Freie Universität Berlin
Department of Political and Social Sciences
Institute of Sociology

MA programme "Sociology – European Societies"
Master Thesis

Stand-up Comedy: Genre of Immigrants? Manifestation of Transnational Identity through Comedic Performance

Anna Kulikova

Date of submission: 20.04.2023

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Céline Teney

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Sérgio Costa

Table of Contents

Introduction

This paper focuses on understanding the popularity of the stand-up comedy genre among cultural minority groups. Perhaps not coincidentally, the presence of these groups is prominent in the stand-up comedy movement. The explanation for this may be some global processes, such as migration, cultural diversity and decolonization, which often result in the so-called hybridization of culture. The emergence of transnational identities is essentially a strategy for first and second-generation migrants, who can simultaneously be carriers of both local and global values and cultural habits. In fact, the stand-up comedy genre itself can be understood as a hybrid genre, where there are global stylistic features and at the same time a display of traditional local cultural features. Stand-up comedy is thus analyzed through the 'gaze' of comic practitioners with immigrant backgrounds, for whom comic performance can be simultaneously a way of social interaction, a way of empowerment, a tool of decolonization, and a transit point to the construction of a hybrid identity.

1.1 Current scholarly and public debate

The question of migrant identity is not strictly modern but has repeatedly been raised throughout history. However, given the new order of superdiversity and transnationalism, it is evident that the process of identity formation and manifestation is taking on new facets, trends and dynamics (Vertovec 1999, 2007).

In dealing with the question of identity and recognizing the complexity and multifaceted nature of this concept, we invariably return to the question of how and through what the transformations of identity take place. Transformations of social and collective identities are entwined with some kind of change in the social and cultural context. Speaking of the transformations of the last decades, certainly, these changes are triggered by the new global order and the processes of globalization.

Of course, there are many theories to describe the changing social context of recent years, but one of the most significant is the theory of transnationalism, understood as contemporary global processes taking place "beyond the nation-state border" (Park and Gerrits, 2021, p. 2). Transnationalism has become one of the main concepts in migration studies in recent years. Understanding migrants as major social actors in transnational processes, we find that the nature of their interaction with the host society and their society of origin has changed greatly. Thus, it is worth understanding that migrants' social practices are very different in the era of globalization. Today's migrants are different in that they are "... multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified" (Vertovec

2007 quoted in Park and Gerrits, 2021, p.2). Along with transnational practices comes a new transnational consciousness, as well as a more complex sense of belonging. One could say that "[t]he transnational lifeworld, carrying multiple meanings, constituting multiple identities and involving multiple sites, actors and social relationships, manifest how identities are being shaped in the contemporary world" (Kanungo, 2019, p. 31).

Transnational processes, together with other processes of globalization, for example with the development of ICT, have challenged the role of nation-states as the ultimate actor in identity formation. These processes "have called into question the traditional homogeneous notions of identity whereby the state contains and ensures social ties and political agreement through the homogenization of citizenship based on the 'one language, one territory, one identity, one nation-state' formula" (Kymlicka, 1995 quoted in Esteban-Guitart and Vila, 2015, p. 17).

Modern migrants, or as Schiller (Schiller et al., 1995) pointed out, 'transmigrants' are simultaneously connected to several cultures, societies and nations. In other words, these people are "[...] stretched between, or dually located in, physical places and communities in two or more nation-states" (Vertovec, 2001, p. 578). Being in such an 'in-betweenness' transmigrants develop a unique view of their belonging and identity, which becomes multiple.

Vertovec (2001), when describing the experiences of transmigrants in multiple cultural and social systems, referred to the concept of 'habitats of meaning' coined by Ulf Hannerz (1996). He says that "[t]he experiences gathered in these multiple habitats accumulate to comprise people's cultural repertoires, which in turn influence the construction of identity – or indeed multiple identities" (Vertovec, 2001, p. 578).

Thus, this phenomenon of multiple identities, and the experience of transmigration, pushes us to reexamine our understanding of identity in broad terms. This also challenges the point that our identities "are firmly linked to specific places" (Boyle, 2002, in Moskal, 2011, p. 30). Therefore, transmigration is "questioning the idea that these identities are 'stable'" (Boyle, 2002, in Moskal, 2011, p. 30).

Furthermore, "[t]he same person can be, without any contradiction, an American citizen, of Caribbean origin, with African ancestry, a Christian, a liberal, a woman, a vegetarian, a long-distance runner, a historian, a schoolteacher, a novelist, a feminist, a heterosexual, a believer in gay and lesbian rights, a theater lover, an environmental activist, a tennis fan, a jazz musician [...] and one of them can be taken to be the person's only identity or singular membership category" (Sen, 2007, pp. xii-xiii).

On the whole, the phenomenon of identity has been studied within different disciplines, the most dominant being anthropology, sociology, and psychology, in which various theoretical explanations have emerged at other times. Although many theories have common grounds, in most cases there is no unified understanding of the phenomenon. This can be explained by the fact that "[...] defining identity [...] refers to both an individual's sense of self as well as to an individual's relations with others" (Andreouli and Chryssochoou, 2015, p. 309).

In further detailing the phenomenon of the transnational identity of migrants, one of the most accurate descriptions of the mechanism by which identities (or multiple identities) are constructed in modern times has been described by postcolonial researchers.

In this paper, we focus our attention on the construction and representation of identity among groups with migrant backgrounds. As argued by Bartczak and Myk, (2014, p. 69), "[t]he study of postcolonialism and postcolonial theory has always and automatically been linked with the problems of representation and identity". By the same notion, it is clear that the central theme of postcolonial studies has always been that of migratory flows, and hence that of immigrant identity. The perspectives of two postcolonial academics, Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha, on identity, become a starting point for understanding how the phenomenon of transnational identity and transcultural consciousness emerged.

Through the lens of diasporas in the British context, Hall and Bhabha dismantle how the phenomenon of identity has been reconceptualized. They describe identity as hybrid, multiple, and inseparable from its representations and the co-cultural discourses in which it participates.

Speaking of the British context, it is one of the most multifaceted and complex social spaces for transmigrants. Multiple historical layers from the colonial past, "colonial displacement migration" (Dunphy et al., 2010, p. 8), the anti-immigrant movement in the 60s and 70s to the current state where there is a growth of nationalism, economic problems on the background of Brexit, create conditions where migrants have to face constant racism, discrimination and xenophobia. Both first- and second-generation migrants find themselves in a situation where they are blocked from accessing a British identity. As Vertovec points out, "[...] 'identity' in Britain functions as 'an ordering device' or 'device of cultural engineering' which entails 'fixing cultures in place' [...and s]uch a view of 'identity' presumes the presence of a singular and homogeneous 'community" (Baumann 1996 in Vertovec, 2001, p. 578).

In describing the British context, it is also worth noting the fact that in the UK "[...] a commitment to international Human Rights legislation is currently overshadowed by a focus

upon protecting borders and strengthening legislation to reduce the flow [... of migration]" and consequently "[t]he operation of governance in this area does not appear to operate in a clear way with internal integrity but rather is deeply problematic in offering a mixed message of 'Welcome to Britain' and 'Go Home" (O'Neill, 2008, p. 3).

Indeed, the division into homogeneous vs. hybrid, colonizer vs. colonized, and migrant vs. local is often used in sociopolitical and cultural discourses that often seek to exclude those who are either part of ethnic minorities or have migrant status. Migrants often experience problems of acceptance in British society, even if they are second- or third-generation migrants who were born and raised in Britain. It can be said that "[i]mmigrant cultures are routinely posed as threats to national culture" (Vertovec, 2011, p. 241). This becomes a booster for migrants to reflect on their belonging. Experiencing various exclusionary discourses and stereotypes, they try to approach their respective backgrounds, their home society, and their diaspora. Yet diaspora is not a synonym here for marginalization in the host community, but rather a synonym for solidarity and unification with those who also have a hybrid identity. As James Clifford argues (1994, p. 322), "[t]he empowering paradox of diaspora is that dwelling here assumes a solidarity and connection there, [...b]ut there is not necessarily a single place or an exclusivist nation. . . . [It is] the connection (elsewhere) that makes a difference (here)" (quoted in Vertovec, 1999, p. 450).

In examining the issue of identity in this paper, the main focus will be on the processes of globalization occurring in the cultural field. This is because it is the socio-cultural context that has the greatest influence on identity formation. At the same time, Vertovec, (1999, p. 450), points out that the mapping of transnationalism in "Cultural Reproduction" is one of the main trends in migration studies. Indeed, the culture of transmigrants and contemporary diasporas is largely based on negotiating their identities through the production of various cultural artifacts and movements where they can create spaces for expressing their hybrid experiences and also for criticizing exclusionary discourses.

Thereby, "[t]he production of hybrid cultural phenomena manifesting 'new ethnicities' (Hall 1994) is especially to be found among transnational youth whose primary socialization has taken place with the cross-currents of differing cultural fields, [so a]mong such young people, facets of culture and identity are often self-consciously selected, syncretized and elaborated from more than one heritage" Vertovec, (1999, p. 451). Such hybrid cultural production can express itself in common art forms such as film, music, literature, theater, and other forms of entertainment. One such popular form in recent years is the production of a comedy, which

often portrays social issues of globalization and migration through, such as the techniques of ethno-comedy and humor. It is worth noting that, "[h]umour plays an important role in human-to-human interaction" (Ruiz-Madrid and Fortanet-Gómez, 2015, p. 246). Also "[a] crucial aspect that continues to negotiate the boundaries of values, institutions, and authority that control society" (Ahmad, et al., 2022, p. 3).

In this sense, the cultural production of comedy can be a rather promising field for dealing with aspects of diaspora and transmigration.

Speaking of transmigrants, we can observe, for example, how comedy genres, through mass media, either more often refer to the topic of immigration and the representation of migrants as the target of jokes, or, become a field for the migrants themselves to establish a discourse. As Schlote notes, (2005, p. 178) "[t]he proliferation of so-called ethnic comedies in various Western countries in the 1990s [...] occurs in the wake of these earlier ethnic sitcoms and earlier ethnic stand-up comedians[...] and at the nexus of the following two developments: on the one hand, the increased visibility of second- and third-generation artists of immigrant descent and what Stuart Hall (1994) defined as 'new forms of cultural practice' and, on the other, the profound economic, cultural and social transformations of the last three decades (e.g. mass migration, income polarization, transnational spaces) [...]".

That being said, "[h]umor may locate in diverse forms such as performance, aesthetics, or reception practices" (Moss, 2016, p. 488)". Performance-based humor genres seem most promising when it comes to the social functions of humor, since comedic performance involves interaction between comedians and the audience.

Also, "[c]omedy, a form which in itself embodies transgression, lends itself to the study of the culturally hybrid" (Dunphy et al., 2010, p. 7). In this sense, the stand-up genre itself can be described as hybrid and it makes extensive use of the transgression of social norms as the main tool for establishing contact between the comedian and the audience. This iconic comedy genre of the West, in recent decades, has indeed gained popularity among those with hybrid identities. As "[o]ne of the oldest forms of humorous expression [...]" (Mintz, 1985, p. 71) and entertainment, stand-up comedy has become a global genre, spreading to many other countries, both those that are considered as western and those that are not. Among other things, in Britain, it is one of the most popular modes of leisure entertainment among British youth (YouGov, 2022).

Lately, stand-up comedy has seen quite a few comedians who are immigrants or belong to cultural minorities. Some such comedians even join specific stand-up comedy groups where their shows specifically focus on jokes about migration issues and their personal migration

experiences. *The Immigrant Comedy Show* is a prominent example, where all the comedians are immigrants. In their jokes, they often touch on themes of their hybrid identity, migrant status and how they try to integrate into British society. Some comedians also signal their "immigrant theme" in the titles of their shows, such as comedian Victor Patrascan, a comedian with a migrant background who has recently gained popularity in Britain with his show *The Dirty Immigrant*.

In this sense, the figure of the stand-up comedian is central to the genre. Importantly, that "stand-up comics employ the use of [...] 'the art of making do' as they transform the raw materials into stories, jokes, [...] in a way which gives expressive shape to their own lived experiences [... at the same time] it gives voice to the 'victimized dupes', as it challenges the structure of dominance and stands against the power [... a]lso, it includes a sense of oppositionality and a sense of difference [...a]nd it, therefore, treats the people as active agents and not merely as a 'site of subjugation'" (Ahmad, et al., 2022, p. 4).

Since the role of the comedian is central to stand-up comedy, I will consider insights into why immigrants often invoke self-representation through humor, and more specifically through the stand-up comedy genre. The second question to consider is how they do this in stand-up comedy, how they construct their comedic narrative, manifest their 'cultural voice' and what existing social discourses they address.

1.2 A gap in the literature

In conducting a literature review, a significant gap was discovered in the research on the dimensions and functions of humor in migration studies. According to Anja K. Franck (2022), we can find very few studies related to the topic of humor. As she points out, "[...]in migration research, the methodological and analytical value of the humorous has been more or less entirely overlooked" (Franck, 2022, p. 1). Meanwhile, humor plays "[...]a vital role in the way marginalized groups comment on and mock power" (Franck, 2022, p. 1).

In addition, there are relatively few sociological studies on the role of humor as a cultural practice in migrant communities. No research has been found on how different migrants (first-, second-, and third-generations) discuss their belonging to several cultures through humor. In particular, there is little information about second-generation migrants and no comparative research about first- and second-generation migrants and their differences in transcultural experiences.

There is also little data on how migrants can use genres of comedy and live comedy performances to discuss their identity and their migrant experience. The most relevant was

only studied by Miller (2020). A substantial body of research on transnationalism has also not yet come to focus on how migrant groups, a major driving force of superdiversity and multiculturalism, can claim their transnational experience through various cultural productions such as stand-up comedy or other comedic performance genres. However, as Malmberg and Awad (2019, p. 216) point out, "[...] literature identifies multiple (and largely complementary) uses of humor in relation to social differences".

That said, focusing on European countries, and in particular, on our case study of Britain, few researchers have taken up the study of how comedy can be a site for migrants to express their identities. Some of the few are DeCamp 2017; Rubio 2016; Boskin and Dorinson 1985; Dunphy et al. 2010. However we found a study with a similar theme in the German context: Zambon (2017) *Negotiating new German identities: transcultural comedy and the construction of pluralistic unity*. No similar study was found in the British context. At the same time, analyzing the study of Zambon, K. (2017) and other similar ones, we found another problem. The study of the comedy performance genre mostly concerns the media space, so they analyze various kinds of tv production or comedy appearances on social media. However, given the high popularity of stand-up comedy as a leisure activity in Britain, on par with going to the theater, concerts or movies, this genre is not taken seriously as an object of research in the social sciences. Also, in the absence of relevant statistics, few researchers pay attention to the dynamics of the growing participation of transnational and hybrid identities in the cultural production of comedy. However, this could be a promising line of inquiry in both qualitative and quantitative research.

Nevertheless, a nexus between migration, the social role of comedic performance, and questions of identity can be provided in the theoretical framework of postcolonial studies. As Huddart (2005) pointed out, elements of humor are often studied in the field of postcolonial discourse. In contrast to migration studies, in postcolonial theory, we can find several seminal ideas that help us in determining how and why humor is an important tool in the discussion and representation of identity, albeit a non-obvious one. For example, Mbembe 2001; Bleiker 2000; Escobar 2011; Källstig and Death 2021, among others. Kapoor (2008) pointed to the role of discussing ethnic identity and racism through the lens of humor, understanding it as a mechanism of resistance to dominant discourses and as a way of criticizing the social inequalities associated with ethnic minorities.

Speaking also of methods, the discourse analysis that we plan to apply has hardly been used in the framework of our topic. We were only able to find some studies related to discourse analysis, but in a linguistic paradigm (Filani, 2020; Puksi, 2018; Archakis, et al. 2018).

Among the few who paid attention to the possibility of applying discourse analysis in a sociological paradigm was the study of Zambon (2017), which was previously mentioned and also Sarkar and Siraj, 2022; Pérez 2013; Fatmawati and Cahyono, 2018; Irena and Rusadi, 2019 and Avila-Saavedra, 2011.

In this paper, we will examine the representation of transmigrants' identities that they create through comedic performance, specifically in the stand-up comedy genre. Thus this paper attempts to bridge the gap between migration studies, the social aspects of comedy, and the representation of transnational identities. Despite the lack of interest in this topic, in this paper, aspects of humor can be seen as a link between the previously discussed themes of transmigrant hybrid identities, their representations, and strategies of transculturation.

1.3 The relevance of the study for sociology

As Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore (2018, p. 179) point out, "[i]t is clear that while migration-driven diversity is a global and inexorably transnational phenomenon, new local challenges are arising as global tensions are played out at local levels, particularly in the intersection of religion, ethnicity, age and gender, and as new forms of inequality emerge". In fact, even though migrants have become one of the major social actors groups, they still face many problems in the host community. The intensification of transnational connections in recent years has strongly influenced the way the modern migrant identifies himself. Vertovec (2001) points out that the most interesting intersection of migration studies and the paradigm of transnationalism is the study of migrant identity formation under the new conditions of transnationalism. The reason for this is that more and more people have connections in their daily lives with more than two countries, societies and certain cultures. Although the socio-cultural consequences of transnational migration are a promising direction in the study of the formation of migrants' multiple identities, so far they remain understudied. This is particularly true for understanding the extent to which transnationalism affects the identities of first- as well as second-generation migrants.

Meanwhile, "[...] despite increasing awareness and acceptance of super-diversity as a new demographic reality and the recognition that factors beyond ethnicity and country of origin play a major role in migrant settlement and social relations, migration studies has to some extent continued to be dominated by an ethno-national focus" (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2018, p. 180).

Finding themselves in such a social context of exclusion based on various ethnic, national, and racial grounds, migrants have to find new forms of negotiating their identities and ways of entering society and resisting existing exclusionary and dominant social discourses. With their unique transcultural experiences, migrants often try to represent themselves through different narratives about themselves, and in this way, they form their identities. Therefore, it is necessary to "[...]embrace more critical approaches to how personal narratives create identities as well as resist and reinforce larger cultural narratives" (Young, 2009 quoted in Chen and Lin, 2016, p. 19).

At the same time, "[h]umour is important for many reasons, not least as a form of representation that reveals interesting things about the world [but it also] provides a compelling means to understand the workings of power and the nuances of the social order" (Seirlis, 2011, p. 514 quoted in Källstig and Death, 2021, p. 340). Stand-up comedy, with its rather unique set of stylistic elements, is a rather interesting genre that tends to bypass social norms and criticize social problems and power relations in a rather direct and radical manner. As DeCamp (2017, p. 328) says, "[...] some scholars argue that comedy acts as a potent medium for challenging socially conservative norms and hegemonic discourses of race, gender, class, and sexuality [... and s]ome of the proponents of this position contend that racial comedy is inherently rebellious in its goals, seeking to upend the status quo through marginal or multiple perspectives [...]". In fact, stand-up comedy often responds to all sorts of stereotypes about minorities by mocking them. Moreover, the genre does not require any special training from the performers. Most comedians are amateurs with no previous professional acting training. Such aspects make this genre accessible to participate in it not only as a viewer but also as a performer. With all this in mind, these creative practices make stand-up comedy especially attractive to various minority groups who may face problems of acceptance by dominant social groups. Migrants who are constantly confronted with various exclusionary discourses and distorted representations of their status and identity do indeed often turn to stand-up comedy, and participate there as comedians, revealing various racial, ethnic, and cultural stereotypes. In this paper, we are interested in how migrants "[...] negotiate and consolidate the values and behaviors prescribed by their ethnic and religious groups with those prescribed by the host culture" (Stuart and Ward, 2011, p. 263 quoted in Esteban-Guitart and Vila, 2015, p. 23).

In doing so, we will consider the British context as one of the most complex and rich in terms of migration issues. According to Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, (2018, p. 180) "[...]

superdiversification occurs in the context of rising nationalism exemplified by the rise of right-wing parties, the UK's decision to leave the European Union [...]". Mass migration has become one of the main social agendas of recent years and one of the major social discourses in the UK.

As Dunphy et al. (2010, p. 8) pointed out, there are two contexts that have influenced mass immigration and the formation of diasporic identities in Europe in recent years, namely "colonial displacement" and "economic migrants". These scholars are also among the few who have analyzed aspects of humor in relation to migration contexts. As they note, "[t]hese two types of displacement context are historically quite distinct, but may nevertheless produce very similar kinds of migrant experience, and indeed parallel kinds of humour" (Dunphy et al., 2010, p. 8).

A situation where both contexts contributed significantly can be found in quite a few Western European countries, but the UK stands out in this sense. It is not only a place where guest workers flock as in other countries, but it is also a former colonial country, which in postcolonial times is most acutely affected by the issue of decolonization. As we observe, migration and the colonial past often translate into a visible ethnic divide in Britain.

For this reason, this paper has the potential to enrich the field of research on the themes of migrant integration in the British context and the social role of humor as a tool for negotiating transnational identity.

1.4 Research Questions

According to these perspectives, a reasonable question might arise, can we say that stand-up comedy is really a genre for immigrants, a platform where they can manifest their transnational identity? In this paper, this question will be explored with interpretations of what role and function comedy performance can have for transmigrants and the negotiation of their identities. We argue that performing stand-up comedy gives migrants the opportunity to draw attention through humor to how they understand their unique personal experiences and their belonging to multiple cultures, as well as to the attitudes they encounter in their interactions with others. We also suggest that stand-up comedy can be understood not only as an art practice or popular entertainment, but also as a special space that can bring together people with similar identities and also as a discursive practice that can create a dialogue with those groups of people who have different senses of belonging. Also, we assume that for first- and second-generation migrants these functions may be somewhat different. Thus, we would like to explore the logic of the mechanism by which migrants use stand-up comedy to

discuss their identity. In this paper, the following research questions stand out:

1. What transcultural experiences and transcultural identities do migrant comedians discuss in their stand-up performances?
2. How do stand-up comedians, who are first-generation migrants, negotiate and represent their transnational identities in their performances?
3. How do stand-up comedians, who are second-generation migrants, negotiate and represent their transnational identities in their performances?
4. What are the similarities and differences in the representation and negotiation of transnational identities between first- and second-generation migrants who are stand-up comedians?
5. What functions of transnational identity representation can be found in stand-up comedy as a discursive practice?

1.5 Research Composition

The structure of this paper is presented as follows. First, in our next chapter, we will examine the basic theoretical aspects of transnational identity through postcolonial studies. Our consideration will be informed by the work of Stuart Hall, one of the most prominent representatives of postcolonial theory and cultural studies, who has examined cultural and diasporic identities. In Hall's work, we also highlight aspects of discourse and its relationship to the formation of cultural identity. Through this, we will try to understand why the mechanism of representation is crucial in identity formations in modern times. In chapter 2.1.2 we will look at aspects of hybrid identity and the so-called 'Third space' that Homi Bhabha, another prominent scholar of postcolonial studies, has written about. In Bhabha's work, we will also describe such important aspects of identity representation as stereotype and mimicry. Overall, these two chapters should help us understand how the concept of identity has been reconceptualized and why the transcultural order has had a significant impact on it. In addition, both scholars describe in some detail the impact of the mechanism on identity formation. They specifically address British society and the impact of its colonial past on ethnic minorities and diasporas. In Chapter 2.2 we will look at some theories of transnationalism and transculturation. Chapters 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 focus on the so-called transnational turn in social studies, which adds a description of the process of transnationalism and the emergence of a new type of migrant, the transmigrant. Further here we will try to understand the main characteristics of the transmigrants and their identities. In section 2.2.3 we will try to uncover the logic of transmigration and the new strategies of

transmigrant integration, which can be described by the term transculturation, coined by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz.

Further in section 2.3, we find the specific nexus between humor and transmigrant identity representation through the work of postcolonial studies and selected anthropological works. In sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 we will explain why humor can be used by migrants as a tool for negotiating and positioning their identities, and why comedic performance and specifically stand-up are so appealing to transmigrants as a creative and discursive practice. We will also reveal the main stylistic features of this genre and then detail our research questions.

In the next section 3 we discuss the methodological approach that will be used for this study, namely sociological discourse analysis. Sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 reflect the methodological design of our study, detailing all major aspects such as the scope of the study, the rationale for the case study, the sample design, the operationalization of key concepts according to the theoretical framework, the data collection process, and the data analysis strategy.

Section 4 will highlight the findings corresponding to the research questions. These will unfold the common themes, which were found in the examined texts, define the results of the analysis, with the excerpts from the analyzed texts, and interpret them in order to answer the research questions of this study.

Finally, the fifth and final chapter will reflect on the possible shortcomings, and perspectives of this study as well the potential contributions of this study and its possible applications. This will be followed by the main conclusions of the research.

2. Theoretical framework

First of all, let us look at the central aspect of this paper, understanding transnational identities and what features are intrinsic to them. For this purpose, we will discuss relevant theories related to concepts of cultural identity and transnationalism.

2.1 Theoretical line one: Understanding Identity in Postcolonial Theory

Before we move on to a detailed examination of transnational identity and the experience of migrant identity formation, we take a step toward sociological macro-theories to establish how the very notion of identity has been reconceptualized in the era of postmodernity and globalization. How the hierarchy of individual and collective identities has changed in sociology, and how national, ethnic, racial, and cultural identities stand in modernity.

Speaking specifically about migrant identity in modern times, Vertovec (2001, 2009) pointed out that the most significant paradigms that have emerged are those dealing with migration

and identity through the lens of diaspora, hybridity as well as transnational and transcultural processes.

Although our focus is on the latter, we will begin with the first two types of paradigms, diasporic and hybrid identity, which come from postcolonial theories, since they have played a significant role in the development of the third paradigm, identity from a transnational perspective.

2.1.1 Stuart Hall's Theories of Cultural and Diaspora Identity

The work of cultural studies scholar, Stuart Hall, is an important point for this paper for three reasons. First, conceptually, Hall was one of the first to point out that the understanding of identity has changed dramatically because of the emergence of a new global order. Second, Hall was able to describe how migrant identities are formed in the era of postcolonialism. Third, Hall was one of the first to point out that representation is an important aspect of identity.

Hall (2015) argued that we need to recognize that the very concept of identity overcomes some crises because the traditional view of it as something related to purely individual characteristics or as only the result of the interaction between the individual and the social environment does not reflect social reality. The reason for this is the evident dominance of multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Due to the emergence of a variety of interactions and global flows, our social and personal identities cannot be based on certain national-territorial or ethnic aspects. Identity has become a complex phenomenon, where each individual simultaneously belongs to several social communities. Identity cannot be defined solely in terms of religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, language, etc. In accord with other scholars of postcolonial studies in the 1980s and 1990s, Hall was able to determine that collective national identities are no longer binding because globalization has created a great challenge to the nation-state acting as the center of the establishment of cultural frameworks and values. Identity is therefore no longer tied to a particular location of the nation-state. There has come " [... a] new 'transnational' phase of the system [... and its] cultural 'center' everywhere and nowhere. It is becoming 'decentered'" (Hall, 2018, p. 215).

