

Chronic Inter-play of Identity and Choice: A Zero-sum Competition in Shamsie's *Home Fire*

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Abstract *The issues of globalization and economic and social dependency have penetrated into modern postcolonial literature, especially in the literature of expatriate Pakistani writers. Home Fire explicitly covers the issue of zero-sum competition between the immigrants and the locals. The attitude of the Americans and the Britishers in the perspective of post 9/11 era highlighted this issue. The Zero-sum competition is situational and chronic. The major factor that constitutes this competition is the national identity. There are certain discursive events in the novel that propagate the fallacy of zero-sum competition. Zero-sum situations force Isma to adopt the Other attitude towards her brother Pervaiz and sister Aneeka because of the (BIOPTIONAL CHOICE) two options of choice and future. Eammon gains choice and, after that, realizes and refuses the future. This study shows the zero-sum events as highlighted in the work Home Fire and analyzes the situational and chronic interplay of national identity, choice, and sense of future.*

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Introduction

Pakistani English literature covers the issues of immigrants, and the most renowned writers in this century have discussed such events which reflect the more complex issues of the immigrants, particularly those issues which emerged after the 9/11 event, the changing dynamics in the European and American society against the Muslims especially the Pakistanis. "we may say that Pakistani English literature stemmed from the Muslims' need for self-assertion and acted as a medium through which national belonging found reflection" (Mahira, 2016).

Zulfikar Ghose is one of the leading figures among the first wave of authors from Pakistani patronage, and his work does not reflect the political issues, but the structure of authority and its dynamics are his major concerns. His biography *Confessions of a Native-Alien* (1965) shows his views about the situation of immigrants; it is amazing to mention that *The Texas Inheritance* (1980) is a novel written by

Ghose under the pseudonym of William Strang. Whereas Ghose was from the first generation of immigrants, therefore, the issues of immigrants are in less intensity. Tariq Ali is much under the influence of natives, and his "Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree" (1992) gives the picture of Muslim history from the lens of Western conception. He is among those writers who were ready to unlink themselves from their original link of belonging to the colonial background in favour of their newly acquired nationalism of the host country, mainly America. Ahmad Ali (1908-1998) was a community-based writer, and the theme of cultural immunization among immigrants predominates in his writings. Among the trans-culture reviews, Bapsi Sidhwa's work is most illustrating, however, among the recent writers, Mohsin Hamid emerges as the writer of complex issues of the immigrants.

The writers of the second generation of immigrants address the issues of immigrants.

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This second generation is the generation of those Asian and Arabs who had come there after the independence mainly for economic prosperity. They sort their ways of earning in the host countries as professionals, but then there came some people who were not professionals but were only unskilled workers, and they married themselves with women of the host countries to get legal residential status as Safer (2014) reports; "The only available path to citizenship that was open to them after the ruling was marrying those who were recognized as citizens. The Punjabi men married Americans of Mexican heritage and settled in El Centro, California". There emerged a new generation who were born and brought up in the host countries, but still, their problems were not over. They became the participants of a social game of zero-sum. According to Merriam-Webster, "zero-sum game is a situation in which one person or group can win something only by causing another person or group to lose it." This represents that there are participants in this gaming process and in a social situation of immigrants: one is immigrants, and the other is the new postcolonial generation of the host countries with a sense of superiority or legacy of hegemony. In a psychological event, this situation becomes clear when "If I Win - You Win. I will get what I need if I take care of your needs first."

According to Izaya Kros (2020), the social gain of one is the loss of other, but this does not happen in the case of immigrants when all their efforts to gain some social, political, and economic advantages are rejected by those people who enjoy hegemony and status in the society. In a zero-sum game, as far as the rationality and competence of the players or the participants are regarded, the utility purpose is prominent, and the word game is not used in its recreational meanings, but it here refers to political, social, and psychological situations where different conflicts arise. In a situation where an immigrant encounters a native of his own generation, there is not an even game or situation the native has an advantage.

