

XENOPHOBIA AND CITIZENSHIP IN MEG VANDERMERWE'S *ZEBRA CROSSING*

Mustafa Mohammed Abdullah^{1*}, Hardev Kaur², Ida Baizura Bt Bahar³, Manimangai Mani⁴

^{1,2,3,4}English Department, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, University Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.
Email: ^{1*}mustafaliterature@gmail.com, ²jshardev@yahoo.com

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: In the past two decades several researchers have explored the concern of xenophobia in South African fiction. Studies sought to determine the reasons behind the prevalence of xenophobic violence in South Africa. Previous research on xenophobia claims that xenophobic violence is prevalent in the state is, in fact, due to economic and social reasons only. Yet, this article aims to correct the misconception of the Rainbow Nation that South Africa was supposed to have been achieved after 1994. Moreover, to prove, based on the text analysis, that the xenophobic violence in South Africa is not due to the economic and social crisis only, yet there are other factors, like the state politics and the governmental discourse of the post-apartheid state in South Africa.

Methodology: The text *Zebra Crossing* (2013) by the South African novelist Meg Vandermerwe is under the focus. The concept of Michael Neocosmos of Citizenship from the postcolonial theory is applied to the selected text. A close reading of the text and qualitative research is the method of my analysis. The article will focus on the acts of violence reflected in the text in an attempt to find the reasons behind such acts. Neocosmos' valid conceptualization about the outbreaks of xenophobia in South Africa in the post-apartheid is applied to the selected text.

Main Findings: the article will conclude that the notion of the rainbow nation in South Africa is no more than a dream due to the outbreaks of xenophobia and the ongoing violence against foreigners. It will also prove that the continuous xenophobic violence in South Africa is not because of social or economic reasons only yet, there is a political discourse that engenders and triggers the natives to be more xenophobic. Thus, the state politics of exclusion, indigeneity, and citizenship are the stimuli for citizens to be more aggressive and violent against foreigners.

Applications of this study: the study will add new insight to the domain of English literature generally and the South African literature specifically. The study will be valuable in immigration literature as it deals with the plights of migrants in South Africa and their suffering from xenophobic violence. The study is located in the postcolonial approach.

Novelty/Originality of this study: the study offers new insight towards xenophobia in South Africa. The concept applied in the study has not been explored so far in the selected text. Previous research claimed that xenophobia in South Africa is due to economic and social reasons but did not focus on the legacies of postcolonialism nor the new political system. The study is original and new as it discusses an ongoing and worldwide phenomenon utilizing a new concept. The article is considered a new one since it deals with violence among black people themselves.

Keywords: Vandermerwe, Citizenship, South Africa, Xenophobia, Politics, Violence.

INTRODUCTION

Xenophobia is increasingly recognized as a serious, worldwide social phenomenon. "Xenophobia" comes from the Greek words *xénos* 'stranger' or 'guest' and *phóbos* 'fear'. Interestingly, the second connotation, 'guest', has lost its validity. It is translated as 'fear of strange'. [Bhatia \(2009\)](#) defines Xenophobia as "irrational and excessive fear of strangers or strange (foreign) cultures, which can often become converted into intense, Jingoistic patriotism and or racial or cultural prejudice".

Xenophobia appeared in South Africa as a reaction to the financial decay and the unchanging state of poverty of people after liberation. The failure of the government to achieve its promises after the collapse of apartheid led people to be xenophobic against African migrants. South African people lived a very long life of oppression, humiliation, and racism under the apartheid era. South Africa experienced severe discrimination and racist system of seclusion and isolation. [Beinart & Dubow \(1995\)](#) state that "Segregation was the name coined in early twentieth-century South Africa for the set of government policies which sought to regulate the relationship between white and African colonizers and colonized".

After South Africa's 'independence', xenophobia has risen, along with a growing number of foreigners entering the country. Foreigners were harassed, attacked, and even murdered in this country ([Matsinhe 2009](#)). The attitudes towards immigrants have become more hostile and aggressive among some sections of the population of South Africa. Hatred against foreigners is particularly opposed to people from other African countries ([Hopstock & Jager, 2011](#)). Several studies were conducted in post-apartheid South Africa have recognized sturdy, pervasive, undesirable attitudes, and antagonism towards foreign citizens living in the state ([Nyamnjoh 2006](#)). Thus, he captures the meaning of xenophobic violence in the context of South African by labelling it as "intense dislike, hatred or fear of others who are foreigners". He suggests that xenophobia also involves such ethnolinguistic and cultural constructs that form the foundation of the 'other's' mistrust and suspicion.