Nevertheless, all this does not eliminate the question of identity, but, on the contrary, amplifies it. This is why Hall (2015, 2018) stresses that it is necessary to talk about so-called "multiple identities" rather than singular identities, which are based only on a single trait or on belonging to a certain social group. Instead of talking separately about national, ethnic,

gender and other identities, Hall proposes to consider identity from the perspective of culturalism, that is, through the prism of culture.

The fact is that globalization, with its cultural manifestations, has a dual nature, where the contrasting processes of unification and intensification of manifestations of cultural differences go side by side. Thus identities in modern times are based on both global and local cultural practices and experiences. As Hall (2018, p. 223) accurately notes, "[...] these are the signifiers of a new kind of transnational, even postnational, transcultural consciousness". This "transcultural consciousness" is caused by increased migration flows, which are unregulated and which erode the concept of identity as something established, immutable, and based on belonging to collective national traits (Hall, 2018, p. 223).

As Hall (2018, p. 222) pointed out, "[a]cross the globe, the processes of so-called free and forced migrations are changing the composition, diversifying the cultures, and pluralizing the cultural identities of the older dominant nation-states, the old imperial powers, and, indeed, of the globe itself".

Thus, Hall (1990, 2021) introduces the concept of cultural identity, which can be interpreted in a two-fold way. It has references to the past on the one hand, but also to the future on the other. The scholar specifies, "[t]he first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective one true self, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selfs', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (Hall, 2018, p. 258).

This understanding however reflects the old logic of identity. The second definition, Hall says, depicts a new discourse on identity, where

> "[c]ultural identity [...] is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being', [...they] have histories [b]ut, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialism past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power, [...] identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (Hall, 2018, p. 260).

So, the second model says that, first, identity should be seen as a set of multiple social and individual characteristics or identities, such as national, and ethnic background, and as cultural heritage or economic status.

Second, cultural identity is a process, not a fixed point, where identity itself exists in positioning toward "others", social hierarchies of power, ideologies, historical experiences

and collective memory. Accordingly with the first point, "[m]ultiple identifications create zones of overlap and friction that would seem to deny the subject any comfortable position of being an "insider" or an "outsider" in relation to a given social, cultural or political group or an "imagined community [...]" (Laurencin & Roy, 2014, p. 6).

Third, identity is constantly being negotiated and thereby transformed by being woven into different discourses in regard to cultural differences and the past. In other words, "[w]e are always in the process of cultural formation [... and thus …] culture is not a matter of ontology, of being, but of becoming" (Hall, 2018, p. 222).

Although Hall did not mention the term transnational identity, he was one of those who operated with a close concept such as *diaspora identity*. In doing so, Hall addresses the notion of diaspora as part of the already mentioned "new logic of cultural identity" along with other figures in British cultural studies, such as Paul Gilroy (1993) and Avtar Brah (1992).

Vertovec (1999) points out that diaspora consciousness in many ways contains characteristics of transnationalism. He said that throughout the works of Hall and other cultural studies scholars, 'diaspora consciousness' is marked by dual or multiple identifications. At the same time, Vertovec stresses that "there are depictions of individuals' awareness of de-centred attachments, of being simultaneously 'home away from home', 'here and there' or, for instance, British and something else" (Vertovec, 1999, p. 450).

Prior to this, Clifford (1997), who introduced the concept of diaspora identity, determined that speaking of diaspora in the era of globalization is not exactly what was previously associated with the concept. He says that "[d]iaspora is different from travel [... because it] involves dwelling, maintaining communities, having collective homes away from home [...] (Clifford 1997, p. 287 quoted in Cressey, 2006, p. 55).

Hall, being himself a Caribbean migrant who moved to Britain, often referred to the question of the functioning of migrant identity throughout his writings. Drawing on the case of the Caribbean diaspora, Hall makes several important points. One of his major contributions is his in-depth analysis of colonial history and the emerging postcolonial context in Britain.

Above all, he has drawn attention to the growing discourse around race and ethnicity. He says,

> "[a] racially driven 'fundamentalism' has surfaced in all these western European and North American societies, a new kind of defensive and racialized nationalism.

> Prejudice, injustice, discrimination, and violence toward 'the Other' based on this hypostasized 'cultural difference' has come to take its place [...]" (Hall, 2018, p. 223).

He interprets this effect as an inevitable reaction to growing cultural differences and hybridization, where national collective identities, realizing that they are losing their power "in their territory" are being eroded. In doing so, they try to counter this by falling into various forms of discrimination such as xenophobia and the exclusion of those who may bring a different identity. As it may seem at first glance, collective identities have not disappeared under the influence of transnational flows, but are actively trying to resist them, seeing "[...] nomadic and seminomadic minorities as a potential threat to the 'stable, culturally homogeneous, historically unchanging […] national territory'" (Sibley, 1995, p. 108 quoted in Toninato, 2009, p. 3). Yet, according to Hall, the strategy of hostility and denial of difference is in fact a failed strategy, since the postcolonial era and globalization make it impossible to speak of national identity as something homogeneous and tied to a particular territory. In view of globalization, the world has become so complex that the process of superdiveristy has intensified (Vertovec, 2007).

Thus, "[t]he unregulated flows of peoples and cultures [...] inaugurate a new process of 'minoritization' within the old metropolitan societies whose cultural homogeneity has long been silently assumed" (Hall, 2016, pp. 56-57). Along with that, "[t]hese 'minorities' are not effectively ghettoized [... but] engage the dominant culture along a very broad front. They belong, in fact, to a transnational movement, and their connections are multiple and lateral" (Hall, 2016, pp. 56-57).

Furthermore, Hall touches on the ways in which racial positioning in Britain affects multigenerational migrants and the formation of multiple identities. Second- and third-generation migrants, faced with the difficulty of being accepted as British and "[b]locked out of any access to an English or British identity, people had to try to discover who they were, [... so] young black men and women know they come from the Caribbean, know they are black, know they are British [, t]hey want to speak from all three identities [, so t]hey are not prepared to give up any one of them" (Hall, 2018, pp. 74,80).

Also, Hall points to an interesting phenomenon as the emergence of "[...] black identity as a matter of cultural politics in Britain" which came about as a representation of all migrants "from the Caribbean, East Africa, and the Asian subcontinent" during waves of migration in 60s and 70s. (Hall, 2018, p. 76). This is when, according to Hall, the distinct political situation with migration influenced the emergence of Black identity. In doing so, the

definition of “black” entered the discourse not only as a narrative of anti-immigrant politics in Britain but also as a form of social cohesion among migrants. In discussing this, Hall tries to reconstruct the narrative of those who began to define themselves in racial terms after the 1960s and 70s in Britain. He says that all migrants adopted the representation of their identity as black as a kind of movement against xenophobia and racism and as a form of social solidarity. Their narrative may sound like this, he says “[...]we may be different actual color skins but vis-à-vis the social system, vis-à-vis the political system of racism, there is more that unites us than what divides us” (Hall, 2018, p. 76).

This is how Hall describes the practices of contemporary diasporas, which in essence claim that it is in differences that cultural identity is constituted, in that unique experience that can bridge the traditions, values and practices of different cultures by denying national boundaries.

Another important point concerning the definition of the mechanism of identity formation was raised by Hall in his work *Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation* (1989). There he says that “[d]iaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (Hall, 1994, p. 235). In other words, identities are constantly in the process of formation. Thus, “[...]identity [is] constituted, not outside but within representation” (Hall, 1989, p. 80). By representing identity we thereby construct and reconstruct it. This constant process of identity reframing and representation does not occur on its own but is linked to the various social discourses in which identity is involved. Hall, understood discourse as “[...]a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic”, that is a “[...] discursive practice – the practice of producing meaning” (Hall, 2018, p. 201). In colonial discourse, which is based on the ideology of authority of homogeneity, a certain system of representation of meanings about the other is created. Through such discourse, power can be established. Dominant discourses can be created around race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, etc. As Källstig and Death (2021, p. 339) point out “[t]he power of discourses” [... consequently …] have been highlighted by a rich tradition of critical scholarship”. Hall puts it in this way, “[b]y discourse, we mean a particular way of representing ‘the West’, ‘the Rest’, and the relations between them” (Hall, 2018, p. 155).

Subsequently, another proponent of poststructuralism, Butler (1993) also pointed out that identity is not some set of fixed social identifications, but a kind of performance, where there

is a representation of the self and the intersections of one's identities through discursive practices. On the one hand, as a subject, I play my identity, but at the same time, my identity is also a subject, where I "[...] am performatively produced by the discourse in which I participate" (Ruitenberg, 2007, p. 263). It is also important to note that identity is not only constructed within pre-existing discourses in social contexts but can also itself create new meanings and hence new discourses through which it is positioned in society.

In this sense, referring to the phenomenon of Caribbean cinema, which emerged as a response to redefining the identity of the Caribbean diaspora who live in Britain and elsewhere in the Western world, Hall (1989) emphasizes how important self-representation is for identity. Especially when it comes to decolonized ethnic minorities. Moreover, through the representation of cultural identity, in this case expressed through the art of cinema, there is a discourse for discussion and therefore room for dialogue. A dialogue between the past and future identity status of those who belong to this diaspora, as well as between "us" and "others" (the new culture in which migrants dwell). It is also, as Hall notes, a dialogue between two vectors: the "similarity" - "difference" and the "continuity"- "rupture" (Hall, 1989, p. 72). Clifford also identified the importance of diaspora discourse, he stated that "[d]iaspora discourse articulates, or bends together, both roots and routes to construct [...] alternate public spheres, forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference" (Clifford 1997, p. 251).

Thus, cultural identity as represented through discursive practices is able to rally groups of people who share the same meaning, knowledge or experience. It is important to understand that the representation and then construction of identity does not occur autonomously but is also a communicative process where the presence of the "other" is necessary. It is always in interaction with other social groups, their identities and discourses. Also different groups and their discourses in representing their identities, can compete with other discourses and groups for the affirmation of power and social positioning.

Obviously, cinema is far from being the only tool in the representation of meanings, but it is one of the most powerful means of artistic expression. As Hall says, "[c]ommunities, Benedict Anderson argues in the Imagined Communities, are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/ genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (Hall, 1989, p. 80). Cinema, like many other forms of art, has its own set of stylistic means capable of creating a representation of identity that will resonate with those people who have similar experiences

and who share a common meaning and thereby create those imaginary communities around them. In this sense, we can say that "[...] identity is a semiotically-mediated act and is, therefore, a narrative product which is ordered, thus giving unity and purpose to the experience" (Esteban-Guitart & Vila, 2015, p. 19).

By using cinema as an art of the "West", those of the Caribbean diaspora use the discursive tools and practices of the hegemonic groups. That is the comprehensible artistic language of cinema helps to reconstruct the diaspora identity and represent their cultural experiences in a new social context.

To summarize, although it has become increasingly difficult to delineate an understanding of identity in the contemporary climate of globalization and transculturalism as it is not a fixed concept, but something that is constantly in process of redefining the past, it is in the second model of identity that Hall sees an opportunity for dialogue between the marginalized minorities and the dominant majorities. Thus, one of Hall's (2018, p. 58) important ideas is that we need to "[...] move away from any absolutist vision of identity that is ultimately fixed and to prioritize the necessarily contradictory (and always incomplete) cultures of hybridity". Therefore, identity does not exist without its positioning, that is its representation.

2.1.2 Homi K. Bhabha's Theory on Hybrid Identity

For another postcolonial scholar, Homi Bhabha, questions of cultural identity also feature prominently. The landmark book of postcolonial studies, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1996), was written under the editorship of Hall and Gilroy, which brought together many brilliant scholars in addressing the question of redefining the concept of identity in the era of multiculturalism. One of the most striking articles, *Culture's In-Between* (1996), was written by Homi Bhabha, in which he points out that any culture cannot be seen as a closed and immobile system. Quite the opposite, it must be understood as a space "in-between", in which various existing aspects can interweave with new elements and thereby produce new meanings about the past and future. In other words, cultures become a kind of laboratories dominated by processes of transformation, or "hybridization", which "do not maintain a single position but form identities in an ongoing process" (Ellis, 1995, p. 196).

Bhabha suggests that hybridization is closely linked to the history of colonization. Having originated in the time of colonization, today, in the context with the prefix "post-", in postcolonialism and postmodernity, the hybridization of cultures has become a key process rather than disappearing.

Although hybridization is inseparably linked to colonization, and hence this implies that the main actors here are the colonizer and the colonized, he still rejects and criticizes the explanation of hybridity through any binary categories because it is "[...a] false ontology in that it masks the reality that things, like social groups, are not discrete but rather a continuum of subtle differences that are always in process and always shifting" (Shumar, 2010, p. 498).

What Bhabha and postcolonial studies in general are saying is that "the notion that any culture or identity is pure or essential is disputable" (Meredith, 1998, p. 8). Similar to Hall, Bhabha suggests that cultures and identities are not essentialist static constructs that are tied to one characteristic of time or territory but are fluid, transformable and hybrid. That said, "[i]n-between spaces like borders are liminal zones between nation states" (Müller, 2019, p. 7).

Bhabha's ideas synthesize several important theoretical directions such as poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, literary theory, postcolonial studies, and many others. The dominance of French poststructuralist concepts of scholars like Derrida, Lacan, Foucault, Barthes and others is most evident in Bhabha's work.

Hybridization can be interpreted in two ways. Broadly speaking, it is precisely a direct follow-up to the poststructuralist tradition, which directly saw social reality as a field of discourses that establish power with a certain hierarchy. Hybrid cultures in this sense produce hybrid identities that attempt to blur the boundaries of established hierarchies and discourses and thus "[...] dismantle the possibility of an homogeneous locus of enunciation" (Costa, 2007, p. 8). On a narrow scale, "the hybridism defines a cosmopolitan global condition, [...which brings…] multiplication of possibilities of perception of the world from a locus outside the spatial and symbolic context of the imagined communities, which comes along with globalization" (Costa, 2007, p. 8).

The processes of globalization thus create a new hybrid identity that, "[...] emerges from the interweaving of elements of the coloniser and colonised challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity" (Meredith, 1998, p. 8).

In his book, *The location of culture*, Bhabha (1994), similarly to Hall's ideas, suggests that the symbolic power of nation-states, and consequently national collective identities, is in decline because they are unable to withstand the increasing processes of globalization that have triggered the mechanism of hybridization. "Homogeneity" is a logic produced by nation-states imposing national identities that try to cling to it as the binding force of collectivities, thereby establishing their hegemony (Bhabha, 1994, p. 142).

At the same time, Bhabha emphasizes that people who possess hybrid identities, especially migrants, diasporas or ethnic minorities within postcolonial discourse, are not direct social agents who can immediately and instantaneously remake the entire power hierarchy and revolutionize the homogeneous order. What is possible for them is to create some "third spaces" in which other meanings are demonstrated between the loci of the colonizer and the colonized (Bhabha, 1994, p. 36). Immigrants and ethnic minorities whose identities are rooted in several cultural differences between home and host countries, and as those who can relate to several cultures at once, have only the possibility of accelerating transformations. In other words, they have "[t]he hybrid's potential [which] is with their innate knowledge of 'transculturation' (Taylor, 1991), their ability to transverse both cultures and to translate, negotiate and mediate affinity and difference within a dynamic of exchange and inclusion. They have encoded within them a counterhegemonic agency. At the point at which the colonizer presents a normalizing, hegemonic practice, the hybrid strategy opens up a third space of/for rearticulation of negotiation and meaning" (Bhabha 1996 in Meredith, 1998, p. 9).

So the "third space" is the result of hybridization, this is where the colonizer and the colonized meet, where the Western and the Oriental interact, and where the most important process is not an abrupt change of order, but the designation to others that there are other cultural identities, other cultural experiences, heritage, religious rituals, other individual and collective expressions of identity, that this minority can manifest. That is, the display and recognition that the homogeneity of national identities can no longer dominate, as more and more we see examples of hybrid identities that illustrate that difference cannot and should not marginalize them. Moreover, they have their own voice and possess the necessary knowledge to be involved in the discourse, that is, to be not the subject of the discourse, but its active agents; they can tell their own experiences without mediators and take care of the representation of their identities. Thus, "[...t]he third space is a mode of articulation, a way of describing a productive, and not merely reflective, space that engenders new possibility" (Meredith, 1998, p. 9).

Nonetheless, nation-states attempting to assert their power resort to different forms of an ideology of homogenization and representation of the identity of "self" and "other". National identity is represented as something fixed. This fixed set of ethnic, gender, racial, historical identities has the most important function of multiplication and replication. Bhabha states that "[f]ixity [...] is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging

order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition." (Bhabha, 1994, p. 66 quoted in Newton, 1997, p. 293).

- **Colonial Discourse and Representation: Stereotype and Mimics**

Bhabha says that the main tools in the representation of fixity are the "stereotype" and the resulting "stereotypical discourse" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 67). That said, "[t]he stereotype [...] is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated [...]" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 66). Stereotypes are certainly important to the colonizer because they help to create a representation of a true Western, civilized national identity and to emphasize the other's differences, and thus to establish symbolic boundaries of belonging and power.

This is why racist, xenophobic, stereotypical discourse emerges in homogeneous societies. However, it is important to understand that, like all colonial discourse, the stereotype form of discourse cannot be interpreted unequivocally as something good or bad, "the stereotype [is] an ambivalent mode of knowledge and power" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 66). Its ambivalence lies in the logic that Bhabha reveals through the concepts of psychoanalysis. Essentially, along with the establishment of symbolic dominance over the colonized through stereotypes, the reverse process also occurs, the colonizers inevitably show that they first recognize the presence of the "other" and second, they are concerned about it (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 66-67). That is, the group that associates itself with homogeneity and national identity and is the bearer of stereotypes about the other has "the anxiety that stereotypical representations betray in the colonizer's sense of self-identity" (Huddart (2005, p. 39). Speaking in Freudian terms, the stereotype is akin to fetishism, where there is a fixation on universal similarity, reaching the point of absurdity and at the same time the anxiety that there is someone else who has a difference, something that "all of us" do not have (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 74). Applying this to the colonial context, classic colonizer stereotypes can combine the two statements, "all men have the same skin/race/culture" but at the same time, "some do not have the same skin/race/culture" (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 74).

The proponents of homogeneity obviously do not want to see the embodiment of otherness as something normal, so they create stereotypes about the "other". Also, they do not want to enter into a dialogue with the "other" or convive in the same territory, which is why they discriminate against minorities. As a response to this comes a new strategy of entering discourse for the colonized, namely mimicry, which is "[...] an exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas, [...] this exaggeration means that mimicry is repetition

with a difference, and so it is not evidence of the colonizer's servitude" (Huddart, 2005, p. 39).

Just like the stereotype, mimicry is ambivalent. From the position of the colonizer, who tries to maintain a homogenized order, mimicry is generally approved, since it does not contradict the principle of sameness and is a symbol of the establishment of power over the other. On the other hand, the colonizer, who has a constant anxiety and fear that his power may be overthrown by "the other", feels some kind of catch, seeing that he is being mimicked. Bhabha expresses this as being "almost the same, but not quite", or referring to the racist discourse, "almost the same, but not white" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 89). He thus emphasizes, "[t]he ambivalence of colonial authority [which] repeatedly turns from mimicry - a difference that is almost nothing but not quite - to menace - a difference that is almost total but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 91).

From the position of the colonized, mimicry can also reflect their anxiety that is transmitted to them from the colonizer. Thus, the colonized express that by imitating the dominant culture, probably have also aspirations to be at the top of the hierarchy that can be achieved through imitation and appropriation of that culture.

And at the same time, it is also a desire to resist submissiveness, to master the knowledge and tools of the dominant culture. The colonized are trying to speak in the colonizer's language, in order to negotiate the recognition of a hybrid identity and a new hybrid order.

Bhabha suggests that various artistic movements can become "third spaces" where speakers of hybrid cultures, such as migrants or ethnic minorities, represent their identities and create their discourses of resistance. The author points to several such examples. From the *Harlem Renaissance* movement in literature, music and theater to the *Third Cinema* in film, he displays that these movements emerged as a form of resistance to the collective national discourses and spoke with the voice of minorities (Bhabha, 1994, p. 144).

Bhabha's work, although largely questioned and criticized, is nevertheless important in understanding how cultural identity is constructed, negotiated, and manifested in the contemporary postcolonial context. His theory of hybridity echoes much of Hall's theory of diasporic identity but at the same time adds important conceptions of the third space, stereotype, and mimicry.

2.2 Theoretical line two: Shaping of Transnational identities. Transnationalism and Transmigrant Identity

Next, let us turn to theories of transnationalism, as a third paradigm for considering identity and immigration in the context of globalization. Below we describe key characteristics and aspects of transnational identity.

2.2.1 Transnational Turn

Speaking of the transnational approach as a research paradigm for understanding migration processes in a globalized context seems quite seminal and diverse. Around the beginning of the 1990s, more and more scholars began to address social phenomena through the prism of "trans-". Vertovec (1999), describing the state of modernity as superdiversity was one of the first to draw attention to this by analyzing several key theories related to transnationalism and migration studies. He summarized "some common themes including transnationalism as a social morphology, as a type of consciousness, as a mode of cultural reproduction, as an avenue of capital, as a site of political engagement and as a reconstruction of 'place'" (Vertovec, 1999, p. 447) The influence of transnationalism on migration has certainly been examined from various angles, but two of the most traditional approaches can be distinguished. The first type is "those writings that are situated within postmodern and post-colonial discourses and [the second type is] those writings that adhere to politicaleconomy approaches, [however the] issues pertaining to identity, often articulated in terms of hybridity, fragmentation or celebration of difference, are usually considered in the first category" (Al-Ali et al., 2001, p. 591). In fact, one of the most pioneering researchers in this field, Alejandro Portes (2001), distinguishes exactly three types of transnationalism according to the above-mentioned approaches, namely socio-cultural, political and economic types (Tedeschi et al., 2022, p. 606). Since our main research focus is related to the process of formation and representation of transnational identity, we are going to follow the first direction, examining the socio-cultural consequences of transnationalism in migration. This direction also allows us to continue and complement the previously described theories of postcolonial researchers Hall and Bhabha. Below we analyze these themes and describe some of the markers of transnational identity that can be found in the studies on transnationalism.

2.2.2 Transmigration and Transmigrants

In 1992, the social anthropologist Nina Glick Schiller introduced the term "transmigrant", pointing out that international migration as a conceptual framework has a number of shortcomings. The main problem is that it only reflects the geographical fact of migration

between different countries. Moreover, "'[i]nternational migration' paints a picture of relatively permanent moves from one fixed point to another but, for many migrants, international moves are only part of a biography of movement between places, with some moves being more permanent than others" (Schiller et al., 1995, p. 48). It is true that more and more people are moving from one country or region to another without seeing the new country as the final destination. Thus, the process of migration has changed somewhat in recent decades and has acquired many new characteristics. The term transmigration indicates that besides the very fact of a change of location, migration from one country to another establishes many new links and patterns between different societal spheres and institutions. That is, "[t]ransnational migration is the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Schiller et al., 1995, p. 48).

Certainly, migrants have always maintained ties with their "societies of origin" (Schiller et al., 1995, p. 48), nevertheless, in the situation with transmigrants the nature of these ties has changed dramatically. In the era of globalization and the development of ICT technologies, migrants have opportunities not only to maintain social and cultural contact with their country of origin, but in addition, they are becoming active social actors in both host countries and their countries of origin. Schiller says that transmigrants differ in that they tend to "[...] maintain connections, build institutions, conduct transactions, and influence local and national events in the countries from which they emigrated" (Schiller et al., 1995, p. 48). At the same time, transnationalism makes it possible to commodify and simplify the process of migrant integration by giving them the right to be included in the social life of the country to which they arrived. As Schiller et al., (1995, p. 48) note, "[Transmigrants] are not so-journers because they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities, and patterns of daily life of the country in which they reside".

This is mostly possible because of the various transnational practices that transmigrants adopt. These transnational practices or activities, as Portes (2001) pointed out, help to draw the line between migrants and transmigrants. However, the researcher speaks specifically of practices "from below", i.e. those that "concern civil society, as well as individuals and their formal/informal activities" (Tedeschi et al., 2022, p. 606). In contrast to transnational practices "from above" that occur "in the corporate and inter-governmental sectors", transnational practices "from below" are initiated by migrants themselves and are "cross-border (sociocultural, political, and/or economic) activities, practices, and behaviours

that are meaningful, affect the identity and sense of belonging of people, and are carried out on a regular (not exceptional) basis in the everyday lives of individuals [...]" (Tedeschi et al., 2022, p. 606, 615). These practices can be expressed in a number of different areas, whether these are economic, political or socio-cultural. For example, they can take the form of entrepreneurship, diaspora civic associations, cultural and social activism. The main difference between transnational activities and regular activities is that they bridge the cultures, economies and societies of migrants across their host society and their country of origin in some way.

Such activities "from below" not only activate the establishment of social networks and transnational communities but also "[...] affect people's sense of belonging, loyalty, and sense of attachment" (Tedeschi et al., 2022, p. 606). Wolfgang Welsch (1999), in turn, argued that both transnational practices and the sense of belonging characterize transcultural identity. In other words, "[...] not only transnational 'ways of being' (activities, practices, networks, etc.) but also 'ways of belonging' (solidarity, reciprocity, etc.) acted as crucial parameters for the establishment and maintenance of the transnational lifeworld" (Kanungo, 2019, p. 31).

Further, speaking of transmigrants and transnational identity we should distinguish contemporary transmigrants from classical migrants, implying that contemporary migrants are not only actively involved in transnational practices but, more importantly, have "unique sense of belonging that can be individually contextualized and diversified beyond the nation-state borders" and they "may simultaneously experience a strong sense of belonging to the home society, a sense of assimilation in the host society, and the transnationalism 'across the borders'" (Park and Gerrits, 2021, pp. 7-8; Sheringham 2010; Tamaki 2011). In many ways, transmigrants' sense of belonging becomes somewhat of a challenge for them, as they find themselves in a state of being "in-between" two or more societies and cultures. This combination can result in "[the] confrontation between the norms and values that shape the identity in the home society and those prevalent in the host society, which nudges migrants to be constantly aware of who they are and how they (are) present themselves in various situations" (Park and Gerrits, 2021, p. 7).

