

**Coronavirus pandemic and the social ties****Dr.Mohammed Amine DECHIRA**

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*Corona Virus-19 pandemic attests to the sensitive position occupied by risks in contemporary societies, both as a source of social anxiety as a result of its development. The danger and its repercussions on the patterns of interaction between them in the midst of this pandemic, which required a social survey of a research sample in the state of Ain Temouchent, through which it was shown the extent of the impact of Covid as a danger on individuals' perceptions, which prompted them to change the traditional tangible communication frameworks to digital virtual ones, which replaced Social links.*

**Keywords:** *Social risks, covid 19, social ties, collective perceptions, pandemic management.*

**جائحة كورونا فيروس و الروابط الإجتماعية****ملخص**

تشهد جائحة كورونا فيروس-19 على المكانة الحساسة التي تحتلها المخاطر في المجتمعات المعاصرة، سواء باعتبارها مصدر قلق اجتماعي كنتيجة لتطورها وفي هذه الدراسة، تمت معالجة تبعات هذه الجائحة على نسق العلاقات الإجتماعية من منظور علماء اجتماع المخاطر وذلك بالتركيز على التحليل السوسيولوجي لتمثلات وتصورات الأفراد لهذا الخط وانعكاسات ذلك على أنماط التفاعل بينهم في خضم هذه الجائحة، الامر الذي تطلب إجراء مسح إجتماعي لعينة بحثية بولاية عين تموشنت، فتبين من خلاله مدى تأثير الكوفيد كخطر في تصورات الأفراد، مما دفعهم إلى لتغيير أطر تواصل التقليدية الملموسة إلى أخرى إفتراضية رقمية، حلت محل الروابط الإجتماعية.

**الكلمات المفاتيح:** *مخاطر إجتماعية، كوفيد 19، روابط إجتماعية، منجمنت الجائحة.*

**La Pandémie de Corona virus et les liens sociaux****Résumé**

*La pandémie de coronavirus témoigne de la place centrale qu'occupe le risque dans les sociétés contemporaines, à la fois comme préoccupation sociale et comme produit de leur développement, et dans cet entretien, on s'est intéressé à la manière dont la sociologie appréhende le risque et les enjeux sociaux soulevés par les crises sanitaires et leur gestion, ce qui nous a permis de conclure que les représentations, les attitudes face au risque et la différenciation sociale de l'exposition au risque sont des éléments qui affectent la nature et la forme des liens sociaux entre les individus.*

**Mots-clés:** *Risques sociaux, covid 19, liens sociaux, management pandémique.*

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**Introduction:**

The coronavirus as a risk has been anticipated, and the authorities have sought to act in the face of the danger it represents, by taking measures to prevent it, to detect the threat, and then to try to treat it not a health risk but a social risk.

The Work of the sociologist François Ewald (1996) according to which the 20th century is characterized by a progressive "risking" of the world and an "insurantalisation" of societies by "risking the world", he means that what constitutes a risk as the way one looks at an event for example, the Spanish flu which killed between 20 and 50 million people at the end of the first world war was not a risk at the time, because no one saw it coming, no one tried to prevent and control it.

On the other hand, the H1N1 flu of the coronavirus are risks, since these epidemics were anticipated and the authorities sought to act in the face of the danger they represent, by taking measures to prevent them, to detect the threat then to trying to deal with it.

So the importance of this research is linked to the notion of risk, that it is based on a representation of the threat as an accidental and random event that affects social ties more than public health.

On the other hand, the aim of this study is to highlight the frameworks for treating sociology in its specialization related to risk management for a pandemic of Corona virus as it is an independent variable that affects the collective perceptions and representations of members of society and the transformations that result from it in the nature of the social ties.

To address this issue from the theoretical side, it has been relied on previous studies in the form of the study conducted by the researcher Celine Guilleux, who she based on the problematic of impact of the covid-19 crisis on social life.