There was a nationwide xenophobic vehemence erupted against foreigners in South Africa in May 2008. It emerged first in Alexandra in Johannesburg. Immigrants, refugee workers, and other foreign inhabitants were assaulted, murdered, dispossessed of their belongings. Many foreigners were raped and several were displaced and banished from their societies. Crush states that the aggressive insolences against migrants living in South Africa have “continued to harden” (Crush 2001, 15). Antagonism towards strangers is considered as one of the most extensive symbols of the South African culture in the post-apartheid era (Sinclair 1999).

The attackers were black residents who targeted African migrants (Matsinhe 2009). Previous studies have reported many xenophobic attacks that regularly happen in South Africa. Tens and hundreds of immigrants were exposed to harassment, assaulted, and murdered because of the xenophobic violence. Xenophobic violence has been an object of research after 1994 in South Africa.

South Africa is known as one of the most unwelcoming countries to black foreigners in the world. Many domains of literature portray xenophobic violence as an intensely ingrained, continuous, growing occurrence in South Africa. This will endure being categorized as an essential social concern in the state for the near future (Adjai, and Lazaridis 2013). Scholars have insisted that current efforts and mechanisms have been futile or being efficient in restricting xenophobic attitudes or averting the reappearances of xenophobic outbreaks in the state (Landau 2013).

In his dissertation *Cleaning the Nation: Anti-African Patriotism and Xenophobia in South Africa* Matsinhe (2009) states that the last attacks in May 2008, whose pictures stunned countless individuals all over the world with recollections of racial purging, was not a remote aberration but a normal phenomenon of post-apartheid typical tendencies. Matsinhe claims that while xenophobic violence is an international occurrence, South African antiforeigner insolences have particular social and historical emergencies. While all non-citizens are mostly noticed adversely, African foreign citizens are more likely to be victims of violent anti-foreign attitudes and activities than other foreigners.

Crush (2001) Crush, J., (2001). The dark side of democracy: Migration, xenophobia, and human rights in South Africa. *International migration*, 38(6), 103-133. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00145>

In his article *The Dark Side of Democracy: Migration, Xenophobia and Human Rights in South Africa* elaborates that the growth of xenophobic violence in South Africa should not be separated from the belief and discourse of building the new South Africa. In a very factual and concrete logic, xenophobic violence is the foundation of independent patriotism. Although the nation has done huge steps in constructing a legitimate and social rights philosophy applicable to the fresh independent system, there are undoubtedly significant hindrances to be reduced before the regime and the people are willing to hold the conception of identical privileges for strangers and to guarantee that refugees are legitimately authorized to simple social and work civil rights, merely by the advantage of being on South African territory. Xenophobia was the main focus of the literary domain after independence in South Africa, as will be shown in the next pages. Thus, as mentioned earlier, the concern of xenophobia is a worldwide phenomenon and needs to be addressed. Previous research explored the issue from an economic and social perspective yet, this article will tackle the topic from a postcolonial perspective.

South Africa in the post-apartheid age inherited the legislation system from apartheid with very little modification. During apartheid, racist discrimination was among white and black people in the state, yet, after liberation, racism became among black Africans themselves. In the apartheid era, the racist establishment of South Africa was thoroughly strengthened employing regulation and cruel state control. Apartheid openly expressed the philosophy of racial pureness and white hegemony, constituted into political certainty in many different forms (Marandi, Ramin&Shabanirad 2017). Since 1994, intolerant attitudes towards black refugees stayed fostered and transmitted by a constant prevalent political pomposity. From 1994 to 2004 Mongosuthu Buthelezi, Minister of Interior appears to have conducted this anti-immigration campaign from the start (Crush 2008). In August 1994, while speaking to the Parliament, Buthelezi increased the rhetoric of anti-foreigners when he openly blamed migrants inhabitants living in South Africa for collecting aids from the “Reconstruction and Development Programme” at the disadvantage of the citizens, thus posturing a straight danger to the accomplishment of the program and the well-being and security of all citizens, Buthelezi stated that:

If we South Africans are going to compete for scarce resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into SA, then we can bid goodbye to our RDP...the employment of illegal migrants is unpatriotic because it deprives South Africans of jobs...the rising level of migrants has awesome implications for RDP as they will be absorbing unacceptable proportions of housing subsidies and adding to the difficulty we will be experiencing in healthcare. (Bouckaert 1998, 1)

Besides Buthelezi's statements, other officials from South Africa have been also blameable for intensifying the anti-migrant sentimentalities in the state. Joe Modise, the Defence Minister, declared a well-propagandized account in 1997 attributing migrants in the country for the escalation of criminality amount in the stat. Buthelezi intensely and overtly resisted the South African "Development Community" (SADC) philosophy on the unrestricted transfer of possessions and individuals in the state, asserting that it would be a catastrophe for South Africa (Buthelezi 1997).

