

THE RHETORIC OF OTHERING IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC: LABELING COVID-19 AS A "FOREIGN VIRUS" IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Summary: This paper explores how the COVID-19 pandemic affects social relations and social interactions. It will rely on critical discourse analysis in order to identify the patterns of power relations related to various political and media narratives about the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be shown that the pandemic crisis has contributed to the rise of xenophobia and discrimination, which is the result of fear of the Other being perceived as a carrier of the disease. Discourses and narratives about the COVID-19 outbreak portray COVID-19 as a foreign virus, emphasizing binary oppositions: we/they, self/other, civilized/barbaric, citizen/foreigner, West/East and so forth.

Key words: COVID-19, xenophobia, discrimination, othering, discourse, analysis

Introduction

This paper examines public discourse about COVID-19. It will be shown that the COVID-19 outbreak is often described as a *foreign virus* in public discourse in both Eastern and Western societies. The COVID-19 virus is often portrayed as the disease of the *Other* and the consequence of this rhetoric is the rise of xenophobia and various forms of discrimination worldwide. In public discourse in the United States, COVID-19 is described as a "foreign virus" or "Chinese virus" (LeBlanc, 2020; Ho, 2020). In public discourse in China Africans are blamed for the second wave of coronavirus infections and are portrayed as "irresponsible" and "unhygienic" (Chung, 2020). In Sri Lanka and India Muslim minorities have been identified as responsible for spreading the virus (Donmez, 2020). In media in India, they are labeled as "'corona criminals' propagating 'corona-jihad'" (Afeef, 2020).

The narrative construction of the *Other* that is described as a threat and carrier of the disease is founded on binary oppositions: we/they, self/other, civilized/barbaric, culture/nature and so forth. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted

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disparities that already existed in various societies (Chung, 2020). The complexity of dynamics of xenophobia and discrimination and tendencies of othering and drawing boundaries have become more intense and obvious in times of crisis (Michener, 2020). Divisions that exist in various societies are amplified by the crisis. "Crisis enables us to pay attention to those patterns of division, to center them and highlight them and to think more critically about them than we would have before" (Michener, 2020).

Method

This paper aims at examining the rise of xenophobia and discrimination in a time of pandemic through critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA focuses on the use of language within a particular (historical, political or sociological) context (Van Dijk, 2001). CDA identifies the power of language to construct the world.¹ Discourses constitute social practices such as discrimination, exclusion, power relations and so forth. "Critical discourse analysis uncovers how a polarizing discursive activity highlights the negative aspects of the Other and the positive attributes of the Self while marginalizing the positive features of the Other and the negative actions or characteristics of the Self" (Lams, 2017). In this paper CDA will be employed in order to identify narrative patterns regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. Discourses and narratives about COVID-19 that can be subject to CDA can be drawn from variety of genres, such as the press, political speeches, public announcements, social media communication and so forth.

According to McCarthy, discourse analysis deals "with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used" (McCarthy 1991: 5). It stems from work in different field of study including semiotics, linguistics, hermeneutics, sociology, anthropology and psychology (McCarthy, 1991: 5). Discourse analysis deals with exploring both spoken interaction and written words: newspaper articles, policy papers, stories, notices, billboards and so forth (McCarthy, 1991: 12). Cameron (2001) emphasizes multidisciplinary nature of discourse analysis. According to Cameron, discourse analysis represents: 1) a method for social research; 2) a set of empirical knowledge about how speech and text are organized, and 3) a set of theories about the nature of communication and construction of social reality (Cameron, 2001: 17).

Critical discourse analysis stems from the poststructuralist aspirations in culture (Vuković, 2014: 97). It represents one of the approaches to discourse analysis (Ibid.).² According to Fairclough, critical discourse analysis represents a "discourse

¹ "It is important to stress that CDA has never been and has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific theory. Neither is one specific methodology characteristic of research in CDA. Quite the contrary, studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds, oriented towards different data and methodologies" (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 5).

² According to Carta and Morin, "discourse analysis is characterised by a plurality of disciplinary, theoretical and methodological approaches marked by internal heterogeneity, in such a way that 'it is perfectly possible to have two books in discourse analysis with no overlap in content at all'" (Carta and Morin, 2014: 297).

analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony" (Fairclough, 1995: 132-133).