This call for papers from the French Revue of Sociology aims to explore the empirical and theoretical issues of the upheavals and/or lasting social changes produced, directly or indirectly by the covid-19 pandemic.

Without being limiting, four lines of questioning seem to us to deserve particular attention: social inequalities; work ; training ; information ; expertise ; science; politicization and political recomposition such as the confinements such as the generalization of distancing measures have enabled the populations concerned to become aware of the importance of the relational "fabric"<sup>(1)</sup> inherent in all life in society a dimension traditionally well studied by the social sciences.

Sociologists themselves quickly seized on the general principle of the crisis as "revealing" to underline the fragility of the health system, the extent of social inequalities, the lack of know-how of public authorities or even dysfunctions in biomedical research .

The second study presents a sociological survey entitled "life in confinement" carried out by Marie-Pierre Bès, and ClearBidart (CNRS - LEST, Aix Marseille University) when the VICO survey was launched, at the time of the event, to better understand the multiple consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on the lives of people residing in France.

His objective is to produce knowledge and document for the future of the gigantic crisis that we let's cross. Beyond the medium-term scientific analyzes of which they will be the basis, the dataproduced are also an archive on file of a historical phenomenon that historians likecitizens can consult later.

In a context saturated with information, speeches and comments of all kinds, a context where polls sponsored by governments or private companies are on the rise, it is useful to bring the perspective of a social science investigation that has no other objective than the productionreasoned knowledge of the event.

The central objective of the VICO<sup>(2)</sup> survey is therefore to produce sociological knowledge about one of the major consequences of the pandemic, namely the obligation to stay at home and this situationhas at least three major characteristics:

**A.** Lockdown represents a remarkable observatory of inequalities in French society and it potentially affects everyone, but it is nevertheless likely to be experienced in very different ways.

Different and reveal deep social inequalities, the VICO survey questionnaire thus first collected very concrete information on the housing conditions, the situations compared the work and daily activities of the respondents, asking them each time about their situation before and during confinement.

**B.** Confinement questions our relationship with the authorities and our obedience to the state so in a few hours, the government got the whole of society to agree to lock itself up and give up their right to freedom of movement.

Of course, fears of illness and the police played his role, but we cannot reduce the immense consent that has been witnessed to these elements alone, all that we can call the containment "police" constitutes the second axis of the questionnaire.

Again, the social differences compared the acceptance of rules and their control will be particularly scrutinized: rare indeed are the occasions like these where the most favored members of a society must like the others, agree to restrict their movements.

**C.** Confinement questions our social relationships and what cements ordinary solidarity.

It is an exceptional opportunity to reflect on the consequences of this crisis on the forms of meeting, solidarity and social cohesion.

There are new inequalities emerging, linked to ability to get help or rely on pre-existing relationships in the face of difficulties? What personal relationships are strengthened, which are degraded, and why? What do these tell us?

Accordingly, and based on what was previously touched upon, the sociological concern revolves around the nature of the outcomes of the Corona pandemic in the form of social relations and the quality of societal ties that crystallized during and after the end of this epidemic, including the social risk variable and its reflection in the form of links between members of society.

**Thus, the sociological question was asked:**

**What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as a social risk on social ties?**

In an effort to answer this concern, the research hypotheses were put forward as follows:

**More COVID-19 represents a social risk, more the bonds (relations) between community members change.**

**1-COVID-19 pandemic as a social risk (frameworks and paradigms)1:**

The Covid-19 crisis is a phenomenon that goes far beyond the health issue. Through the prism of health, from the angle of the risk of contagion, it affects all social institutions and collective organization.

As in the 19th century, the jolt provoked brings into definition implementation and control of the social order, but before discussing sociologically the corona virus pandemic, it is first necessary to analyze the term of risk in sociological matters and its relationship with the effects that occurred during this pandemic.

Therefore a phenomenon that has become a risk from the moment shipowners became aware of this threat and tried to guard against it in advance.

So a threat, a danger, or whatever, turns into a risk as soon as a collective awareness<sup>(3)</sup> of the presence of a threat appears and a desire to control it, through preventive mechanisms or remedial mechanisms 'insurance.