Concerning official actions, Aliens Control Unit (ACU) across South Africa was formed by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Representatives were allowed to haphazardly catch suspicious foreign residents on the streets and working sites, mainly based on vaccination paper, color, or even how they utter words (Crush 2008). The Commission on Human Rights (SAHRC) in 1998 reported that South Africa's democratic values were subjected to increased xenophobia and had to be exterminated (Misago, Freemantle & Loren, 2015). Certainly, from 1998 onwards, there were limitless destructive xenophobic outbreaks on newcomers across the state (Adjai and Lazaridis 2013). Such incidents involved verbal abuses, physical attacks, and massacres. In 1998, three strangers were violently pushed off a train in Pretoria by a crowd of South African coming back from a demonstration on joblessness (Crush 2008).

A grave result of the xenophobic insolences demonstrated by law administration agents is that the targets and foreigners mostly have no confidence in the quest for righteousness. The reality that these forces and other police organizations are intolerant or questioning the justification of assaulting foreigners requires a more concrete and practical reaction to the issue. It suggests that in addition to endorsing the correct regulations to fight xenophobic intolerance, more additional legal procedures cautiously intended to win the hearts of offenders and improve their insolences are obligatory (Muchiri 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

A considerable amount of literature has been published on xenophobia in South African fiction. (Davis, E.S., (2013). *New Directions in Post-Apartheid South African Fiction and Scholarship*. Literature Compass, 10(10), 797-804. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12098> In her seminal article *New Directions in Post-Apartheid South African Fiction and Scholarship* states that the new writings connected with postcolonial works have released new environment, presenting a range of matters that request more academic research, "including homosexuality, gendered violence, consumerism, cosmopolitanism, and xenophobia", and that offer significant expectations for potential literary scholarships in South Africa. Davis points out that xenophobic violence, the ongoing consequences of HIV/AIDS, corruption, rape, and other social evils all promise a predictable future of unending fight, conflict, and destitution in South Africa. Thus, Davis highlights the presence of xenophobic attitudes toward foreigners and emphasizes that xenophobia is a prominent topic in post-apartheid South African literature. In the same vein, Saayman (2016)

Saayman, S. (2016). Imagining the "other"—The Representation of the African Migrant in *Contemporary South African Literature*. International Journal of Language and Linguistics, 3(6), 72-80. in her article *Imagining the "other" – The Representation of the African Migrant in Contemporary South African Literature* explores the novel and its focus on stereotypes. The article sheds light on a refugee woman who, because of her physical dissimilarity, faces xenophobic attitudes. The article highlights the issue of xenophobia against foreigners yet, it draws on Derrida's theory of racism, besides, it emphasizes that the fear from the migrants in the novel is because of the stereotypes and misconceptions about them. Thus the study concludes that xenophobic violence is connected to criminality, unfaithfulness, and witchcraft. The author missed focusing on the state politics of exclusion and citizenship and their roles in generating xenophobia.

The text under study was the focus of LaraBuxbaum (2017). In her study, she sheds light on the xenophobic violence in the novel yet, to expose that violence, she employs animal allegories and animalized humans. Buxbaum investigates the representation of xenophobia and animalization in the novel. She claims that the novel is precisely absorbed in the portrayal and confrontations of the individuals who are humiliated by xenophobia (Buxbaum 2017). As such, the article highlights the issue of xenophobia and its relation to animalization of the African migrants and their experience in the 'rainbow nation'. Though the article tackles the issue of xenophobia, it focuses on the animalization process which is different from my focus on the methodology and the theoretical approach.