Discourse-analytical approaches to public political discourse in times of crisis have been particularly valuable in shedding light on sharp distinctions between identities and difference (the self and other) constructed through these public discourses. However, "the term discourse is widely contested" (Carta and Morin, 2014: 297). Discourses create meanings and perceptions of social facts (Foucault, 1969). Relying on Derrida (1976), Carta and Morin argue: "The process whereby a signified can be attributed to a signifier entails the articulation of this signifier into a broader semantic system of meanings" (Carta and Morin, 2014: 297).

Discourses play a significant role in constructing social realities and conditions. They may be employed in creating collective identities and subjects, such as races, ethnicities and nations (Jovanović, 2015: 31). On the other hand, they may also be employed for advocating or justifying the exclusion of members of certain social and ethnic groups (Jovanović, 2015).

Based on critical discourse analysis of political and media narratives about COVID-19, this paper demonstrates continuity and consistency in portraying the COVID-19 virus as a disease of the *Other*. "Othering is defined as a discourse that employs a power 'to construct particular subject positions for 'us' by designating a certain category of people as 'them' (the Other)" (Liu and Self, 2020: 463). There are different linguistic means that are employed in order to realize these strategies (Aydın-Düzgit, 2014: 359). "Referential/nomination strategies can use various linguistic means, such as the use of tropes, substitutions, certain metaphors and metonymies, with the effect of creating ingroups and outgroups in discourse. For example, uses of 'we' and 'they', and "home" and "foreign", as Aydın-Düzgit states, "can be cited among the many linguistic means that involve referencing. They are very closely linked with the strategy of predication, which is the process and result of linguistically assigning qualities to subjects" (Aydın-Düzgit, 2014: 359).

The COVID-19 pandemic-related xenophobia and racism have various forms in accordance with the preexisted negative stereotypes in various societies.

Portraying the COVID-19 Virus as a "Disease of the Other"

Although "COVID-19 has no borders and it doesn't recognize nationality, race or creed" (Chung, 2020), COVID-19 is often portrayed as a disease of the *Other* in public discourse. COVID-19 became a global pandemic and calling the coronavirus by its point of origin reflects xenophobic and racist language practices of affiliating ethnicities and geographic regions with diseases (Ho, 2020).

Public political discourse and media narratives (as well as communication on social media) about the COVID-19 pandemic often include rhetoric of blaming China and people from China for the COVID-19 outbreak. China is described as "barbaric", "unhygienic", "foreign", and as a threat to the Western values, way of life, and even global health (Yee, 2020). Simultaneously with the spread of the virus in the West, there was a spread of prejudice against the people of Asia, their food and customs. One of the dominant narratives ascribes the COVID-19 pandemic to "the Chinese" – and their unhealthy culinary habits" (Barreneche, 2020: 19). At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, "The New York Times published an article about wet markets in China with the tweeted caption, "This is where you get new and emerging diseases that the human population has never before seen" (Yee, 2020). The British newspaper *Daily Mail* published an article which states that the coronavirus was transmitted to humans from snakes that were sold at the market in Wuhan (Rahhal et al., 2020). Luca Zaia, the governor of the Veneto region in Italy said that "unlike Italians, the Chinese did not have good standards of hygiene" and "eat mice live" (Donmez, 2020). Although he apologized for this statement, Italian civil society group Lunaria has collected over 50 reports of discrimination against Asians in Italy soon after Zaia's speech (Donmez, 2020).

Discrimination against Chinese culture can also be perceived in the American press, public political discourse and social media communication. John Cornyn, a United States Senator from Texas, directly accused China of creating the virus, saying that "China is to blame (...) Because the culture where people eat bats and snakes and dogs and things like that" (Shen-Berro, 2020). In this way the Chinese are portrayed as backward, uncivilized and diseased as opposed to the civilized West. These discourses are based on the self/other binary opposition. They employ a power to designate the Chinese as the Other, an outgroup that is "singled out due to some undesirable characteristics" it possesses (Liu and Self, 2020: 463).

