

Robert Parham

Statistical research / Financial economics / Cybersecurity

<https://kn.owled.ge/>

I study how information shapes decisions, how firms grow, and how risk is priced. My work combines developing statistical theory, analyzing large financial datasets and building research software to turn these questions into models and empirical tests.

Assistant Professor of Finance, McIntire School of Commerce, University of Virginia, 2017-present.

My background includes command of the Israeli Intelligence Corps' cybersecurity academy and product management at Microsoft and IBM-XIV. At Microsoft's Haifa office, I led internal security assessment for the ISA Server development team. As co-founder and CEO of Fidu, I recruited the founding team and defined a product for fiduciary financial management through secure text.

RESEARCH

My research has appeared in *Journal of Financial Economics*, *Review of Finance* and *Stata Journal*. I use causal inference to study financial information and investor behavior, and develop distributional and structural models of firm dynamics and asset pricing. My current work develops statistical frameworks for firm growth and financial returns, including methods that accommodate profits, losses and heavy-tailed outcomes.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Financial Economics University of Rochester	2017
M.S.B.A., Financial Economics University of Rochester	2013
M.B.A., Finance Tel Aviv University	2006
M.Sc., Computer Science Technion	2002
B.A., Computer Science Technion	2000

HONORS

2025 IQAM Best Investment Paper Prize, *Review of Finance*, for "Is News Really News?"

2002 Award for Creative Thinking, Head of Israeli Military Intelligence, IDF.

1996-1999 Technion Excellence Fellowship, Technion.

Professional experience

University of Virginia

2017-present

Assistant Professor of Finance | McIntire School of Commerce

Develop statistical methods and empirical financial research, with applications to disclosure, investor behavior, firm dynamics and asset pricing. Build research software and analyze large financial datasets.

Designed and teach Intermediate Corporate Finance around first-principles reasoning. Built an assessment system with more than 500 answer-level observations per student to diagnose understanding and guide course revisions; recruit, train and mentor student TAs.

Fidu

2016-2018

Co-founder & CEO

Recruited CFO and CTO co-founders and led customer-facing product definition for fiduciary financial management through secure text. The team developed an app and tested it with consumers.

Performed the chief product officer function alongside the CEO role. The venture closed before public launch.

IBM-XIV

2009-2010

Senior Product Manager | XIV Storage Division

Defined new enterprise-storage features with the development team and educated customers and users about product capabilities and new functionality.

Microsoft

2006-2008

Program Manager | Israel R&D Center, Haifa

Worked on new ISA Server features, then was promoted in the second year to lead the product's internal security assessment team.

Conducted security code reviews, taught secure-development practices and coordinated with Microsoft's security team in Redmond on release-security requirements.

Israeli Intelligence Corps

2000-2005

Captain | Cybersecurity Researcher; Head of Cybersecurity Academy

Conducted cybersecurity research, then commanded the academy during 2003-2005. Direct responsibility for more than ten instructors and dozens of students, including instructor development, teaching methods and administration.

TEACHING RECORD

University of Virginia | Intermediate Corporate Finance

2018-2026

University of Rochester | Corporate Finance

2013

University of Rochester | Mathematical Techniques in Economics

2012

Published research

Three peer-reviewed publications. Abstracts reproduced below; titles link to the journal records.

Is News Really News? The Effects of Selective Disclosure Regulations

With Brent Kitchens and Chris Yung

Review of Finance 28(6), 1991-2015 (2024)

Before regulations were enacted to prevent such practices, information leaked through selective disclosure was incorporated into markets prior to the public release of news. “News days” did not deliver news to markets; now they do. We provide novel evidence of changes in returns and turnover behavior around the enactment of regulations barring selective disclosure practices in the United States and the EU. We conversely document lack of such changes in Australia and Japan, which did not implement similar measures. We conclude that selective disclosure resolves Roll’s R^2 puzzle.

WSJ Category Kings - The Impact of Media Attention on Consumer and Mutual Fund Investment Decisions

With Ron Kaniel

Journal of Financial Economics 123(2), 337-356 (2017)

We exploit a novel natural experiment to establish a causal relation between media attention and consumer investment behavior, independent of the conveyed information. Our findings indicate a 31% local average increase in quarterly capital flows into mutual funds mentioned in a prominent Wall Street Journal “Category Kings” ranking list, compared to those funds which just missed making the list. This flow increase is about seven times larger than extra flows due to the well-documented performance-flow relation. Other funds in the same fund complex receive substantial extra flows as well, especially in smaller complexes. There is no increase in flows when the Wall Street Journal publishes similar lists absent the prominence of the Category Kings labeling. We show mutual fund managers react to the incentive created by the media effect in a strategic way predicted by theory, and present evidence for the existence of propagation mechanisms including increased fund complex advertising subsequent to having a Category King and increased efficacy of subsequent fund media mentions.