This threat can also be completely irrational and imaginary for example, Ulrich Beck said "in my thesis, I worked on Protestants' fear of going to hell and the way in which their religion could reassure them in the face of this "risk".

Risk, as a category of analysis in the social sciences, is therefore very frequently considered as a social production, in the sociology of risk the works are very numerous and cover very varied fields.

They are particularly interested in individual behaviors in the face of risk, in particular in the perceptions of risk and so-called risky behaviors, as well as in the way in which a risk structures a collective, so the British sociologist Anthony Giddens on whom I also rely a lot, was interested in a more individual register, in the relationship to risk of individuals and in the place of risk in their daily decisions.

Modernity is characterized according to him by the pre-eminence of a “culture of risk” by this he means that our society constantly urges individuals, who have acquired greater autonomy, to take charge of their lives, to become entrepreneurs of their own existence, including their own health, by being attentive to everything which in their environment could constitute threats or opportunities for their future well-being.

In order for them to be able to make the right decisions today for their future, in their choices of consumption, lifestyle, etc, we provide them with expert knowledge that is often quantified, so according to Giddens In contemporary societies, everyone is therefore required to be aware of the risks incurred and to control their own lives to "colonize the future" to use Giddens's terms, by relying on available knowledge, in particular a collective knowledge determined by the relationship quality, but not all individuals conform to this norm that constitutes the culture of risk and it is the whole point of sociological work to precisely show the social diversity of attitudes towards risk and the future.

We also find the contribution of the German sociologist Ulrich Beck, who is an essential author on the question of risk, insisted on the fact that the risks of today, which he calls the risks of the new modernity, are threats which escape our senses: we do not see them, we do not hear them, we do not feel them.

This is the case with viruses, so Beck explains that very often these contemporary risks are externalities of productive activities, which simultaneously produce tangible goods, with value and invisible and silent risks, which promote their proliferation, this is one of the paradoxes of the "risk society"<sup>(4)</sup> highlighted by Beck: thanks to scientific and technical progress of societies become safer, because they are able to control more and more dangers, but at the same time they generate new risks like covid 19.

Then, it definitely belongs to the category of invisible risks typical of the “risk society”, even if Beck is mainly interested in major technological, chemical or radioactive risks, rather than infectious risks and especially since some carriers of the disease, especially children could be asymptomatic.

This is one of the reasons why the first measure taken was to close the schools to protect the adults of the elderly with whom the children could come into contact.

This invisibility of risk complicates its management and this risk is also an externality of the contemporary mode of development, because as I said, the fast spread of the coronavirus is due to the intensity of the flow of goods and people in the world.

In 1917-1918, the Spanish flu, a comparable virus, took two or three years to go around the world, whereas today it took only a few weeks for the coronavirus to be present everywhere or almost everywhere in the world.

## **2-Socialties and the pandemic(case study of the agglomeration known as ELDjaouhara in the city of Ain Temouchent) 2**

This contribution aims to explore the empirical and theoretical issues of the upheavals and/or lasting social changes produced, directly or indirectly by the Covid-19 pandemic, without being limiting, four lines of questioning seem to us to deserve particular attention:

As researchers we are all affected by this invisible disease that we would like to overcome as soon as possible.

Virologists and pharmacologists can obviously focus on the search for a vaccine or care, they are on the front line, so more modestly sociologists can try to measure the social effects of the epidemic, as well as those of the political measures deployed to deal with it, especially in the case of a disease for which the best remedy is a social device: distance yourself from others, avoid all forms of sociability! Does this engender or will engender a withdrawal into

oneself, loneliness, atomization, bordering on anomie, and therefore a threat in the long term to social cohesion?

Furthermore, will this epidemiological and political solution to confinement (and the others that will follow) have an equal and fair impact among all citizens? As sociologists, social cohesion and inequalities are precisely the analytical prisms of our research.

