ERC starting grant
(Social Science, Economics)
ROBUST

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My project, very briefly

- "Robust Mechanism Design and Robust Prediction in Games" (ROBUST)
- Theoretical studies of economic agents' behavior given any "rule of the game", and of obtaining insights about "desirable" rules, with more robust approaches ($\simeq$ weaker assumptions).
- ERC starting grant, 2016-2021.

Uniqueness of ERC

- (Generous funding / competitiveness / reputation)
- Suitable for **ambitious** research agenda
  - Long term
  - "High-risk, high-gain"
  - Little commitment in terms of the outputs

Some advises: Proposal

1. How you show-case is important:
   - 2015: Applied for ERC starting grant, failed (eval: A)
     - "Novelty would be marginal relative to the prior literature".
   - 2016: Applied for ERC starting grant, succeeded.
   - Not much difference in the proposed projects themselves, but I tried to present in a different way.
     - Why "my/our" approach of robustness?
     - What could be potential impacts of my/our research outside own field (i.e., pure econ theory)? E.g., policy recommendation, empirical/testable prediction...

2. Be broad(er)
   - Show ambition
   - Ex post benefit: Your research interest can gradually change.
   - (Though not too much, of course)

Some advises: Presentations

1. Broad audience
   - Roughly 15 people in the room, where I presented for 5 min.
     - Time management is important (rehearse MANY times!).
     - Only 1 is close to your field, who liked your stuff already: Don't disappoint him/her.
     - Several of them are close to your competitors' fields, who may be biased against you: Wisely handle their (perhaps unintentional) "trap" questions.
     - The others (perhaps a majority) is rather neutral: Bring them on board with your "general/broad" contributions.
2. Q & A (15 - 20 min for my case)
   - Should try to come up with ALL possible questions, and prepare answers for them.
   - May be a good idea to include slides specifically for some of the potential questions.