In a social zero-sum, the game is of *creative value*, which means the value or social space, one creates by way of one's skills or a kind of social importance, and the *production value* is that which one receives in response to one's creative value. This creative value is the original social effort that has social utility or importance.

The productive value is a response or the division of resources attained and in a situation of generations where one is native, and the other is non-native, and the production value is denied to the generation of immigrants.

According to Hills (2018), the zero-sum is a belief that can bring self-fulfilling, and "If you believe there is no alternative but to split a fixed-pie, then you may fail to look for places to create value. That is a real mistake". Whereas the natives have fixed a pie for themselves and all struggles of the immigrants fail. After the 9/11 event, the creative value of all the Pakistani immigrants in Europe and America declined, that they were part of the American dream, but after the event, they received less productive value and less sense of self-fulfillment, which caused a state of navigational identity, and they were in a gridlock of identity between their new identity of the born status of host countries and in the identity of representing the colonized nations.

Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) is an impressionism of Sophocles tragedy *Antigone* but touches the complex issue of identity and sacrifices of immigrants to sustain loyalty with their birthplace. There is a "Listen to" jihadist approach in the novel because the brother of the main character Isma seems innocent, but the British political system and annoyance for Muslims in the post 9/11 perspective of Europe and America, Parvaiz is guilty everywhere, and even his sister Isma does not want to "Listen to". The novel conveys that those Muslims living in Europe and America do have a religious association with the Muslims of other countries, but their loyalty is for the country where they are born. Whereas the people of the native origin reject their sacrifices and establish a zero-sum game zone at the social level where all the sacrifices and attempts to sustain a new identity are associated to 'zero,' a zero situation is a situation in which all the previous gain and recent tries of the immigrants receive 'nothing,' and for the native, this is a situation of no loss or no gain rather consolidates their hegemony. This research traces the zero some events reflected in the novel *Home Fire*.

Objectives of the Study

This research traces issues of Muslim immigrants living in Europe and America in the post 9/11 scenario. The main focus of the research is;

- To trace the sacrifices of the immigrants for their new identity with the view that all their tries go to 'zero' because they receive less response.
- To highlight the struggles of the immigrant for their creative value and the response of 'zero' they receive from the natives.

Research Questions

The research questions are;

- How do the immigrants involve in a zero-sum social game?
- What struggle do the immigrants sustain to attain their creative value?

Significance of Study

The work *Home Fire* has not been investigated under the topic of zero-sum social gaming, which is a new perception in literature and analysis is based on the situational evaluation under the two concepts of value: Creative and Productive Values. Before this, the work is analyzed under the critical framework of an identity crisis, hybridity, multiculturalism, and stylistic elements of the Greek tragedy.

Literature Review

Many researchers address the problems of immigrants implied in the neo-postcolonial literature; however, their main focus was identity, racism, and demographic change. But with the emerging new scenario and after the second wave of immigrants have given forth a generation that has no or marginal connection with their countries of origin. However, certain other issues have emerged; for example, a sense of not receiving the desired response from the natives or an Otherness. Mohsin Hamid describes this issue "We're left in a state of horrified pessimism. And that horrified pessimism leads us to believe the future will be worse" (2017). This refers to a mental shock because this pessimism is caused by an immigrant's responses from the natives. Hamid (2017) in the same interview, talks about it "I think sometimes feeling that you've been marginalized opens you up to the realization that, in their own lives, almost everyone experiences marginalization, a kind of foreigner sense" and the sense of foreigner is because when an immigrant after living years in the country of

migration does not find fit to the surroundings even after many efforts to adjust within the background.

