

# *revue française de sociologie*

## **Call for Papers** ***Revue française de sociologie*** **“COVID-19” special issue**

### **Scientific coordinators:**

**Nathalie Bajos (INSERM-EHESS), Michel Dubois (CNRS-Sorbonne Université),  
Patrick Peretti-Watel (INSERM)**

What impact has the Covid-19 crisis had on life in society? Lockdown periods and generalized social distancing measures—entirely new experiences in France and many countries—have made the populations in question aware of the importance of the relational “fabric” inherent in social existence, a dimension traditionally studied in the social sciences. French sociologists were quick to grasp the general principle that the crisis would “reveal” critical issues such as the fragility of the health system (Gaudillière, Isambert, and Juven 2021), the magnitude of social inequalities (Bajos et al. 2021), the public authorities’ lack of organizational know-how in responding to the situation (Bergeron, Borras, Castel and Dedieu 2020), and areas of dysfunction in biomedical research (Gingras and Khelfaoui 2021). The list is far from complete (for a thorough inventory, see Lazar, Plantin, and Ragot 2020; Gaille and Terral 2021), but all these studies work to account for preexisting phenomena that have been considerably exacerbated by the crisis.

The pandemic event has also triggered or accelerated lasting social transformations. We don’t have to resort to “life before and after” rhetoric when investigating mid- or long-term pandemic effects and the effects produced by the various public

measures taken to reduce the spread of the virus. Social science researchers have already greatly benefited from the commitment of research organizations and funding agencies to investigate new research topics, including the impact of lockdowns and consequences of the pandemic on living conditions, health care trajectories and chronic disease treatment, experiences of families with young children, public attitudes toward vaccines, not to mention the renewal of scientific process and scientific expertise. Once again the list is hardly complete, but if we step back a bit it now seems obvious that the very landscape of the social sciences in France and elsewhere has been at least partially reconfigured by the COVID-19 crisis.

Papers for this special issue will explore the empirical and theoretical issues implicated in the lasting social upsets and/or changes brought about either directly or indirectly by the COVID-19 pandemic. The following four lines of inquiry, though not restrictive, seem to us to deserve particular attention:

- 1) **Social inequalities.** Faced with an emergency health situation and founding their decisions on medical and epidemiological knowledge, the public authorities in France conceived a set of measures without taking into account the social inequalities that run through French society, despite the reasonable assumption that those inequalities would worsen in this particular context. Quite early on, surveys conducted in France and many other countries began documenting marked inequalities in health and exposure to the virus, including unequal risk of death (Bambra et al. 2020). It became clear in all cases that the groups hardest hit by the pandemic were those at the bottom of the social ladder, especially lower-income people and people of non-European immigrant origin. This amply documented fact reflects first and foremost the importance of living conditions in accounting for virus spread and public policy effects. Other studies have shown that the slowdown and in some cases complete halt of activities in certain economic sectors heavily impacted employment and financial resources, especially among people in already unstable jobs and/or precarious socioeconomic circumstances (Albouy and Legleye 2020; Peretti-Watel et al. 2022), and that the crisis changed people's attitudes toward health, particularly affecting access to the healthcare system (Connor et al. 2020). Still other studies have focused on the possible reorganization of family roles generated by lockdown situations; specifically, changes in distribution of domestic work and the "mental burden" of running a household that in turn affected psychological well-being (Pailhé et al. 2020). Contributions pursuing this first line of investigation will probe the processes at work in the COVID-19 crisis' long-term effects on social inequalities in the broad sense of the term—that is, inequalities in age, class, gender, origin, and "race," studying, for example, reconfigurations of family roles and changes in material living and/or working conditions, or changed attitudes toward work or the healthcare system during the pandemic.
- 2) **Work and education.** This second line of inquiry, not entirely separate from the first, concerns the long-term effects of the epidemic and epidemic management on work and education or training (Eurofound 2020). Massive recourse to remote working and the government concern to ensure "teaching and learning continuity" during France's first lockdown period (March to May 2020) are

emblematic here (Lambert and Cayouette-Remblière 2021) as “remote” working and learning have continued long after that first period, particularly in education, bringing to light a preexisting “digital divide.” But this line of inquiry also extends to lasting changes in “in-person” working and learning conditions, with the generalization of preventive measures (e.g., regular hand-washing), the matter of managing student and employee “evictions” due to COVID-19 infection or preexisting health vulnerabilities, mask-wearing and physical distancing in companies and schools (Aucejo et al. 2020, Kniffin et al. 2020). Papers pursuing this line of inquiry may also investigate certain changes from the employer perspective; e.g. the acceleration of trends like increased employment vulnerability (“uberization,” self-employment), or companies’ approaches to redesigning office space and implementing arrangements for managing and monitoring employees. Contributors studying developments from the employee perspective might emphasize how workers have reassessed their work situations—e.g., changing their occupation, changing how they practice their occupation, moving—or investigate how some occupational sectors—health of course, but also live performance, the restaurant business, and others—have been reconfigured.