The main binary oppositions that emerged in the public political discourse regarding the COVID-19 outbreak are; we/they, civilized/barbaric, West/East, which "point to the boundaries of the discursively articulated" *Self* "in relation to its various geographic Others" (Aydın-Düzgit, 2014: 361).

On the other hand, in public discourse in China Africans are portrayed as the *Other*, and often blamed for the second wave of coronavirus infections (Vincent, 2020). Some authors point to similarities between the rhetoric of othering regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the rhetoric of othering regarding Ebola several years ago. One of the dominant narratives ascribed Ebola to the Africans and their culinary habits (Yee, 2020: 9). Yee argues that "newspaper articles and broadcast news revived images (...) of Africa as a dark, diseased place to be feared" (Yee, 2020: 9).

In public discourse in India Muslim minority is blamed for the COVID-19 outbreak. "Hindu nationalist groups began to see the virus not as an entity spreading organically throughout India, but as a sinister plot by Indian Muslims to purposefully infect the population. #CoronaJihad thus began trending on Twitter" (Desai and Amarasingam, 2020: 3). The variety of Anti-Muslim narratives in India that portray Muslim minorities as the *Other* (being perceived as a carrier of the disease) led to the rise of Islamophobia (Ibid.).

However, this is not a new phenomenon, because throughout history, a contagious disease that would break out in one country has always been called the "disease of the Other" (Kišjuhas, 2020). Such, for example, was the case of spread of syphilis in Europe in the late 15th century – the English called this disease "French infection", the French called it "*morbus Germanicus*", the Florentines described it as "Neapolitan disease", and the Japanese called it "Chinese disease" (Ibid.). "Stigmatization of certain groups during crisis situations is not new. From terrorism to disease outbreaks, migrants have often been scapegoated for endangering native populations. Diseases have at times been perceived as 'foreign' (...) as was the case with cholera in the 1830s, HIV/AIDS in the 1980s or, more recently, with H1N1 influenza" (United Nations, 2020).

Nevertheless, otherness has always played a vital role in determining both personal and national identities. Identity is always defined in relation to the *Other* – it is a relational term that always refers to the diversity by which it is established. Although the identity derives from the Latin word *idem* (the same), this term not only denotes identification, but also diversity, without which any self-identity is unattainable (Ricoeur, 1992). However, when this diversity is denied and when the *Other* is rejected and marginalized, an essentialist conception of identity is created, based on sharp binary oppositions.

Public Political Discourse and Media Narratives about the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Rise of Xenophobia

Discourses of othering were analyzed by Edward W. Said who investigated the power relations within American and Western European discourses on Asian, Middle Eastern and African societies (Said, 1978). These cultures and peoples are described as undeveloped and static within Western discourse and this implies that Western societies are superior, developed and rational (Said, 1978). According to Ooi and Arcangelis:

“The role of knowledge production in the colonial project, which Said termed ‘Orientalism,’ has relied primarily on producing images of the ‘Orient’ in dualistic terms that serve to affirm Western cultural superiority – for example, in depicting the ‘Orient’ as backward, the West becomes civilized; in casting the former as superstitious, the latter becomes scientific; in describing the former as irrational, the latter becomes rational; in representing the former as archaic, the latter becomes modern; in fashioning the former as evil, the latter becomes good; in painting a picture of the former as violent, the latter becomes peaceful” (Ooi and Arcangelis, 2017: 270).

In public discourse in the United States, there is a focus on the idea that the virus was brought by a foreign presence³, instead of focusing on community spread (Chung, 2020). "Responses to the virus have been really rooted in the legacy of ra-

³ The president of the United States, Donald Trump, called the coronavirus "Chinese virus" (Al Jazeera 2020). He also characterized the coronavirus as a "foreign virus" (LeBlanc, 2020).

cism and xenophobia and have spread their contagion in public policy discourse and everyday interactions" (Chung, 2020). Misinformation that is spread in the media has also contributed to the rise of xenophobia, racism and various forms of discrimination.

In public discourse in the United States the COVID-19 pandemic is often discussed in xenophobic terms, such as "Wuhan virus", "Asian virus", "Chinese virus" or "foreign virus" (Yellow Horse and Leong, 2020). The same can be argued about social media as a number of persons posted "about the 'Chinese virus', 'Chinese coronavirus', 'Wuhan virus', or the 'King Flu'" (Kozłowska, 2020).

