

## **Living with a Global Pandemic: A Study of People's Experiences of Covid-19 in Sweden**

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This article presents an analysis of data collected in Sweden in April and May 2020 through an online survey conducted by Research Committee 36 Alienation Theory and Practice at the International Sociological Association that examined experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim of this presentation is to investigate people's worries and concerns arising the pandemic in relation to their socioeconomic background, social capital, health, and wellbeing. Their opinions and judgements concerning the national measures that have been implemented in order to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, along with what is perceived to be the biggest threat in the current situation, are issues of primary concern. Although worry is a common response to threat, it is also closely related to psychological distress. We address the question of psychological distress as it points to the need for further, qualitative studies that will focus on the particular question of widespread fear as a public health problem.

The theoretical framework of the study resides upon the concepts of risk, social capital, and communication. Through the employment of multiple stages of both regression analysis and multiple correspondence analysis, we found that higher levels of worry were closely associated with personal judgments that the measures being employed on the national level to combat the new corona virus were poorly chosen and ineffective. They were also associated with the view that Covid-19 – the illness itself, rather than the financial or social consequences of the pandemic – constituted the greatest threat that people and society as a whole were forced had to contend with. Higher levels of worry and stressed were also related to advancing age, chronic illness, lower levels of social capital (in terms of the availability of support when needed and feelings of loneliness), and feelings of sadness and depression. As noted above, a significant finding is that our survey and analysis point to the need for further qualitative analysis of the pandemic's psychological consequences, or what has been termed an epidemic of fear.