

Editorial

Dear reader,

it feels strange to sit on my office chair and to write an editorial dealing with highly interesting and specialized economic articles while outside a pandemic rage killing ten thousand of people. Therefore I want to quit the usual way of writing an editorial and instead make some remarks concerning the effects of the plague for social sciences. I don't insinuate definite answers. In any case, I'm very much convinced that future journals like ours will have to investigate the results of the pandemic for the social, political, cultural and economic world we live in. The pandemic poses questions, social sciences have rarely tackled or tackled in a specific non-sufficient way. My short remarks will be very general.

Not even having reached the peak of the spread of the virus, the discussion about the limits of a globalized economy has started. The failure of the worldwide connected production and service chains for the supply with medical products in the different nation states is obvious. For many observers the development expresses a new blow against the idea that the market serves best the needs of the people. Even if one doesn't want to go so far, it seems clear that we have to better understand the limits of the different markets, be they based on political, cultural, social or economic reasons. The health market concerns a good that needs to be prioritized to other goods. It seems necessary to find new matches between the functioning of sustainable national health systems and globalized economic orientations. But this implies an orientation at values prioritizing health and not economic advantages in a narrow view of economic orthodoxy. Health is a value as such. To reduce it to a material code ignores the complexity of societal thinking and the social progress that has resulted from it.

Years of cuts into essential social services have made the national health services more vulnerable also in terms of jobs. In general, we have to concede, the look at the market as a job creating machine has overlooked that human health is a necessary condition for economic growth. That is, work in the health sector needs to find conditions that allow for a humane treatment of all people in the systems.

The pandemic unmistakably makes clear that all citizens find themselves in a position to fully and equally benefit from the national health systems. At the very moment, large parts of the employed and self-employed are more vulnerable in respect of the health systems, and additionally they are more vulnerable than before their privatization and globalization. Underpaid, under-protected and undervalued they can only hope on state interventions securing their well-being in the times of the present crises. This also holds for the health structures for the elderly their insurances being privately or stately organized.

I hope that the authors of the interesting articles in this edition of JEEMS as well as the readers and reviewers can accept, that I did not write a promotion of the articles. They would have deserved it. I myself read them with tremendous benefits. But certain times need things to be done differently. Thank you.

*Eckhard Dittrich
Member of the Advisory Board*