- 3) **Information, expertise, and science.** Papers pursuing this third line of inquiry will account for how the crisis has transformed boundaries between information and disinformation, lay and expert knowledge—science and non-science. The Covid-19 crisis has been described as a disinformation pandemic, particularly in conjunction with social media (Giry 2020). The strong uncertainties caused by the pandemic have given rise to numerous controversies in which scientists and experts find themselves pitted against anonymous contributors, a situation that has led to more or less profound changes in the rules governing scientific argument (Dubois et al. 2021). The French public authorities established different expert committees while regularly changing how they interact with them (Benamouzig 2020). Meanwhile, faced with the urgent need to produce results quickly, the scientific community was led to question some of its own operating rules, notably those for evaluating research findings and publications (Horbach 2020). Exposing the fragility and indeed fraudulence of some scientific publications—material that in certain cases was used and cited by public authorities—gave visibility to new evaluators of scientific work. Last, and consistent with the observation that the pandemic has impacted the social sciences, we welcome contributions that draw on original empirical material to study the nature of the current overall reconfiguration of the scientific landscape and the issues implicated in it.
- 4) **Politicization and political realignments.** From another perspective, the current health crisis has also brought about more acute politicization of health issues, examples being the controversy on treating COVID-19 with hydroxychloroquine and population mistrust or reluctance with regard to vaccines (Stroebe et al. 2021; Ward et al. 2021). Individuals seem increasingly likely to apprehend these issues through the prism of their own personal ideological or partisan preferences, while the resulting polarization no longer seems to follow the “right/left” divide but rather a split between governance parties and “anti-system” parties—a continuation of the restructuring of

partisanship that began before the health crisis. Stronger politicization of health issues may also reflect individuals' propensity to read the world in which they make decisions and choices in partisan terms (Gauchet 2012; Gostin 2018; Blank and Shaw 2020). In this understanding, the refusal to get vaccinated appears to have taken on a political dimension, expressing mistrust of the government—defiant and dissenting mistrust in some cases—or discontent with government crisis management, and/or confirming ideological options rooted in earlier social conflicts, of which there was no dearth in the years preceding the crisis. Clearly, too, politicization is fueled by measures that restrict individual freedom (lockdowns, curfews, “health passes,” “vaccination passes,” etc.).

Contributions to this special issue may draw on qualitative or quantitative materials; they may take a comparative approach, looking at the COVID-19 crisis in relation to other health crises or comparing situations observed in different countries. We would also welcome proposals for a critical review of a few recent and important books pertaining directly to the special issue topic.

Contribution proposals must be between 500 and 1,500 words and written in either French or English. They will briefly specify the following:

- 1) research topic and state of the relevant literature,
- 2) material and methods,
- 3) results expected,
- 4) a short bibliography (no more than 5 references).

Proposals that do not comply with this format will be automatically rejected.

Proposals must be sent **before April 25, 2022**,  
to Assistant Editor Christelle Germain and the three coordinators at  
[rfs.covid19@services.cnrs.fr](mailto:rfs.covid19@services.cnrs.fr)

They will be examined jointly by the scientific coordinators. Acceptance letters will be sent out **no later than May 30, 2022**.

Authors of accepted proposals must submit their full texts **no later than December 15, 2022**. Articles may not exceed 75,000 characters (including spaces, references, and tables). Each article will be evaluated anonymously by the editorial committee of the *Revue*.

## References

Albouy, V. and Legleye, S. 2020. Conditions de vie pendant le confinement: des écarts selon le niveau de vie et la catégorie socioprofessionnelle. INSEE Focus 197, June.  
Aucejo, E. M., French, J., Ugalde Araya, M. P., and Zafar, B. 2020. “The Impact of COVID-19 on Student Experiences and Expectations: Evidence from a Survey.” *Journal of Public Economics* 191, 104271: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2020.104271>.