At the same time, talking about socio-cultural aspects, we can say that transmigrants combine both the global and the local. Although contradictory, it is not uncommon for transmigrants to lead a cosmopolitan lifestyle, but to remain committed to traditional confession, and family values, which have been gained through intergenerational transmigration. Welsch (1999, p. 204), agreeing with Hannerz (1990) states that "[t]ranscultural identities comprehend a

cosmopolitan side, but also a side of local affiliation, [so t]ranscultural people combine both. Welsch (1999, p. 204) elaborates, "[o]f course, the local side can today still be determined by ethnic belonging or the community in which one grew up [b]ut it doesn't have to be [...]". Thus, transmigrants' sense of belonging can be articulated in three dimensions, an affinity with the host society, at the same time with homelands, and in addition, with global, (e.g., cosmopolitan) values. They are often in a state where they do not feel a full belonging to any culture, but rather their belonging becomes hybrid. This is manifested in migrants' identities and hence in their strategies for living in the host society. Identities and strategies become hybrid and shiftable. Moreover, transmigrants "[...] can make their own choice with respect to their affiliations, [so] their actual homeland can be far away from their original homeland" Welsch (1999, p. 204).

Therefore, some scholars tend to "[r]ather than thinking of immigrants as moving in a linear trajectory from culture A to culture B, [...] we should think of acculturation and identity issues as contested and mixing and moving" (Bhatia and Ram, 2001, p. 2).

2.2.3 Acculturation/Transculturation

Unfortunately, transnational identities are often associated with problems of belonging and inclusion. Vertovec (2001, p. 578) says that "[t]he transnational identities are the result of histories and stereotypes of local belonging and exclusion, geographies of cultural difference and class/ethnic segregation, racialized socio-economic hierarchies, degree and type of collective mobilization, access to and nature of resources, and perceptions and regulations surrounding rights and duties" (Vertovec, 2001 quoted in Esteban-Guitart and Vila, 2015, p. 23). In other words, "[t]his process can be problematic because, quite often, both the society of origin and the host society may not recognize the dual character of the people living between two cultures" (Esteban-Guitart and Vila, 2015, p. 23). Furthemore, "[t]hey will also become more acutely aware of how others (mainly in the destination society) perceive them and which societal position they are believed to belong" (Waldinger, 2015 in Park and Gerrits, 2021, p. 7).

Originally, when talking about how migrants can co-exist in two or more cultures and how this affects their identity, social psychologists and sociologists have employed the classical model of migrants' acculturation in the host society, comprising the well-known four main strategies of migrants, "assimilation," "integration," "separation," and "marginalization" (Berry, 1980 in Bhatia and Ram, 2001, pp. 3-4). The latter strategy, i.e. the total rejection of the culture of origin and at the same time the full acceptance of the culture, norms and

traditions of the host society, is more likely to be supported by a typical nation state, where the principle of homogeneity prevails. Whereas transnationalism rather postulates the principle of integration. This strategy, "[...] implies both the preservation of home culture and an active involvement with the host culture", where the basic principle "[...] is the assumption of universality" (Berry, 1980 in Bhatia and Ram, 2001, p. 4). In general, the strategy of migrant integration is something that can be found in many doctrines of international organizations, open multicultural countries, and that is a kind of transnationalism taking place "from above". However, given the new global order, the process of acculturation becomes rather more complex and multifactorial. It is notable that "[t]ransnationalism is differentiated from immigration, in that the latter involves a more permanent affiliation with the host country and separation from the home country while the former may imply no long-term intention to stay beyond what is economically necessary" (Hornberger, 2007, p. 2 citing Trueba 2004). To sum up, the main difference between transmigrant and ordinary migrant and migration is that "[t]ransnationalism thus lends itself to a dually-linked process of 'becoming other' to both home and host national-cultural contexts" (Hornberger, 2007, p. 2 citing Trueba 2004).

In fact, the transnationalism that comes "from below", i.e. from transmigrants themselves, diaspora communities, often applies a complex, hybrid repertoire of strategies and resorts to transculturation instead of acculturation. *Transculturation*, a term coined in 1940 by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, described it as "[t]he mutual and reciprocal influence of groups that come into contact, a process that irrevocably transforms their identities" (Michaud, 2011, p. 46; Rojas, 2008).

Whereas classical acculturation is a one-way process, where a migrant tries to assimilate in the host country, i.e. learns and absorbs language, values, and attitudes of the dominant culture, "[t]ransculturation addressed the complex processes of exchange - linguistic, economic, racial, gendered, and cultural [...]" (Arroyo, 2016, p. 133). This is the essence of the difference between the classical immigrant and the transmigrant. Immigrant experience often carries negative connotations. While transnational experiences can be seen as an asset, "[...f]rom this transcultural perspective, the very notion of being a 'migrant' has the potential to be transformed from a disadvantage to an asset as 'one of the most important practices is to be able to cross differences and identities, to be able to sail round the multifaceted and interconnected world without being shipwrecked" (Guerra, 2008; Triandafyllidou, 2009 in Arias Cubas et al., 2022, p. 2). Transnational experience can be seen as transcultural capital,

giving the transmigrant the advantage of using a broader cultural repertoire for acculturation processes. As some scholars point out, "[t]ranscultural capital is conceptualised and operationalised as 'the strategic use of knowledge, skills and networks acquired by migrants through connections with their country and cultures of origin that are made active at their new places of residence'" (Triandafyllidou, 2009, p. 102 quoted in Arias Cubas et al., 2022, p. 2). That is, transcultural strategy implies a dialogue of cultures and can also change the status of the migrant as marginalized, inferior, stigmatized. Transmigrants not only assimilate the cultural repertoire of the host country, but also bring their cultural background, heritage, history, values, etc., thereby manifesting the hybridity of their identity. The same applies to the establishment of social ties, the transmigrant has them both in the host country and in his/her country of origin. It can be argued that transmigrants are simultaneously located in several *habitats of meaning* (Hannerz, 1996). These habitats are not necessarily attached to specific territorial boundaries, but rather reflect the fact of establishing a connection to several cultures at once. This new transcultural experience of being in several or "[...] multiple habitats accumulate to comprise people's cultural repertoires [...]" (Vertovec, 2001, p. 578), which directly prompts the formation of a hybrid transnational identity that is usually not fixed but can be transformed depending on how migrants "[...] negotiate their two [or even more] forms of cultural socialization [...]" (Esteban-Guitart and Vila, 2015, p. 18).

At the same time, "[p]rocesses of transculturation occur in different settings, which determine the symmetry and success of a cultural exchange" (Krause, 2016, p. 1). Given Hall and Bhabha's postcolonial perspectives, indeed, we see that many nation-states often make this exchange asymmetrical. Seen as a threat to their homogeneous fixed national identity, the cultural differences and hybridity that transmigrants bring are often met with anti-immigrant politics, nationalism, xenophobia, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against ethnic minorities.

Nevertheless, as mentioned above, transmigrants often find themselves in a situation where they cannot be fully accepted either in their country of origin or in their family's country of origin. Transculturation is "[...]the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, [...] but the process also necessarily involves the loss of uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a deculturation" (Ortiz 1995, pp. 102–103 quoted in Arroyo, 2016, pp. 133-134). *Deculturation*, is the other side of transculturation and at the same time a part of its process. Deculturation largely concerns second-generation migrants who were either born and raised

in another country and, for example, do not fully master the cultural repertoire of their country of origin.

In this paper, we will refer to both first- and second-generation migrants as transmigrants. In defining second-generation migrants, we will use the definition of Crawley (2010), who in his research looked at migrants in the United Kingdom. He defines a second-generation migrant as "[...] who was born in the United Kingdom and has at least one parent who is foreign-born" (Crawley 2010, p. 553).

Thus, many of them do not associate themselves with religion, or cultural norms and do not speak the language of their country of origin. The process of deculturation of the second-generation of migrants may create a conflict "[...] with the earlier generation of migrants who already have formed own way of assimilated identity [...]" (Park and Gerrits, 2021, p. 8). It is not uncommon for such conflict to arise within the same family where there are parents, first-generation migrants and their children, second generation migrants. The two generations may have a different sense of belonging and assimilation strategies that create misunderstandings about each other.

Nevertheless, for first-generation migrants, deculturation can also be an issue. It can be said that "[t]heir new experiences have changed the filters through which they see the world and this can lead to discontinuities with their cultural group of origin [...and…] they can be transformed into [...] 'marginal man' in terms of identity, politics, and culture" (Esteban-Guitart and Vila 2015, p. 18).

Thus, given that the host society often tends to exclude migrants due to some cultural, ethnic or racial differences, transmigrants try to seek more hybrid ways of interaction using several cultural repertoires at once. Transcultural strategies mainly aim to show that cultural, and ethnic differences in society are a positive phenomenon and should not be seen as a threat. This is often not an easy task, given the resistance from the dominant society and the representation of migration through various discourses as a threat to national identity.

For example, Van Dijk (2018, quoted in Khan et al., 2021, p. 490) said that:

> "[...] there are two kinds of discourses that show immigrants as the threatening other. One is the racist discourse through the use of racist language, which excludes the immigrant communities. The other kind of exclusionary discourses are the discriminatory discourses based on differentials practices, which magnify the differences between the host community and the immigrant community making them irreducible and integration impossible, therefore".

In addition, given that often transmigrants do not fully associate themselves with either the home or the host culture, and sometimes come into conflict with the holders of homeland identity, they try to "[...] find the like-minded people who may feel the same agony, share every days' thoughts and feelings, and re-establish their own social ties [...]" (Park and Gerrits, 2021, p. 8). The earlier mentioned aspect of identity representation in this sense can also be likened to the definition of cultural voices which are "[...] technologies of social origin which in the form of ethnic, national, and religious discourse and narratives are turned into the material and content through which people who live between two cultures or different frames of reference – the society of origin and the host society – experience the world and build their sense of self" (Esteban-Guitart and Vila, 2015, p. 19). By manifesting such cultural voices of their hybrid identity, migrants not only have a chance to better understand their experiences and find meaning in them but also come together in certain social communities based on the similarity of their cultural identity.

Therefore in transculturation transmigrants surprisingly often turn to creative practices or they are "[...] developing new communities that center on shared identities [...]" (Park and Gerrits, 2021, p. 8). This allows them not only to "[...] speak up for empowering themselves against certain discriminatory events that counteract their desires of belonging" (Park and Gerrits, 2021, p. 8) but also to transform their hybrid experiences into "[...] the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena [...]", that Ortiz (1995, pp. 102-103) described as a process of *neoculturation* (quoted in Arroyo, 2016, pp. 133-134). As a result of neoculturation, so-called transcultural spaces or third spaces can emerge of which Bhabha spoke. They are created in part by transmigrants, where those can invoke new strategies for their acceptance and inclusion, as well as give new meaning to their hybrid status (Portes, 2003; Tedeschi et al., 2022). In Bhabha's theory, we can find descriptions of neo-cultural phenomena such as the third space or space in-between, where the negotiation of identities takes place.

2.3 Theoretical line three: Humor and Transmigrant Identity Representation

Neoculturation can find its manifestation in various forms of art, where transmigrants by employing creative practices can also transform them into discursive practices, discussing their transcultural experience and creating a third space where cultures of origin and host cultures meet. One such interesting neocultural phenomenon that we will examine next is the phenomenon of comic performance as a mean of representing identity. Specifically, our focus

will be on the genre of stand-up comedy in which many migrants have actually made their presence heard.

As Schouse (2007, p. 34) notes, "[...] humor research has traditionally focused almost exclusively on the individual level", where three classical theories of humor dominate, namely "Incongruity", "Superiority" and "Relief" theories.

These theories undoubtedly reveal many aspects of humor, but they cannot fully explain its functions at the social level. For comedy and especially live performance genres such as stand-up comedy, these philosophical concepts are rather limited. That is why we turn to understandings of humor from postcolonial theory and anthropological framework.

2.3.1 Humour in Postcolonial Perspective

In the postcolonial framework, we can find several works that have drawn attention to the social role of humor. Often, they consider humor through the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin (1984), and his metaphor of carnival, *Carnivalesque*. Carnival is a special ritual and entertainment form of the Middle Ages, the elements of which can be observed in modern social order and social behavior.

Carnival is a theatrical tradition in which humor plays an important role. The main conflict in the carnival action is the "[...] crowning ritual and the following de-crowning of the dominant ruler" (Bakhtin, 1979, p. 72). According to Bakhtin, this ritual carries the meaning of global change, transformation and renewal. The carnival is a certain model of social space, but turned 'upside down' or 'inside out', where life becomes unpredictable. On the one hand, it is a complex form of culture with its own rules and social roles, on the other hand, it is a theatrical act, a performance that blurs distances between people and diminishes all kinds of official conventions and boundaries of being. He said, "[...] people divided in life by impenetrable hierarchical barriers, come into free familial communication on carnival square" (Bakhtin, 1979, p. 72).

The metaphor of carnival can also be transferred to the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. In doing so, carnival culture shows that humor is capable of being a transformative force, having a whole language of different symbols and meanings, and it is apt to challenge representations of dominant discourses. The element of performativity is also very important, the symbolic power is vested in the speaker, the one who makes us laugh. That is, the role of the jester, as the main actor, is central. Through elements of the grotesque, he mocks power hierarchies and reinforces his power. Hoy (1992), argues that the carnival jester, with his ability to parody and mimic various social roles, can be compared to

contemporary stand-up comedians who tend to comment on and ironically portray current political discourses.

Humor in carnival tradition plays an important role in resistance. Resistance, in general, can be described as a central function of humor in Bakhtin's theory, which has been widely applied in postcolonial studies.

Speaking of stand-up comedy, this genre can be "[...] is not just taken as an insightful representation of the world, but as a potential manifestation of power, agency, and resistance" (Källstig and Death, 2021, p. 340).

Also, humor as "[...] resistance focuses on the power of language, discourses, and representations, positing that what satirists and jesters say about society can have important cultural and discursive impact" (Källstig and Death, 2021, p. 341).

Surprisingly, comedy performances and migrants have a long-standing relationship. In fact, historically, a comedy performance has always been about migrants. Firstly, migrants have often been the target of jokes. Secondly, the representation of the classic 'immigrant' is definitely combined with the role of the comic, which has traditionally been associated with a marginalized persona with a number of defects or weaknesses. In the previous chapter, we came to the conclusion that transmigrants often face numerous problems when integrating into the host society. This is because "[...] their identity still tends to be seen through the classical border-based frames given by the country of origin, host country, or quite often, by ethnicity" (Park and Gerrits, 2021, p. 2). In other words, in addition to how transmigrants perceive themselves, there is also the perception of them by 'others'. As such, the transmigrant has to resort to new strategies of engagement and inclusion in society and the dominant culture. As stated earlier, Hall (1989, p. 72) saw cultural identity as "[...] not an essence but a positioning". In the postcolonial discourse, we can find an important aspect of representation, giving the notion that identity, rather than being fixed, would transform depending on the social context. In other words, "[...] how one represents others encountered during intercultural experiences may then be seen as representations that are bounded by the geographical, historical and cultural contexts acting at the moment of encounter" (Martin and Griffiths, 2012, p. 920). This positioning is directly linked to the social context and the discourses that exist within it around the characteristics of identities that are accepted and not accepted.

Humor and often comic performance can be seen as "[...] as a counter-cultural means of subverting, satirizing or ridiculing dominant norms and discourses" (Källstig and Death, 2021, p. 341).

Stand-up comedy in this sense can be understood as the discursive practice that Hall (1994) referred to. As Greenbaum (1999, p. 33) points out, "[s]tand-up comedy is an inherently rhetorical discourse; it strives not only to entertain, but to persuade, and stand-up comics can only be successful in their craft when they can convince an audience to look at the world through their comic vision". By creating a representation of their transnational identity through the medium of humor, as well as by ridiculing the hegemony of discriminatory discourses, transmigrants can establish their meaning, and resist the hegemony of colonial discourses.

After all, the comedy act, and stand-up comedy in particular, as one of the most popular comedy genres based on live performance, is one of the most interesting means of artistic expression. Stand-up comedy can be understood as a kind of third space where hybrid identities are given symbolic comedic authority that allows them to reflect inadequate representations of their identity from the colonizer or host nation.

2.3.2. Comic Performance and the Stand-up Comedy Genre

The first mention of stand-up comedy is known from at least the mid-20th century. However, as a distinct genre as it is known, it emerged around the 1960s. (Double, 2018). From about this time onwards, stand-up gained an important place as popular entertainment in English-speaking countries. As such, stand-up comedy is generally defined as "[...]an encounter between a single, standing performer behaving comically and or saying funny things directly to an audience, unsupported by very much in the way of costume, prop, setting, or dramatic vehicle" (Mintz, 1985, p. 71).

In many ways, stand-up comedy can be called "[...]the backbone of vaudeville and burlesque and the variety theater" (Mintz, 1985, p. 72). And also "[...] stand-up comedy is a descendant of the dramatic comedy genre in both artistic and social dimensions" (Kawalec, 2020, p.4). Nevertheless, some elements of stand-up comedy performance are distinctive when it comes to describing the jokes and the figure of the performing comedian. Indeed, the genre has several typical characteristics, which we discuss below.

- **Venue and setting**

In general, "[...]the comedy venue can be differentiated from other sites of performance" (Rutter, 1997, p.73), as it is usually not special premises with a professional stage but rather nightclubs, pubs, bars. Designated stand-up comedy clubs are a fairly new phenomenon, nevertheless, they can often be hosted in some bars and are not equipped and staged in any special way. Rutter (1997, p.73) characterizes it like this, "[...] in most venues where there is a physical stage it always less than a two feet high and usually only raised by a few inches" .

The stage with the comedian does not have any decorations, costumes or props. The stage itself is usually small and the distance between the performer and the audience is minimal. Also, "[...]seating at stand-up comedy is not sectioned according to economics" (Rutter, 1997, p.74). Similarly, the audience is often seated like in a regular bar with tables. Pubs are by and large the most common venue for stand-up comedy in the UK. As Rutter (1997, p.76) points out "[...]the linking of pub culture and stand-up comedy" is one of the distinguishing features of the genre in Britain. Generally speaking, the venue for stand-up comedy usually involves the creation of an informal atmosphere and the possibility of free interaction between the audience and the performers.

- **Audience**

An important aspect of stand-up comedy is the reduction of the conditional distance between the performer and the audience. The audience often interacts with the comedian and can comment and express their reactions as the performance is taking place.

Although the audience "[...]they can choose to attend gigs by their favourite comedians", there is still an unpredictability effect in stand-up comedy as the audience, even when coming to a familiar club, "[...]they cannot influence who else will perform on any particular night or choose the running order for the night's performers" (Rutter, 1997, p.71). Furthermore, as Rutter, (1997, p.78) says, it is not surprising that there is, "[...] recurrent problem of inappropriate behaviour in stand-up venues [... given] the nature of pub culture in Britain and the duality of comedy venues".

- **Stand-up comedian**

A stand-up comedian usually performs alone. His performance is a comic monologue in which he often shares his personal experiences, observations from everyday life and current social discourses.

Comedians in stand-up comedy are usually amateurs and not professional artists. It is not uncommon for stand-up clubs to have an Open Mic routine, where anyone from the audience can take the stage with their own performance, prepared jokes or improvisation.

However, many stand-up clubs create their own stand-up comedy chains and circuits, where they invite either professional comedians, or former amateurs who became professional artists, or comedians who gained some success and popularity among the audience. There, they may become permanent residents or touring performers.

However, for the most part, stand-up comedians have no special training and, moreover, stand-up comedy is not their main livelihood.

The role of the comedian in stand-up comedy performance is central. Interestingly, as Mintz (1985) says, the comedian is usually presented as a marginal person with some kind of disadvantage (mental, physical and otherwise). This in turn gives him some right or as Douglas (1968, p. 372) said 'immunity' to overstep the bounds of what is permissible in jokes. It is not only, however, an effect of pity and condescension towards his weaknesses and defects, the comedian often articulates in his jokes and monologues those thoughts which are socially available but which cannot be uttered according to some social norms.

Speaking of stand-up comedy, "[...]the stand-up comedian [is a] public joker who affirms or subverts culture" (Ekou, 2018, p. 520). Mintz (1985) speaks of one as a "comic spokesperson," "social commentator" or "a mediator, an articulator of culture and contemporary anthropologist" or even as a "shaman [...which is] leading us in a celebration of a community of shared culture [...]" (Mintz, 1985, pp.74-75 quoted in Ekou, 2018, p. 520).

- **Jokes**

As a rule, the stand-up comedy genre is considered to be a rather reduced comedic performance art, and "[...]does not require plot, closure, or point [... so]jokes may be as short as ingenuity allows, and there need not be anything but jokes" (Limon, 2000, p.13). Comedians usually tell their jokes in a "spontaneous conversational manner, as if they were speaking to friends" and as Stebbins, (1990, p. 3) adds, many comedians "write some or all of their material, fitting it to their personalities [...]".

In fact, usually, in order to gain the audience's trust, comedians' jokes are based on their personal experiences, personal traits and generally focus heavily on their own person, their concerns and their problems. A kind of openness is important in stand-up comedy. Therefore, usually at the beginning of the performance the comic introduces himself and "[...]establishes his or her comic persona, discussing personal background, life-style, and some attitudes and beliefs" (Mintz, 1985, pp.79).

Stand-up comedy jokes are usually presented in a form of "[...]anecdotes, narrative jokes, one-liners and short descriptive monologues" (Stebbins, 1990, p. 3). Typically, jokes involve a verbal narrative of the speaker, however, sometimes comedians resort to other stage effects such as parody, mimicry (e.g. imitation of accent, manner of speech), pantomime, special dressing, etc.

Often comedians in their performances deliberately violate social norms in their jokes. They may use inappropriate language and touch on very sensitive topics. In general, it is important to understand that "[s]tand-up comedy functions not only to entertain people but also to

present various current issues and topics ranging from ethnicity, gender, politics, to those considered taboo" (Setyaningsih, 2013, p.145).

Sometimes comedians use a technique where they comment on the audience members without limits or even insult them. Mintz (1985, pp.78-79) refers to it as the "[...]ritual insults directed at audience members, and sometimes heckling and the putting down of the heckler (also relaxing the audience, making them feel less vulnerable". This way of speaking, when the comedian deliberately transgresses the norms of communication, is reminiscent of the carnival tradition that Bakhtin describes. The comic is a jester who levels the audience with his harsh jokes, his insults, and makes it clear that everyone can be the target of a joke in stand-up comedy performance. This is essentially a ritual where everyone is involved in the performance and the comic act. The transgression of social norms in general carries risks, but the comedian intentionally takes these risks. This is an important aspect of stand-up comedy performance.

In his work, Mintz (1985 p.73), drawing on the work of Mary Douglas (1968) and Victor Turner (1979), concludes that stand-up comedy, as a comedic performance, can be understood as the "[...]rite and anti-rite, or as public affirmation of shared cultural beliefs and as a reexamination of these beliefs." On the one hand, humour, comedy, the very substance of the joke "[...]tends to be subversive [...and can] tear down, distort, misrepresent, and reorder usual patterns of expression and perception" (Mintz, 1985 p.73). On the other hand, the performative aspect directly adds a ritual aspect and thus "[...]the experience of public joking [together with the] shared laughter, and celebration of agreement on what deserves ridicule and affirmation fosters community and furthers a sense of mutual support for common belief and behavior (hence rite)" (Mintz, 1985 p.73). Mintz, (1985) speaking of performance as ritual, says that Turner (1979) "[...]sees rituals as an opportunity for society to explore, affirm, deny, and ultimately to change its structure and its values" (1985 p.73). Performance is a form of "[...]of plural reflexivity", or "[...] the ways in which a group or community seeks to portray, understand, and then act on itself" (Turner,1979 quoted in Mintz,1985, p.73).

Knowing that identities essentially exist in their representations, the main question is how and by whom they are represented and therefore what discourses are created around them. That is, we would like to understand how comedians represent and negotiate their identities through the stand-up comedy genre. Our research will involve conducting a discourse analysis for one case study, specifically stand-up comedy in the UK. We will discuss in more detail why we chose this method and the case of Britain in the next section. Our research questions are:

RQ 1: What transcultural experiences and transcultural identifications do migrant stand-up comedians from the UK discuss in their stand-up performances?

RQ 2: How do stand-up comedians who are migrants in the UK discuss and represent their transnational identities in their performances?

RQ 3: What are the similarities and differences in the representation and discussion of their transnational identities between first- and second-generation migrant stand-up comedians from the UK?

3. Methods

3.1. Discourse Analysis Method

After formulating the theoretical framework and research questions, the choice of the methodological approach was defined as qualitative research and the research method as discourse analysis.

Two reasons indicated that a discourse analysis method would be the most appropriate for this research.

Firstly, since the question of identity is at the center of our research. In general, discourse analysis is indicated among others as the most effective method in the study of identity. At the same time, discourse analysis as a method is closely linked to discourse theory, which in turn is one of the key theories describing identity. In the theoretical section, we have repeatedly referred to these ideas, recognising that different discourses reflect the social context in which identity is constructed and positioned. In other words, a discourse has a significant impact on the construction of identity. Taking Hall's and Bhabha's theories into account, we rely on the fact that identity is not autonomous and fixed, but is multiple, constantly reshaping, and in many ways existing through its positioning in the social structure and forms of representation in different discourses. This usually takes place through interaction with other identities and social groups within different discourses. Transmigrants construct and reconstruct their identity through exposure to different discourses or 'cultural voices' that exist in social contexts. More precisely, identity is constructed through constant social interaction within different discourses and "[...] it is discourse that produces power-knowledge relations within which subjects are positioned, identities are constructed and bodies are disciplined" (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, p. 21). As van Dijk (1997) stated "[d]iscourse analysis thus involves an interest in the ways social members categorize themselves" (in Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, p. 19). Along with that, "[...] identity is a

semiotically- mediated act and is therefore a narrative product which is ordered, thus giving unity and purpose to the experience" (Esteban-Guitart and Vila, 2015, p. 19).

Accordingly, this paper views transnational identity as a cultural identity which is also a hybrid and has experience in two or more cultures at the same time. How migrants represent their transcultural experience and belonging, or in van Dijk's (1997) words, how they categorize themselves within the social structure, being between several cultures, is what concerns this paper. As basic material for analyzing the transnational identity of migrant comedians, we will consider their texts of performances, that is, their narratives in which they refer to their hybrid experiences. In doing so, narratives, as Farrell points out, "[...] have come to be seen as a fundamental site for self-construction, as well as for the relationship between self and society" (2008, p. 40). Discourse analysis, focusing on both written and spoken narratives, allows for a detailed analysis of transnational stories "[...] as resources for self-coherence are also useful sites for examining how hybridity and change in social position are negotiated" (Farell, 2008, p. 43).

The second reason is examining stand-up comedy in this research as a discursive practice for the representation of transnational identity. Earlier, we found out why representation is important for constructing and negotiating one's identities. We have also clarified that humor can be a mode of representation of hybrid transmigrant identities.

Next it is necessary to understand how this representation takes place in such discursive practices as stand-up comedy.

In order to answer this question, we find it most appropriate to turn to the texts of stand-up comedians and understand what transcultural experiences can be discussed, as well as how migrants discuss them in their performances, through the medium of humor. As it is,"[d]iscourse analysts interested in the generation of meaning as the consequence of rule-governed activities the exploration of which illuminates the micro processes by which people make claims about themselves" (Barker, 2004, p. 55).