In *The Role of African Fiction in Educating about Albinism and Human Rights* Baker & Lund (2017), explore the topic of albinism in the novel. They state that Meg Vandermerwe's *Zebra Crossing* (2013) depicts a Zimbabwean girl with albinism who becomes a target of misconceptions about albinism. Besides, the article inspects the complexity of the migrant experience while proposing a critique of modern South African culture. The article also examines how the novel under debate is distinct from other literary works on albinism. It reflects the role of fiction in resolving sensitive subjects relating to albinism in sub-Saharan Africa and stresses the impact that cultural production, like fiction, can be made to support the human rights of people with albinism. Hence, the article focussed on issues of albinism, superstitions, and the positive role of fiction in supporting the human rights of people in sub-Saharan Africa.

In their article *Black on the inside: albino subjectivity in the African novel*, Lipenga, and Ngwirab (2018) examine the representation of albinism in four African novels, and *Zebra Crossing* is one of them. The authors highlight the way albinism is presented as a bodily condition that intersects with other experiences on the continent, including indigenous epistemologies, gender, sexuality, and family relationships. The study draws on Literary Disability Studies, which is aided by insights from Disability Studies. Thus, the researchers examine literary representations of the albino as portrayed in the novel. They argue that Vandermerwe's *Zebra Crossing* is not about Chipso the albino, but a young girl was pushed into the boundaries from her country, Zimbabwe, into South Africa by social and political events, a girl who, amidst social and sexist oppression, desires to love and to be loved. They comment that here are some instances in the

novel where the family fails to display affection towards the child with albinism, and instead rejects her. For example, in *Zebra Crossing*, the protagonist's father takes one look at his newborn child and concludes that her "pale skin was the product of an interracial betrayal, pure and simple" (Vandermerwe 2013, 21) which he uses as an excuse to abandon his family. Though the article explores the phenomenon of xenophobia, it has not shown the impacts of apartheid nor the state politics of post-apartheid South Africa. Thus, based on previous studies, there is no single research explored the issue of xenophobia utilizing the same concept of the present study. The article aspires to fill the gap in the scholarship by offering new insight and conception as far as xenophobic violence is concerned.

METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study will be conducted through a close reading of the text. The acts of violence portrayed in the novel will be traced and analyzed utilizing the concept of Neocosmos' citizenship. As the novel demonstrates, xenophobic violence in South Africa is due to state politics and the governmental discourse that generates and triggers xenophobia. The concept of citizenship is applied to the text to expose the governmental role in maintaining and motivating natives to be more xenophobic against foreigners. The article unearths that xenophobic violence in the state is not social or economic, however, the politics of citizenship and exclusion are the main factors of xenophobia. The concept of Citizenship was developed by Michael Neocosmos in his book *From Foreign Natives to Native Foreigners* (2010). The concept was discussed as a postcolonial approach by Frantz Fanon (2007), Pal Ahluwalia (2012), Mahmood Mamdani (1996), among others, to explore the conversion of the colonial 'others' into the postcolonial 'selves'. As such, the concept of Citizenship from the postcolonial theory will be utilized to analyze the text under study.

Undoubtedly, South Africa has witnessed two types of colonialism, the White British colonialism, and the apartheid colonialism. So, apartheid, although it's a South African regime, it is considered as a colonial system. That is to say, the agonies that appeared in the post-apartheid period such as the economic crisis, immigration, discrimination, racism, and xenophobic violence can be considered as postcolonial legacies. Thus, the postcolonial approach is appropriate to analyze and inspect the phenomenon of xenophobia since it is a postcolonial legacy. South Africa has been under colonialism, represented by the apartheid, for a very long period. Apartheid rule has inflicted the state with many social, political, economic, and psychological complexes that surfaced in the postcolonial phase. Thus, the present study endeavors to explore the phenomenon of xenophobia in *Zebra Crossing* based on the concept of citizenship. The article also aims to locate the reasons and roots of xenophobia under the shadows of the exclusive and xenophobic state politics of the post-apartheid system.

Neocosmos is a contemporary critic who lives in South Africa and witnessed the incidents of xenophobic violence and his theories are far more accurate and credible. In this sense, I find Neocosmos more suitable and can best support and back up my analysis. Neocosmos in his book *From Foreign Natives to Native Foreigners, Explaining Xenophobia in South Africa*, conceptualizes the reasons behind the appearance of xenophobic violence in the post-apartheid era. He states that "xenophobia should be understood as a political discourse and practice" (Neocosmos 2010, X). Thus, he asserts the role of state politics in generating and triggering xenophobia. At the same time, the history of South Africa is closely associated with the method in which citizenship was perceived and struggled over in the past 50 years at least

He argues that:

xenophobia in South Africa is a direct effect of particular kind of politics, a particular kind of state politics in fact which is associated with a specific discourse of citizenship which was forged in opposition to how apartheid state interpellated its subjects... xenophobia is a direct outcome of state practices as structured both by the practices of apartheid state as well as by the discourses developed by the national movement, and systematically reproduced by the legislative and daily practices of the post-apartheid state (Neocosmos 2010, X).