The term *Wuhan virus* "conflates a specific Chinese province with national and continental locations (China and Asia) that historically have been racialized and connected to persons of Asian descent in the U.S." (Yellow Horse and Leong, 2020). The cases of racist attacks on Asians are reported in both Europe and the United States (Ibid.).

According to Jennifer Ho, calling COVID-19 a "Chinese virus" cannot be justified by the fact that the flu pandemic in 1918 was called the "Spanish flu" (Ho, 2020). "This reinforces the problem with using 'Chinese virus' since the 1918 flu pandemic did not originate in Spain, so the logic does not hold up" (Ibid.). Ho emphasizes: "When people say it is not racist to say that the virus originated in China, that would be true if one lived in a world in which systematic racism was not still an issue and anti-Asian racism did not still persist" (Ibid.).

Anti-Chinese rhetoric in a time of pandemic crisis is directed against people of Asian descent, whether Chinese or not, and whether they have ever been to China. The hashtag #MakeChinaPay widely circulated on Twitter expressing anger towards China and calling for a boycott of products made in China (Kozłowska, 2020). According to DeCook, in the US the right-wing media establishment, right-wing social media pages, as well as "right-wing celebrities" have been spreading misinformation and conspiracy theories about COVID-19, as well as xenophobia (DeCook, 2020). This is an example of the abuse of fear and vulnerability by right-wing politicians (xenophobic, racist, etc.).

After the US politicians referred to coronavirus as "Chinese virus", "a total of 16,535 'Chinese virus' or 'China virus' tweets were identified in the preperiod, and 177,327 tweets were identified in the postperiod, illustrating a nearly ten-fold increase at the national level. All 50 states witnessed an increase in the number of tweets exclusively mentioning 'Chinese virus' or 'China virus' instead of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or coronavirus" (Budhwani and Sun, 2020). These discourses produced a number of cases of racism, xenophobia and discrimination against Asian American people. All these discourses represent China as the *Other*.

Viala-Gaudefroy and Lindaman argue that "the expressions 'Chinese virus' and 'Wuhan virus' personify the threat. Personification is metaphorical: its purpose is to help understand something unfamiliar and abstract (i.e. the virus) by using terms that are familiar and embodied (i.e. a location, a nationality or a person). (...) Metaphors are not just poetic tools, they are used constantly and shape our world view. The adjective 'Chinese' is particularly problematic as it associates the infection with an ethnicity (Viala-Gaudefroy and Lindaman 2020). This perspective is based on

narratives that preexisted the COVID-19 pandemic which point to unhygienic and barbaric traditions that are perceived as the *Other*.

These discourses of othering produced the rise of xenophobia, racism and the crisis of democracy. The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the COVID-19 pandemic became a "human rights crisis" and led to "rising ethno-nationalism, populism, authoritarianism" (Euronews, 2020). According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW) report, the COVID-19 pandemic caused fuelling of xenophobia and anti-Asian racism (Donmez, 2020). According to this report: "Asians and people of Asian descent have been targets of derogatory language in media reports and statements by politicians as well as on social media platforms, where hate speech related to COVID-19 also appears to have spread extensively" (Donmez, 2020). According to this report, authorities in the United States, European, African, and even some Asian countries have directly or indirectly encouraged xenophobia, racism, and hate speech based on anti-Chinese, anti-immigrant, and white supremacist rhetoric (Ibid.).

At least 267 anti-Asian hate speech has been reported in the UK, and the Human Rights Watch has received similar reports from South Korea, Japan, France, Spain, Russia, Australia, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Indonesia (Donmez, 2020). The citizens of China were forbidden to book hotel rooms in one hotel in the Russian city of Blagoveshchensk (Higgins, 2020) as well as in the Indonesian city of Bukittinggi (Emont and Mandhana, 2020). A video circulated on social media in Kenya, showing an angry crowd of people threatening two people of Asian descent, who are labeled as "corona." (Solomon, 2020).

