- What's hot now in finance?
- How to select a research topic?
- How much "risk" to take in your research?

<u>Topics / What's hot</u>

- Most (not all) of best topics are relevant for current news.
  - Many of the best ideas happen reading the FT, NYT or WSJ

- Do not get caught in old finance framings
  - My best papers: new topics – payday loans, household finance and tax evasion, impact investing, FinTech
  - Best to carve out new agenda and own it

- Current topics I like (some of this is taste)
  - Innovation economy (public & private)
  - Macro finance (but fresh)
  - Household finance (markets or solutions, not just another mistakes paper)
  - Labor & corporations / organizations
  - Intermediary asset pricing
  - SRI (with caution)
  - Politics & finance
  - Inequality

How much Risk to take? / Selecting Topics

- ▪ I may be inverted here: Going after entirely new topics is not risky in my mind
  - Rather, necessary for Tenure in good schools
  - Easier to publish
- ▪ Good idea: Take the time and risk of understanding new markets rather than using new markets to do an incremental analysis
- ▪ Risk = being boring (boring papers don't get on programs and get cited)

- – Topic Risks
  - i. [data] Taking on an active multi-year data collection pre-tenure
  - ii. [data] Data from private sector with hold-up or veto rights
  - iii. Doing something at which you are not good
  - iv. Writing something which would not be of interest to FT readers (some exceptions, e.g., fundamental theory)
  - v. Topics that attack/criticize

- – Career Risk (a lot omitted here, skipping coauthor selection risks)
  - i. Not standing up for yourself
  - ii. Eschewing the club
  - iii. Not being visible / saying No to visibility chances
  - iv. Doing a bad job in front of any audience
  - v. Thinking that being a "good citizen" pays (be yourself, with correct expectations)