"Foreigners" then were regarded as the non-original citizens, whereas the significance of foreigners' employment has deteriorated South Africa after apartheid, both financially and governmentally, it is factually as far as migrant labor is concerned that "citizenship as indigeneity has been imagined" (Neocosmos 2010, 59). Thus as Fanon prophesized the unity of African, that ambiguous principle, "yet one to which the men and women of Africa were keenly devoted, and whose operational importance served to bring enormous stress to bear on colonization, African unity takes off the mask and crumbles into regionalism inside the hollow shell of rationality itself" (Fanon 2008, 128).

Neocosmos affirms that:

Citizenship now became reduced to indigeneity and formalized by legislation. It now became overwhelmingly formed by state prescriptions rather than popular ones. Nevertheless, this required the defeat of popular-democratic ideology and politics and its replacement by state politics which rapidly achieved hegemonic status. This state-nation formation perforce had to exclude those not seen as belonging to the nation as defined by the state, in other words 'foreigners' (Neocosmos 2010, 60).

The methodical discrepancy management of natives and newcomers to the state of South Africa for the past two decades, few are entitled to privileges while others do not have similar effects. Neocosmos insists that “the various political actors in this country have allowed its political culture to provide the foundation for xenophobic and inter-ethnic violence”. One more principle of governmental philosophy in post-apartheid South African, which relates with unique beliefs, its thorough out of control denunciation of any concept of “group rights” due to the advance of patriotism that in various means is the humble image of apartheid nationalism ([Neocosmos 2010, 3](#)) Neocosmos advocates that pervasiveness of xenophobic violence in South Africa, is a consequence of:

The hegemony of a particular form of state politics; a politics that reduces citizenship to indigeneity and politically passive conception of citizenship. The hegemony of this mode of politics was secured as a result of a failure to sustain an alternative popular-democratic politics which had stressed the centrality of political agency and inclusiveness in the construction of South African citizenship. The securing of this hegemony of state politics was enabled... by the specific theoretical understanding of the apartheid state and the ethnic interpellation of its subjects, adhered to by African nationalism ([Neocosmos 2010, 17](#)).

Neocosmos insists that xenophobic intolerance in South Africa after apartheid is a precisely governmental address with a specific past. It is established as a consequence of an exact relation between government and people. He adds that xenophobia presumes a formation of citizenship originated on the origin and political nonparticipation. After independence, South Africa was in a condition of crisis because of the disappointment to address desperate poverty. However, it is essential to stress that economic aspects, however important, cannot possibly account for why it was those considered to be non-citizens who shouldered the impact of the brutal outbreaks. Conditions of poverty may only justify the subjection, thwarting, and distraction of the offenders yet, not for their objects. “Why were not Whites, or the rich, or white foreigners in South Africa targeted instead. Was it simply because poor Africans were more simply accessible as scapegoats”. This dispute is not substantial. For this to occur, for non-nationals to be targeted systematically, non-native Africans would have first to be politically and communally fashioned as ‘the other’, as reasonable targets in common belief ([Neocosmos 2010, 122](#)).

The illegalization of migrancy, the xenophobic unrestricted ethos among officials since the early 1990s, the failure to cultivate genuinely independent regulation and the hiding behind concepts of ‘Fortress South Africa’ in formulating present legislature, the prevalent xenophobic culture among the public service and the police, the mistreatment of the helpless in the country, the awful practices at the detention center of Lindela, the xenophobic opportunism of local officials and the absence of substitutes, have all contributed to the formation of a hegemonic intolerant governmental prejudice ([Neocosmos 2010, 142](#)).

Violence against ‘aliens’ has thus not only been stimulated by officials but essentially structured by them while the regime conducted its own ‘crackdowns’ on ‘illegal immigrants’, compounding the stress. Indeed, annually, there are accounts on government organizations distressing and impending so-called “illegal aliens”, individuals are held by the law enforcement representatives for being “too dark” or “walking like a black foreigner”. Caught individuals are sent to banishment centers, such as Lindela on the boundaries of Johannesburg, where the undocumented are systematically deprived of basic rights ([Neocosmos 2008](#)).