The situation of the zero-sum game at the social level is observed, which, according to [Thomas Hills\(2018\)](#), depends on the "creative value" because every event at the social level is based on gain and loss or "creative value" and "productive value". This cycle of "creative value" and "productive value" makes the lives of the immigrants are like reruns of British television sitcoms going around 'in one tedious, eternal loop. Because immigrants are always prone to repetition - it's something to do with that experience of moving from West to East or East to West from island to island. Even when you arrive, you're still going back and forth; your children are going round and round; that is because their productive value diminishes after an interval or after the events that happen at their country of patronage. After the 9/11 event, the Muslims but a lot more the Pakistanis lost their creative value. This enforced an emergence of a situation where all their gains turned to zero at once. But before the WTC incident, the Pakistanis in America were considered unimportant and had no effects on the lives of Americans, Tariq (2017) states that Islam was the only religion and there were no Taboos related to it, and the Pakistanis were un-stigmatized, and there was no mythical threat connected with them (Safeer, 2017).

Joseph (2005) asserts that as far as the integration of immigrants in the host American society is concerned, these are the religious, racial, and social positions that hinder this integration, and not all the immigrants equally assimilate the American Dream. These three factors comprise a sense of identity and creative value among the people. Therefore immigrant's "Negotiated identities still influence their involvement in the American way of life between fully immersing themselves in the host community's ways of life". (Tariq & Safeer, 2017). But the second generation of Pakistani who are born and educated in the host countries face the navigational identity, for they are not attached to the culture of their country of origin as their parents were, as well as they have no seamless integration with the native American culture. This class has become vulnerable to zero-sum social gaming.

To establish good affinity with the lost generation, this class tries to increase their "productive value," and thus, they try to gain higher degrees from the universities of the host countries. This attempt to achieve an education from the universities is also one attempt on their part to integrate themselves with the culture, politics, and social structure of the migrated country. That means that they want to acquire a new identity of the hosts.

Shamsie addresses this class in her *Home Fire*, but there is a counter opinion that whether the generations of the host countries are ready to accept the "creative value" of this generation of immigrants, while in the institutional structure of host countries, racial discrimination does not exist, but there is the currency of a racial divide in all the host countries, especially in America. Thus this second generation of immigrants navigates to multiple identities. The native community rejects their "creative value" with their fellow immigrants and shows a *high degree of misunderstanding the values that they represent*.

In "The souls of the black folk" (1903) Dubois explains that multiple consciousnesses emerge when a small portion of any population is put down but not allowed to be *objectified, stereotyped, and devalued*. The Pakistani Muslim immigrants in America had to confront with those stereotypes that had symbolized the narrative of terrorism with their existence after the 9/11 attacks. It was, of course, that they faced problems of creative value and identity, but now the media has started to target them and whatever they did was the element of derision. But before that, Europe, the United Kingdom, and America were the lands of their dream of prosperity but the event had changed the outlook for them. This emerging new outlook has for them the same experience that the postcolonial hegemony had left for them, and now there was a sense of religious hegemony instead of cultural hegemony, which they faced previously. Christianity is the dominant religion in most of the host countries, for example, America, where there is 72% of the total population is Christian, and the Muslims are less than 1%.

There is a psychological inheritance within the new generation of immigrants that the religion plays a pivotal role in the daily affairs as Kattan (2009) states that in those countries where there is a Muslim majority, Islam governs all the

aspects of social lives and to a very great extent on the visitors who visit there, and this thought further aggravated their condition because they applied the same dictum to their life in the host countries and there was Islamophobia, which is a form of religious hegemony.

[Alexander \(2013\)](#) reports "that America faced an increasing trend towards Islamophobia and otherization of the Muslims and Arab American, which is still ongoing. Statistics show that in the months following 9/11, hate crimes against Muslims and people perceived to be Arab increased to 40 times their pre-9/11 number. Public and workplace discrimination against Muslims had already quadrupled a year after 9/11". This increase in crime rate has traumatic effects among the Muslims, and their creative value, which they had attained by creating productivity, decreased and caused them to suffer a strange economic and social crisis and felt helpless and they wanted to negotiate for their part and prove their productivity. In recent years there have been a number of steps that errand them and enable them to attain their productive value back on a social basis –these measures are; i. they are participating in the political system and policy-making institutions of the host countries, ii. institutionalizing by becoming doctors, engineers, and social scientists, and iii. building relationships on the basis of humanity and friendships. But these measures are not helping them to win this zero-sum social gaming.

