

Call for Papers – 8th SUERF/UniCredit Foundation Research Prize

Savings behaviour in crisis and post-crisis times

Deadline for Submissions: extended to 30 November 2020

Motivation

The Global Financial Crisis and COVID-19 crisis have, among many other things, also affected savings behaviour. Changes involve both aggregate household savings ratios, individual propensity to consume and to save, as well as portfolio choice. While the post-GFC and COVID-induced very low interest rates have likely reduced income motives for saving, crises put precautionary savings into the foreground. In the COVID-19 crisis, new attention was directed to savings motives, given the impossibility to consume, resulting in “forced savings”. The COVID-19 crisis also raises the question whether consumption and household savings behaviour will change more permanently, and beyond the time of the constraints imposed by the pandemic and related containment measures. Such changes would have important permanent consequences on aggregate demand, structural employment/unemployment, potential growth, the sectoral composition of output, the natural rate of interest and, as a result, the environment in which fiscal and monetary policies act.

Content of submissions

Against this background, this call for papers invites original research – theoretical or empirical, academic or policy-oriented – on aspects relevant for the understanding of the short-term and long-term effects of crises, such as the GFC and the COVID-19 crisis, on savings behaviour. Some examples for fields of research are:

Consumption and aggregate savings behavior in crisis and post-crisis periods

- How do economic and financial crises affect consumption and aggregate savings ratios in the short, medium and long run?
- Which savings motives play a role? How do these motives change as crises unfold? What are the differences between different crises, e.g. the GFC and COVID-19?
- What differences in long-term impact of these crises might be expected?
- Impact on, and differences between, different socio-economic groups. How do households' demographic properties (age, wealth, income, job security, employed versus self-employed, active in safe versus affected economic sectors, single versus multi-person households etc.) affect savings behaviour and savings motives?
- What role does gender play for crisis-related and post-crisis savings behaviour?
- How are crises likely to impact on short- and long-term expectations?
- Is there a distinction to be made between “forced” and “voluntary” savings and consumption expenditure?
- Are there international differences in the impact of Covid-19 on savings and consumption expenditure?
- Do the crises have an impact on expectations about future unemployment and what would be the expected impact on savings?
- Is savings behaviour (level and portfolio choices) affected by the policy measures taken in response to crises?
- Savings glut vs financing glut: drivers and policy remedy?

Crises and portfolio choice

- How do crises affect portfolio choice?
- Do households adjust portfolio choice only temporarily or more permanently in response to economic and financial crises (e.g. due to experienced large portfolio losses during crises)?
- What are differences in crisis-induced portfolio reactions depending on demographic factors (age, wealth, income, job security, employed versus self-employed, active in safe versus affected economic sectors, single versus multi-person households etc.)?
- What role does gender play in crisis-related and post-crisis portfolio choice?
- What drives the use of gold as an asset class?
- What drives the use of real estate as an asset class?
- What role does fear of future inflation play for savings in these latter two asset classes? What role does fear of a financial and banking system crisis play? What role does general economic uncertainty play? Is increasing government debt associated with heightened fear of an erosion of nominal assets?
- How might portfolio choices be affected by policy responses to the crises?
- Do policy responses have an effect on expectations about future taxation and/or inflation?
- Do crises increase liquidity preference?

Role of financial education

- Does the level of economic and financial education affect savings behaviour in crisis and post-crisis times?
- Does the level of economic and financial education affect portfolio choice in crisis and post-crisis times?
- Does financial education make a difference in the relative relevance of the driving factors mentioned above?
- Have governments/regulators adopted measures to enhance financial education?

This list is non-exhaustive, other contributions fitting into the overall topic of the call for papers are welcome.

Formal Requirements and Procedure for Submissions

The SUERF/UniCredit Foundation Research Prize is open to authors and co-authors who are **citizens or residents/students in the EEA, Switzerland, and other countries in which UniCredit is present** (in addition to EEA countries, the latter also include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia and Serbia) and **born after 30 September 1980**. Prizes of **EUR 2,500** gross will be awarded to up to two outstanding papers on topics related to the call for papers. The winning authors agree to present their papers at a SUERF/UniCredit Foundation Conference to be held in Milano (or in a webinar/e-conference) in February 2021. Winning authors agree to provide a non-technical 5-10 page policy-oriented summary of their research findings for publication as a *SUERF Policy Note*.

Applications should be submitted through the online submission form on the UniCredit Foundation website at www.unicreditfoundation.org in PDF format by **30 November 2020**, in **English**. Applications should be accompanied by a brief **curriculum vitae** including the candidate's/candidates' date of birth and a copy of current identity documents that confirm the author's/authors' date(s) of birth and eligibility. The prize is open to **papers that have been finalised within the last 12 months** prior to the deadline for submissions. Full terms and conditions of entry can be downloaded from the SUERF and UniCredit Foundation websites.