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## Introduction

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The theme of the special issue is on the ‘Advances in banking and finance in the post-crisis era’. This special issue contains six papers that deal with a diverse set of research questions in finance and banking related to parity conditions in international finance, the impact of unconventional monetary policy on bank stock returns, numerical methods for contingent claim analysis, public’s perception of digital currencies and the construction of corporate failure prediction models.

In the paper ‘An empirical investigation of covered interest rate parity: the case of the GBP/USD and SEK/USD exchange rates’, Stephanos Papadamou and Evangelia Theodosiou test the covered interest rate parity (CIP) by examining empirically the relationship between the forward premium and interest rate differential in international finance. They use a cointegration-based approach in two different exchange rates against USD, namely GBP/USD and SEK/USD. They find that CIP holds in the case of GBP/USD, for both three-month and six-month maturities, but does not hold in the case of SEK/USD. They also find that small-scale deviations from parity are mainly attributed to transactions costs.

In the paper ‘Evaluating the effect of IFRS adoption on earnings management in Greece. A logit approach’, Christianna Chimonaki and Konstantinos Vergos examine if IFRS adoption resulted in the long run to decreasing accounting manipulation. They employ a full sample of 231 non-financial firms that were listed on the ASE between 2002 and 2015 and find evidence based on the long-term period that IFRS adoption has been a significant step towards transparency and lower information costs. The findings of their study endorse the wider and faster adoption of international accounting standards, and provide a valuable guide that can be useful to regulators and market participants.

In the paper ‘Bitcoin as an alternative digital currency: exploring the public’s perception vs. experts’, Spyros Papathanasiou, Nikolaos Papamatthaiou and Dimitrios P. Balios explore how the public perceives digital currencies and Bitcoin in particular. Using questionnaires, random sampling and simple and multiple regressions they find that the public perceives Bitcoin differently than the experts do. Individuals believe that Bitcoin is mainly a means of transactions/payments, contrary to the experts’ opinion, which is that Bitcoin is primarily an investment asset.

In the paper ‘Solutions in quadratures to the CEV model’, Evangelos Melas develops new numerical methods for pricing options when the underlying follows a constant elasticity of variance (CEV) process. The CEV process captures the inverse relationship between stock prices and volatility and is widely used in contingent claim analysis because it generates fat tails in the distribution of the underlying asset. The author uses separation of variables techniques and derives new simple solutions of CEV partial differential equation with practical applications in option pricing.

In the paper ‘ECB’s unconventional monetary policies and the European bank stock returns’, Dimitris Kenourgios, Nancy Kagiana and Athanasios Katevatis examine the impact of the four unconventional monetary policy announcements followed by the European Central Bank on the stock price of European banks, as well as on the STOXX Europe 600 Banks index, from January 2010 to December 2016. They find that there is a positive relation between the announced programs and the stock returns of the European banks at the same day of the announcement, while the impact is stronger for the long-term sovereign bond purchases (Securities Markets Program). They also find that the banks of the countries which benefit most from the unconventional policies are those from Southern Europe. On the contrary, the announcement of these programs displays a limited effect on the banks of the European core countries and those with solid banking system. Finally, the announcements seem to reduce the volatility of stock prices and especially for the covered bond purchase program (CBPP3).

In the paper ‘A study of corporate failure using data envelopment analysis and quadratic discriminant analysis: the case of the Greek construction sector during the period of the economic crisis’, Apostolos Christopoulos, Nikolaos Demiroglou and Ioannis G. Dokas provide a reliable methodology with respect to the construction process

of corporate failure prediction models. Their approach follows a two-stage analysis: the classification of construction sector firms into failed and non-failed by using a non-parametric technique of data envelopment analysis (DEA) and the application of multiple discriminant analysis (MDA) for model specification.