To put it differently, this paper does not aim to describe the phenomenon of transnational identity but to describe how transmigrants represent their identities through comedic narratives or which transcultural experience they see as a resource for laughter. In this sense discourse analysis is the most appropriate, as the results of discourse analysis "[...] are not descriptions of a social phenomenon or problem, but rather descriptions of the possible ways in which such phenomena or problems are seen or interpreted by people within a particular cultural context" (Ehgartner, 2020, p. 4).

It is worth noting that discourse analysis is a rather multifaceted method and is used in various disciplines, such as social psychology, social linguistics, etc. As well it has several subsets. In this paper, we apply sociological discourse analysis. Its distinctive feature is that "[t]he sociological discourse-analytical approach, in which texts are analysed as 'social text', suggests that instead of being individual or universal thinkers, human beings subscribe to 'thought communities' - communities of differing interpretations of how the world works" (Ehgartner, 2020, p. 3). In this case, our thought communities are transmigrants involved as comedians in stand-up comedy. In this sense, we will look through discourse analysis to find common patterns in the representation of transnational identities and the common meaning they share.

Whereas in sociolinguistic disciplines, discourse analysis focuses mainly on the linguistic devices used in the text under analysis but in sociological discourse analysis the linguistic aspect in discourse is not the most critical one. Also, although discourse analysis is traditionally associated with the analysis of discursive or linguistic practices, it "[...] is not the study of language per se (as in linguistics), but focuses on social action that is mediated through language" (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 237). By employing this method, we understand stand-up comedy culture as a discursive practice, but we do not intend to study the linguistic aspects of comedians' performances. We understand comedians' performances, and their texts, as social texts. That is to say, "[...] text is viewed as a representation of the culturally shared 'common sense' ideas available to people in the community in and for which this text was produced" (Ehgartner, 2020, p. 4). Discourse itself "[...] is more than texts or utterances, but a field of knowledge" (Scott, 2016, p. 428). That is, "[...] there is not an accessible, absolute truth on a topic or essence to a being, but each has a field of knowledge about it, a discourse" (Scott, 2016, p. 428), so "[d]iscourses are historically contingent, multiple, and competing" (Scott, 2016, p. 428). Therefore "[d]iscourse-analytical approaches from sociology and related disciplines are influenced by the work of Michel Foucault and their focus is less on the rules and conventions of conversations, but on accepted, institutionalised, power constituting forms of knowledge that are present in conversations" (Ehgartner, 2020, p. 3).

To sum it up, "[...] the discourse analytical approach illuminates the common contextual backgrounds and culturally shared ideas which are at the basis of the varying attitudes and aims that different individuals and groups express" (Ehgartner, 2020, p. 6). It is precisely our aim to understand what transcultural processes (social contexts) have influenced the shaping

of transmigrant identity and what common meaning transmigrants hold when representing their transnational identities in comedy performance.

3.2. Case Selection and Sample Design

- **Case Selection**

Since this paper does not aim at cross-cultural research, it seems optimal to limit our consideration to transmigrant comics from one country. We chose to focus on stand-up culture in the UK. There were several reasons for this.

First, our theoretical framework draws heavily on postcolonial studies, namely the theories of Hall (1994) and Bhabha (1994), who in turn for the most part use Britain as the primary case study. Because we understand transnational identity as close to a description of diasporic and hybrid identity, we have relied on the fact that the country we wish to examine had to be associated with a colonial past. In the first chapters, in describing the social context influencing cultural identity we cited 'the colonizer' - 'the colonized' dichotomy presented by Hall (1994) and Bhabha (1994) as a relationship that corresponds very much to the dichotomy 'a nation-state' vs. 'ethnic minority/diaspora/hybrid' identity. Accordingly, Britain is one country where postcolonial discourse and especially discourse on the cultural identity of migrants, ethnic minorities, and diasporas remains always relevant. The dichotomies 'colonizer' and 'colonized' can still be found in discursive fields, as can racial and ethnic discrimination.

Secondly, Britain, as the country with the highest level of migration in Western Europe, faces not only migration from former colonies but also migration based on economic reasons, which for example has been reported in recent decades as "[...] drastic increase in immigration from Eastern Europe" (Czaika and de Haas, 2017, p. 5).

Since the onset of Brexit, this rhetoric has intensified and translated into various forms of discrimination, not only as racism but much more broadly as 'migratism' (Tudor, 2022). Overall, the migration processes taking place in Britain also reflect a high level of superdiversity, in the words of Vertovec (2007) and transculturation. The origins of migrants are becoming increasingly multilayered and hybrid, and their identities are multiple and transnational.

Thirdly, Britain can be cited as one of the centers of dissemination of postcolonial discourses through the media, given the overall global dominance of Anglo-Saxon media resources. In this sense, "[...] the media may also act as a 'lens of belonging', providing opportunities to observe, negotiate, and reconsider a multiplicity of ways of identifying and being part of

society" (Zambon, 2017, p. 7). Furthermore, postcolonial discourses are also visible in mass media and feature individuals with hybrid identities. This is the case in entertainment media such as stand-up comedy shows.

Fourthly, as an extension of the third point, stand-up comedy is one of the most popular social activities in the UK among adults, overtaking for example going to a concert or the theater (YouGov, 2022). At the same time, stand-up comedy has a fairly prominent presence in the media space. The genre has, in a sense, gone global. Stand-up comedy culture is now found in many countries and on every continent. That being said, the audience there is not just the audience attending live shows. Stand-up comedy has a large media presence and recordings of many shows can be found on media platforms and social media.

In general, stand-up comedy culture has a deep tradition that stretches from the traditional English performing arts genre and is also an important entertainment genre in which not only professional comedians can participate, but also the general public.

Finally, we found the number of certain initiatives in the UK that directly connect stand-up comedy with immigrants. These are creative stand-up comedy groups and shows that are organized by immigrant comedians. After conducting research on such initiatives, we identified two of the most prominent projects that provide quite a lot of information about their activities and, most importantly, about resident comedians. The first initiative is the *Immigrant Comedy Show* organized by the *Eastern European Comedy Fest* group. These shows feature comedians who are immigrants (first- and second-generation) who perform in the UK. The second project is a public initiative offering stand-up comedy courses for migrants and refugees called *No Direction Home*. This initiative brings together experienced comedians to give workshops for aspiring stand-up artists who have a migrant background and who have emigrated to the UK.

Thus, our research will focus on comedians with migrant backgrounds who perform within the aforementioned initiative groups. That is, the sampling design involves looking at stand-up comedians' performances from the Immigrant Comedy Show and from No Direction Home who are first- and second-generation immigrants.

- **Sample characteristics**

When talking about sample size, our study implies a small-scale qualitative study. Discourse analysis in general, "[...] can be applied to large volumes of text material as well as to a small selection of samples" (Ehgartner, 2020, p. 5). When talking about sample size, our study implies a small-scale qualitative study. Discourse analysis in general, "[...] can be applied to large volumes of text material as well as to a small selection of samples" (Ehgartner, 2020, p.

5). Generally, the size of the sample will depend on the scale at which a social phenomenon is considered and also on how many social groups are distinguished within the discourse. In our work, the specific focus is on migrants in Britain and accordingly the reference will only be to the UK stand-up comedy scene. In selecting relevant stand-up comedy texts for the analysis, we will also limit our search to the period, from June 2016 to the present year (2023). Since 2016 was the year of the Brexit referendum, it needs to be taken into account as an important event that influenced the social context and discourse on migration in the UK. Accordingly, we recognise that the socio-historical context before and after the Brexit referendum was very different. Our work does not seek to compare these two contexts and the sample will therefore focus only on the post-Brexit period.

All this suggests that our analysis does not presuppose consideration of the global, or cross-cultural scale, but examines the phenomenon of transnational identity only within a single case study. Additionally, realizing that the transcultural experiences of first- and second-generation migrants might be somewhat different, we identify first- and second-generation UK migrant comics as two social groups participating in the same discourse. Accordingly, our sample will involve splitting and consequently comparing the performance texts of these two groups. In this sense, it seems optimal to limit our study to no more than 10 texts from 10 different immigrant comedians. Ideally, five of them are first-generation migrants and the other five are second-generation migrants. We selected comedians who have different ethnic backgrounds but are from the UK or have emigrated to that country, and who reside and perform as stand-up comedy artists there.

Next, we will look at the pre-selection criteria for comedians' performances in the sample.

Table 1. Sampling criteria

No.	Criterion
1.	The first criterion is the comedians who are members of either *No Direction Home* or the *Immigrant Comedy Show*.
2.	The second criterion is the comedians who are first or second-generation immigrants, who have moved to and are based in the UK.
3.	The third criterion is, that they perform in English and that the video footage of their performances are available on the media platform YouTube.

4.	The fourth criterion is, that in their performances comedians somehow discuss their migration background, their transnational identity traits, cultural differences between host and home societies, the importance of the stand-up comedy movement for immigrants and other similar themes which are described in the Table “Dimensions and Indicators” below.
5.	The fifth criterion is the posted videos of their performances no earlier than 1 July 2016.

Thus, the data for the sample was searched on the social media and video platform YouTube. In the next section, we will talk in more detail about the data collection procedure and the research design.

3.3 Research Design and Data Collection

The research design involves the guidelines for conducting a Sociological Discourse Analysis described by Ehgartner (2020, pp. 5-6) and employs six steps, namely:

1. Identifying the text material that is well-suited to studying the research problem;
2. Identifying the sources and context of production of the collected text material;
3. Identifying the patterns of variation;
4. Identifying the internal contradictions;
5. Identifying the basic assumptions;
6. Identifying the rules of the discourse and the ways in which they are interrelated with problems and possibilities.

The first two steps have already been partly dealt with in the previous section, where we described the process of sampling and choosing the case study of the social context in which the discourses will be analyzed in this study. Putting our research questions into perspective once again, we have restricted the sampling of the UK case study to the period from 2016 to the present, looking closer at two social initiatives or social groups that bring together stand-up comedians with migrant backgrounds from the UK. These, in other words, will be considered as the ‘producers of text’ for the analysis.

Regarding the unit of analysis, discourse analysis can include “[...] different forms of written or spoken texts, even images” (Ehgartner, 2020, p. 5). In our case, a unit of analysis will be

humorous utterances or jokes from transcribed texts of live stand-up comedy performances. The performances comprise video recordings of live performances by comedians on various stages in Britain. As these are spoken texts, they will be transcribed. In addition to transcribing verbal statements, we will also document the comedians' gestures, i.e. their non-verbal communication. In the transcribing procedure, "[...] verbal and nonverbal communication events [will be inserted] in the transcript in order of occurrence" (Hamilton et al., 2015, p. 331). In the transcripts, we will also point out some communicative acts where the comics change their voicing, i.e. employ an imitation of different accents. This "[...] supplementary information about an interaction [...] do not usually affect the form or content of transcripts but are simply alternative perspectives on the same data" (Hamilton et al., 2015, p. 323).

- **Data collection step**

Once the Immigrant Comedy Show and No Direction Home initiatives were found, a brief content analysis had to be done. On the websites of these initiatives, we were able to find the names of 21 comedians who had taken part in these initiatives at different times. Accordingly, we compiled a list of these names and then for each artist we conducted a so-called 'background check' (Schneider, 2013). It was important to find information about their country of origin, their ethnic background and to check whether they met our sampling criteria. Of the 21 comedians, we found biographical information for only 17 of them, all of whom were first or second-generation immigrants based in Britain. Of the 17 comedians, for each of them, we searched for performances on the YouTube platform, where three criteria were met: the video description indicated that the venue was in the UK, the date of the performance was given and that it was published no earlier than July 2016. Only 14 comedians were eligible.

Afterwards, among these 14 stand-up performances by 14 migrant comedians, we examined themes that were directly related to the representation of transnational identity.

As we see transnational identity as a cultural identity, which is "[...] is the product of a dialogue between the society of origin ('prior knowledge') and the host society ('new experiences'), which begins with a 'life change' or 'biographical disruption', that is to say, emigration" (Esteban-Guitart and Vila, 2015, p. 19). As we understand transnational identity as a cultural identity, which is "[...] the product of a dialogue between the society of origin ('prior knowledge') and the host society ('new experiences'), which begins with a 'life change' or 'biographical disruption', that is to say, emigration" (Esteban-Guitart and Vila,

2015, p. 19). Accordingly, in defining the texts for analysis, we focused exclusively on the sociocultural level.

Following this, we selected performances in which comedians (first- and second-generation immigrants in the UK) included utterances or jokes regarding every four themes in their performances:

1. Society of origin
2. Host society
3. Immigration
4. Transcultural experience

These thematic contexts we have further elaborated on and highlighted their indicators. Indicators of the occurrence of these contexts in the performances are keywords and subthemes, which we designed according to our theoretical framework, based on Hall's, and Bhabha's ideas, as well as transnationalism and transculturation theories and studies. These indicators reveal the concept of transnational identity and characterize each of the four spheres/themes: Society of origin, Host society, Immigration, and Transcultural experience. The following indicators (below) were developed for each of the themes. These indicators will guide in that all four themes are displayed in each performance of the comedians.

Table 2. Dimensions and Indicators

Dimensions	Indicators
Society of origin	Ethnic background; nationality; family and friends; religion; cultural background; lifestyle; language; traditions; values; sense of belonging to the country of origin.
Host society	Life experiences of being immigrant or a person with a migrant background in host society; personal experiences of the acculturation/integration process in the host society; cultural characteristics of the host country; British way of life, language, traditions, values; British national identity; sense of belonging in the host country; British attitudes towards migrants;

	immigrant status in Britain; existing social and political discourses on immigration in Britain; ethnic and racial stereotypes in Britain.
Immigration	Immigration as a biographical disruption; common stereotypes about migrants; global political and social discourses about immigration; comments on exclusionary discourses about migrants; ethno-jokes; their own migrant experience or that of their family.
Transcultural experience	Transnational sense of belonging; hybridity and their belonging to more than one culture simultaneously; comparison of cultures; personal transcultural experience when integrating in the host country; transnational connections; transnational practices; dialogue of cultures; diasporic experience; conflict of cultures of (host and society of origin).

Altogether, 13 performances met the criteria, but the corpus of analysis was limited to 10 performances by 10 different comedians. We excluded 3 performances, as our sample had to be proportional according to the two groups of text producers (first- and second-generation migrant comedians). These three performances all met the criteria, but all belonged only to the second group, second-generation migrants. We excluded these three performances also because they were much shorter than the other ten. The performances of the following ten comedians were included in the sample (Appendix 1).

- **Coding categories (Identifying the patterns of variation step)**

In order to proceed with step number three in our research design, which is "identifying the patterns of variation" it was necessary to assign coding categories for units of the analysis. This helps to define the repetitive and variation patterns in texts of different comedians as

well common themes raised across performances and related to the dimensions of the studying phenomena. After selecting the material for analysis it was transcribed and the data for the next coding step was collected. We used MAXQDA as software for the analysis. Using MAXQDA we were able to systematize the texts of stand-up comedy performances and highlight those jokes which displayed the four themes mentioned above. For each joke utterance, a unit of our analysis, we assigned tags or subthemes. This essentially helped us to identify the main coding categories that recurred in the discourses produced by the comedians and that were relevant to our research questions. The categories were further analyzed to highlight common themes and also the variations of these themes in the jokes of each group (first- and second-generation migrants). The code system displays the thematic structure of these recurring discourses for each of the four dimensions (Appendix 2).

- In **identifying the internal contradictions step**, we looked more closely at each utterance so that it was possible to compare and distinguish differences in the representation of one or another coding category in the different groups.
- Steps 5 and 6 involve **interpreting the statements** to determine the discourse patterns of each group. Interpretation also involves assessing how discourses can match or refer to the overall broad social context and relate to external discourses about the phenomenon of transnational identity.

The results of the interpretation and the basic assumptions of the analysis are outlined in the next chapter.

4. Results

4.1. Common themes and discursive strategies

To answer the first research question, *what transcultural experiences and transcultural identifications are discussed by stand-up comedians-migrants from the UK (specifically the performers of the No Direction Home and Immigrant Comedy show projects)* we analyzed our thematic map (Appendix 2). As the thematic map was designed according to our dimensions from the operationalization, there was displayed an ultimate set of sub-themes and code categories that we found and assigned to the comedians' utterances. Subsequently, all relevant recurring code categories for the research questions were identified. Then, several code categories were clustered, as they represented a variation of narratives related to the same broad theme. Three common themes that recurred from performance to performance were found. These themes indicated which transcultural experiences the comedians were addressing to describe their identities. These three themes are the main discursive strategies

which are Confusion about belonging (1), The experience of discovering own hybridity (2) and The reshaping of identity (3).

The details of each are discussed below, including the interpretation of the strategies according to the theoretical concepts that were used in the theoretical framework.

1. **Confusion about belonging**

Several comedians report being unsure about how to identify themselves, as they have a sense of belonging to two or more cultures at once. In fact, they report that their identity becomes multiple and their sense of self can be understood as hybrid.

In his performance, British comedian of Nigerian descent, Nabil Abdulrashid, says that the question about his cultural affiliation is often asked by those who come to his performances. He stresses that many of them ask the question inaccurately, confusing the terms and using different categories such as religion and nationality to make comparisons:

People come to me after shows and go, 'Nabil, tell me, Nabil, do you consider yourself to be Muslim or British first?'.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 5)

Such a question confuses him, where he is not only confused by the fact that people are equating definitions of religious and national identity but also confused by the fact that he does not know why such a choice should be made. In answering this question he reports that he is baffled by the need to choose one or the other. At the same time, in answering this question, he adds the aspect of racial identity as well:

I'm like, 'Why can't I be both?'. And furthermore Muslim isn't a race. I'm Nigerian just like every other black comedian in the UK. I'm Nigerian, don't worry.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 5)

Nabil admits that he himself does not know how to define himself, as he belongs to both cultures and, moreover, has lived the same amount of time both in Nigeria and in Britain and also holds dual citizenship:

But still that I don't know, what I see myself, as a British or Nigerian first? Cuz I was born here but I move back home, you know. I've probably lived equal amounts of my life in both

cultures…I've got a British passport and the Nigerian.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 7)

The confusion of race and ethnicity may be an error in the comedian's statement, however, racial discourse is one of the most acute and race is the main attribute invoked when discussing identity in Britain. Therefore, it is likely that this was intentionally worded. Below racial positioning will be discussed in more detail. Nabil, however, continues the theme of racial definitions and essentially makes a generalization in which he says that like all black stand-up comedians in Britain, he is Nigerian. Such an act may speak to some of the stereotypes in Britain that exist in relation to black comedians.

- **Hybrid sense of self**

Affiliation with more than one culture is something almost all comedians talk about in their performances, discussing their affiliation with both their host culture and their country of origin.

A second-generation migrant, Fatiha El Ghorri was born and raised in London and has Moroccan roots. In her show, Fatiha highlights her bicultural background. As a second-generation migrant growing up in a large family, she often mentions in her narrative the connection to her culture, more specifically to the diaspora culture of Moroccans and Muslims in Britain.

I've got a massive family, guys. I've got 13 siblings. I know. My mom forgets our names, she's like, 'number five come here, number seven take number 11 to school'. She is a proper looney tune, right.
(Transcript 1, Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 8)

As she begins her performance, she employs an unexpected ending of her joke:

My name is Fatiha. So I come from the deep deep middle east… of Hackney…
(Tran 1 Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 2)

Such a joke demonstrates a mockery of stereotypes about women wearing the hijab. At the same time, by mentioning the borough of Hackney in London, where she is actually from, she demonstrates her belonging to the host culture as well. Fatiha also adds:

...and I'm also a Moroccan.
(Transcript 1, Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 2)

Speaking of herself as both British and Moroccan, Fatiha uses the narrative 'I am from [...] but also […]'. In doing so, she demonstrates her multiple identities.

Interestingly, the mention of regions in the UK or London, as Fatiha refers to Hackney above, is something to be found in the performances of almost every comedian. Such mention is a demonstration of one's connection to one's place of residence and the host culture, which is an important aspect of identity. As in the case of Fatiha El Ghorri, often the regions of Britain with which they are affiliated are used by comedians to demonstrate existing territorial and social divisions or to report on regions/districts traditionally settled by diasporas of different ethnic communities. For example, Fatiha El Ghorri speaks of the Ladbroke Grove area, 'a home' of the Moroccan immigrant community in London:

Anyone's been to Morocco? Anyone's been Ladbroke Grove? You've also been to Morocco.
(Transcript 1, Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 2)

Fatiha uses a joke about Ladbroke Grove as an area that has been so ethnically influenced by the Moroccan diaspora that for those who have never been to Morocco, the experience of visiting Ladbroke Grove can equate to a trip to Morocco. Cherti (2009, p. 5) points to the, "significance of the neighborhood" for transmigrants in Britain. For example, "for younger British Moroccans living in North Kensington, it is essential to maintain the links that they have developed within their local community, which in turn create a sense of 'home', [...] some [...] identified themselves in relation to their local neighborhood, as a 'Portobeller' or a 'Grove girl or boy', referring to Portobello and Ladbroke Grove" (Cherti, 2009, p. 5). Thus, "[t]his reflects a strong sense of belonging to two social arenas" (Cherti, 2009, p. 5). In other words, an area like Ladbroke Grove, a traditional location with a high percentage of Moroccan diaspora settlement, becomes a kind of identifier of multiple belonging to two cultures at once, British and Moroccan.

Athena Kugblenu is a British comedian with ethnic background from Ghana and India. She was born in North London and her performances often feature references to particular areas of London and the theme of locality stereotyping. That said, her affiliation with parts of London does not have references to particular diasporas as Fatiha El Ghorri does. In her jokes, she often mocks the stereotypes of hate between those from North and South London. This sense of belonging as well as the division of London in Athena's performances is more likely to resonate with the discourse of the Global North and South.
She gives an example of the issues that arose in her family when she became a mother:

[...] it's fine this baby's gonna change the world. In fact, this baby is making the world better by just existing. This baby is mixed race. Thank you, thank you! Um, the dad's from South London, I'm from North.
(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 1)

In her joke she exaggerates and equates the discourse of difference between parts of London with issues of race. She also talks further about how dating her South London boyfriend has entailed intergenerational tension between her, a second-generation migrant and her mom, a first-generation migrant. Apparently, her mom has a strong sense of belonging to one part of London and like other Londoners has stereotypes about Londoners from the other part of the city:

Both families were dead against it. I swear down. We had to go on dates on neutral territory - the Thames Clippers. Greenwich to London Bridge. My mom was devastated. She was like, 'What about South Hampstead, you know? What about South Hampstead, Athena?!'. Yeah, what are the children going to be? Are they going to be gentrified or the gentrifiers?
(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 2)

Nabil Abdulrashid makes a similarly exaggerated distinction between Northerners and Southerners in London:

[...] this guy comes, he sees my name, he knows it's Nabil Abdulrashid on the show. He just doesn't expect him to look like me because [...] I'm from South London, right?

(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 37)

This representation of themselves, where migrants emphasize which part of London they are from (North/South London) or North/South Britain is obviously an important aspect of identity for themselves. Moreover, regional differences and attribution are also a bridge to a mutual understanding with the audience, where viewers can also associate themselves within regional/territorial divisions.

This identification, however, is also observed among first-generation migrants. Ginnia Cheng, like Athena Kugblenu, draws a parallel between the racial divide and regions of residence in Britain. People from another part of London/Britain can be perceived almost as people of another race:

I think I am a little racist towards northerners, though. He is from somewhere called Hartlepool, which is translated to southern English, in the middle of fucking nowhere.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 14)

As a first-generation migrant from Hong Kong, Ginnia sort of mimics the typical Brit, operating on standard stereotypes about people from the northern regions of Britain. The narrative, 'I am a racist', is also a bit of a mimicry device used by several other comedians.

In doing so, she also jokes about her own hybridity, noting the connection to the host and home society. In doing so, she appeals to more global notions of territorial divisions, communicating her affinity with Asia and the West at the same time:

I've become very aware recently that I look like I eat rice but I sound like I ate a Kardashian […] which makes no sense because I actually moved straight from Asia all the way to the West Midlands.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 3)

While having an American accent and being Asian, Ginnia uses the joke narrative, 'I look like this but I sound like this', which also signals her multiple identities. The reference to the West Midlands is probably not a coincidence either. By mentioning this region, Ginnia communicates her migrant background. The West Midlands is one of the locations where "[a]sylum seekers awaiting a decision on their application" (Kierans, 2022, p. 2).

In his utterance, another first-generation migrant, Joshua Bethania, uses a similar formulation by comparing India's status as a region of residence to regions in Britain:

So I'm full Indian, um, but I'd like to clarify, you know, um. I'm from India, not from, um, one of those shitholes like Birmingham or Croydon or something.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 4)

Both comedians express their jokes in a rather blunt manner, resorting to obscene language when identifying regions of Britain that are not the most prestigious. The harsh manner of joking could be interpreted as an 'insulting ritual', which we have discussed before.

Vlad Illich, a first-generation migrant comedian from North Macedonia, does not joke about regions of residence in a harsh manner, but instead focuses on typical stereotypes about the diaspora populations in a particular region of Britain:

I'm a little foreign. Can I have a genuine guess of where I'm from? Poland? Serbia? Bulgaria? Romania? Very close! I'm from Manchester. I'm a Macedonian.
(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 2)

Responding to a guess from the audience that he is Romanian, Vlad jokes that their guess is correct with Manchester, in this sense, being an area with a high concentration of Romanian diaspora in the UK (Matras & Leggio, 2018).

- **Acculturation/Deculturation**

Another aspect of identity confusion is that many comedians refer to their experiences of acculturation and deculturation in their performances.

A second-generation migrant, Romesh Ranganathan was born and raised in Britain, but also has a connection to his ethnic background, which he talks about in the performance. He begins his show by straight away stating that he is having difficulty with his self-determination. Alike Fatiha, he uses the narrative 'I am from [...] but also [...]':

I'm British and I'm proud of that but I'm also proud of my Sri Lankan heritage [...]
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 1)

Growing up in the UK, Romesh still values his Sri Lankan origins and has links to Sri Lanka through his parents, first-generation migrants, and other relatives. Nevertheless, he reports on his deculturation process:

[…] but I cannot connect with it and the reason I cannot connect with it is because I do not speak the language but I look like.
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 2)

This can also be found in the joke, where he describes his experience of traveling to Sri Lanka and his communication experience with the local people:

As soon as we landed they were talking to me. So I just, like walking through the airport bump into someone and, (imitating accent) 'ba-hba-bha-ba-ba'. I have to say, 'I'm so sorry mate, I can barely understand Glaswegian.
(Tran 2_ Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 4)

Referring to this transcultural experience, the language barrier between Sri Lankans and him, he compares it to the different languages and dialects within Britain. By exaggerating and saying that he "can barely understand Glaswegian" he demonstrates that his cultural identity is still more connected to Britain, as he speaks only English. Language becomes a serious obstacle to maintaining cultural links with the home community, but along with the loss of language, Romesh points out that he also finds it difficult to understand his relatives even when communicating in English:

And then I can't even connect with my family. That's a sad thing, I can't even connect with my family because I only speak a bit of English. I don't speak any Tamil. *So I'll meet an uncle and go, 'Hello, uncle',* - *(imitating accent) 'Hello, Romesh, you're good?'.* - *'Yeah, I'm good!'* - *(imitating accent) 'You good?'* - *(getting annoyed) 'Yes!'* *This is a weird situation.*
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 5-6)

Romesh's joke strongly resembles Ginnia's 'I look like this but I sound like this'. In both cases, both comedians report that their ethnic backgrounds are often accompanied by prescribed stereotypes about 'looking as if they speak/do not speak a language'. In Romesh's case, he encounters expectations from the community of origin (looking like a Sri Lankan means speaking Tamil). In his situation, the loss of linguistic proficiency signals deculturation. Ginnia, on the other hand, encounters the prejudice that people with Asian ethnic backgrounds do not speak English well, a stereotype of the host community. Ginnia, by debunking stereotypes and demonstrating her fluency in the language, essentially states the opposite effect, acculturation.

