The Keywords of Covid-19. A cross-cultural survey.

Since early 2020, **the global, rapid, and ferocious spread of Covid-19** has found all the world unprepared, with devastating consequences on public health as well as on social, political, and economical aspects. Still in the eye of the hurricane, we cannot say how such a global pandemic will reshape anthropologically, socially, economically, and politically the world as we have known it so far.

Within such an appalling situation, it would seem that **analysing words** is the least of the things we should care about. Yet, **words** are by no means irrelevant as they allow us to represent and understand our reality, and are therefore even **more relevant in times of crisis.**

Therefore, within the project of the online dictionary '**In Other Words**' we wish to offer **special insight and critical tools** to a large audience through this dedicated section of the dictionary: "**The Keywords of Covid-19**".

This section analyses critically how, in different countries and different contexts, words have been used and mobilized **to create specific narratives of the pandemic** – e.g., to make people accept severe limitations to their rights; to spread terror or hope; to deliver para-scientific terms and fake-news; to favour or contrast conservative and divisive views of communities and societies; etc.

Contributors choose to discuss critically one or more **relevant and recurrent keywords** that have shaped narratives and discourses on Covid-19 in **their country**. **Keywords** are therefore **listed by country** to allow an immediate cross-cultural comparison.

The structure and the rationale of this **specific section are lighter** and **less structured** than the overall project 'In Other Words', since we consider it necessary to be timely. Though we maintain English as a lingua franca, we encourage contributors to begin their discussion on the keyword/s with an **Abstract of about 50 words in their own native language, or in a language other than English.** We envision such a proposal to offer an immediate visual reference of how specific words have been used in different countries, but also as a way to problematize 'native speaker' otherness.

Each analysis tackles several issues, as for example:

- which are the **most recurrent words/metaphors** used in different countries to define this pandemic? e.g., the term 'war';
- how does **this pandemic have redefined the construct of Otherness**? e.g., who are the '**new**' **Others**? which are the '**new' borders**? which is the '**new' invasion**?
- which are the recurring words and narratives on/of Otherness which have been used **to construe such changes**?
- how many usually **invisible forms of Otherness** has such a pandemic revealed? e.g. the elderly, the sick.