

## TAV TESTO 1

### **The US economy is reliant on consumer spending - can it survive a pandemic?**

*In this article a US journalist discusses the impacts of the reduction in consumer spending in the US caused by the pandemic.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically affected the American economy, reducing spending by American households on materials goods, air travel, leisure activities as well as the use of automobiles. As a result, greenhouse gas emissions have temporarily fallen dramatically.

While this may be positive for the environment, the social price is high: since the U.S. economy depends heavily on consumer spending, the country is experiencing the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression, the threat of homelessness for tens of thousands of people and a failure of businesses large and small. How did the U.S. arrive at the point whereby mass consumption - and the greenhouse gas emissions associated with it - is necessary for economic and social well-being?

A consumer society is a 20th-century construct. The American Dream has become synonymous with buying material goods such as cars, houses, furniture or electronics. Today, the spending habits of American households make up 70% of the U.S. gross domestic product, a measurement that describes the size of the economy.

At the same time, there is little evidence that Americans have become happier in the last seven decades of growing consumerism.

This pandemic reveals to me the vulnerability of an economy heavily dependent on a single source of economic activity - consumption. From my perspective, the U.S. would be better off if the economy - our collective wealth - were more heavily weighted toward public spending on, and investment in, education, health care, public transit, housing, parks and better infrastructure, and renewable energy.