Transmigrants, living in the host culture, often show a high degree of connection to that culture. At the same time, for many, the process of mastering the new culture was not the easiest. The experience of overcoming the language barrier is reported by first-generation migrants. For many of them, modern English media was one of their first contacts with the new culture before they moved to Britain.

Victor Patrascan, a first-generation migrant from Romania, says he finds it strange to speak and perform in English as a non-native speaker. At the same time, he jokes about how a popular cartoon was his resource for learning the language:

You know, it's weird. I'm Romanian speaking English because I've learned the language from Scooby-Doo.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 12)

Ginnia Cheng, being from a Commonwealth country, jokes about her experience of learning English:

[…] so I don't know why I sound like this. I think it's because we only had an American TV when I was growing up. I mean we had Mr. Bean but he doesn't really speak.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 5)

Joshua Bethania, mocks typical British reality shows by talking about his acculturation:

I'm trying to be English, you know, whatever that means. I thought a good place to start

would be to watch some television to pick up the old culture. I started watching the show, a lot of you might know this. They basically rounded up a bunch of good-looking people, you know. They put them on an island and they are made to find love in a hopeless place. The show is called Love Island or as I like to call it, The UK.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 18)

The affiliation with the host culture and the acculturation experience can also be traced in the lifestyle jokes. Ginnia Cheng reported that her daily habits and the lifestyle of the host society that she has adopted, bring confusion to her self-definition and belonging.

I've lived here for so long now, over 10 years that I have fully integrated. In fact, I have become such an upper-middle-class white person. [...] so it is weird to look like this and sound like this, though. If I haven't looked in the mirror for ages I forget I'm not a white girl.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 8-9)

She talks about how her lifestyle makes her feel like 'a white upper-class':

I have to hear this voice say things like, 'Oh my God, I love bottomless brunch!'. And then *last weekend at bottomless brunch I literally heard myself saying, 'But prosecco is so hard to drink out of a wine glass!'. Is that cultural appropriation?*
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 10)

In her joke she also uses mimicry, ironically asking herself and the audience if this is an example of cultural appropriation.

Raising the theme of cultural appropriation and the new habits acquired through acculturation, Joshua Bethania discusses 'typical British food' alluding to cultural appropriation and colonial discourse, where Chicken Tikka Masala became part of British cuisine:

I've also been trying to get into food. I've got a seafood allergy so I can't really try out the fish and chips, so I go for the next best British food, Chicken Tikka Masala.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 19)

2. The experience of discovering own hybridity

The sense of being 'in-between cultures,' when one does not fully belong to any culture, is much more common in the narratives of second-generation comedians. Many of them describe the experience of discovering their hybrid identity as children, when they went to school, and when they realized that the strategies of their parents, first-generation migrants, did not fit with them.

- **Intergenerational conflict in the migrant family**

Besides Fatiha El Ghorri, No Direction Home features another female comedian who is a Muslim and wears a hijab. Ola Labib is a British comedian of Sudanese descent. She was born and raised in Portsmouth, UK. She describes her experience of socialization in a British school as traumatic and difficult:

[…] it was crazy and I felt like I didn't have anything in common with the other students because I actually came from a very strict black African upbringing. And it was tough because I felt like I couldn't fit in with anybody. I had nothing in common.
(Transcript 4, Ola Labib, Pos. 4)

Describing it this way, she emphasizes that her connection to her culture of origin through her family in her childhood was important and played a major role in defining her identity for a long time. That said, growing up in Portsmouth, she was the only child in her school with African cultural background. As she tells about her experience, Ola demonstrates how her identity changed, from complete marginalization in her host community to her acculturation. She demonstrates her experience of acculturation or transculturation by telling how she became a fan of Eminem as a child:

But that all changed when I was in year eight. Because I finally found the link between the black community and the white community. I found my ivory to my ebony, I found my Biden to my Obama. I found Eminem.
(Transcript 4, Ola Labib, Pos. 5)

Apparently, her childhood fascination with Western hip-hop music was met with hostility in her conservative family:

I became obsessed with Eminem and I knew my mom would never buy me his merchandise because apparently, he's haram. To put my mom into context, my mom is so strict that if she was ever to apply for ISIS they would look at her application and be like, 'Oh, this one's a tough hardcore'.
(Transcript 4, Ola Labib, Pos. 6)

She describes that after her mother discovered a new hobby of her daughter, she had to face a beating from her mother. Facing misunderstanding and family violence, Ola describes as a turning point in her identification:

It was crazy because, you know what I learned from that beating, ladies and gentlemen? What doesn't kill you makes you stronger! And I decided that I wanted to be a backing dancer for Eminem. So I used to come home from school turn the TV down really low and practice dancing. One time I was dancing [...], my mom walks into my room [...] and she's like, (imitating accent) 'What are you doing?'. *I panicked I was like, 'Mom, I want to be a dancer'. She looks at the TV and looks back at me, (imitating accent) 'You want to dance naked in front of men?'* *I panicked, I was like, 'Yeah, I do mom, but wallahi I'll keep my hijab on'.*
(Transcript 4, Ola Labib, Pos. 9-10)

Ultimately, Ola was able to make her own family, which is not only multicultural, but in which her hybrid identity was also embraced:

I thought my dreams were over until in 2019 I got married to an African-American rapper and I was so excited because he took me to the USA for the first time.
(Transcript 4, Ola Labib, Pos. 13)

Interestingly, when telling her story in English with a British accent, Ola uses Arabic words related to Islam, such as *haram* (prohibition) or *wallahi* (I swear to Allah). This suggests much of her irony about her strict upbringing in a Muslim family, but it also reveals a connection to her culture of origin. As one of Britain's first stand-up comedians to appear in a hijab, Ola is a prime example of how she represents her hybrid identity. Given that

Islamophobia in Europe is often directed toward women who wear the hijab in public spaces, and also that stand-up female comedians are often condemned in traditional Islamic culture, this appearance is a new narrative contributing to the discussion of transmigrant identity.

Performing as a headliner at No Direction Home, Ola represents the hybridity of her identity to the public and has the potential to do so for young comedians who also have migrant backgrounds. Demonstrating her story can help bring people together around similar experiences in the community. In this sense, the stand-up comedy genre within a social project like No Direction Home has the attributes of the 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994).

Romesh, like Ola, became aware of the hybrid nature of his identity early in his childhood. He tells an interesting story from his childhood, mentioning how his parents, as first-generation migrants, were very worried about their children and how their multicultural experience would play out:

The weird situation in my life is that my mom and dad worried about my brother and I that we are not being Sri Lankan enough, also conversely worried about that we are not being English enough.
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 7)

Eventually, Romesh describes his first day of school, the first time he discovered he has 'multiple identities':

[…] my mom and dad both so worried about me growing up in this country they gave me a secret weapon […] My first name is not Romesh. Romesh is my middle name. My first name is Jonathan. *(Imitating laughter in the audience.) Go fuck yourselves, all right?! But it is Jonathan! That's what it says on my birth certificate.* *I didn't know that because when I was at home as a little kid my mom and dad called me Romesh, you know. The first time I found out what my name was my first day at school. Can you imagine that? I just sat there. Like, your first day at school is difficult enough as it is, right [...] without finding out you've got a secret identity.*
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 7-11)

Romesh also describes a moment of conversation with his parents, who explain to him the reason why they gave him an 'alternate name':

I came home, I said… I can't remember exactly [...] and he said to me, 'Well we didn't want to have to discuss this with you early on but I will explain it to you, Romesh. You know in this country there is discrimination and sometimes you don't get the opportunities that you deserve because of your ethnicity. So we thought you could use this name when you're applying for things and hopefully dodge the issue'.
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 11)

After having such an experience, Romesh says that this decision to give him a typical British name not only failed to solve the problem but also brought great confusion and bewilderment about his own identity. It is interesting that now he uses his name, Romesh, rather than Jonathan. Nevertheless, this story demonstrates how difficult it is for second-generation migrants to grow up in families where parents, themselves first-generation migrants, have some fears about how their children will be received in the country to which they have immigrated. This can often produce intergenerational conflicts.

- **Identity crisis after immigration**

For many first-generation migrants, the issue of hybrid identity is also pressing. Typically, their first realization of their hybrid identity came during their immigration. Also, it came with moments of communication with others, when others judge migrants on the basis of their ethnicity. Ginnia jokes about her identity crisis which came after the realization that the perception of others might be different from what she has of herself:

Actually, I had a bit of an identity crisis when I had to register for the NHS (National Health Service) for the first time because as I was filling out my form I realized my vital statistics so like my height, age and gender and ethnicity unfortunately together form one of the most searched-for terms in the history of porn sites like ever.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 6)

- **Being a minority**

Overall, the comedians report that one of the main aspects of becoming aware of their own hybridity involves feeling self like a minority. In discussing their sense of being a minority, comedians usually refer to the experience of being rejected in a community of origin or a host

society. In addition, encountering various exclusionary discourses or the stigmatization of the migrant status also plays a large role in this.

Joshua compares his marginalized status in the UK and in India:

I should probably address my name as well, my name really is Joshua. The reason is, um, is because I'm Christian. I grew up Christian, my family is Christian and well we're like a minority in India. [...] So I'm technically a minority in India and I'm a minority here in the UK. I'm pretty much a minority wherever I go.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 9, 11)

Nabil, realizing his hybridity, and having a connection to both Nigeria and Britain, points out that this situation, being in-between, makes you rejected in both societies:

I've got a British passport and the Nigerian. You possibly know what that means, I'm not welcomed in either country.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 7)

Romesh Ranganathan says that he identifies himself as British because he was born and raised there. Having Sri Lankan origins, he reports that although he would very much like to be, he cannot be fully accepted in Sri Lanka because he does not speak the language. Romesh comments on his appearance that he looks as if he should be speaking Tamil. This joke speaks to the typical process of deculturation, where a second-generation migrant does not speak the native language of his or her parents. However, transmigrants often don't want to give up their ethnic background, because even if they don't speak the language, they still have a sense of belonging to the society of origin. Romesh says that he is 'proud of his Sri Lankan heritage' and is also connected to the community, his relatives live in Sri Lanka. However, because of language deculturation, he cannot communicate with them. The ethnic community defines him as 'one of them' because he looks alike, but they are disappointed to find out that he does not speak their language, so he is immediately rejected by them after all:

I should be able to speak the language, right? This is an incredible Sri Lankan disguise. *If you're white [...] you've got no problems because I just assume obviously you can't speak it. For me, it looks like I can speak it.*

(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 2-3)

The experience of exclusion from the society of origin is portrayed by Nabil Abdulrashid. Coming each time from Britain to Nigeria, his friends mocked him, stigmatizing him and saying that he could no longer be considered Nigerian but British:

Last time I went to Nigeria it was like: (imitating accent) 'Ah, look at him, English boy! E-E-E-E-English Bo-boy, you can't move any more! Too much fish and chips? You are English now!'. *They start taking the piss off you even. They're like: (Imitating British accent) 'Would you like a glass of water?' Oh, they don't pronounce t-sound, they only drink it.*
Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 8-10)

In addition to laughing at the British accent, they also touch on racial aspects. Drawing distinctions in identification, between 'black African', and 'black British'.

- *(Imitating British accent) 'Nabil, would you like some suntan lotion?'* - *'Suntan lotion? I'm black! What do you say?!'* - *'Yes, but you're not black, you're English black'.*
- (Tran 5_Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 8-10)

In addition to the rejection by the society of origin after the processes of deculturation, another discursive direction in the narratives of comedians is the discussion of issues related to immigrant status and their experience of encountering exclusionary discourses.
Vlad Illich, a first-generation immigrant from Northern Macedonia, begins his performance by presenting himself as:

Good evening London! Hello, world! Hi, my name is immigrant.
(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 1)

By choosing such a joke for introducing himself, he makes it clear straight away that in the UK many people perceive him through the status of an immigrant. However, he is perceived as a classic immigrant, which evokes many stereotypes in the host community. Further, he

tells that he had to face xenophobia towards him as an immigrant when he moved to London. That causes the problem of his integration.

I hate London. I try to talk to my neighbours, I was like, 'Hello my name is Vlad. I just moved in here. Come for a coffee anytime'. *They said, 'Hello', and the next day they put up a fence. The great British welcome.*
(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 4-5)

Victor, in his self-presentation, talks about how Eastern European immigrants make up a large percentage of immigrants in Western Europe. He specifically refers to his nationality as Romanian and the large diaspora of Romanians in Britain:

Like most Romanians, I live here […] um…
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 5)

Ginnia, commenting on her migration experience, signals with her joke that immigrant status limits some opportunities for career or education:

[…] I actually moved straight from Asia all the way to the West Midlands. You're right, I did not get into my first-choice university.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 3)

Comedians often refer to the exclusionary narrative, 'immigrants came here to steal jobs'. Joshua, who came from India, makes a similar joke about immigrants being unable to freely pursue a career:

Hey, guys, my name is Joshua. You might recognize my accent from your bank's customer support.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 1-2)

He jokes about his accent and mentions his job in customer support, which is usually one of the lowest-paid jobs that migrants often get.

In general, criticizing or challenging stereotypes about one's immigrant status is an obvious way for almost all comedians to discuss their transnational identities. Among the common

discourses and stereotypes that comedians have discussed was the theme of the migrant workforce. Many first-generation and second-generation comedians have come up with the topic of immigrants doing typical manual labor or working low-wage jobs. For instance, Joshua tells the story of his city of Bangalore, which caused the problem of job cuts in Western countries because professionals from India were a cheaper and therefore more attractive workforce for Western employers:

Bangalore was used as a verb back in the day. So people in the West were bangalored if they were made redundant because the job moved to India more specifically to Bangalore, right, and hence you were bangalored because it's cheaper labour.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 7-8)

In the end, Joshua, mentions the typical anti-immigrant narrative that immigrants can threaten the collapse of the economy in host society because they 'came to steal jobs':

So I kind of get annoyed when people say immigrants come here to steal jobs. We don't need to travel, we can be immigrants from home.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 7-8)

Vlad talks about his immigration experience using a joke about this stereotype:

I moved here about three years ago to steal jobs. Not from you, from the Romanians.
(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 3)

In doing so, he comments on the status of migrants from Eastern Europe, who tend to move to Western European countries as gastarbeiters. Vlad reveals that he also encounters some xenophobic attacks during his show:

Once I got heckled. This guy shouted at the back he was like 'You're stealing our jobs!'.
(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 6)

Here, Vlad is akin to entering into a dialogue with such a narration, responding and trying to debunk this stereotype:

How can I steal a job if it's already vacant? I think immigrants do jobs no one else does. So if you don't trust me, tell me when is the last time Tom from Essex sold you a kebab? Never. So it is me or Jalal from Bangladesh. Who is your uber driver? Jalal again. He's working two jobs.
(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 7)

Another comedian from Eastern Europe, Victor, from the first line is introducing himself as Romanian. He jokes about it, commenting on the discourse about the impact of immigration on the economy:

[…] I'm Romanian. Thanks for the support. It's great to be in this country. In today's economy, this is what you get, guys.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 1-2)

Ginnia, in turn, talks about the situation in Asia, where there is also some special kind of racial discrimination:

You know, I actually left Asia to escape a life of being forced up onto dingy stages in the background of a bar entertaining rooms full of mostly drunk white people.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 2)

Some second-generation immigrant comics also employ jokes about the problem of workplace discrimination. Romesh told his personal story that his parents only gave him his first name Jonathan because they were afraid that Romesh would have trouble finding a job if he applied with his Sri Lankan name. That said, Romesh jokes about this decision of his parents, as he realizes that discrimination and racism could arise anyway:

[…] it's a very well-intentioned plan. I don't know how he thought that was going to play out, right?
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 12)

He makes a sarcastic joke about what a hypothetical situation might look like with a typical racist employer if he would have followed his parents' plan:

So I put that on an application form, the guy looks at it and goes, 'Ah, Jonathan Ranganathan, must be a white guy [...] Must be a white guy. Let's get him here! Let's get him in. Finally a good old traditional English name now! This is great! [...] This guy is a good English fella! No! He's a frontrunner!'.

And then what happens at the interview? I mean, I've got to meet somebody. So I rock up there.

- *'Hello, there!'*
- *'Who are you?'*
- *'I'm Jonathan.'*
- *'You're Jonathan?' (Depicts the employer talking to his colleague.) 'What is going on?! Have you seen him? I thought he was the driver but he's actually the applicant! Oh does he look like a Jonathan? He looks like he literally just stepped off a boat'. 'So it's actually you that's Jonathan?'*
- *'Yeah'.*
- *(depicts the employer talking away) 'I can't fucking believe this! Can we just get that light up? No, he is that dark. Jesus!'.*

(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 12-13)

That being said, ethnic name discrimination in recruitment is indeed one of the big problems in the labor market. Athena Kugblenu also discusses this, linking it to the fact that 'white privilege' clearly matters.

With her joke, she argues that a person with "a native-sounding name" has more career opportunities than those who have "an immigrant-sounding name" (Ahmad, 2020, p. 471).

Like you had all the help in the world. You know you're not called Muhammad so your cv didn't end up in the bin. Less likely to get stopped and searched and if you do get stopped and searched and you go in front of a judge less likely to get a custodial sentence.

(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 8)

Athena also speaks of various companies which are only interested in hiring immigrants because they value their labor cheaper. Athena turns to her personal experience and connects it to global colonial discourse and racial positioning:

What I'm saying is, I'm in Poundland because of slavery. What's your excuse?
(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 8)

As a second-generation immigrant, Nabil also comments on his experiences in Britain and discrimination in the workplace, commenting on the concept of 'white privilege' that he constantly has to deal with. He describes his co-workers:

Dave runs off, goes and tells our supervisor, who just happens to be white too - no privilege involved, it's just a coincidence.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 29)

Nabil thus mocks the discourse that the phenomenon of 'white privilege' does not exist.
Another common racist narrative that confronts migrants with a sense of their hybridity is one 'Go back to where you came from'. Many comedians make jokes about this exclusionary discourse as a form of critique of such racist attacks. Athena, for instance, gives one personal example of encountering a racist on public transport. Through her upsetting personal experience, she jokes that she can already identify those who might be racist.

Recently I got on a bus and I saw a guy. I don't like stereotyping but it's easily done. So acquired a bit like, 'he might be racist'. So I thought, 'Let me start a camera'. Yeah, trying to get famous, guys. Lucky guess, guys, he said something a little bit offensive. He found someone he didn't like the look off and he said: 'Oy, why don't you go back to where you came from?' So I replied, I said, 'We are on the bus, that's probably what she's doing'. But obviously I look like this, so he said, 'Actually you can go back to where you came from too!'
(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 11)

Athena, addressing the audience, says that her origins are linked to several backgrounds and that it is difficult to say where she comes from. Moreover, Athena is a second-generation

migrant, born already in Britain. Obviously, facing persistent discrimination in Britain makes her aware of her hybridity and her connection to her ethnic heritage, regardless of where she was born:

(Sighting and rolling her eyes.) Like, I'm from Ghana and I'm from India, all right? That's not like a brilliant idea, man […] um, this racism and sexism in this country I've experienced.
(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 12)

Another discourse noted by comedians in their jokes is the stereotype that immigrants are guilty of increasing criminality and making the host country unsafe.

Both Vlad and Victor, comedians from Macedonia and Romania, have a number of jokes about Eastern European immigrants being involved in criminal organizations.

Don't worry I'm not with the mafia. I quit last year. I'm kidding as if you can quit the mafia. That shit stays with you forever just like chlamydia.
(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 11)

Vlad also comments on the stereotype of immigrant residences as places where criminals concentrate:

So I live in London now […] with six people. I don't know who they are. Like one of them has a gold tooth. When I asked him, 'How did you get it?', he said, 'Good times, bad friends'.
(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 12)

Victor also jokes about his origins and the Romanian diaspora:

Don't worry about the Romanian thing. I know you're worried.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 3)

I know a lot of Romanians and I know for a fact that most Romanians would never touch something that doesn't belong to them. I steal all the time. I never go to a supermarket without eating in the supermarket. You can try it too. They can't read the barcode in your stomach.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 15)

He ends by saying that yet racial prejudice matters in Britain:

Just help yourself […] if you're white. *If you're not white, I'm sorry, the world is not fair […] but get a white friend. Ask them to steal for two like they're pregnant.*
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 16)

Nabil also touches on immigration as a cause of crime, saying that such prejudice often arises against Muslim immigrants:

My wife's Pakistani, right. Yeah, I know. We have all kinds of people knocking on our door. Counterterrorism, immigration […] is there […].
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 12)

He also discusses his name and how it predetermines his immigrant status with all its side effects:

[…] you don't even have to be a Muslim or speak Arabic to know what the name Nabil Abdulrashid means. The name Nabil Abdulrashid basically means that my phone calls are monitored.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 50-51)

3. Reshaping of identity

In narrating their experiences of having come to terms with their hybridity, the comedians in their stories also demonstrate how this has subsequently triggered a process of identity reshaping. As can be seen from their jokes, their identity transformation occurs when they encounter new discourses that are saturated in the social context.

- **Racial Positioning**

One of the main reasons for their identity reformation was the racial fundamentalism that migrants encountered in Britain. As we have argued above, the phenomenon of racial division in Britain was a new cultural experience and discourse that some migrants of the first generation had to face after emigrating and the second generation generally had to face first during their socialisation.

Victor Patrascan talks about how racial positioning is one of the biggest issues in the identity debate in Britain. Living here he had to realise that race is one of the causes of social divisions in Britain.

This is another thing that I became when I came over here, I became white. I'm not white, I'm Romanian!
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 17)

At the same time, Victor is perplexed that his racial identity has become the main dimension of his identity and he talks about how being a white British and a white foreigner from East Europe are not the same thing. In his joke, he speaks ironically about himself and his status:

I'm a foreign knockoff […] of a white person. Do you know what I mean? I look like this so I can blend into the white western society […] but then I start talking […] and people go like, 'That's not what white people sound like. This is the bootleg version'.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 17)

Calling himself ironically a "foreign knockoff" or "bootleg version of a white person", Victor touches on the discourse of "white privilege". Speaking to the audience about this, he tries to redefine this concept and suggests that his status as a migrant from Eastern Europe turns his "whiteness" into "wasted potential".

Think about it. I can't be fully white, I have a Romanian passport. My Romanian passport takes my white privilege down a few pegs. You know what I mean, because being a white guy from Romania is like being a Rolex watch from Bangladesh. Just wasted potential.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 18)

Ginnia Cheng, a comedian from Hong Kong, reports on her experience of reinventing her identity:

I've lived here for so long now, over 10 years that I have fully integrated. In fact, I have become such an upper-middle-class white person.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 8)

In this joke, she speaks about the confusion about her self-identity after the process of acculturation in the host community. In doing so, she mocks the process of full integration in the host community, as the process of a migrant's acceptance in the host community is usually predetermined by his or her class and ethnic background. Thereby not being 'white from the upper class' takes away the possibility of full integration in the UK and marginalises the migrant. Nevertheless, Ginnia represents that identity can be fluid and go beyond solely racial or class identifications.

Joshua accurately highlights the essence of the discourse on identity in different social contexts and points out that race is becoming a major marker of social division in Britain, on a par with football:

So in India when it comes to social divides, religion is a big thing. Like how you have race and football clubs here.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 10)

Ginnia, while stating her confusion about self-identity, also jokes about how integration has become more difficult in recent years because of the rise of nationalism and racism:

But it's actually been a little bit difficult to integrate over the past couple of years. Because racist attacks against Asians have actually gone up by 80 percent. And you can trust that statistic because Asians calculated.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 11)

A distinctive narrative that relates to racial discourse is 'I met a racist the other day'. Many comedians refer to their personal experiences of encountering racism in Britain using this form of humour. Joshua Bethania talks about his experiences living in Britain and the

permanent presence of racial discrimination. He ridicules it and deliberately refers to his sad experience as a positive one, which is of course bitterly ironic. Joshua also mocks the common discourse and xenophobic attacks that migrants in Britain are supposed to "fully integrate". He describes his experience of meeting one such proponent who shares this narrative:

I've been in the country a few years. I've met a lot of interesting people. You have such quirky terms for various people. Um, and I met this guy who you would probably call a racist, I guess. Which is pretty cool. You know, he goes: 'Immigrants who come in this country need to be more English'. Which is obviously a subtext for being more white.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 14, 15)

Faced with racial fundamentalism in Britain, many comedians, also use the narrative 'I am (not) a racist'. Such an aspect can be interpreted as the mimicry of which Bhabha (1994) spoke. Some of them even claim in their performances that they themselves are racists. This humor technique is typical for stand-up comedy. It can also be seen as a discursive practice which opens a role reversal with the dominant majority and gives the marginalised minority the opportunity to establish symbolic power in the discourse.

Nabil, at the very beginning of the performance with the self-introduction, declares that he is a "racist" himself:

Hi, my name is Nabil and I'm a racist. I'm glad some of you find it funny. My neighbours hate me but I don't know why cuz they all look alike to me.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 1)

In Nabil's joke it can be seen, how Bakhtin's theory of the carnival works, where the jester can take on the role of the ruler. By presenting himself as a racist, Nabil seems to swap places with the dominant national identity and speaks on its behalf. Joshua jokes that he is not a racist:

So coincidentally I've got another brown friend. I mean, I'm not racist, I have brown friends.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 21)

Joshua here also seems to mock different stereotypes. On the one hand, the one that ethnic minorities stick around in their diasporas. And on the other hand, it sort of mimics those who deliberately emphasise that they have no racial prejudice, which is not true.
Moreover, many comedians mock identity politics or politically correct language with regard to ethnic minorities. This, for example, is how another Indian comedian, Ashish Suri, begins his show:

I know the thing about becoming brown […] Becoming what?! Three years ago, when I turned brown […] (Crowd laughs.) The thing about being shady is […] (crowd laughs) well, non-Caucasian […].
(Transcript 7, Ashish Suri, Pos. 1)

By addressing such topics, comedians reflect on how with racial positioning, language is becoming censored and how racial social debate is becoming absurd. Also, many comedians touch on political correctness and language taboos with mockery, as they see that language censorship and the rejection of racist terms do not change the situation with regard to racial prejudice at all.
Ginnia's stand-up comedy shows where she candidly talks about her immigrant experience in Britain are perceived by many as crude or even racist.

