

THIS STUDY BEGAN ON A RELATIVELY SMALL SCALE AT Stanford University in 2007 as a comparison between university reforms in India and China, with a focus on engineering education, and as a part of the International Initiative at Stanford. The International Initiative was a major effort by Stanford to promote interdisciplinary international research, bringing people together in the university from different departments who might otherwise not address important research problems. With Stanford's strong interest in information technology and engineering education and the rapidly growing numbers of engineering graduates in India and China, this seemed an ideal subject for interdisciplinary research. Several committees headed by Coit Blacker, director of the Freeman Spogli Institute, administered the Initiative. One of these committees was charged with making annual research awards on a competitive basis to a few projects from many proposed, and ours was fortunate enough to be one of those chosen.

With the help of Min Weifang, a Stanford graduate and vice president of Peking University, we immediately partnered with the relatively new China Institute for Educational Finance Research (CIEFR) at Peking University, directed by Wang Rong. In India we partnered with Jandhyala B. G. Tilak, at the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) in New Delhi. Because of its broader interest in studying higher educational change in China, CIEFR devoted significant resources to the project. NUEPA also met part of the project costs from its own resources. A major contribution was that CIEFR hired Prashant Loyalka from Stanford as a full-time

researcher, and he ended up conducting the study in China. Loyalka also participated in the student surveys and administrator interviews that we organized in association with NUEPA in Indian universities and played a key role in writing this book.

In the next year, with the support of the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE's international programs are currently managed by the International Foreign Language and Education Service of the Department of Education) and the Russian Ministry of Education, Stanford's School of Education and Department of Economics initiated an educational partnership with the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in Moscow to improve the teaching of economics in Russia and the teaching of the economics of Russia and research on Russia at Stanford. That partnership is still under way in 2012. Among its many other achievements, the cooperation between Stanford and HSE brought Russian researchers—Isak Froumin, the vice rector at HSE, and Maria Dobryakova, a sociologist at HSE—into our comparative project on university expansion and change, and allowed us to include Russia's university system in the study. Others at HSE, such as Gregory Androushchak, also participated. Katherine Kuhns, a Stanford School of Education doctoral student with long experience in Russia, helped manage the joint research project with HSE, wrote her dissertation on the politics of higher educational change in the Russian Federation, and made major contributions to the Russian sections of the book.

The final country in the study, Brazil, came into the project by a less direct route. Brazil has a considerable history of research on higher education and a number of existing surveys of students and institutions. With the intellectual leadership of Jacques and Simon Schwartzman, and with the financial help of the Centro de Estudos de Políticas Públicas e Educação Superior at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) and Stanford's Center of Latin American Studies, we were able to organize a two-day meeting on higher education research at UFMG in Belo Horizonte in early August 2009, bringing together a large number of higher education experts covering a series of important issues from finance to affirmative action to engineering education. That was followed by a small cooperation with Simon Schwartzman at the Instituto de Estudos do Trabalho e Sociedade in Rio de Janeiro. However, almost all the work done on the Brazilian data was carried out at Stanford based on the available research, the large databases at the Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais (INEP), and support on various questions from the

experts who came together in Belo Horizonte. Thus, the blame for any Brazilian inaccuracies must fall on the Stanford team.

Unlike many international research studies, which are collections of papers from authors in different countries writing separately on a similar subject, our research was truly a unified collaborative. All the authors were involved in fieldwork in each of their countries, all reflected on the results from all four countries, and all commented extensively and repeatedly on the final product. We also met three times during the course of the study to discuss interim results. The first meeting was at NUEPA in New Delhi in 2008, the second was at HSE in Moscow in 2009, and the third was in 2010, organized by CIEFR in Beijing. As mentioned, an independent meeting was organized in Brazil in 2009. Some of us also met regularly at international professional gatherings and presented the interim results of the project. This took place, for example, at the World Congress on Comparative Education in Istanbul in 2010, the 55th Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society meeting in Montreal in 2011, and the American Society for Higher Education meeting in Charlotte in 2011. We came together again to present a draft of this book in a one-day seminar/webinar at Stanford in April 2012.

As we learned, international interdisciplinary cooperation on this scale is a long process. The fieldwork in India, China, and Russia took more than two years, and just bringing together the data we collected and writing the book required almost two years. Besides the book, the project has resulted in three dissertations (Loyalka and Kuhns at Stanford, and Pradeep Chowdhury at NUEPA in India) and a number of journal articles—more will come in the future. At Stanford, the project achieved its goal of bringing people across campus to focus on a problem of common interest—it involved economists, political scientists, and engineers. Perhaps the most important result is that many people from many countries and different disciplines worked for more than four years as a team, learned from one another, and gained such a much greater understanding of one another's societies.

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