The social dynamics have changed so as that all the efforts that they make are not responding well, and their navigating identity is not settling. [Patrick L. Mason \(2014\)](#) records, "Heightened racial, religious and ethnic stereotypes were enforced which were none existed before" to recover from these stereotypes, there is a strong need to establish new social rights dynamics which may retain them, their creative value and increase their productive value because in a social game as much value a person owes his existence faces as less crisis of loss.

The above discussion highlights the condition of Muslims after the 9/11 events. Many Pakistani expatriate writers highlight the issues of the second generation of immigrants; Mohsin Hamid, in his *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, addresses the same issue of immigrants. Gasztold, (2015) observes, "the borders of conflict shift from public to personal,

complicating the issue of identity for Muslim immigrants". The shift is, in fact, about the creative value that there is a need for the person in the society, and the complications are about their navigational identity and productive value.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the immigrants face the problem of identity, but this identity in the second generation of immigrants is all about the creative value and the productive value.

Theoretical Framework

This research is qualitative and interpretative in nature and is based on a theoretical and a conceptual framework of Zero-sum social gaming that is constituted for analysis. As the term is explained by C. Wright Mills as "a zero-sum conception of power that is, the more one person had, the less was available to others". To analyze this concept, Ashcraft's postcolonial critical framework is borrowed in which the hegemony and identity create a valid critical method to analyze the literary work. The conceptual framework develops the connection between concepts and *empirical research, and relevant theories to advance and systematize knowledge about related concepts or issues*, Watson (2007) proposes a conceptual framework for social creativity analysis. Such frameworks help to develop a systemized relation between ideas and identify gaps for research. The present work is based on the contextual representation of zero-sum response expressed through the main characters of the novel.

Analysis

The paradigm to justify the novel, *Home Fire* is often turns up confusing when described as the story of two families sojourned in Britain because the story actually is not a conventional depiction of the immigrants facing dilemmatic circumstances in the west. It actually describes the events when the struggle of one community of the west is summed to 'zero' by the other integral community of the country which is embracing more and more immigrants every year. This community actually claims to be the generation of the country where they live in. They consent to the fact that their parents were immigrants, but they are not, they belong to the place where they are born and struggle to

contribute as much effort as the natives do in the development of the country where they dwell. But all their efforts to claim the nation-hood usually confront a big zero when they interact with those who claim to be the natives. It is very poignant that most of the intelligentsia of the modern age conceives it as a psychological phenomenon or a psychological barrier that hinders the integration of these two communities as a congregated whole.

The novel inaugurates and the zero-sum pitch is done, but the receipt is balanced with Zero. Isma doesn't bring her books, her family pictures and even she doesn't bring Quran just because she wants to be called the native. Leaving personal contents behind interprets that she owes much to her identity of being native, but all her sacrifices cost her suspicions. The lady officer doubts her for having a costly coat which is a little unfit "a size too large" and "too nice for someone" like her. Isma tries to equal the deal and describes her job and her academic achievements and her travel to Amherst but "the more you said, the more guilty you sounded". And there is still a question "Do you consider yourself British?" the officer asks even when he has costumed her luggage, he bargains her mind. Her reiterate is she is British. But the answer this time is to compensate the value of zero. She knows "Occupying other people's territory generally causes more problems than it solves". She is so compliant that she doesn't "show a tiny bit of contempt". Ultimately she leaves the office gets her boarding pass and timidly rushes to catch her plane. She is British, she is educated there, she has the same views about Iraq and Syria as a British youth can have, but still she is engaged in a situation which is zero-sum for her. All her efforts for "creative value", from her struggle to her present status, fail to bring her "productive value" that she wants to gain from the natives. For her, this value is a pint of survival of her being as a "British". There is unconscious fear in her that does influence her dealings with the natives, and even the sound of ice makes her afraid because of the dealings of zero-sum. She knows whatever happens to her won't be believed, and there may be some blame on her being. She is aware of the situation in which all her good actions can any moment be turned into "terrorism." Gita, her friend, and room partner has distanced herself from Isma because she is also an immigrant and she wants to prove herself