I was dating this white guy recently who came to a couple of my gigs and he was like 'Why are you so racist towards white people? I love you, marry me.'
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 13)

Here, she also mocks her British ex-boyfriend, portraying him as not being the smartest guy who first calls her a racist, but even after such a rude statement, he still tries to date her. Meanwhile, she jokes about being a racist, but her form of racism is not based on racial definitions, but on other categorisations. She makes fun of the fact that Asia has its own form of 'racism':

Babe, I'm Asian. I'm racist towards everybody equally. For example, I don't care if you're white or Chinese. I will look straight in the eye and tell you that your zodiac system is shit.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 13)

Victor, starting his discourse on racism with a philosophical insight into how absurd this social divide is, suddenly ends with a crude joke, exposing himself as a racist in relation to his friend from China:

I have a friend from China, he's supposed to be a different race. It doesn't make sense, his skin colour is exactly like mine. Why is he a different race? Because he looks like he's sneezing all the time? But he's my friend! He's just a guy from China.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 21)

Such a harsh statement makes a mockery of those people, who first deny racism, but then end up with racist ideas. The joke is an example of what Mintz (1985) was referring to, that stand-up comedians often overstep the social norms as they are in a privileged position as jesters. Such jokes have a function of 'ritual' where the comedian, levels all those present at the performance and attempts to get rid of social boundaries at least for the duration of the show.

- **Colonial discourse**

Another discourse that becomes a resource for redefining identity is the colonial discourse. In essence, comedians demonstrate how the colonial past can be reinterpreted and become a kind of empowerment mechanism in the representation of one's identity. Athena, mocking Trump and his voters, uses a reference to the colonial past:

I don't like the way people are getting angry about Trump. I think people are getting too emotional. I really want to hate him but he makes white people so angry. I kind of like that. Donald, what's your secret? We've been trying it for 300 years.
(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 10)

With this joke she points to the division into 'us' and' others', the 'black community' and the 'white community'. Migrants coming from the Commonwealth countries emphasised that the division between the colonizer and the colonized is still an agenda when discussing their identity there. Ginnia, while talking about her immigrant experience and that of her father, also uses a reference to Hong Kong as a former colony.

My parents are actually from the next British colony, Hong Kong. My dad actually also studied here in the UK but he moved back and I chose to stay here. Which makes me a first-generation-disappointment.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 4)

Joshua Bethania, an immigrant from India, says that when he encounters discrimination against migrants and ethnic minorities in Britain he tries to understand these people. Hence, he sort of reverses himself and speaks from the perspective of a racist person who relates to the dominant national identity. In the end, it becomes clear that this positioning is only a mimicry and a mockery. Instead of really justifying the racist stance, he eventually brings it to the point of making the racist understand what it means to be in the role of the colonized.

Normally I would have gotten offended but this year I've been practising empathy and I thought to myself, you know, all of this aggression is coming from somehow logical thinking, right? Because can you imagine if someone came into your country and forced their culture, refused to learn the language, started stealing your things, got into your political structure, started ruling you for years and years, and introduced a communal divide that would last for decades and decades and when they finally left, they left with the stolen things, put them in a display in a museum for you to come and see. That would be insane, wouldn't it? I see there are blank faces, so for those who went to an English school that was a joke on colonialism.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 16)

Elsewhere, Joshua turns to the theme of colonialism, describing his experience of going to a restaurant with his friend. The comedian seems to allude to Britain's long history of racism and imperialism.

So he's someone who doesn't really eat a lot and tends to starve every time I go out with him [...] So I don't like to see a brown man dying of hunger. What am I? Winston Churchill?
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 22)

Ginnia addresses the colonial and political discourse and mocks how the Western media may have created an image of the British in Hong Kong in the past. She also points to former Prime Minister Boris Johnson as an example of political sentiment with a hint of nationalism in the present.

But you know Mr. Bean was so popular in Hong Kong that sometimes I just think there's this whole generation of older people out there whose only two interactions with the Brits were either a terrifying colonizer or bumbling idiot. They just didn't live long enough to see a British prime minister. Could in fact be both!
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 5)

- **Migrant vs. local**

Transmigrants experience exclusionary discourses which are normally coming from a dominant homogeneous society. Often these discourses are based on the division between 'us' and 'others', ethnic minority and national majority, migrants and locals.

Victor says that before he came to live in Britain he did not have to think about his nationality. In the, for him, new British context, he became an ethnic minority and therefore he had to rethink and negotiate his identity. Victor comments that after immigration he perceives his identity not as fixed and singular, but as multiple. He acknowledges that the transcultural experience had an impact on the formation of his identity in this sense:

It's quite a new concept for me being Romanian, because, um, when I was back home I was just a guy. Left Romania, became Romanian, came over here, became Eastern European. I dreamed that one day I'm gonna go to the United States and become Mexican. *Sometimes I understand culture like it gives us a little bit of flavour right? Sometimes I think about myself. What is it about me that is me as an individual and what is it about me that is me as a Romanian?*
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 4, 15)

Here he refers to the status of immigrants in different countries being different. Victor also goes on to suggest that Mexican migrant status in the US may be assumed as an advantage over Romanian migrant status or as he says Eastern European migrant status in the UK.

Joshua Bethania, suggests that the definition of immigrant status in Britain is also linked to racial positioning:

I'm what's, um, considered an immigrant or an expat if I was white.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 5)

Joshua, at the beginning of his speech, also comments on his ethnic background, which usually leads to people recognising him as an immigrant and assuming where he comes from:

People who don't see colour, I am brown. But, you know, being brown in the UK, people make assumptions of where I am from.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 3)

Nabil brings up a joke that often when he returns from Nigeria back to the UK, he feels the contrast, where people judge you generally based on your appearance or your name.

You come back to England, you deal with all these issues again because everybody has in their mind what everyone is supposed to look like. My name is Nabil Abdulrashid and I get stereotyped all the time. I'm Nigerian and I've got a name like this.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 34)

Also, first-generation migrants interestingly describe a moment when they had certain perceptions of the British before their immigration. Victor seems to emphasise that the division into migrants and non-migrants is meaningless.

I remember the first time I came here I actually thought that I'm going to meet a new species of a human being. The British! The people who took over the world [...] and I've met you and you're as boring as everyone else. That's the disappointing thing about meeting people from a different culture. They're interesting for like two days but then they become like everyone else.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 13)

Political discourse is also the subject of jokes from a second-generation migrant comedian, Romesh Ranganathan. He is commenting on the rise of nationalism and the growing popularity of the right-wing parties as the UK Independence Party (UKIP). He says:

What the hell's going on? I mean the UKIP's got a million votes in the last election. I think, Jesus, what does that mean for my family?
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 17)

Further, he jokes about what it would be like if he happened to understand these right-wing populists and their voters:

[…] and then I was realizing I'm misjudging the UKIP. I don't know anything about them. I need to educate myself, need to find out about them. *So I did. I went to the UKIP's website and checked them out. Do you know what? Very nice website. Nice color scheme, easy to navigate menus […] they've got some values.* *Start looking at the policies, I'm thinking, 'There's not a lot of shit here I disagree with'. You know, they want to take tax off the minimum wage. I'm in complete agreement with that.*
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 17-18)

Eventually, he jokes about gradually becoming in solidarity with the values and directions of the party and reaches the point where he becomes sort of racist towards his own mother:

I'll get to the end of it, I read all the policies, I thought, 'Fuck, I think, I'm UKIP'. *I phoned up my mom, said to mom, 'Honestly, what have you really contributed?' And I'll be honest with you, I wasn't that happy with her answers. That's the honest truth. She might have to go.*
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 18-19)

The joke is also an example of how identity is not something prescribed and fixed. Certainly, the joke shows the exaggeration and ridicule of those who embrace the views of nationalism. However, by playing the role of a homogeneous national identity attacker, he demonstrates

that as a second-generation migrant, his identity is in the process of being redefined and repositioned.

4.2 Identity negotiation strategies

In order to answer research question 2, on *how stand-up comedians discuss and represent their transnational identities in their performances*, the following discursive strategies used by stand-up comedians were found.

1. Opening self-introduction

Each stand-up comedy performance usually begins with a short self-presentation to the audience. It was found that almost all comedians used this moment as an establishment of their 'comic persona'. Moreover, they use the very first line to indicate the transnational character of their identity.

The very first utterance was usually based on personal characteristics of cultural identity such as name, ethnicity, race, religion, nationality, accent and country of origin and was accompanied by a joke about it. Some comedians used general terms related to their nationality, and ethnicity or indicated their immigrant status instead of presenting their name.

Hello everybody, oh yes, I'm a Romanian.	(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 1)
Hi, my name is immigrant.	(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 1)
Hey guys, you have no idea how grateful I am to be here tonight in the first world.	(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 1)
Hey, guys, um, my name is Joshua. You might recognize my accent from your bank's customer support.	(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 1)
I know the thing about becoming brown. Becoming what?!	(Transcript 7, Ashish Suri, Pos. 1)

Some comedians are speaking openly about their transcultural issues at the beginning of their show:

This is the problem I've got. I'm British and I'm proud of that but I'm also proud of my Sri Lankan heritage […] but I cannot connect with it […]

(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 1)

This general pattern of self-presentation, where comedians immediately communicate their transnationality may suggest that the question of identity is important for them and that issues of hybridity strongly affect their lives. Also communicating their personal experiences and marginalized status allows them to connect with an audience who can, through humour, better understand transmigrants' problems or recognize their own experience.

2. Jokes about personal transcultural experiences

Comedians, however, do not leave the topic of their identity just at the beginning of the performance, but continue with this theme and elaborate on how the process of self-recognizing their multiple identities took place.

For second-generation migrants, the resource of jokes is often their childhood, where they describe how they went through the socialisation phase with their transcultural background and how this influenced the formation of their hybrid identity. For Ola, Romesh and Fatiha the stories from their childhood were accompanied by comparisons with their parents as first-generation migrants. They noted that cultural differences were a source of conflict for them in their families, as their values and lifestyle are more cosmopolitan or they feel more affiliated with the host culture than with their culture of origin. The process of deculturation was widely depicted through stereotypes about diasporas and the cultural habits of ethnic communities.

First-generation migrants have a similar narrative where they talk about their experiences of acculturation in Britain after immigrating there. The resource for their jokes was integration problems, immigrant status, lack of understanding by the host community of their culture of origin and stereotypes about their cultural identity. Some comment on how they made friends in Britain with the British. Comedians point out that this was not easy because, firstly, locals are often not at all aware of the migrants' culture and their place of origin:

I moved here about 10 years ago and sometimes I sound negative but I don't mean to. I really like it here, I've met some really lovely people, I made friends here. Sometimes people get excited and they go, 'What? You're from Romania? I know someone from Czechoslovakia!'. I don't know how that's relevant but at least their heart is in the right place.	(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 6)

[…] and I was the only African girl in my secondary school. But according to the other students I was apparently the only Pakistani they'd ever met.	(Transcript 4, Ola Labib, Pos. 4)

Secondly, they make their assumptions solely on the basis of certain national/ethnic stereotypes about the migrant country:

People come to me, people like, 'Oh, are you from India? I love the Slumdog Millionaire'. I was like, 'Good for you. I hate it'. I don't go around judging people based on movies. I'm not like, 'Oh, are you American? I love the Human Centipede'.
(Transcript 7, Ashish Suri, Pos. 5)

When talking about their transcultural experiences, comedians often give examples of how they have to deal with racism and xenophobia, such as interacting with border officers, police, etc. Fatiha gives such an example of how she usually goes through border controls with her Moroccan family:

[…] so they called an officer over and they have guns, right, and my mom turns around to me in Arabic and she's like, 'Fatiha, tell him we are Muslim we are not scared of death!'. I was like, 'Listen, yeah, you ain't scared of death and I'm shitting in my hijab'.
(Transcript 1, Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 6)

The story also provides an interesting example of how Fatiha, a second-generation migrant, and her mother, a first-generation migrant, reacted differently to this situation. Fatiha also comments that while living in Britain she has experienced many xenophobic attacks from strangers due to wearing the hijab:

I get a lot of trouble for wearing a hijab, you know. Like, I get men trying to rip it off my head and stuff like that happens a lot.
(Transcript 1, Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 7)

Another second-generation hijab-wearing migrant comedian, Ola Labib, begins her performance with a joke about how her appearance in a hijab usually immediately brings her a lot of negative islamophobic reactions from "white people":

Hi, guys. My name's Ola and for a start to be I've never been looked at by so many white people with happy expressions on their faces […] like honestly, the last time I had so many white people looking at a girl with a hijab when they refused to let you back into the country.
(Transcript 4, Ola Labib, Pos. 1)

3. Representation of identity through the mockery of common stereotypes

Another strategy used by comedians is to discuss their identity through typical stereotypes about their culture. In stand-up comedy, comedians resort to discussing stereotypes in order to distance themselves from the typical clichéd representation of them by others. In their jokes, they do not deny stereotypes about their cultural identity, but they do bring them up, acknowledge them and thus demonstrate an awareness of what others think of them. By accepting these stereotypes rather than silencing them they perform a ritual of release and resistance. Therefore their negative experiences can be ridiculed to show that their identity is much more complex and multiple than those stereotypes. At the same time, making fun of prejudices about their ethnic, national, religious and cultural identities helps them to flip the discourse about their status and to make their cultural voice heard. Humour in this sense becomes a discursive tool that helps to build dialogue and change the power imbalances imposed by some dominant groups. Stand-up comedy as a genre that uses fairly straightforward jokes with no cuts helps to level the marginalized migrant minorities with the dominant collective national identity.

Actually, I had a bit of an identity crisis when I had to register for the NHS [...] At first, I was horrified but then I was like I should just embrace this. I should just embrace this privilege of being sexually fetishized because that's one privilege white guys will never have.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 6,7)

Nabil faces stereotypes in Britain not only about his ethnicity but also about his name and religion. Nabil jokes that many people have stereotypes about what Muslims look like and that he is often not identified as a Muslim by his appearance. In his joke, he also resorts to stereotypes about migrant Muslims who work as taxi drivers:

He was like, 'Oh sorry, it's just that you don't look Muslim. I said, 'Yeah, that's cuz I've only been Muslim for two weeks. In the third week, you transform into an Uber driver'.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 44)

4. The negative portrayal of the host society and the British

In their jokes, comedians talking about their integration problems often discuss British collective national identity. As a rule, they represent the part of the population that is racist, xenophobic, islamophobic, imperialist and nationalist. Comedians portray the typical nationalists in British society in a rather negative way, mocking their intellectual abilities and aggression.

Ginnia talks about how she has to fight off racist attacks in Britain. She portrays the typical behavior of racists by showing them as rather primitive people. She demonstrates this through some of the characteristics of national identity and the connection between racist attacks and the culture of football fans who use a popular song as their football anthem.

I've actually found a really good way to stop racist attacks in England. So there's this app you can get right. I don't know how but it plays a sound that seems to just totally stop white people, no matter what they're doing […] and the sound is […] (Turning on the music on her smartphone which is the song "Sweet Caroline" from Neil Diamond).
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 12)

Nabil talks about how racism can unexpectedly come even in close circles. His story is about a close friend who turns out to be a racist. Nabil points out how the racist attitudes in the family can later manifest themselves in future generations:

My friend Darren […] his father, was the worst type of racist. For those of you who wonder what the worst type of racist is [...] the worst type of racist starts a statement with, 'I'm not trying to be racist but…'. And then proceeded to say the most racist things possible. He said, 'I'm not trying to be racist but…', he was like, '(shouting) […]

Somalians and the Bangladeshis need to fuck off back to Pakistan!'. It just comes naturally. Should be a statue of you holding the Daily Mail.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 3-4)

5. Criticism and resistance to anti-immigrant discourses

In their performances, comedians often use the technique of responding to exclusionary discourses that they have encountered. Many of them point out that the British social context is full of such discourses and therefore transmigrants experience social inequality because of their migrant status or their ethnicity.

There is a narrative among comedians that their status as 'in-between' causes negative reactions and rejection of the dominant national identity. Comedians respond to common anti-immigrant, racist and nationalist discourses with their jokes:

You know, where he goes, 'Immigrants who come in this country need to be more English'. Which is obviously a subtext for being more white.	(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 4,5)
This guy shouted at the back he was like, 'You're stealing our jobs!'. I moved here about three years ago to steal jobs. Not from you, from the Romanians.	(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 3,6)
He found someone he didn't like, the look off and he said, 'Oy, why don't you go back to where you came from?'.	(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 11)
Where is this country coming to? [...] immigrants who don't even speak the language.	(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 10)
[...] our home office saying, 'We only want the best and the brightest to come into this country'	(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 9)
[...] the white lady was just like, 'It wasn't me..!! I don't like you! Go back to where you came from!'.	(Transcript 7, Ashish Suri, Pos. 7)

As a reaction of resistance to such stereotypes, 'I'm (not) a racist' jokes are used:

I think I am a little racist towards Northerners, though.	(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 14)
So coincidentally I've got another brown friend. I mean I'm not racist I have brown friends.	(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 21)

Or also various kinds of so-called terrorist jokes that comedians make from time to time in order to mock the prejudices that immigrants cause the high rate of criminality. For Fatiha, as a hijab-wearing comedian, this is a pretty big topic on which she uses terrorist jokes several times. Also, Joshua and Romesh use terrorist jokes as if to mock xenophobia and racism:

[...] as a stand-up comedian when you're doing a gig you've always got to time yourself. [...] So this week I was doing a gig and I couldn't find my watch, right, so I had to take my alarm clock. So I get on stage I'm like, 'Hi guys!'. I turn around, put the clock down I turn back and they're gone.	(Transcript 1, Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 10)
[...] they gave me a secret weapon. Don't worry it's not something I'm now going to detonate, all right?	(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 8)
So in the early 2000s, there was a tech boom. Um, this is not a terrorist joke. I have forgotten where I kept my backpack. That is a terrorist joke.	(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 7,13)

Romesh is also sarcastically bullying by using almost all the 'pain points' of racists and xenophobes, articulating the most typical stereotypes about immigrants:

I'll move to your neighborhood, I'll take one of your jobs, I'll shag one of your women and I will bring the property prices right down. That's just sometimes I think I'm having more children just to piss off the neighbors.
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 15)

By mocking such discourses and showing their absurdity from humorous perspectives in stand-up comedy, migrants assert that cultural identity cannot be something fixed, it is multiple and constantly in the process of construction. In this sense, humour is indeed used by immigrants as a tool to resist exclusionary stereotypes and discourses.

6. Mimicry

Bhabha (1994) noted that in addition to stereotyping, we can also observe a strategy of mimicry in the discourse between the colonizer and the colonized or the homogeneous and hybrid identity. Mimicry is "[...] exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas" (Huddart, 2005, p. 39). Mimicry is indeed one of the strategies comedians employ to resist stereotypes about themselves, in which they may represent behavior and typical features of a homogenous national identity. In the performances of comedians from the stand-up comedy initiatives which were studied, there were several such jokes in which migrant comedians try on the role of a typical xenophobic or racist British person.

Victor demonstrates this in a joke about a Romanian shop he discovered in London. He narrates here with mimicry:

I was so excited when they opened because I could finally buy Romanian stuff that I missed at home. [...] I grab the stuff that I miss from home, I go to pay. [...] A Turkish guy. He didn't even speak Romanian. Where is this country coming to? When you can't even have a Romanian shop but are being taken over by fucking immigrants who don't even speak the language. You know I had to speak English with a guy. Can you imagine that? In a Romanian shop!
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 9)

Nabil employs a mimicry strategy in his joke, demonstrating the kind of behavior he encounters when people cannot pronounce his 'non-native-sounding name' (Ahmad, 2020). He does the reverse situation where he parodies such people and positions as they would have been in his own role:

I found out my friend Darren who's white by the way, [...] am I saying that properly? Darren, sorry these Caucasian names are very difficult on my tongue, you know.
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 2)

And also, in relation to his colleague, he applies this strategy again, also mimicking those people who are trying to use politically correct language when talking about ethnic differences:

I was working in an office and two of my colleagues were arguing. One of them was Nigerian […] very Nigerian. The other guy was [...], um, I don't know what the politically correct term is [...] a color neutral? [...] melanin challenged?. His name was Dave. By the way, am I saying that properly?
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 27)

Romesh applies mimicry by taking on the position of right-wing party supporters:

I phoned up my mom and said, 'Honestly, what have you really contributed?' And I'll be honest with you, I wasn't that happy with her answers. That's the honest truth. She might have to go.
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 19)

Mimicry, as Bhabha (1994) points out, is ambivalent. On the one hand, it is a strategy that makes the dominant majority feel uncomfortable, on the other hand, mimicry is also a statement that the minority, as well as the dominant majority, has some anxiety about their differences. Indeed, by employing this strategy, comedians certainly draw attention to the problems of integration they face and confirm that some differences in cultural identities become an obstacle and a division between 'us' and 'others'.

7. Denote social divisions and differentiate themselves from 'others'

Also, transmigrants are in a process of constant redefinition of their identity, embracing their minority status, and in turn, trying to set boundaries of their identity. They start emphasizing their differences and distinguishing between themselves or someone similar to themselves and others. Transmigrants are also beginning to rethink racial positioning, representing their status of a minority as an advantage. Therefore they often negotiate their identity within divisions into colonizer and self, 'us' and 'they', or for example into 'white' and 'black communities'. In doing so, again, they promote exclusionary discourses about migrants threatening national identity and like this, mocking them.

For example, the common narrative used is that ‘white people will soon have to try on the role of a minority’:

You’ll be the minority soon, wouldn’t ya? This carries up.	(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 15)
I'm pretty much a minority wherever I go. That's something white people will find out soon.	Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 11-12

Also, migrant comedians, by applying the rules of racial fundamentalism, separate themselves from those who supposedly deny racism. Nabil talks about how racism can derive from left-wing-supporters and -activists and Athena Kugblenu talks that ‘white people will never understand the black community’ because of the existing ‘white privilege’.

So now a lot of tending to say that racist people can only be right-wing and ignorant. So ‘I’m-left-wing-liberal’ could be really racist too. Like you know (Imitates people who speak with piety, puts his hand to his chest and rolls his eyes.). Like, you know, ’I know everything there is to know about black culture! I’ve been to Brixton twice’. You know, I know everything there is to know about Islam. I’ve eaten hummus and couscous.	(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 36)
I think black people who are in mixed-race relationships are really brave and I tell you why. You know, once you go black [...] (audience shouting back ‘...you never go back’). Yeah, normally people shout that. You obviously read all your reading materials, your ‘Black Lives’ materials.	(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 3)

Nabil shows how those who hold left-wing political views often use language taboos to show that they are not racist. He suggests that this kind of cultural misunderstanding or as he says ‘racism’ is not only found among those who openly support anti-migrant politics as right-wingers, but he finds ignorance often among opposite left-wing activists who on the surface support ethnic minorities but have absolutely no in-depth knowledge of the culture.
He also uses the regional stereotype of Brixton as an area of London with a high percentage of migrants living there. Also “[m]edia images of Brixton, for example, portray the area and those who live there as threatening, aggressive and culturally ‘other’”. (Howarth, 2002, p.

238). Nabil jokingly compares such cultural learning about black culture through a visit to Brixton twice with learning about Islamic culture through food.

Comedians say that politically correct anti-racist or post-colonial language does not resolve the issue of racism because people do not fully understand the experiences of the colonized past. Athena argues this through her experience at work when she received a stupid question from her colleague:

[…] white people do fascinate me though. You do! And I think the way for us to get on better with each other is to have conversations. Sometimes when people talk to me they say stupid things. I had a normal job, I went to my kitchen to make a hot beverage. Trevor from accounts comes in, looks at me and says, 'Isn't it funny how it's not okay to say black coffee anymore?'. News to me, Trevor. Pretty sure black coffee is the most accurate use of the word black we've got in existence today.
(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 5, 6)

Athena goes on to say that she decided to make a joke about her colleague who raised the issue of racism without understanding the meaning of it:

[…] so I said, 'Trevor, you are absolutely right, you can't say black coffee anymore. This is what you're supposed to say when you want to drink a black coffee, so you go to the barista and you say, 'I'll have a white coffee, please' and then you'll have a coffee without privilege'. I like the idea that Trevor was wandering around London asking for coffee without privilege and the barista's going to spit in it.
(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 6)

Employing Hall's (1994) definitions, it can be said that for many comedians, the question of collective 'black identity' comes up as a way of resisting social inequalities against ethnic minorities in Britain.

8. Demonstration of solidarity

Each of the comedians notes that the social context of Britain with it's social inequalities and the discriminatory position of ethnic minorities and migrants have quite markedly affected their process of identity positioning. In attempting to change the framing of social positioning, comedians recognize that a critique of stereotypes and exclusionary discourses is

essential. Inclusion in such social discourses should also take into account their voice as migrants who have their own experiences of interacting with different cultures.

Some of the comics seek to emphasize that xenophobia and racism only confirm the fears of national identity and its morbid quest to defend its homogeneity. As in Bhabha's (1994) theory, by articulating repetitive stereotypes and exclusionary discourses, comedians who are hybrid identity holders make it clear that it is only a fetishisation of homogeneity in those who fixate on their national identity. Many comedians, while expressing their cultural experience through humor, also often talk seriously about issues of discrimination. In doing so, they express a position of solidarity, using stand-up comedy as an arena for voicing a critique of serious social problems and supporting all other immigrants.

As Victor from Romania describes, he has become more aware in Britain that ethnicity can divide society. Victor says that redefining his identity through the prism of race puzzles him and he says that ethnic prejudices only bring problems in society:

But this is the thing, man, that I've discovered like race is bullshit, right? [...] I don't know why this is the thing, I think it probably comes from religion, right? Because religion pretends that it's about bringing people together but I think it does exactly the opposite.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 21, 22)

In doing so, he draws a comparison between racial discrimination in Romania against Roma people and in Britain against Romanians:

If you want to see racism, there is racism, go to Romania, see how Romanians treat gypsies [...] or stay here and see how they trade gypsies.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 20)

The comedians also talk about the state of xenophobia in which many, who advocate a national identity, find themselves. Athena concludes by trying to look at the migration situation in Britain from a different angle, trying to swap the power distribution between marginalized immigrants and collective national identities:

White privilege, very hard concept to understand. [...] You know you're not called Muhammad so your CV didn't end up in the bin. Less likely to get stopped and searched

and if you do get stopped and searched and you go in front of a judge less likely to get a custodial sentence. *[...] you know what? We're in a hostile environment to immigrants but it's white British people I genuinely feel sorry for the most. [...] Britain, you need us more than we need you!*
(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 7-9)

Many comedians also provide arguments through jokes that advocating homogeneity mainly creates problems for those who promote it.

