

ESSAYS IN FINANCIAL INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

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The scope of this dissertation is to observe three of the most prominent trends of this era and to present innovations that could inspire both academics and businesses. There is an urgent need to improve the traditional ways in which the markets operate to achieve financial growth while respecting the environment and the society.

The third and fourth manuscript tackle directly the topic of sustainable development through the lenses of SMEs. The first manuscript offers evidence related to the development of FinTech entrepreneurship in a market. Though FinTech and sustainability might appear unrelated at first, their simultaneous development could support achievement of a sustainable economy. FinTech could foster the availability of green finance, which is necessary to the capital-intensive sustainability transformation. FinTech supports the sustainable development not only through green finance but also by providing financial resources to underrepresented groups, hence promoting financial inclusion. Both Fintech and sustainability are relatively recent trends, hence this dissertation, which focuses on financial innovation and sustainability, oughts to provide evidence for both considering their increasing dependency and relevance. The third unfortunate trend, that is analysed in this dissertation is the healthcare crisis risk. The “Great lockdown Crisis” disrupted the markets and caused severe recession to many economies globally. It is self-evident that good health is perceived as an integral part of sustainability. The facility, we propose in our third manuscript, could act as a shield for both the economies and the health of the EU citizens. Healthcare crises, similar to the ones caused by COVID_19, have the potential to significantly disrupt the markets and cause financial instability. However, financial stability appears as a precondition for the financing of sustainable development.

The first manuscript investigates the impact of venture capital and credit on the FinTech start-up formation across countries and got published in the journal of Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice in 2020. The second manuscript was developed during the first wave of the COVID_19 pandemic. Inspired by this unfortunate healthcare crisis with severe economic consequences, we propose the creation of the Emergency Health Financing Facility within the EU. Our paper got published in the Financial Transformation journal in 2021. The third and fourth manuscripts suggest essential innovations in the sustainable finance field. Our third manuscript proposes an innovative methodology to create an ESG performance index for SMEs. We use the ESG performance index we developed in our fourth manuscript to investigate the impact of ESG performance on the creditworthiness of SMEs.