native and adopt the same attitude for the Muslims which is prevailing among the generations of the natives. Her leaving of room her discontinued contact with Isma and Aneeka are part of the deal of becoming native and gaining "creative value".

Imsa sees her brother's online status on Skype but she is confused whether to contact or not because she knows it will damage her impression for which she is here and another deal of zero-sum shall let her down, her productive value that she assumes to gain in America would also be declined. Hira Shah, her teacher fervently implies the uselessness of "gain" and loss that forces them to break their way from their country of origin in favour of the country of birth.

She meets Eamonn, he is also wearied of the zero-sum dealings by the natives though he has changed the spellings of his name "Ayman" to a Jewish pronunciation, his father is an MP, his mother is an Irish American and he has the same marginalized relations with his father as have many young ones of the American aristocratic class but he still is facing an unconscious psychological trauma of being bargained for a transaction of losing "creative value". Eamonn doesn't know anything about Urdu, he claims to attain a value, but the reality is, he is not so and is aware of the linguistic expressions of Urdu language. This is the struggle for the creative value that he rejects his past lineage with Pakistan and Urdu language. Just to gain value he has compromised views about Islam, which has become as lethal for them as cancer. Despite his secular ideas and distance from Islam, he is still a Muslim for the natives, all his strives of being called secular are meeting with a "zero-sum" this is that "subtext" he hears from the natives. He is afraid of the "no-go area" of the response of devalued "creative value". His father becomes the new home secretary, but the "Islamic background" is still depressing that whatever they do, has no response rather their loyalty is always full of doubts. This zeroing attitude towards them is what is not allowing them to integrate with the natives. As far as Eamonn's behavior is concerned, there is a lack of communication on his part because he has a sense of escape in him, he fears to discuss things in a vivid expression rather he puts a question before his friend about having a beard but the response "We'd hold you down and shave it off"

because they won't let him become "hipsters." The only solution with immigrants is to keep justifying themselves and try to engage themselves in dealings of no response.

This zeroing of response is actually a characteristic of the colonial era when the dehumanized colonized public also faced the same problem as is being faced by the immigrants in the west, especially immigrants from the Muslim countries. The treatment of the colonial establishment towards the colonized was similar to that of the natives in the western countries and America. Then the colonized had no choice in such situations of cross responses and now the immigrants have no choice and are vulnerable to the same treatment as their generation before them was.

Today the international political and economic structure also supports the powerful countries, the previously colonizers hold the economic and political power in international politics and the condition of the formerly colonized country is still pathetic. The new generation of migrants is attempting for a creative value to participate in the social fiber and contribute to the integration of nationalism where they may attain the same status as the natives have.

If you look at colonial laws you'll see plenty of precedent for depriving people of their rights; the only difference is this the time it's applied to British citizens, and even that's not as much of a change as you might think because they're rhetorically being made un-British. Say more. The 7/7 terrorists were never described by the media as "British terrorists." Even when the word "British" was used, it was always "British of Pakistani descent" or "British Muslim" or, my favorite, "British passport holders," always something interposed between their Britishness and terrorism. ([Shamsie, 2017, p. 33](#))

But this un-British is a consultancy of the previous history of hegemony and this power domination is a marked trend even in the media which keeps checking the progress of the migrants by spreading news and by developing a narrative against the specific community, especially the Muslim Community from Pakistan.