So as a member of the monitoring unit responsible of the health situation at the state of Ain Temouchent, I had the possibility of having information before and during the Covid crisis on a representative sample of the local population and therefore its allow to measure the changes in behaviors and attitudes caused by the pandemic and the containment, this makes all the difference with other sociological surveys on the Covid-19, which are more intended to take a snapshot of the situation, and not to record almost live the transformations of social practices which will perhaps settle in the duration.

**2-1 Methodology an research technics**

As technology evolves and more and more people are using e-mail and social media as the main means of communication, the use of electronic questionnaires in social research is likely to increase and it will be possible to evaluate the effectiveness of using this medium in this way, soa few studies have been conducted that deal with comparing computer-implemented surveys with questionnaires that are carried out directly (the researcher and the participant face-to-face) and virtual and electronic questionnaires,so Facebook surveys are more likely to lead to socially acceptable answers.

Computer communication may be particularly appropriate when studying certain groups of people. We mention, for example: Individuals who are unable to meet the researcher or meet other participants for some reason, the obstacle for some individuals may be the severity of their preoccupation only, for such groups the time-limited opportunity to participate from their homes or their workplace (for example in virtual interviews) may serve as an incentive to encourage them to participate and it is the appropriate technique for conducting social surveys in the case of the Covid epidemic.

The focus on the virtual survey began in the study of individuals who are unable to participate in their own person, so we find the research of Bowker and Tuffin (2004) entitled: “The use of electronic media (the Internet) in analyzing the discourse related to individuals with physical disabilities”, published in: “The Journal of Computer Science Social”, issue (22) pp. 241-228, when Booker and Toven studied the electronic experiences of individuals with physical disabilities using online interviews

Accordingly, this study touched a random sample of 500 people living in the residential community called Al-Jawhara, during the period from 15/10/2020 to 12/12/2020, where the data were processed through the spss program.

**3- Presenting the results of the hypothesis: more COVID-19 represents a social risk, more the relations between community members change.**

**Table 01. Community members’ perceptions of the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic**

Expression	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
The Corona pandemic presents the most dangerous disaster we have experienced in our lives.	2.5	0.5
Our thoughts are limited to how to get out of this situation.	3.80	1.5
We suffer from a constant fear of infection with the virus.	3.20	1.2

We cannot practice our social life in the context of this pandemic.	3.15	0.9
The average of deviation	3.30	1.35

Source: (Field interview,12, 2020)

**Comment: Table No.01 shows the perceptions of individuals from the researched sample about the Corona 19 pandemic and what is represents for them in relation to theirs diaries in society.**

**Table 02. The impact of the Corona pandemic on social relations**

Expression	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
I Have Little Contact With The Community	3.2	1.2
I can only go out of the house when absolutely necessary	3.15	1.5
My social behavior has changed	3.90	1.3
The average of deviation	3.60	1.32

Source: (Field interview, 12, 2020)

**Comment:Table No. 02 shows the impact of the Corona pandemic on social relations, and the repercussions of this on the pattern of social relations, specifically on the social behavior of the members of the sample studies .**

**Table 03. The nature of the social ties in the context of the Corona pandemic**

Expression	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Our lives have become limited to the social media	2.20	0.2
Tangible social interaction can't be replaced by a virtual digital interaction.	2.90	0.9
Remote interaction breaks down social ties.	2.90	0.9
The average of deviation	2.75	0.85

Source: (Field interview,12, 2020)

**Comment:Table No. 03 shows the quality of the social ties imposed by the Corona pandemic appears, especially with the application of social distancing and isolation as two mechanisms to reduce the rates of transmission of the virus.**

**5. A sociological reading of the findings:**

**4-Field results given the following research hypothesis «more COVID-19 represents a social risk, more the relations between community members change" 3**

Based on the results of the field study, the following results were obtained:

**(A) Social inequalities.**

Faced with the health emergency and relying on medical and epidemiological knowledge, the public authorities designed a set of measures without taking into account the social inequalities that run through local society, which one could however think would be aggravated in this particular context.