Bajos, N., Jusot, F., Pailhé, A., Spire, A., Martin, C., Meyer, L., Lydién N., Franck, J. E., Zins, M., Carrat, F., the SAPRIS study group. 2021. "When Lockdown Policies Amplify Social Inequalities in COVID-19 Infections." *BMC Public Health* 21 (1): 705.

Bambra, C., Riordan, R., and Ford, J. et al. 2020. "The COVID-19 Pandemic and Health Inequalities." *Journal of Epidemiology Community Health* 74: 964-68.

Benamouzig, D. 2020. "Un sociologue au conseil scientifique." In *Le monde d'aujourd'hui. Les sciences sociales au temps de la Covid*, edited by M. Lazar, G. Plantin, X. Ragot. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Bergeron, H., Borraz, O., Castel, P., and Dedieu, F. 2020. *Covid19: une crise organisationnelle*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Blank, J. M., and Shaw, D. 2015. "Does Partisanship Shape Attitudes toward Science and Public Policy? The Case for Ideology and Religion." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 658 (1): 18-35.

Connor, J., Madhavan, S., Mokashi, M., Amanuel, H., Johnson, N. R., Pace, L. E., and Bartz, D. 2020. "Health Risks and Outcomes that Disproportionately Affect Women During the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Review." *Social Science and Medicine* 266, 113364: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.113364>.

Dubois, M., Frenod-Dunand, A., Gargiulo, F., and Guaspere-Cartron, C. 2021. "Le contrôle par les pairs au temps du coronavirus." In *Sorbonnavirus, Regards sur la crise du coronavirus*, edited by P.-M. Chauvin and A. Clement. Paris: Sorbonne Université Presses.

Eurofound. 2020. *Living, Working and COVID-19*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, COVID-19 series.

Gaille, M., and Terral, P. (eds.). 2021. *Pandémie. Un fait social total*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.

Gauchat, G. 2012. "Politicization of Science in the Public Sphere A Study of Public Trust in the United States, 1974 to 2010." *American Sociological Review* 77 (2): 167-87.

Gaudillière, J.-P., Izambert, C., and Juven, P. A. 2021. *Pandémopolitique. Réinventer la santé en commun*. Paris: La Découverte.

Gingras, Y., and Khelfaoui, M. 2021. "L'effet SIGAPS: la recherche médicale française sous l'emprise de l'évaluation comptable." *Zilsel* 1-8: 144-74.

Giry, J. 2020. "Les fake news comme concept de sciences sociales. Essai de cadrage à partir de notions connexes: rumeurs, théories du complot, propagande et désinformation." *Questions de communication* 38: 371-94.

Gostin, L. O. 2018. "Language, Science, and Politics: The Politicization of Public Health." *JAMA* 319 (6): 541-42: doi: 10.1001/jama.2017.21763.

Horbach S. 2020. "Pandemic Publishing: Medical Journals Drastically Speed up their Publication Process for Covid19." *Quantitative Science Studies* 1 (3): 1056-67.

Kniffin, K. M., Narayanan, J., Anseel, F. et al. 2021. "COVID-19 and the Workplace: Implications, Issues, and Insights for Future Research and Action." *American Psychologist* 76 (1): 63-77: doi: 10.1037/amp0000716.

Lambert, A., and Cayouette-Remblière, J. (eds.). 2021. *L'explosion des inégalités. Classes, genre et générations face à la crise sanitaire*. La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de l'Aube/INED.

Lazar, M., Plantin, G., and Ragot, X. (eds.). 2020. *Le monde d'aujourd'hui. Les sciences sociales au temps de la Covid*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Pailhé, A., Panico, L., and Solaz, A. 2021. "Children's Well-being and Intra-household Family Relationships during the First COVID-19 Lockdown in France." *Journal of Family Research*: <https://doi.org/10.20377/jfr-718>.

Peretti-Watel, P. (ed.). 2022. *Huis-clos avec un virus : comment les Français ont vécu le premier confinement ?* Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion.

Stroebe, W., van Dellen, M. R., Abakoumkin, G. et al. 2021. "Politicization of COVID-19 Health-protective Behaviors in the United States: Longitudinal and Cross-national Evidence." *PLoS One* 16, 10:e0256740. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0256740>.

NB: Erratum in: *PLoS One* 2022, 17, 1:e0263100. 17(1): e0263100: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0263100>.

Ward, J. K., Alleaume, C., Peretti-Watel, P., the COCONEL Group. 2020. "The French Public's Attitudes to a Future COVID-19 Vaccine: The Politicization of a Public Health Issue." *Social Science and Medicine* 265: 113414: doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.113414.