As such, according to [Neocosmos \(2008, 588\)](#), the state and fresh lawful judgments have been strengthening a xenophobic culture, accusing foreigners of stealing “our jobs, our houses, and our women”, while black foreigners are made “air game for those in power to make a quick buck”. The product, argues Neocosmos, has been the over authorizing of officials now capable of acclaiming extreme control over “extremely vulnerable people” so that “bribery, extortion, and dishonesty become not only possible but regular practices”. Thus, along with Neocosmos’ thoughts, xenophobia is not merely a primary manifestation of public indignation, but a policy, which, in “rainbow” South Africa, is sponsored, or at least directed, by sections of the government leaders and its civil servants, with ‘politics’ becoming a zero-sum game among the elites.

DISCUSSION: CITIZENSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL XENOPHOBIA IN ZEBRA CROSSING

Zebra Crossing explores the journey of Zimbabwean foreigners coming from their own country into South Africa. Chipso, the heroine of the text, and her brothers and as records for the xenophobic attitudes of the South African officials against foreigners. Politics of exclusion and citizenship maintain and motivate xenophobia against foreigners and non-citizens from African countries on the borders and inside South Africa. Chipso, the narrator of the story stands as a witness to all the details and recounts the many incidents of the institutional examples of xenophobia.

The novel demonstrates the lack of determination to embrace black refugees as part of the state in South Africa. Moreover, the real number of inhabitants of refugees in the state is “unknown and unknowable” ([Crush, Ramachandran & Pendleton 2013, 211](#)). Therefore, the xenophobic outbreaks are ongoing since 2008 in Durban, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Pietermaritzburg, and it is supreme distress. Outbreaks of xenophobic violence in May 2008 stimulated Vandermerwe to write a narrative uncovering the defenseless position of African refugees living in South Africa ([Naidoo 2017](#)). The novel demonstrates the institutional violence committed by governmental administration and their

failure to control xenophobia in South Africa. About Neocosmos, South African governmental discourse and state politics of citizenship and exclusion could not help controlling xenophobia, yet they were the main factor of its prevalence in the state ([Neocosmos 2010](#)).

Vandermerwe, early in the novel, exposes the corruption of the state in the borders of South Africa and how xenophobia is enhanced and encouraged by state politics. The narrator states “if you have no passport and no visa they will not let you through. Not unless you give them something in return” ([Vandermerwe 2013, 25](#)). The speech here indicates and supports Neocosmos’ notion that “xenophobia is thus a structural feature of state discourse and practice, not an accidental occurrence. A hegemonic xenophobic state discourse arose in tandem with the formation of the post-apartheid state” ([Neocosmos 2010, 108](#)). In other words, the state fails to control xenophobia inside the state and fails also to stop foreigners from pouring into South Africa increasing the population and increasing the competition over 'scarce resources'. From the very beginning and before they cross the borders African migrants have to consider themselves as aliens and foreigners in South Africa. They have to pay to cross the border, a border they will regret that they have crossed. Notions of citizenship and indigeneity are deeply planted in the culture of South Africa as a result of the political discourse.

Institutional xenophobia motivated by the political discourse and the state politics against African migrants paved the way for South Africans to cogitate that this is the right manner to treat Africans. Violence, abuse, and exploitation on the borders of South Africa were documented by Chipso in the novel. She states that “a young Zimbabwean man died of starvation after waiting for weeks to be seen by the Home Affairs” ([Vandermerwe 2013, 49](#)). This incident scandalizes the institutional xenophobia against migrants on the borders of South Africa and how Africans are treated and abused to death. Chipso adds that:

The man was supposed to be staying in this very building, but he dropped dead while standing in the queue outside Home Affairs. He had returned day after day for months. Each time he was turned away, told to come again tomorrow, next week, in two weeks. So eventually in desperation, he just stayed and eventually starved. ([Vandermerwe 2013, 49](#)).