Surveys, in Algeria as in many countries, very early documented strong inequalities in health, from exposure to the virus to the risk of dying from it.

In any case, groups at the bottom of the social scale, and in particular people with the lowest incomes and immigrants of non-European origin, appeared to be the most affected by the pandemic.

This finding reflects above all the importance of living conditions in accounting for the spread of the virus and the effects of public policies, without forgetting the reconfiguration of family roles that confinement situations may have fostered, particularly in terms of taking charge of domestic tasks and distributing the “mental load”, with consequences for psychological well-being<sup>(5)</sup>.

Contributions are expected for this first axis that question the processes that build the long-term consequences of this health crisis on social inequalities (in the broadest sense, including in particular inequalities of age, class, gender, origin or even "race"), whether it concerns family reconfigurations and material living conditions, the relationship to work and its conditions of exercise or even the relationship to the healthcare system.

### **B) politicization of the pandemic**

The refusal of the vaccine seems to have taken on a political dimension, reflecting a distrust of the government, protesting distrust for some as an expression of dissatisfaction with the management of the crisis, and/or confirmation of options ideologies rooted in earlier social conflicts which were not lacking in the years preceding the crisis, of course, this politicization has also been fueled by measures restricting individual freedoms (confinement, curfew, “health pass”, “vaccination pass”, etc.).

### **C) Work and relationships.**

A second axis, not exclusive of the first, focuses on the long-term consequences of the epidemic and its management on employment and training activities, the massive use of telework and the implementation of “educational continuity”<sup>(6)</sup> during the first confinement (from March to May 2020) are emblematic in this respect, because “remote” work and training largely persisted beyond this first period, particularly in education, highlighting an already existing digital divide, so the management of “evictions”, or even physical distancing measures and the wearing of masks in companies and in schools .

The expected contributions may also focus, from the point of view of employers, on the acceleration of trends such as the precariousness of employment ("uberisation", auto-entrepreneurship), on companies that are rethinking the way of manage office spaces such as management and control devices. From the point of view of employees, the emphasis could be placed on the reassessment of the relationship to work (conversion, change of mode of exercise of the profession, mobility) or more broadly the reconfigurations of certain professional sectors: health of course, but also performing arts, catering, etc.

### **5-Sociological reading of the results**

crises are political, economic and social opportunities, they can present an opportunity to change society, by making it possible to take decisions that could not have been taken in other circumstances, in Paris in the 19th century following the cholera epidemic, the sanitation networks were redesigned and rebuilt and the public authorities took the opportunity to change the architecture of the capital.

Regarding the coronavirus crisis, some are prophesying radical societal changes, such as the end of globalization, so that remains to be seen and there may also be less spectacular things such as the development of telework or a desire for national independence in the production of basic necessities in the event of an epidemic.

If we are first interested in lay perceptions of risk, sociological analysis shows that lay people who do not make the right decisions in the eyes of experts or who doubt expert knowledge are not necessarily irresponsible or irrational.

Very often, they tinker with representations based on previous representations, regarding Covid-19 in the absence of scientific certainty, individuals try to go back to precedents by wondering if it is more or less dangerous, more or less contagious than the flu.

So their is resistance to health injunctions may be a well-considered and entirely reasonable choice from their perspective, take the example of opposition to vaccination, which is greater in France than in other countries [10] for ten years, the social sciences have been interested in the notion of vaccine hesitancy<sup>(7)</sup>.

Work in this field has shown that only a very small minority of the population, often very sensitive to information disseminated on social networks and to conspiracy theories, totally reject vaccination, but a larger proportion (20 to 40% depending on the surveys), without questioning the principle of vaccination, have concerns about certain vaccines and choose whether or not to vaccinate their child according to the advantages. And perceived disadvantages of the vaccines.