A study by San Francisco State University Asian American Studies Professor and Chair Russell Jeung tracked racism and xenophobia in media reports about the COVID-19 pandemic. Jeung's study reveals more than 1,000 cases of xenophobia and racism against Asian Americans between 28 January and 24 February in the United States (Kandil, 2020). According to Jeung, labeling the coronavirus as "Chinese virus" within the American public political discourse was the trigger for the spread of racism toward Asian Americans in the United States (Ibid.). "This is just the latest chapter in a long history of anti-Asian racism in the U.S., from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II and the stereotype of Asian Americans as the perpetual foreigners"(Ibid.).

Media discourses also reflect the rise of xenophobia and particularly anti-Chinese sentiment amid the COVID-19 pandemic. German newspaper *Bild* published a provocative article entitled "What China Owes Us", accusing China of the outbreak and spread of coronavirus, but also noting that China should pay Germany 150 billion euros "for damages inflicted on the country by COVID-19 pandemic" (Van der Made, 2020). On the other hand, the Chinese Embassy in France published an article in French entitled "Restoring Distorted Facts – Observations of a Chinese Diplomat Posted to Paris", in which an anonymous Chinese diplomat stated that French medical workers abandoned their jobs leaving the residents of nursing homes to die, and criticized how France was dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic (Ibid.). Although an apology from China soon followed, this did not diminish the tension of the conversation between France's Foreign Minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, and

China's Ambassador to France, Lu Shaye. In an interview published by French newspaper *Le Monde* on 20 April, France's Foreign Minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian said: "I can't accept that anyone, including the Chinese embassy, slanders staff of our retirement homes" (Ibid.). German weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel* "featured on its cover an illustration of a person donning a red hooded cape, goggles, ear-phones and a protective mask, with the headline 'Coronavirus. Made in China'" (Ziener, 2020). *The Herald Sun* in Britain had an even more provocative headline during the pandemic – "Chinese Virus Panda-monium" (misspelling was intended) (Ibid.). French regional newspaper *Courrier Picard* had a headline "Yellow Alert" on a story about the pandemic (Ibid.). All these examples show that negative stereotypes and rhetoric of othering triggered by the COVID-19 outbreak are also spread by the press and media.

On the other hand, the COVID-19-related xenophobia is also reported in China, where the backlash has been directed to Africans in China (Fifield, 2020). The group of African Ambassadors in China sent a joint diplomatic note to China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi and called on China to stop discriminating against Africans (Dogru, 2020). Xenophobic attacks to Africans in China who are blamed for the second wave of coronavirus are often based on the racist narratives which predate the crisis. Within these narratives, Africans are described as lazy, unhygienic, drug addicts, thieves and so forth (Chung, 2020). According to Robertson, "there is a long history of (...) discrimination against Africans in China, which are linked to how Africans are viewed there. During the 2014 Ebola outbreak in three West African countries, Africans in China were subjected to forced quarantine episodes too, but they did not capture the popular imagination the way similar episodes of mistreatment do now. Chinese perceptions of Africans draw from two separate threads: that Africans are dangerous, disease-carrying individuals" (Robertson, 2020).

The rhetoric of othering regarding the COVID-19 pandemic can also be perceived in various other societies. Reports collected from Sri Lanka and India are particularly significant, where Muslim minorities have been identified as responsible for spreading the virus (Donmez, 2020). In India, "there has been a sudden surge in Islamophobic hashtags and posts on different social media platforms accusing Muslims of purposefully spreading the virus. A new term, 'corona jihad', has been coined to describe this conspiracy" (Appoorvanand, 2020). In public discourse in India, Muslims are portrayed as disease-carrying individuals, deceptive and uncivilized (Desai and Amarasingam, 2020). "The current narrative that Muslims are plotting to spread coronavirus and participating in 'corona jihad' is a mere continuation of anti-Muslim propaganda, which has steadily developed on social media and crystallized in anti-Muslim violence since (...) 2014" (Desai and Amarasingam, 2020: 6).

Refugees, migrants and assylum seekers are also often described as the *Other*. "Migrants and refugees are among those who have falsely been blamed and vilified for spreading the virus" (United Nations, 2020). The United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, warned that the coronavirus had produced a "tsunami of hate and xenophobia" (Portman, 2020). He emphasized that migrants and refugees who have often been identified as carriers of the coronavirus and denied access to health treatment have been particularly affected (Tanjug, 2020).

