Final paper projects

• You should write this paper as a part of a team. The optimal size of a team is between 2 to 4 persons.
• Cross-section team formation is okay.
• Please refer to Sloan Standards for guidance on plagiarism, etc.
• Suggested length: 15-25 pages of text (Double space, 12 pt. font).
Format and content

• India and China are huge and complicated countries.
  – Your paper should be a focused treatment of a given topic, rather than a broad and superficial treatment of a topic.
  – You can compare the two countries but you should focus on one country and use the other country as a backdrop or to raise some broad implications.
Format and content

• An example of a focused paper while raising implications for the other country:
  – A detailed paper about the success of software industry in India and its success factors
  – At the end of the paper, you can offer some lessons for China in the following manner:
    • Make a note of the fact—very briefly—that software industry is not as well-developed
    • Make a case that China should make improvements in a number of areas, such as improving financing environment for small firms, promoting trust with foreign clients, etc.
    • Be explicit that this is based on your understanding of the success factors in India.

• This format allows to focus on one country but also enables you to think about issues in the other country.
Schedule

• You should start thinking about your project ideas NOW.
• Email your ideas to me and I will provide feedback.
• The paper is due by 9 am four days after SES 13.
• Your TA will acknowledge receiving your paper. You should check in with her if you do not get the receipt.
• Late papers will be penalized.
• No extensions granted except for extremely extenuating circumstances.
SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR 15.225

• Human capital
  – What has happened in India’s rural basic education since reforms?
    • What has been done?
    • How much was spent? By federal governments? By states?
    • Why teachers do not show up?
  – India’s technical human capital: India is running out of skilled labor.
    • Too much demand? Or too little supply?
    • Mismatch between education and economy: Poor quality of training?
  – China/India comparison
    • Nilekani of Infosys: “We don’t necessarily look for people that have the exact skills we need.” Instead, we hire people that have the quality of ‘learnability’ and then we teach them the requisite skills.”
    • Which country’s educational system does a better job teaching “learnability” and creativity, as opposed to specific skills?
    • Why is there a surplus of college graduates in China but a shortage of college graduates in India?
SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR 15.225

• Corruption
  – Which country has done a better job controlling corruption?
  – How to measure?
    • Transparency international, World Bank indicators
    • Dollar amount of the actual corruption cases
    • Role of transparency through media vis-à-vis the role of monitoring through bureaucracy.
SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR 15.225

• Competitiveness
  • Can you find objective measures of competitiveness? Patents?
    – Which area of India/China is most competitive in producing patents? And why?
    – What kind of patents are these? By foreign firms? By domestic firms? Invention or utility?
  • How to improve “soft” environment such as reducing corruption?
    – What do the international survey data say about corruption in China and India?
    – Can you find more objective measures, such as actual instances of corruption?
    – Which industry/government department/political branch is most corrupt?
    – Compare the worst corruption cases in the two countries? Worst in terms of amount, effect or political rank of those involved.
SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR 15.225

• Property rights
  • How has India been able to develop some industrial parks when real estate transactions are so difficult?
    – What are the specific approaches—negotiation, collective bargaining, market-based transactions?
    – How to solve hold-up problems?
    – Lessons for each other? Can China learn from India’s more “negotiated” approach?

• Financial system
  – How do you characterize the lending practices by the banks in these two countries? Collateral or cashflow-based?
  – Compare and contrast the systems of credit information collection and dissemination in the two countries.
  – How to overcome poor information about small-scale entrepreneurial borrowers? What are some of the innovative methods?

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SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR 15.225

• Management models
  – Compare and contrast the ways the firms in the two countries retain valued human capital
  – Which countries have a more top-down/bottom-up management models among successful firms?
    • Does Infosys delegate?
    • Does Lenovo delegate?
    • How have the firms in the two countries make the transition from the founder stage to professional management stage?

• Labor-intensive industries
  • Why India can produce software but not shirts?
  • Why labor reforms in India are so slow? Is labor market the problem or skilled labor or infrastructure?
  • What have the Chinese firms done in branding and marketing in the labor-intensive industries?