The typical profile of people with this critical posture corresponds to individuals with a higher education diploma, very informed, very concerned about health issues concerning their children. So these are people who fully embrace Giddens' "risk culture"<sup>(8)</sup>, who take their health into their own hands, are risk-aware, and so on.

Far from being irrational, on the contrary, they try to make the best decisions for their child's health.

Sociological analysis in studying the relationship of the Covid variable as a social risk with the social ties variable leads us to rely on the epidemiological paradigm as an entry point to study the risk factors that affect the quality of social ties, based in particular on the work of Bruno Latour (1995), the effects of the predominance of the "epidemiological paradigm"<sup>(9)</sup> in the way of understanding risky behavior and in the definition of health policies to prevent them.

Epidemiology focuses on finding individual "risk factors" and their statistical link to a health problem, such as the link between smoking and lung cancer.

This scientific approach, in particular its multifactorial causality model, has spread widely in many disciplines and beyond the scientific field alone, Philip Morris even relied on epidemiological surveys in the 1990s to put the risks of passive smoking into perspective!, however, the epidemiological paradigm poses many methodological problems and produces results that generally lack solidity.

Above all, it favors the prediction of « risky behavior »<sup>(10)</sup> based on biological causal relationships to the detriment of understanding human phenomena and behavior, it therefore tends to biologize behaviors that nevertheless fit into a social or cultural context, on the contrary, the work of sociologists shows that risk behaviors have a meaning for individuals, in connection with beliefs, rites, a need for self-realization, identity affirmation, social integration .

### **Conclusion**

Today, some people are willing to put themselves at risk of being infected with the coronavirus by not complying with containment measures, because immediate competing risks weigh more heavily: they risk losing their jobs, income, or not succeeding in carrying out a project, they fear loneliness, etc, so the health risk that the authorities seek to manage is not necessarily the priority for everyone.

Many people are more afraid of the consequences that its management has on their way of life or their living conditions, which is why Ulrich Beck said that the new risks<sup>(11)</sup> (industrial, ecological, food, etc.) had a somewhat more democratic, because no one escaped it, unlike other risks, which are generally socially differentiated.

Accordingly, what we conclude as field results about this problem can be summarized in the following points:

- The dependence of the social ties variable on the risk variable represented by the Corona virus pandemic, as the remnants of the virus affect the mechanisms of daily communication between members of society and push them to rebuild their networks of relationships based on the degrees of danger represented by their communication with each other.
- The influence of the variable of social links with the Corona virus pandemic depends on the



results of this disease and its daily remnants, where the periods of escalating waves of infection were witnessing variations in the social behavior of individuals, including their links with each other, as the results of the field investigation revealed that the contexts of the three waves of Covid 19 were You know shifts in the degrees of interaction between members of the community due to the varying levels of danger from one individual to another, as the perceptions and representations of individuals towards the virus are the determinant of their interaction patterns so that we found individuals within the research sample who maintained the same pattern of their daily communication with the rest of the community members in terms of not, their belief in the fact that there is a contagious virus called Corona 19, their ties remained in their physical form, meaning that they did not apply social distancing or isolation in their homes, but rather sought to prove the myth of the Covid, according to them to the rest of society.

While we find another category whose social ties have changed radically, accompanied by the lack of physical communication between them and the rest of society due to the tyranny of the risk factor over their perceptions and representations about this virus, as many of them resorted to replacing their material and tangible social ties with other, neither material nor Concrete represented in virtual links made on the level of a digital environment called social media, which contributed to the establishment of « cyber social links »<sup>(12)</sup> in which the individual achieves his communicative satisfaction, without physical contact with the rest of the social units. In which the individual gave up his physical existence for the sake of his digital existence.

**Endnotes:**

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- 2-Bergeron H & Dedieu F ,( 2020), “ Covid19: an organizational crisis”, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, p 83.
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**B. Journal article**

8. Albouy V & Legleye S, Living conditions during confinement: differences according to standard of living and socio-professional category, Insee Focus, United Kingdom, n° 197, June, 2020, pp 215 - 237;
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**C. Internet websites**

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