To carry out a social deal in zeroing event, the migrants extend a receptive attitude for the natives and they become victims of "the Instrumentalization of Fear". The fear is two-fold; at the one place they are afraid of losing their

current status of prosperity, and this is the prosperity for which their parents had come here and associated themselves with the natives. The other place they think they will belong to nowhere if they didn't show lucrative attitude towards the natives because they have disconnected themselves from their centre of origin. They know the conditions in the countries of a postcolonial era where there is a class that is still crushing the social structure of those countries, and that class would never let them flourish there. These fears are not new, the generation in the colonial era had a class that had become against their cultural, geographical, and national partners and that class obeyed the colonizers and gained profit from the colonial administration. And now there is a class with the same characteristics.

Isma is in "no position to let the state question" her "loyalties" therefore in her own fear, she tells the police about her brother who has gone to Iraq to contribute to the war. This psychological trauma is a result of that zero sum outcome. She is afraid that her scholarship would be discontinued, her social benefits would be ceased and her status as a citizen of Britain would be called back. So she represents the same class that helped the colonizers in their countries with a difference that she is born in the country of the natives yet an immigrant there.

The dealing of the native with the generation of the immigrants has the pertinent feature of the racism that too is based on the "do more" and demand nothing which is another aspect of the zerosumism when all the dealings of one side get a response of "zero" from the other side. The views of common nationhood and one country one nation seems dubious when an integral part of a nation is not permitted to enter into the main tent. The prospects of the immigrants from Muslim countries and China gain the status of belonging to the same race, and the immigrants from the European countries are assimilated readily in the social stream. The "British Muslims to lift themselves out of the Dark Ages if they wanted the rest of the nation to treat them with respect" is the narrative for the Muslim immigrants among the British population that they have no respect and are still in the dark age. The creative value of the immigrants is assessed to zero always in every interaction and exposure.

The recurrent idea of the father is highlighted an issue which also symbolizes

patronage of the immigrants is from a humble backgrounds. The capital crime of the immigrants is their patronage and because their ancestors were slaves, so are they that is the cause of the zero-sum response that they get during their social dealings with natives. "we are British. Britain accepts this" and they as migrants also admire to be called British but for those who have doubts they must get rid of "outdated code of behavior" and "clinging ideologies" in favor of Britain, this is mere satisfying themselves of the responses of zero-sum are because of their faults which they display in social dealing with the natives and they actually "miss out on". This perspective is postcolonial in essence.

The group of countries where they claim to give rights to the women of the age, the immigrant females are a victim of the same male dominance which is a marked characteristic of the former colonial countries. In response, these women of lower origin always see a native with the fear of being diminished, and when the guys of these so-called liberal countries come across a woman wearing Hijab they behave the same of uncivilized-coolies. "If you're nineteen and female you'll get some version of a hard time for whatever you wear" ([Shamsie, 2017, p.21](#)), says Aneeka and they are always there "pretending a game".

Karamat Lone accepts to meet her on the condition that she won't be wearing hijab, though Karamat was raised in a Muslim family, offering strict rituals but now he is against meeting a girl wearing hijab on the account that he shall lose the value that he has attained in these years, now he claims to be a part of a "stigmatized nation". But in the far corner of his mind, he knows this reality that there may occur any such event that may bring him a zero-sum deal. Karamat Loon, the lone wolf is not the wolf as he considers himself, he is ready to lay sacrifice of his own son just to achieve the status of being called loyal to Britain, but he is enclosed in safety in the name of security and the security department searchers out his own house just to ensure whether he is a contact of jihadiz or not. He thinks of himself as a home secretary, the safer one but yet he is not beyond the deal that confronts everyone in the countries of the west.