Thus, such state politics against foreigners is considered as exclusionary and based on feelings of citizenship. Officials of South Africa perceive that those foreigners are not natives and they are not entitled to any rights in the state. Thus, they could be treated as aliens because they are defenseless, vulnerable, and uncovered in the society. Along with Neocosmos words that “the exploitation of the vulnerable in the country, the appalling practices at the Lindela detention center, [where the man died] the xenophobic opportunism of local politicians and the absence of alternatives, have all contributed to the creation of a hegemonic xenophobic political subjectivity” ([Neocosmos 2010, 142](#)). As such, Neocosmos uncovers the negative role of the state in creating the perfect atmosphere for xenophobia to grow in the country. Foreigners are treated as aliens on the borders due to the belief that they are not citizens, they have no rights and can be exploited and abused. Neocosmos offers a clear view of the political discourse of South Africa and how citizenship plays an important role in dealing with and treating African migrants. They are kept waiting for months for Home Affairs to finish their papers until they starve to death. The state itself is being xenophobic towards Africans. As such South Africans imitate and follow the governmental discourse of their state in dealing and mistreating Africans. Thus the xenophobic violence is generated, enhanced, and maintained by the governments itself.

Xenophobia is not only violent actions like killing or burning people alive, yet South Africans express their physical and verbal xenophobia on public and fearlessly. South Africans have the green light to act and express their hatred without any doubt they will be arrested by the police or blamed by authorities. Because they know that they [police and South Africans] share the same feelings and behaviors. Chipso describes a situation happened with her brother and his Zimbabwean friends, she narrates,

It is what the ticket inspector said: ‘just you wait. When the World Cup is finished, we will drive all you foreigners out! If you stay, it will burn! He was drunk’ David soothes. ‘he meant it! And not one of those police bastards did a thing! they arrested us and let him go. It is just like back home, except here they do not abuse you because you are poor, but because you are poor and foreigner’ ([Vandermerwe 2013, 105](#)).

South Africans threaten that they will drive foreigners out of the country or they will burn them alive if they stay just like what happened in 2008 in front of the police, fearlessly and publically. Knowing that the police share them the same sentiments, in this way natives are motivated to express more xenophobic behaviors. As such, along with Neocosmos, the speech above indicates that the attitudes of xenophobic violence are institutional and are maintained by the state discourse of the government. The novel reflects Neocosmos' conception that xenophobia is a "direct outcome of state practices as structured both by the practices of apartheid state as well as by the discourses developed by the national movement, and systematically reproduced by the legislative and daily practices of the post-apartheid state” ([Neocosmos 2010, X](#)). Thus, such daily practices by the police and in public give the citizens the motive and chance to be more xenophobic against African migrants. In this sense, as mentioned earlier in the argument, the political discourse stands

behind the outbreaks of xenophobia in the state allowing the natives to express their hatred ignoring the constitutional rights of the migrants and forgetting about the "rainbow nation".

South African locals are being xenophobic due to the treatment of their officials towards foreigners. Neocosmos suggests that the political discourse itself is xenophobic, thus locals imitate them because they are protected and safe from any punishment or blame. Chipso reports the mistreatment that they suffer from by locals in South Africa. She adds, "that afternoon in December when David came back, furious because a Xosha- speaking saleslady had refused to speak English to him when he asked for help at a department store...I reported her to the manager as if he will do anything" (Vandermerwe 2013, 104). Thus, by knowing only that he is not native and he is black African, natives do not speak to David due to their notions of citizenship and the exclusionary practices.

Chipso's speech reflects the fears and warnings of Neocosmos that locals are xenophobic because they are sure that they will not be blamed or punished, they have learned the culture of xenophobia from their authorities and officials. When the police, store managers, and officials in home affairs are xenophobic that will give the locals the motives to be more xenophobic, 'hey Makwerekwere! Go back to your own country...we know you are here to take our jobs and money' (Vandermerwe 2013, 104). The culture of xenophobia is planted in the minds of citizens by South African officials blaming the foreigners of taking the jobs and money, this indicates that xenophobia is not social only but in the first place is institutional.

Being a black foreigner in South Africa means that you will be abused, exploited, and deprived of any rights. Chipso narrates another example of institutional xenophobia and the effect of citizenship on Africans when she discusses a situation in the hospital when her brother and his cousin needed help. She states:

The nurses. They asked Jeremiah's cousin for his name and family name so they could fill in their forms. When he told them the nurse replied, 'but this is not a Xhosa name [indigenous South African]. You cannot be from here', immediately she left. And each time Jeremiah's went to find her, she and her colleagues pretended to be too busy to help (Vandermerwe 2013, 106).

