

PREFACE

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In a recent Introduction to a *Rivista internazionale di scienze sociali*, *Research in social sciences*, issue dedicated to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, I underlined how difficult it is for an academic journal to maintain a rigorous scientific approach while accepting the challenge posed by the extraordinary events that we are facing nowadays. The so-called *Economy of Francesco* is an exciting occasion to take on this challenge and test our ability to combine rigorous approaches with new paradigms that are at odds with the existing standard methodological approaches.

The *Economy of Francesco* is a huge intellectual but operational work in progress that ought to help us reflect on the essential foundations of our behaviour and, as economists and social scientists more generally, approach our analyses differently. Launched by Pope Francis in 2019, it led to two meetings in Assisi that witnessed the involvement of thousands of young people worldwide involved in all sectors of the economy and society at large. Additional and complementary events have been organized, and a general meeting in September 2022 is currently on the agenda.

Indeed, the *Economy of Francesco* is a great stimulus, particularly for the younger generations, to think and act in a non-conformist way. On the research side, this implies stimulating new methodologies and paradigms that may not align with the so-called “mainstream”. We should be aware that acting in this way is quite a challenge. The incentives that young researchers have to undertake ground-breaking and, more broadly, non-conventional research are almost null. We are committed to providing a platform for such a new perspective.

Thus, it is crucial to stimulate research aiming to tackle the challenges and sometimes dramatic effects of disordered globalization and the unavoidable environmental issue. The fundamental ethical issue should no longer be ignored in economics, nor should it be treated as a fig leaf, hiding behaviours that are unchanged and ultimately unfair and unethical. Accordingly, we need economic and social modelling that endorses such an approach and lines up with a view focused on human values like altruism, dignity, and respect.

The contributions presented in this issue represent the first attempt to stimulate the debate on the challenge posed by the *Economy of Francesco* and are an invitation, particularly to young scholars, to focus their attention to research issues essential to establishing a better and fairer society.

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The contributions are introduced by Luigino Bruni's reflection on the meaning of the whole *Economy of Francesco* and are concluded by Stefano Zamagni's arguments, which also provide a stimulating way forward for social science research. All in all, this is the start of a new research agenda, and thus it is worth recalling Pope Francis' words: "*To you, young people, I once again entrust the task of placing fraternity at the centre of the economy. We feel the need for young people who, through study and practice, know how to demonstrate that a different economy exists. Do not be discouraged!*".