How can I steal a job if it's already vacant? I think immigrants do jobs no one else does. So if you don't trust me, tell me when is the last time Tom from Essex sold you a kebab? Never.
(Transcript 10, Vlad Illich, Pos. 7)

9. Interaction with the audience, using informal language and rude jokes

As previously stated, the stand-up comedy genre is one of those types of comedic performance where the distance between the audience and the performer is reduced and the atmosphere is quite informal. Comedians often use different communication strategies, such as entering into a dialogue with the audience, commenting on audience reactions or even commenting on the audience itself. Performers obviously have the symbolic power and the authority to talk about anything without censorship. A comic simultaneously shows his marginality, and his inferiority, but it also gives him the privilege of saying everything as it is, even the crudest and most socially unacceptable.

Rude jokes, insulting the audience, and using foul language are inherent in the style of some comedians. Being a minority and having a migrant status can add even more rights to the comedian's role as a taboo-breaker.

We found evidence of this in several performances. The rude jokes, crude comments, and obscene expressions become an instrument to draw attention to such sensitive topics as social inequality, discrimination and stereotypes. This also confirms the fact that stand-up comedy is a 'third space' where migrants can feel free to express themselves on the issues that matter most to them and also to resist and challenge discriminatory discourses.

Ashish engages in a dialogue with the audience, discussing his ethnic identity:

I'm brown. Why are you cheering? You're white. (Response from the audience: That was me!) Oh, are you white? Oh, the white lady was just like, 'It wasn't me..!! I don't like you! Go back to where you came from!'. Every joke is a trap, that's how I get the racists. Now you're chill.
(Transcript 7, Ashish Suri, Pos. 7,8)

Romesh, while telling his story about the name his parents secretly gave him, suddenly uses a swear word directed at the laughing audience:

[…] my first name is not Romesh. Romesh is my middle name. My first name is Jonathan. (Imitating laugh in the audience.) Go fuck yourselves, all right?! But it is Jonathan, right? That's what it says on my birth certificate.
(Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 9)

In this way, Romesh probably is emphasizing that although he is joking about his childhood story, his experience was quite traumatic for him and should be taken seriously.

Ginnia, in turn, comments on her 'racism' towards those from the northern part of Britain, also using foul language:

He is from somewhere called Hartlepool, which is translated to southern English, in the middle of fucking nowhere.
(Transcript 9, Ginnia Cheng, Pos. 14)

10. Non-verbal communication cues

Although stand-up comedy is a genre where humor is conveyed through verbal expressions, comedians often also use visual, sound and body language cues in their performances. With them, they portray their transcultural identity, mock stereotypes about their culture of origin or represent their host community.

Most interestingly, the comedians perform in their everyday clothing, without wearing any stage costumes. This tends to create credibility and an informal, trusting atmosphere between the performer and the audience. For some comedians, however, their casual appearance reflects their cultural identity. By wearing a hijab, Ola and Fatia represent their affiliation and

religious values. Also, openly commenting on their hijab and even sneering at their transcultural identity, they certainly challenge many cultural stereotypes.

One time we went to France and we were coming back right and they were being really shitty with us at customs, I just don't know why […] (playing with her hijab).
(Transcript 1, Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 5)

In addition to their clothing, comedians make extensive use of gestures and impersonation techniques to represent their transcultural experience. In addition to the visual aspects of non-verbal communication, comedians often resort to sound effects, more specifically the portrayal of different accents. This trope is often used when it comes to comparing cultures, or typical stereotypes about their culture of origin.

[...] so just like walking through the airport, bumping into someone and, 'bah-bha-bhab-ba'! (imitating Sri Lankan accent). I have to say 'I'm so sorry mate, I can barely understand Glaswegian.	(Tran 2_ Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 4)
[…] so North Africans and Arabs have problems pronouncing the letter 'p'. They can't say it so instead of the letter 'p', they say 'b'. [...] But my dad he's the worst. He's like,'Take your brother to the football bitch'. Don't be calling people that is bloody rude, isn't it?	(Transcript 1, Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 16, 17)
[…] 'Oh, it's your name? Tell me, where are you from? The name sounds a bit to me… a bit… how do I say... um… umm… Muslim'.	(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 41)

Nabil uses this technique in his joke about arrogant but ignorant racists who hold left-wing political views and try to use politically correct language and mimic their manner of speaking. Some comedians, by imitating certain accents or manners of speaking, either make it clear that they are aware of stereotypes about their culture, or they emphasize certain negative traits of the host society.

4.3 The first- and the second-generation

To answer the research question of *what similarities and differences in the representation of transcultural identity can be found between second-generation and first-generation transmigrants*, several findings were drawn.

- **Key differences**

When it comes to the second generation, even though they were born in Britain, almost everyone talks about their origins as if they were from there. When commenting on their ethnic heritage they often use the formulation, 'I am from Britain/I am British…but I am also from…':

My name is Fatiha. So I come from the deep, deep middle east of Hackney, and I'm also Moroccan.	(Transcript 1, Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 1)
I'm from Ghana and I'm from India.	(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 12)
I'm actually not from around here. Yeah, I'm from Portsmouth. I actually came from a very strict black African upbringing.	(Transcript 4, Ola Labib, Pos. 3)

The first generation usually uses the definition of 'an immigrant' as a representation of themselves. In doing so, they usually emphasize their immigrant status at the very beginning of the performance.

I'm what's, um, considered an immigrant or an expat if I was white.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 5)

Also, some discuss their identity not only in terms of national differences but also in terms of regional differences:

[…] my friend I'm, West African	(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 48)
[…] I was the only African girl	(Transcript 4, Ola Labib, Pos. 4)

Or within religious definitions:

Yeah, Muslims have got dating apps. So you've got Tinder we've got Minder[…]	(Transcript 1, Fatiha El Ghorri, Pos. 11)
I said, 'Yeah, that's because I am a Muslim'.	(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 42)

In terms of ethnic definitions:

People, who don't see color, I am brown.	(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 3)
I know, I'm a big black guy.	(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 45)
I'm brown. Why are you cheering? You're white.	(Transcript 7, Ashish Suri, Pos. 7)
I'll be letting down my community. Like black conservatives are doing a pretty good job of that already.	(Transcript 3, Athena Kugblenu, Pos. 4)

Deculturation becomes one of the main topics for second-generation immigrants. As a rule, they refer to their personal experience of cultural differences with their society of origin. For example, this is often expressed in comparing themselves to their parents. The comics also reflect that in problems of communicating with the ethnic community of their origin. Intergenerational conflicts are often present in families with first and second-generation migrants, e.g. a big difference in values as Ola told her story of her mother's strictly Islamic upbringing.

Second-generation migrants often point out in their performances that they are not fully accepted by either society. In particular, they deplore the fact that they cannot be fully accepted in the society of origin. They demonstrate that their belonging to their culture of origin still remains and plays an important role in their lives. In other words, they understand their hybrid identity as a transcultural capital:

[…] I'm also proud of my Sri Lankan heritage.	Transcript 2, Romesh Ranganathan, Pos. 1)
[…] with my roots I began to appreciate things about Nigerian culture I never used to appreciate. I don't do jokes	(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 6)

about, you know, friends or how my parents beat me. There's more to being African than delicious food and child abuse.	

Nabil also speaks highly of the collective identity of Nigerians, discussing the colonial past:

[...] we always think about growing up Niger...and you get taught to look at the worst possible scenario and prepare for it. [...] but we have high spirit...
(Transcript 5, Nabil Abdulrashid, Pos. 25)

For first-generation migrants, the tendency to refer to their country of origin in a negative way, as a third-world country, has been noted. As well, they ridicule their culture by mentioning certain stereotypes. Victor refers to orthodox Christianity, which is dominant in Romania:

And I can give you an example: I grew up Christian orthodox. Has anyone else grown up in the correct religion? Oh, guys, you're gonna burn in hell.
(Transcript 6, Victor Patrascan, Pos. 22)

Also, many of the first-generation migrants point out that their country has its own problems of division and racism:

India's got its own brand of racism as well. Where we're racist to each other despite being of the same race. So when I was a kid people used to ask me, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' and I'd say, 'I want to be white'.
(Transcript 8, Joshua Bethania, Pos. 17)

The first generation of migrants tends to employ a narrative where they demonstrate their acculturation to British culture. However, they admit that integration processes are very difficult for them due to the rapidly growing resistance to migrants from national collective identity and the consequent discrimination against ethnic minorities. Through the demonstration of their personal experiences, comedians report that transcultural processes have strongly affected their identities and thus they have had to undergo several identity

transformations in the course of their lives. For some, this process of identity construction is still relevant and many of them realize that in different social contexts, their sense of self depends strongly on how they are perceived by others.

- **Key Similarities**

Both first and second generations often represent their identity through the narrative of the hybridization of their identity. At the same time, they point out that due to transcultural experiences, they cannot identify themselves as belonging only to one culture. Some say that their transmigration experience had a strong impact on their identity construction as they had to face the sense of being a minority based on ethnic, religious and national criteria when entering a new social context. The situation of transmigrants, who are in a hybrid position 'in-between' and have ties with both the host society and the society of origin, makes them in many ways find themselves in a process of constant reshaping of their identities.

Both second and first generations talk about their identities in terms of social inequalities and the hostility of the socio-political context in Britain around the status of migrants and ethnic minorities. All studied texts reflect on the discourse around the issue of racial positioning and racism. Each of the comedians notes that in recent times they have felt that racial identification has become a major point of discussion about their identities. However, unlike migrants from former British colonies, the colonial discourse seems to be new to migrants from Eastern Europe as there were no such negotiations in their countries. They communicate this in their jokes about not fully accepting the concept of white privilege, as they still face various problems in integration. They communicate this, for example, in their jokes about not fully grasping the concept of 'white privilege'.

Finally, comedians acknowledge that identity positioning is a complex process which largely determines the power distribution in society. Having immigrant status not only can be seen negatively. Although it makes them vulnerable in many ways, it also gives them an opportunity to set a mechanism for social change in the British context. Since this context is largely defined by a colonial past, resistance to collective national identity, racial positioning and discrimination attempts to impose inequality.

5. Conclusion

National states quite often resort to negative stereotypes against migrants, labelling the stigmatisation of 'immigrants' and thus seeking to marginalise them. Stereotypes often based on differences, i.e. ethnic, racial, religious, cultural etc.

Meanwhile, "[m]igration has become much more diverse in terms of the origins of migrants" (Arango, 2000, p. 291 quoted in Czaika and de Haas, 2017, p. 284). The reconceptualisation

of migration flows under the transnational order has led to the emergence of the new terms transmigration and transmigrant.

Transmigrants cannot simply be considered marginalised immigrants or labour migrants in the host society. They are often fluent in the language, have a cosmopolitan lifestyle, achieve a high social and economic status and demonstrate other elements of integration in the host culture. Their network is not limited to diaspora ties. Many of them were already born in this country and become second-generation migrants or have been living there almost since their birth (1.5-generation). Nevertheless, they do not recognise a pattern of full assimilation into the culture of residence but maintain at least some social and cultural ties with the home society. Even though they may possess two or more cultural repertoires at the same time, they are still targets of stereotypes and may be stigmatised. In other words, their hybrid status makes it impossible for them to be accepted either in the society of origin or in the society in which they reside.

Among engaging in transnational practices on a daily basis, transmigrants also experience a process of transculturation and thus do not completely break ties with their society of origin, but equally become fully integrated or actively involved in the process of acculturation in the host community. They experience a sense of belonging to both one and the other society, a condition that Bhabha (1994) refers to as a state of hybridity or a state in-between.

Given such a complex social context, it can also be said that the understanding of identity cannot be tied to a single aspect, such as nationality. Hall (1994) points out that given the emergence of transnational consciousness, it is worth paying special attention to cultural identity as an intersection of different individual and collective identifications. We no longer speak of identities as fixed and singular but instead define individuals as having multiple identities which are in a constant process of being reshaped and reconstructed. This usually happens through interaction with other identities and social groups within different discourses. A transmigrant constructs and reconstructs his or her identity through exposure to different discourses, or ‘cultural voices’ (Wertsch, 1991 in Esteban-Guitart and Vila, 2015, p. 19) that exist in social space.

The postcolonial paradigm indicates that the discourses of dominant cultures or nation-states tend to be constituted around the juxtaposition of identities, the division into coloniser and colonised, ‘us’ and ‘others’, majority and minority, the hybrid diaspora/transmigrant identities versus homogenous national identities. Hall also said the division occurs through the opposition of “the West and the Rest” (Hall, 2018, p. 141). Colonial discourses are

essentially a means of establishing dominance, where the colonizer controls and creates a subverted representation of the identity of the colonized. It is a one-sided representation based on stereotypes about the 'other'. This in turn creates discrimination, which is negatively drawing differences. That is, the voice of the colonised is not taken into account in this representation. Colonial discourse can also be reproduced against any migrant, even if this migrant has mastered the cultural repertoire of the host country, but still exhibits any differences.

As Esteban-Guitart and Vila say, "[i]mmigrants can successfully enter a society and live out their lives, only to be recognized – through their accent, their family, their beliefs or their skin colour – as second-class citizens by the host society and by their society of origin" (Esteban-Guitart and Vila, 2015, p. 18). However, this situation may arise not only among first-generation migrants but also among second-generation migrants. Even though they were born in the host country, they may also face discrimination based on ethnicity, race, religion, etc.

Van Dijk (2018) considered that in one way or another, there is almost always a discourse around minority groups, especially immigrants, ethnic groups, and refugees, where they are exposed as "the threatening other" (quoted in Khan et al., 2021, p. 490). Two such 'exclusionary discourses' are distinguished, one is "the racist discourse through the use of racist language, which excludes the immigrant communities" (Van Dijk 2018, quoted in Khan et al., 2021, p. 490.The second discourse is related to any other cultural differences between immigrants and the dominant society, such as religion, language, traditions, values, and practices. This discourse represents immigrants as people who, due to these cultural differences, are unable to integrate.

However, transmigrants or diasporas are characterised by the fact that they can be integrated into the community and possess the cultural repertoire of the dominant community, while still being the target of stigma or discrimination only because of their ethnic origin.

Resisting with humour and commenting on existing ethnic and racial stereotypes, "[...] satire can be used to mock and deride the weak, as well as to challenge the strong" (Bakhtin 1984, in Källstig and Death, 2021, p. 342). Transmigrants, having their hybridity shaped by transcultural processes, try to find new ways of expressing their voice and inclusion in society. As a result of neoculturation, they are empowered to create new transcultural spaces where they can negotiate and position their identities and challenge exclusionary stereotypes. From the perspective of Bhabha's postcolonial studies, stereotypes are a discursive tool for establishing dominance. In doing so, stereotypes are ambivalent and often communicate that

whoever is producing these symbols is, essentially, manifesting their fear. This fear is linked to the appearance of the other, who represents the difference. At the same time, "[t]he permissive space of the comedy club enables comedians to toy with what audience members assume are essential qualities of an ethno-racial group by telling their 'many stories' (Adichie, 2009) that exist beyond the 'single story', [...] the very act of drawing attention to the stereotyping of behavioral differences by race, 'opens up space for exceptions to be made and stereotyped behaviors disproved' (Jackson, 2001, p. 6)." (DeCamp, 2017, p. 327)

One such third space can be various creative forms in which migrants can express their voice and resist social inequalities. Comedic performance, which has been analysed in this paper, can rightly be considered one of such practices. As Bhabha points out (1996), "[a]t the point at which the coloniser presents a normalising, hegemonic practice, the hybrid strategy opens up a third space of/for rearticulation of negotiation and meaning". (quoted in Meredith, 1998, p. 3). This genre, itself essentially a hybrid genre, originated in North America and has spread and gained popularity in other cultures. Understood as a platform for expressing one's hybrid experience, it has gained popularity among many transmigrants. For example, comedians, through humour, can use various techniques to negotiate their identities.

Mimicry, for example, can be used in stand-up comedy as a tool to change discourse and debunk stereotypes. Källstig and Death, 2021, p. 342) argue that "[t]he mimic, then, in a process of imitating the colonizer but not becoming them, ruptures the colonial project from within its own cracks". Huddart also states, "[...the] mimicry is also a form of mockery, and Bhabha's post-colonial theory is a comic approach to colonial discourse because it mocks and undermines the ongoing pretensions of colonialism and empire" (Huddart, 2005, p. 39).

In fact, humour is often an important part of discourse seen as a response to the inadequacy and hostility of the rules of the homogenous order of national collective culture and colonial power. Since "narcissism and paranoia" are its main driving forces, "[...] history turns to farce and presence to 'a part' [...]" (Bhabha, 2001, pp. 418-420).

Huddart (2005, p. 24), referring to stereotypes mentions that humour as a tool to hold power in the discursive field can also be used by the coloniser along with other forms of representation: "[t]hrough racist jokes, cinematic images, and other forms of representation, the colonizer circulates stereotypes about the laziness or stupidity of the colonized population." This is why stand-up comedy often uses the technique of exaggerated mimicry, which is "[...] mockingly repeating colonial signs and highlighting the failure and contradictions of colonialism" (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 124-125, quoted in Källstig and Death, 2021, p. 344). If in mimicry the comedian reflects the attitude or opinion of the audience, it is

essentially his ritual of insult, where the point is to equalise all those present at the performance. It is a risk, but essentially a stylistic element of stand-up comedy. Transgressing social boundaries is possible and allowed comedians as they "[...] convey their criticism through humor because people are willing to listen to humor without feeling patronized [...]" (Rahman et al., 2021, p. 97). This is particularly important for the transmigrant, as it is in this form that he is able to transform his negative migrant experience into something positive or at least funny. Stand-up comedy in this sense can also be understood as a discursive practice when [...] discourse plays an important role in the processes that go towards "making up" people as new categories of people are brought into being and "new ways for people to be" (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, p. 237). Thus, "[...] discourse, power and identity are intimately connected" (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, p. 240). Albeit, "[...] humor is widely recognized as a fundamental aspect of the human experience, [...and it] has also played a vital role in the way marginalized groups comment on and mock power" (Franck, 2022, p. 1).

Looking at the context of Western Europe we can see that mass migration has become one of the main social agendas of recent years. Two main contexts that have influenced mass immigration and the formation of diasporic identities in Europe in recent years, namely the "colonial displacement" process and the "guest worker phenomenon" can be distinguished. Consequently, "[t]hese two types of displacement context are historically quite distinct, but may nevertheless produce very similar kinds of migrant experience, and indeed parallel kinds of humour" (Dunphy et al., 2010, p. 8).

The situation where both contexts have had a significant impact can be found in quite a few Western European countries, however, the UK stands out in this sense. It is not only a place where guest workers flock, but it is also a former colonial country, which in postcolonial times is most strongly affected by the issue of decolonisation. Hall (1994) and Bhabha (1994), in defining the hegemonic dominance of national identity and in relation to diasporic and hybrid identities, mainly described the British context.

Speaking also of humour, some historical forms of comedic performance, like burlesque or minstrel shows, which represented the figure of the comedian as a member of an ethnic minority, had race-based undertones. All this makes one pay close attention to stand-up comedy not only as a form of entertainment but also as a form of dialogue between different cultures and different meanings.

5.1 Answering the research questions

The following are the results that were found in this study. A brief description shows the main arguments answering the research questions of the study.

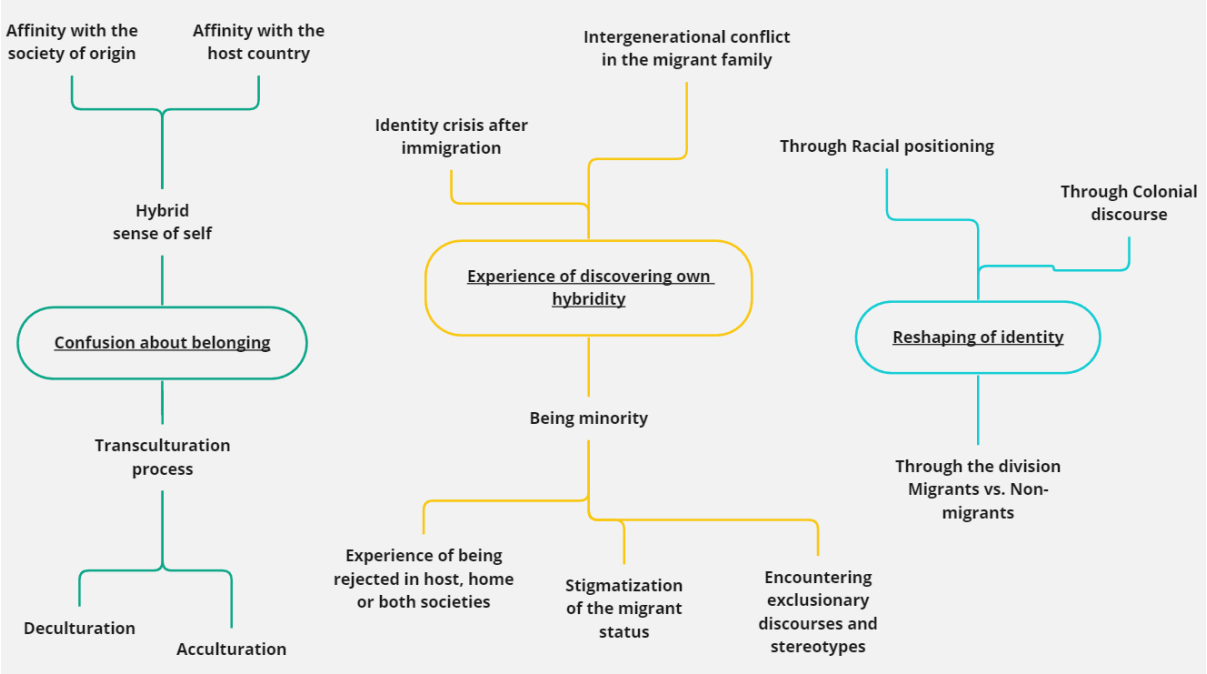
- ***RQ 1: What transcultural experiences and transcultural identifications do migrant stand-up comedians from the UK discuss in their stand-up performances?***

By conducting a discourse analysis, it was found that three common themes recur from performance to performance, namely,

1. Confusion about belonging;
2. The experience of discovering own hybridity;
3. The reshaping of identity.

Figure 1 shows the main aspects of each of the themes.

Figure 1. Common themes related to Transcultural Experience and Transcultural Identifications.



Experiencing confusion about belonging and having difficulty in their self-presentation, comedians indicate their belonging to two or more cultures at once, the society of origin and the host society. Thereby, in Hall's (1994) terms, they demonstrate the multiplicity of their identity or in Bhabha's terms, they indicate its hybrid nature. At the same time, the comedians are talking about their transcultural experience, pointing to the processes of deculturation and acculturation that Ortiz (1995) referred to.

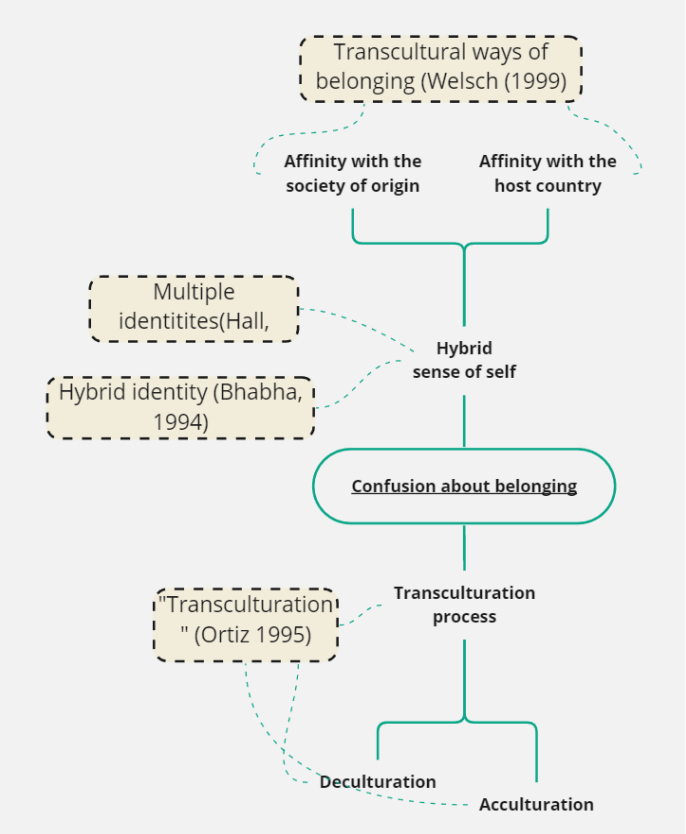
Furthermore, comedians, in their narratives, often refer to the experience of discovering their hybridity. They describe this moment as the experience of encountering the perception of

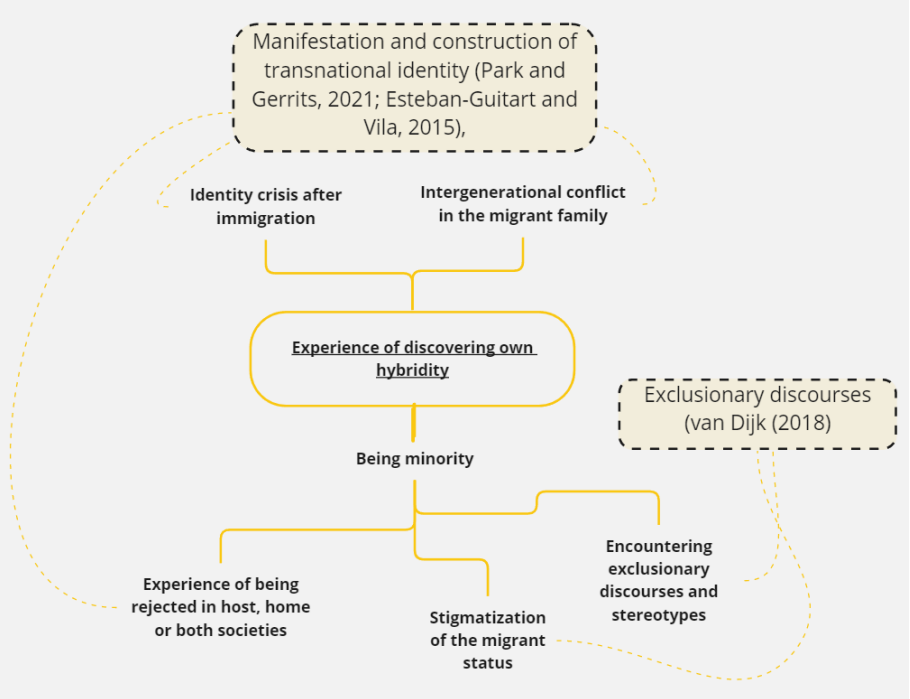
their identity through the eyes of others. This view of their identity may come from intergenerational differences in the family during socialisation, or after the moment of their immigration as a meeting with different culture. Also, migrants have experienced their hybridity along with an understanding of themselves as a minority on ethnic, cultural and other grounds. The social inequalities they face can be reflected in various exclusionary discourses, stereotypes, and stigmatization of their migrant status. This can also be expressed in an inability to be fully accepted in either society (home or host society).