Parvaiz's brain is washed by a jihadi organization, he is trapped and is interested in the organization not in the name of Islam but in the name of his lineage. He wants to attain his

value and the member of the jihadi organization traps him by telling him the story of his father's achievements in the jihad and Parvaiz is happy when Farooq calls him Abu Parvaiz. Parvaiz feels the pride in what his father had done. He seems to have gained a new value, the creative value for which every immigrant is anxious. But he is disappointed when he sees an American and a Scottish having links with the jihadis for whom he was working in the media cell; the slaying of others who had come there for jihad rattled him. He tries to run away and is killed by the same SUV driver in which those two whites used to come there.

There is a hidden narrative of the writer about this terrorism. These so-called countries are themselves the originators of this terrorism. Every effort by the Muslims and the immigrant Muslims increases the trauma in them. These efforts of harmonization both at the international level and at the local levels in the modernized countries don't bring them "creative value". The demand remains the same after the sacrifice of religion, ethnicity and creed. The struggles of the IRA and the struggle of Kashmiris are different. One movement challenged the colonial power, it was declared a terrorist organization but the narrative of wholesome hate is seen nowhere but the Kashmiris are not heard anywhere instead there is a concept of terrorism associated with them and a narrative of hate is everywhere in the world against them.

There are some instances which put questions for those who have a deep sight;

Who kills Aneeka and Eamonn in the blast? Even after the so much struggle of Eamonn's father to be called a British, his son is not granted forgiveness by the system of zeroing nature. Were the security agencies of Britain not aware of where Parvaiz was? The killing of Parvaiz by two whites shows that there is a meta-system that didn't want Parvaiz to reach England again. The group of these countries has such laws that they can repatriate anyone and the countries where they are repatriated, have no option but to accept them for some thousand pounds. Parvaiz had never been in Pakistan since his birth, he never wanted to, he is brainwashed in Britain but is sent to Pakistan for burial. Karamat as part of the system realizes that "Here Britain whittled down the powers of the monarchy, here Britain agreed to leave its empire, here Britain instituted universal suffrage". ([Shamsie, 2017, p.168](#))

There is a misconception among the immigrants that these countries are so generous, but this never happens they keep on challenging their production values. They demand more instances of loyalty they think them responsible for proving themselves suitable for their culture, but when they do, every attempt is blocked and zeroed. Aneeka's cousin responds that what Parvaiz has done is quite challenging, "those of us with passports that look like toilet paper to the rest of the world who spend our whole lives being so careful we don't give anyone a reason to reject our visa applications? Don't stand next to this guy, don't follow that guy on Twitter, don't download that Noam Chomsky book. And then first your brother uses us as a cover to join some psycho killers". ([Shamsie, 2017, p.164](#))

This narrative has a counter-narrative that these countries barter their freedom for the passport they give to them. They are enfranchised by the new method of passports and visas, and once they get one, they are repeatedly tested and given zero marks in every question and these questions demand them to surrender their will, their culture, their language and their beings as well. In response to Isma's decision about her go-to Pakistan, Karamat has in mind;

"She's going to look for justice in Pakistan?" "That final word spoken with all the disgust of a child of migrants who understands how much his parents gave up—family, context, language, familiarity—because the nation to which they first belonged had proven itself inadequate to the task of allowing them to live with dignity. ([Shamsie, 2017, p.168](#)).

And what outcome is there except a zero?

Findings & Conclusion

The study of the novel opens a new dimension of the social events of zero-sum that deal with the issues of immigrants. This zero-sum dealing is not situational rather it covers every aspect of national and international political and economic interest.

The novel highlights the zero-sum dealing at the three levels;

- I. At the personal level when Isma betrays his family.
- II. At the social level when Karamat refuses to help Aneeka and Isma.

- III. At the international level when such mysterious events happen to maintain the reputation of the natives and their country. Till the responses by the natives, the policies at the international level are not changed, the immigrants shall always face the phobias and dilemmas and event the fanaticism. The creative value of the efforts, the immigrants do should be leveled, and there is a great need to review the policies of countries that harbour immigrants to gain the fruit of their efforts. The change is required at the social perception among the people of these first world countries that immigrants are as much useful and valuable as their own people can be.

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