Thus, being not 'Xhosa' means that you are a foreigner; even in hospitals the culture of citizenship and indigeneity is prevalent in South Africa. Nurses are not willing to help a foreigner in the hospital though he may die. Africans are deprived of any rights, they are excluded from society because they are not Xhosa. Thus, there is another type of xenophobia in the hospitals which is institutionally maintained and motivated by the political discourse of the state. Similarly, Neocosmos suggested that:

xenophobia is a discourse concerned with a process of social and political exclusion of some groups of the population. This amounts to a process of social exclusion from the community... and citizenship... of such groups. This exclusion is regularly seen as necessary for the existence of the community/nation in that the 'Other' must be excluded for the 'We' to be (Neocosmos 2010, 13).

Thus, the culture of exclusion due to indigeneity and citizenship was deeply rooted in South Africans. Neocosmos suggests that this technique is necessary for South Africans to 'be'. The nurses are one example of the culture of abuse, exploitation, and mistreatment that black Africans suffer from. The Lindela center, the Home Affairs, police stations, and last the hospitals offer a clear indication of the institutional xenophobia due to policies of exclusion and citizenship. Thus, black Africans have nothing in South Africa except death as they were cautioned by citizens previously 'go home or die here'. The man in the hospital, Chipso describes, died eventually. "After eight hours of waiting and no help, Jeremiah and his friends brought the young man here, and during the night he died" (Vandermerwe 2013, 106). Chipso the narrator of the novel has recorded all the details and experiences of Africans in South Africa was not an exception from death since she is a foreigner in the first place. The text leaves no chance or hope that black Africans may find life in South Africa since Chipso was killed by three mysterious men and her brother and cousins were kidnapped by the police to be sent to the disreputable Lindela deportation center. Thus, the novel closes with no sign of hope to reconciliation or rainbowism since all the African characters in the text left with no chance to live in South Africa.

CONCLUSION

Earlier studies conducted on xenophobia show that outbreaks of xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa are the outcome of the financial and communal distress. Yet, Neocosmos argues that the political discourse of citizenship and the state politics of the new state are the main reasons behind the appearance and the pervasiveness of xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa. Thus, in light of Neocosmos' concept of *Citizenship*, and according to the text examination, the current article accomplishes that South African officials and citizens express xenophobic violence and hatred attitudes towards foreigners are in fact due to feelings of citizenship and indigeneity in Meg Vandermerwe's *Zebra Crossing*. Chipso, the heroine of the novel, revealed that many incidents of xenophobia are shown and practiced by South African officials and how such attitudes of exclusion and indigeneity encourage and stimulate citizens to be more xenophobic against black foreigners. Nonetheless, it has to be stated clearly that continuing legal and institutional shortcomings have the main role in exacerbating xenophobia in South Africa. Thus, the article concludes that numerous

governmental organizations are managed by executives who express xenophobic attitudes to foreigners, supported by state politics of citizenship, and therefore trigger the community's hostile and violent attitudes towards foreigners. The article also denies the presence of the notion of the 'rainbow nation' especially with the mounting increase of the xenophobic attacks in the state and the gloomy ending of the text.

LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARD

The study explores the xenophobic violence on the post-apartheid time and in the South African context. The article did not tackle violence in other African states, yet it focuses on South Africa and in the post-apartheid times specifically. Only one text will be explored which is *Zebra Crossing* by Meg Vandermerwe (2013). The study will be carried out from the postcolonial approach utilizing the concept of citizenship by Michael Neocosmos. The study will explore the violence among black people themselves and will not discuss xenophobic violence among white and black people. Other future studies can be conducted on the same topic exploring other post-apartheid literary texts, like Nadine Gordimer, J M Coetzee, and others. Other theoretical approaches can be applied, like psychological, sociological, political, and others. Xenophobic violence in another African state like Nigeria and Zimbabwe can be explored. A comparative study can be conducted on violence in South Africa and other African countries showing the motives and the consequences of such violence.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

All the authors significantly contributed to each section of the study, Mr. Mustafa Mohammed drafted the manuscript of the article, developed the theoretical approach to be applied to the text, and performed the analysis. Dr. Hardev Kaur suggested the text be explored as it has many examples of xenophobic violence. She revised the first draft of the manuscript and amended some errors in the writing style. Dr. Ida Baizura contributed to the design and the implementation of the manuscript and revised the citation style of the study. Dr. Manimangai Mani worked out most of the technical details of the article and suggested some amendments to the organizations of the study. All authors discussed the results and commented on the final version of the manuscript.

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