There are two patterns regarding the rhetoric of othering and discrimination of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in the time of pandemic crisis that can be perceived globally. The first pattern relates to developing narratives whose aim is scapegoating of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and minority population (Chung, 2020). In this way, the sharp binary opposition is based between citizens and immigrants, who are perceived as a threat to social security. The second pattern that can be identified are migration restrictions worldwide. Greece, Hungary and the United States prohibited new asylum applications (Chung, 2020). A great number of countries closed their borders soon after the COVID-19 outbreak. This can be argued about China, Iran, Italy Spain, the United States, Russia and so forth. Although this decision was legally justified, a number of foreigners found themselves in an unenviable situation – without the possibility of obtaining adequate medical care and protection in a foreign country, without being able to return to their home countries.

The Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán, used the COVID-19 pandemic to justify his anti-immigration policy and to limit citizen's rights as well. In a radio interview, Orbán explained why Hungary closed universities but not schools during the COVID-19 outbreak (News Wires, 2020). He said: “There are lots of foreigners there. Our experience is that primarily foreigners brought in the disease, and that it is spreading among foreigners” (Ibid.). In April 2020, Hungary's Parliament handed Viktor Orbán the right to rule by decree indefinitely, which is unacceptable for an EU member state.

The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres. called on the media to remove "racist, misogynist and other harmful content", and on educational institutions to focus on digital literacy at a time when false news continues to spread on the internet (Tanjug, 2020). "In the longer term, stigmatization and discrimination can negatively impact the ability of migrants to integrate into society. This not only undermines their wellbeing, but more broadly, that of receiving communities which benefit from their diverse contributions to social cohesion" (United Nations, 2020).

Conclusion

The main purpose of this analysis is to identify patterns and narrative paradigms regarding the COVID-19 pandemic that is often represented as the disease of the Other or foreign virus. Relying on critical discourse analysis this paper emphasizes that there is a discursive tactic in both Eastern and Western societies by which foreigners are represented as responsible for the COVID-19 outbreak and carriers of the virus. These discursive tactic is based on the sharp binary opposition self/other, which is used to portray entire cultures as unacceptable (unhygienic, barbaric, irresponsible and so forth). They are often described as a threat to public health within public discourse in both East and West. The second type of discourse of othering relates to representing refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and members of minority groups as carriers of the disease and a threat to the state and its social security (Jovanović, 2015).

Discourses and narratives about the COVID-19 outbreak portray the COVID-19 as a *foreign virus*, emphasizing binary oppositions we/they, self/other, civilized/barbaric, citizen/foreigner, West/East and so forth rather than perceiving the virus as community spread. This paper emphasizes the complexity of dynamics of discourses of othering to draw boundaries, which become more intense and obvious in times of crisis (Michener, 2020). It emphasizes that divisions and negative stereotypes that exist in various societies are amplified by the crisis.

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РЕТОРИКА ДРУГОСТИ У ДОБА ПАНДЕМИЈЕ: ПРИКАЗИВАЊЕ ПАНДЕМИЈЕ COVID-19 КАО „СТРАНОГ ВИРУСА“ У ЈАВНОМ ДИСКУРСУ

Сажетак: Сврха ове анализе је да идентификује обрасце и наративне парадигме у вези са пандемијом COVID-19, која се често представља у оквиру јавног дискурса као болест Другог или „страни вирус“. Ослањајући се на критичку анализу дискурса, овај рад наглашава да и у источним и у западном друштвима постоје дискурзивне тактике којима се странци, као и избеглице, мигранти и припадници мањинских заједница етикетирају као одговорни за избијање пандемије COVID-19, носиоци вируса и претња јавном здрављу и социјалној сигурности. Дискурси и наративи о избијању пандемије COVID-19 приказују COVID-19 као страни вирус, истичући бинарне опозиције: ми/они, сопство/другост, цивилизовано/назадно, грађанин/странац, Запад/Исток и слично. Овај рад наглашава сложеност динамике дискурса који теже повлачењу граница, који постају интензивнији и очигледнији у кризним временима. Поделе и негативни стереотипи који постоје у разним друштвима су само појачани кризом.

Кључне речи: COVID-19, ксенофобија, дискриминација, реторика другости, дискурс