Fitting the Errors-in-Variables Model Using High-Order Cumulants and Moments

With Timothy Erickson and Toni M. Whited

Stata Journal 17(1), 116-129 (2017)

In this article, we consider a multiple mismeasured regressor errors-in-variables model. We present xtewreg, a command for using two-step generalized method of moments and minimum distance estimators that exploit overidentifying information contained in high-order cumulants or moments of the data. The command supports cumulant or moment estimation, internal support for the bootstrap with moment condition recentering, an arbitrary number of mismeasured regressors and perfectly measured regressors, and cumulants or moments up to an arbitrary degree. We also demonstrate how to use the estimators in the context of a corporate leverage regression.

Working papers

Research summaries. Linked manuscripts and full abstracts are available on [the Research page](#).

Growth and Differences of Log-Normals

Sole-authored

Develops the difference-of-log-normals distribution as a common framework for heavy-tailed economic outcomes formed from opposing positive flows. Evidence from public firms covers cash flows, payouts, investment, ratios, growth and returns. Connects these empirical patterns to a tractable firm model and distributional estimation tools.

The Two Dimensions of Income Growth

Sole-authored

Separates income growth into changes in scale and revenue-cost balance, preserving transitions through profit, loss and recovery. Conventional growth omits 19% of operating-income and 28% of economic-income transitions in the sample. The two-dimensional representation connects these missing observations to growth persistence, valuation and equity-return tails.

Asset Pricing with Cumulants

With Mihail Velikov and Han Xiao

Expresses log expected gross excess returns as an exact expansion in joint return-SDF cumulants. A few structural parameters can price a much larger library of cumulant factors. Three parameters generate 31 prices in the empirical tests; the resulting 28 restrictions are not rejected. Out-of-sample tests use 284 long-short anomaly portfolios.

A Second Operating State in q-Theory: Revenue, Cost, and Corporate Losses

Sole-authored

Shows that revenue-cost balance provides an independent operating state in firm models. In 142,480 firm-years, a surface based on capital and scale leaves 82% of balance dispersion unexplained. Persistent balance helps organize investment, firm value, losses and adverse exit; allowing it to vary independently improves the model's account of signed income.

Facts of US Firm Scale and Growth 1970-2019: An Illustrated Guide

Sole-authored

Documents 18 stylized facts about the scale, income, growth, returns, investment and dynamism of public US firms over 1970-2019. Emphasizes distributional forms, scale-dependent heteroskedasticity and systematic differences between small and large firms. Provides an empirical reference for the related firm-growth research.

Research software

Stata/Mata: `xtewreg/EWreg` (errors-in-variables estimation) and `Symbolic.mata` (symbolic algebra). MATLAB: structural and DLN estimation. Python: data collection and current agent-assisted research, checked with automated tests and statistical investigation.

Research projects & academic activity

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The Growth and Value of Cities

With Sanket Korgaonkar and Ben McCartney

Models city surplus as the difference between agglomeration benefits and congestion costs, separating city scale from surplus balance.

Knowledge Constraints and Firm Growth

Sole-authored

Studies how firm-specific, human-embodied knowledge constrains the growth of R&D-intensive; firms.

Whose Attention Is It, Anyway?

With Ron Kaniel and Chris Schwarz

Uses an experiment to distinguish people searching for information from trading systems reacting to search activity.

PRESENTATIONS & SEMINARS

- 2026 Financial Management and Accounting Research Conference; Blue Ridge Finance Conference; University of Virginia
- 2025 Eastern Finance Association; American Finance Association; Penn State; University of Rochester; UNC Chapel Hill; George Mason; George Washington
- 2024 University of Minnesota Economics; Econometric Society Summer School in Dynamic Structural Econometrics; Commonwealth Finance Workshop
- 2023 Southern Finance Association; Finance Down Under
- 2022 SKKU Finance Conference; Euro Working Group on Commodities and Financial Modelling, 65th meeting
- 2021 Eastern Finance Association
- 2020 17th Corporate Finance Day
- 2018 Financial Intermediation Research Society; IDC-Herzliya summer finance
- 2017 Arizona State; Nanyang Technological University; University of Melbourne
- 2016 American Finance Association; European Financial Management Association; Fordham
- 2015 American Economic Association

REFEREEING & SERVICE

Ad hoc referee: Journal of Finance; Journal of Financial Economics; Review of Financial Studies; Review of Economics and Statistics; Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis; Journal of Banking and Finance; Review of Managerial Science.

McIntire: Finance Seminar Committee (2017-2023); participated in Finance-area recruiting (2019); AI Advisory Task Force working-team leadership and report contribution (2024). Conference discussant and session chair.

SELECTED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Invited lecture, "What Is Money?", Wheaton College (2024); UVA Speaks, "Cryptocurrency and Crypto Assets" (2021); "Media Attention and Investment Decisions", VoxEU (2016) and TheMarker (2017).