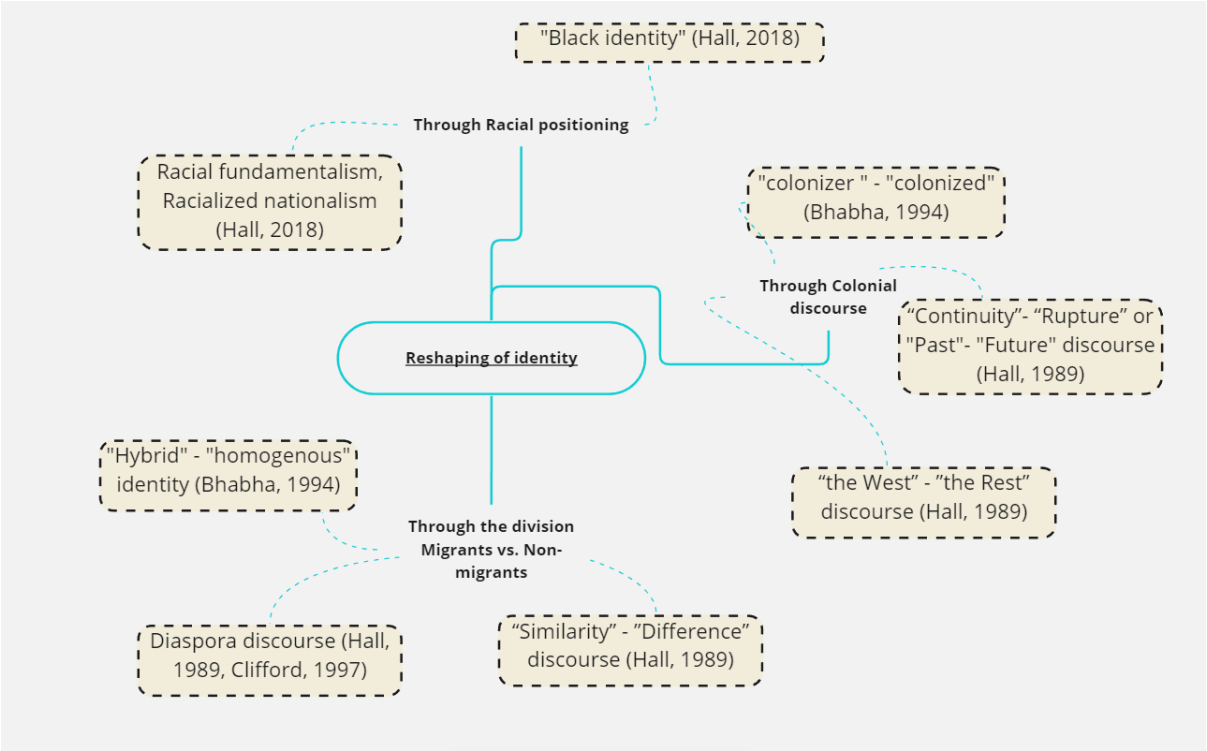
All of this triggers a mechanism for reshaping their identity that was discussed by Hall (1994). These transformations, as reported by the comedians, occur through redefining their own identity within the colonial discourse, racial positioning or the discourse on social division into migrants and non-migrants. These factors can also be found in Hall's (1989, 1994) theory, who pointed out that identity cannot be understood as fixed, but is in a constant process of reformatting. This takes place within a negotiation about the past and the future, about "similarity" - "difference", divisions into "the West"/ "the Rest", colonizer /colonized, "white and black communities", etc (Hall, 1994, 2018). **Figures 2, 3 and 4** show the connection between the main themes raised by migrant comedians and the theoretical concepts that can offer an explanation.

It can also be assumed that all three themes reflect the very sequential process of negotiating a transnational identity, from the moment of recognising hybridity, through the moment of accepting the multiple nature of identity and its constant reformatting in interaction with external discourses.

Figure 2, 3 and 4. Common themes and the linkage with the theoretical framework







- ***RQ 2: How do stand-up comedians who are migrants in the UK discuss and represent their transnational identities in their performances?***

We found the following discursive strategies used by comedians to negotiate their transnational identities. Among the main ones: Opening self-introduction, Jokes about personal transcultural experiences, Representation of identity through the mockery of common stereotypes, The negative portrayal of the host society and the British, Criticism and resistance to anti-immigrant discourses, Mimicry, Denote social divisions and differentiate themselves from 'others', Demonstrate solidarity, Interaction with the audience, using informal language and rude jokes, Non-verbal communication cues. **Figure 5** shows the main discursive practices used by British comedians with the linkage to the theoretical framework.

The wide range of discursive and performance tools, suggests that stand-up comedy as a genre has several functions at once in discussing and representing the identity of transmigrants. It can be understood both as a third space and as a form of neoculturation for transmigrants who often find themselves in a minority or excluded position both in the home and host society. The role of the comedian in stand-up comedy offers a number of avenues to express his or her unique cultural voice, to express criticism of the dominant majority through humour or to display solidarity with those who find themselves in a similar situation that is 'in-between'.

Furthermore, the jokes in stand-up comedy shows and the texts of the performances are based on the personal experiences of transmigrants, as the analysis has shown. At the same time, this genre gives them, so to say, the freedom to express personal opinions and observations, even if it does not coincide with the opinion of others or transcends social norms. Stand-up comedy, on the one hand, looks like an everyday conversation, the comedians are narrating as if it were a chat with friends. On the other hand, it is still a form of performance, with all its aspects of performativity. Migrants, by articulating in comedic form those exclusionary discourses that exist in the British social context, also perform a kind of ritual, a comic reversal, where they may try to change power imbalances and also mock stereotypes and prejudices about them. Through their 'comic persona' they can, in fact, negotiate their identity and transcultural experience in any form, without censorship (Mintz, 1985).

Figure 6 depicts the main functions of stand-up comedy as a discursive practice of transmigrants.

Figure 5. Discursive practices used by British comedians with migrant backgrounds in Stand-up comedy with the linkage to the theoretical framework.

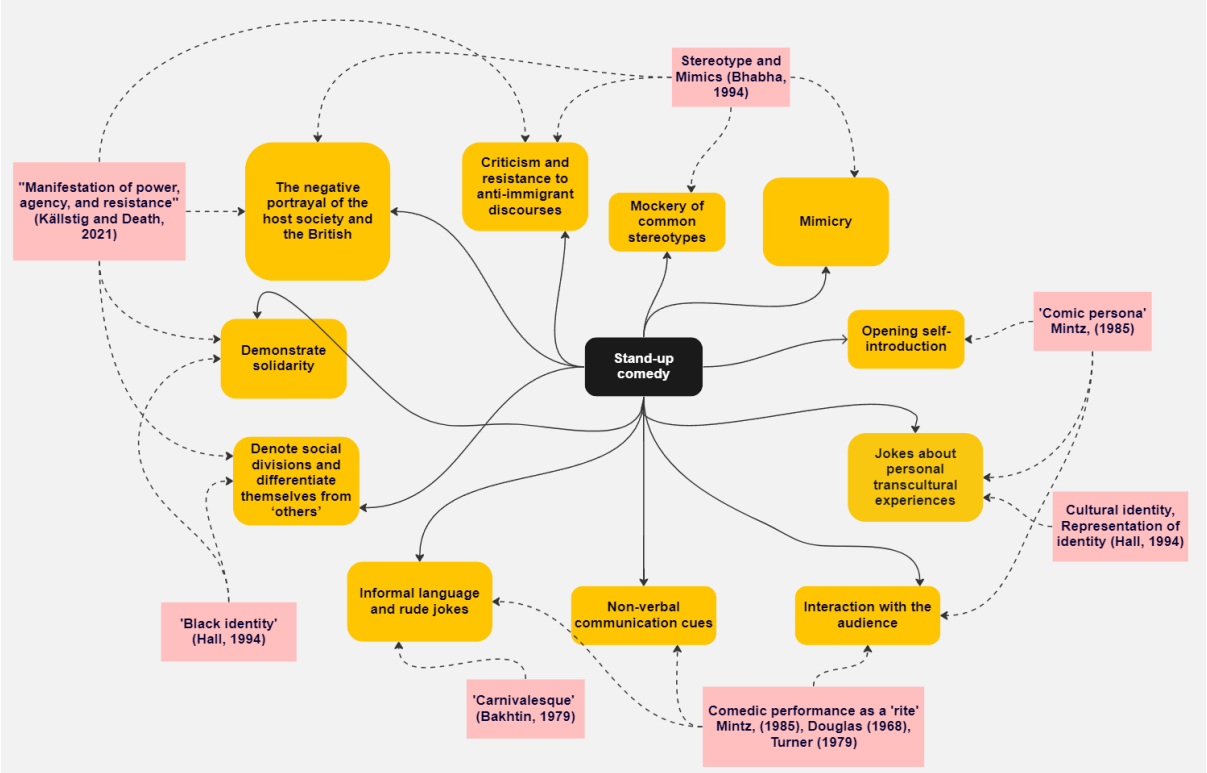
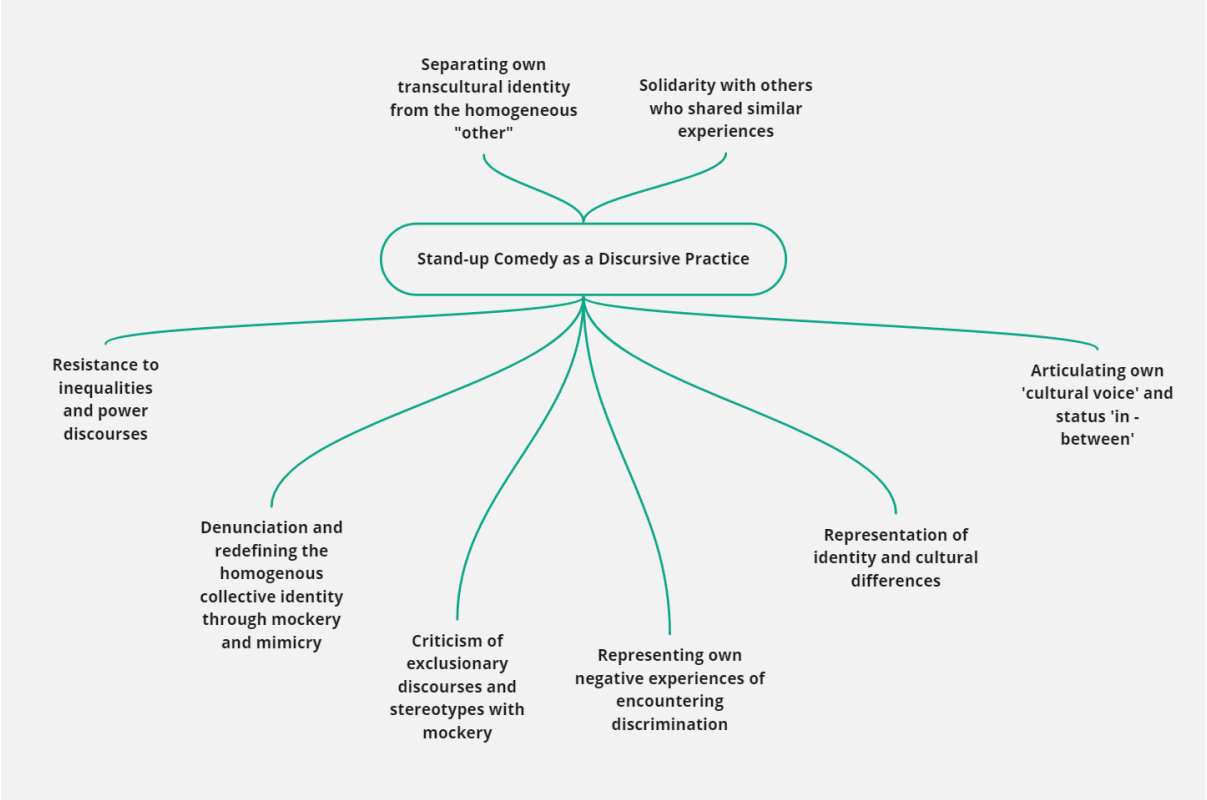


Figure 6. The functions of stand-up comedy in the negotiation of transnational identity.



- ***RQ 3: What are the similarities and differences in the representation and discussion of their transnational identities between first- and second-generation migrant stand-up comedians from the UK?***

While almost all comedians have different ethnic backgrounds, residency patterns and other sociodemographic characteristics, almost all discuss their identities through themes related to their hybridity. They employ also narratives of personal experiences of identity transformation. Furthermore, in almost every performance, strategies of criticism of exclusionary discourses, racist prejudices or stereotypes about migrants were found. Likewise, many comedians speak negatively about the social context of Britain, portraying racist attacks, social inequalities against migrants and ethnic minorities, and dominant xenophobic discourses. Moreover, migrants also make sarcastic representations of British collective national identity, referring to the manifestation of nationalism, expressed for example in the popularity of right-wing parties in Britain or imperialism and colonialist discourse. Mimicry of collective national identity can also be found in the performances of both first- and second-generation migrant comedians.

The difference in the narratives of first- and second-generation migrant comedians was evident in the representation of their transculturation process. While the first generation saw their acculturation as a main source of humour, the second generation articulated a narrative

of their deculturation. However, while acculturation was for the most part accompanied by critical commentaries, the second-generation comedians talked rather seriously about the process of their deculturation. They displayed regret at becoming excluded from the society of origin. Also, even those comedians who spoke about deculturation, often, when presenting themselves, indicated that they still had a connection to their cultural background in some way. Also, the process of awareness of their hybridity tended to occur for first-generation comedians after the fact of their immigration, and for second-generation comedians during their socialization. The second generation in this sense also refers to intergenerational conflicts in their families with their parents (first-generation migrants) as a trigger for identity reinvention.

Another difference is that first-generation migrants' representation of their society of origin is articulated in a rather negative way as if to emphasise the difference between "the West" and "the Rest" (Hall, 2018). But the second-generation recalls that their transnational status made them value their ethnic background more, thus understanding their transcultural experience as 'transcultural capital' (Triandafyllidou, 2009).

Criticism of racism and xenophobia was also sometimes directed towards groups which seemed not to be typical for such charges, e.g. left-wing supporters and activists. This narrative was more often found among second-generation migrants. That is probably because they have a longer experience of interaction with the host community than first-generation migrants and thus based on their experience they came to this insight.

5.2 Discussion and implications

The main contribution of this paper is to look at the phenomenon of humour and comedy performance as an instrument of identity representation. Since the topic of humour has not been raised very often in migration studies, and the topic of stand-up comics has only been dealt with in a few studies and has hardly been represented in the European context, our topic and research questions can be considered quite novel. The topic of migration, the problems of inclusion of migrants in Britain is a highly important and socially relevant topic, while the genre of stand-up comedy, or more precisely stand-up comedy culture, is one of the most popular entertainments in Britain and where migrant comedians make up a large percentage of the performers. On this basis, it can be assumed that understanding comedy performance as a discursive practice for negotiating transmigrant identity is one of the unexplored research areas where the intersection of humour, migration, postcolonial issues and issues of inequality in society are worth more attention and is quite a promising research area. Studies

of migrants' voices in qualitative research also tend to focus only on interviews with migrants and their media activities but rarely pay attention to migrants' narratives in their non-standard forms of communication such as art practices. We found that stand-up comedy is one of the important sites for migrants, specifically in Britain, where the genre is so well known. In terms of stylistic features, we found that this type of comedy performance involves comedians constructing their narrative based on personal experiences and issues while seeking validation from an audience that may share their opinions and experiences. The popularity of the genre can also be explained by the fact that comedians tend to talk about their problems very openly and do not restrict their jokes to social norms. This is a very important aspect, indicating that stand-up comedy texts are valuable material for analysis, which can provide new perspectives on existing problems of inequality and integration of migrants. Thus, the novelty of the study is that by analysing the jokes we were able to find many taboo topics about their transcultural experiences, and stereotypes they face that migrants often do not talk about or do not want to talk about in regular conversations.

By also looking at two groups of migrants, we were able to come closer to understanding how discussions of identity differ between first and second-generation migrants and also what common concepts they share. It must be said that we have found much less research on second-generation migrants than on first-generation migrants. Some studies do not make this distinction either, although there is a great need to do so because of the many differences in the problems they face in their everyday lives. The focus on this distinction and the comparative study of narratives can also be seen as a strength of the analysis undertaken.

In studying the texts of comedians we found ample evidence that the social context strongly influences the formation of their identities. Our theoretical framework from the postcolonial studies of Hall (1994) and Bhabha (1994) was a good choice for explaining how society in Britain works and the problems it poses for migrants. Thus the theme of racial and ethnic discrimination, as stated by the above scholars, was the most frequent one in the performances. This suggests that comedians have an insider's perspective on these issues and may provide clues as to what problems are being overlooked.

In terms of methodology, our study may also prove novel, since stand-up comedy performances have hardly been considered units of study in sociological discourse analysis. We have only found a few linguistic discourse analyses, but it is in the social sciences that this has been lacking. As Angermüller, (2011, p. 129) analyses, "[a]s opposed to traditional linguistics, discourse analysts do not limit themselves to the study of language and usually refuse to define discourse as a pure semiotic object (as 'text only' as it were)". At the same

time, discourse analysis is a powerful tool in qualitative research and helps to better understand the mechanism of representation of migrants' identities in transnational contexts. As in sociological discourse analysis, "[t]ext is viewed as a representation of the culturally shared 'common sense' ideas available to people in the community in and for which this text was produced" (Ehgartner, 2020, p. 6). The study of comedic texts has provided great insight into what common sense comedians put into their social positioning and what is common in the way they negotiate their identity while being a migrant. For example what exclusionary discourses and stereotypes they criticize, what power dynamics exist in the social context of Britain, how they define themselves within national, ethnic identities and finally what personal negative or positive transcultural experiences they see as a resource for discussion and laughter.

It is also important to understand the potential for practical application of the research findings. Sociological discourse analysis as a method has several advantages, especially "[t]his approach, rather than trying to solve predefined problems, seeks to identify ways in which problems could be framed differently" (Ehgartner, 2020, p. 4).

In addition, one of these is the possibility of transferring a social problem from the research dimension to the practical dimension. Often sociological discourse analysis is particularly useful when it comes to social interventions and social change to address problems, such as in our case problems of social inequality, xenophobia and the integration of migrants. Identifying new discourses and narratives through this method provides insight into "[...] limitations as to how social problems are debated as well as barriers to how agendas for change are formulated, this method can highlight avenues for change in society and within organisations, communities and institutions"(Ehgartner, 2020, p. 3). Also, "[t]his approach, rather than trying to solve predefined problems, seeks to identify ways in which problems could be framed differently" (Ehgartner, 2020, p. 3).

5.3 Limitations

The findings demonstrate one possible explanation for the mechanism of representation of transnational identity of first- and second-generation migrants in such creative and discursive practices as comic performance. However, there are several shortcomings of this study that are worth highlighting in future research on the topic.

Firstly, in the stages of selecting a theoretical framework and operationalising the concepts, one criticism could be that concepts such as transnational or hybrid identity have rather blurred definitions. In general, the concept of identity itself is one of the most difficult to

describe and although it has been described in various theoretical directions, it still remains a rather poorly conceptualised phenomenon in social research. We attempted to draw on previous studies in their definitions, for example in defining the denominations and indicators of 'transnational identity' we have focused on Esteban-Guitart (2015), Hannerz (1996), Vertovec (1999), Hall (1994), Bhabha (1994, 1996) and other postcolonial concepts.

However, almost all of these studies are rather theoretical and have not been tested empirically. On the other hand, when referring to an indicator such as 'hybridity' we also acknowledge that this concept is to some extent too broad and not always easy to apply empirically. As Werbner (1997) says, "[a]ll cultures are always hybrid. [...] Hybridity is meaningless as a description of 'culture,' because this 'museumizes' culture as a 'thing.' [...] Culture as an analytic concept is always hybrid [...] since it can be understood properly only as the historically negotiated creation of more or less coherent symbolic and social worlds" (Werbner, 1997, p. 15 quoted in Kraidy, 2002, p. 7). Therefore, picking up on this argument, one could say that "[s]ince all culture is always hybrid, this argument goes, then hybridity is conceptually disposable" (Kraidy, 2002, p. 7). In other words, when defining the theoretical framework, the theories we chose did not allow for full decoding at the operationalization stage and therefore, created some difficulties for their adaptation and application in discourse analysis.

Secondly, at the stage of analysis, one of the disadvantages is certainly the small sample size consisting of only 10 comedians' performances including about 220 of their humorous utterances. However, the sample size does not allow us to generalise the subject of study, the representation of migrants' transnational identities in stand-up performances. As the research was limited to comedians from two migrant comic initiatives, the findings cannot be applied to all first- and second-generation migrant comedians from Britain.

Another disadvantage relating to the sampling design is some of the differences between comedians, and more specifically their artistic status within the stand-up comedy genre. Performances from the No Direction Home initiative were considered by us from the headlining comedians, in other words, these comedians have some artistic name and have been performing in this genre for quite some time. Whereas the comedians performing in Immigrant Show are usually novice comedians and have performed much less. This fact, we suggest, may affect the way comedians construct their narratives and self-censor their jokes accordingly. For example, better-known comedians may be more open about their experiences, whereas aspiring comedians, in order to gain audience acceptance, may tailor their performances to the discourses that the audience shares.

Thirdly, at the interpretive stage, we also encountered some difficulties. As our research units are based on comedians' jokes about their identity and transcultural experience, the aspect of the humorous narrative presentation itself proved to be a challenging task requiring much reflection from the researcher. A humorous narrative implies that any information embedded in it is double-bottomed and cannot be understood directly. Although this was the interest of our research question, 'how comedians represent their identity', the process of creating code categories proved to be quite time-consuming. Some jokes, in order to assign them a particular code, required specific knowledge of the cultural context of Britain and other countries, as well as the stylistic features of the stand-up comedy genre itself. Moreover, the interpretation of a joke, as opposed to ordinary interview utterances, usually implies that the narrator does not express his or her ideas directly but in an allegorical form. We have tried to describe the main performative strategies that we think demonstrate the function of stand-up comedy as a genre for discussing identity, and we have also tried to find theoretical and empirical evidence from other studies about the cultural context that comedians have referred to (e.g. territorial and regional stereotypes about London districts etc.). However, we certainly cannot be sure how accurate our interpretations are as to what meaning the comedian was trying to convey in his joke.

Finally, among other things, another misrepresentation could be the fact that our data was based on comedians' performances that they produced in different locations, at different times, and with different audiences. Although we tried to limit the sample according to different criteria, such as time of publishing, still data, based on video recordings, can keep away many details of the context in which the performance was made and therefore recorded outside the scope of the study.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Potential future research on stand-up comedy as a genre for transmigrants could include a more detailed examination of specific themes such as different forms of discrimination like racism. Since racism has become one of the most common themes in the context of this study, it would also be useful to conduct a cross-cultural analysis of stand-up texts of migrants from different European countries on how racism has influenced the positioning of migrants' identities. As our analysis suggests, social context plays a significant role as a resource for negotiating transnational identities. Given the postcolonial theoretical framework, the cross-cultural lens of discourse could capture performances by comedians from different countries with colonial pasts. That said, given that the standup genre has gone global and

gained popularity beyond its origins, it would be interesting to compare narratives of transnational identity in the host community and the society of origin. Understanding stand-up comedy as a hallmark of western culture' (Kawalec, 2020) but which has gained popularity in non-western countries, it would be interesting to observe how the genre has adapted in non-western cultures and how this intercultural dialogue has affected comedians' narratives of identity. For example, the popularity of stand-up comedy has spread to India or Arab countries, where some migration flow comes from, it would be promising to look at how comedians with the same background, for example from India, manifest their transcultural identity in India and in Britain and how they portray it in their performances.

Speaking of the theoretical framework, it would also be necessary to look at the problem of transnational identity manifestation through other theories, especially theories of migration studies. Also, the research should continue to compare different types of migrants and what differences can be found in their discussions of identity. We have considered only two categories, first- and second-generation migrants, but as Vertovec, (1999, p. 578) says in analysing transnational studies, there is also "[...] the need to incorporate refugees into the emergent transnational perspective". Since, "[...] migrants and migrant-origin communities have tended to be the focus of most studies of transnationalism" (Vertovec, 1999, p. 578), refugees' narratives and their transcultural experiences are little studied. The same can be said about 1.5-generation migrants, those who were born in one country but who emigrated to another country almost from their childhood and accordingly grew up there. The study of this category could also be an interesting continuation of the research along with first- and second-generation migrants.

Furthermore, subsequent research could also pick up on the intersections of gender, migration and the role of humour. In our study, female and male comedians described their personal transcultural experiences in several ways. Female comedians wearing the hijab, for example, could be an interesting extension of the theme of transnational identity in comedy performance.

Speaking of methods, it seems that considering stand-up comedy within a multimodal discourse analysis could be beneficial. As the study showed, comedians used not only verbal communication but also non-verbal strategies to negotiate their identity. Multimodal discourse analysis could be an appropriate method in this sense. Since "[i]t is important to pay attention to visual and verbal presentations in conducting discourse analyses of video data because visual and verbal semiotic choices are interrelated parts in the composition of a whole" (O'Toole, 1994 in Cui, 2022, p. 8).

In addition, stand-up comedy has a wide representation in different media. For instance, this paper analysed performances that have been posted on social media platforms such as YouTube. In this sense, it would be obvious to conduct a critical discourse analysis studying not only the texts of the performances but also the media reactions to these performances (e.g., such as user comments) posted by viewers on social media.

Finally, a synthesis of the materials of the analysis also could bring some interesting results. Studying the combination of comedian texts and for example, interviews with them, where they comment on their transcultural experiences, could bring a more detailed description of transnational identity.

REFERENCES

Adichie, C. (2009, July). The danger of a single story. TEDGlobal. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html

Ahmad, A. (2020). When the name matters: An experimental investigation of ethnic discrimination in the Finnish labor market. Sociological Inquiry, 90(3), 468-496.

Ahmad, F., Alam, S., & Kaur, A. (2022). Performative retrieving of humour for socio-political subversion: stand-up comedy as a form of creative resilience. Cogent Arts & Humanities, 9(1), 2131968.

Ainsworth, S., & Hardy, C. (2004). Critical discourse analysis and identity: Why bother?. Critical discourse studies, 1(2), 225-259.

Al-Ali, N., Black, R., & Koser, K. (2001). The limits to 'transnationalism': Bosnian and Eritrean refugees in Europe as emerging transnational communities. Ethnic and racial studies, 24(4), 578-600.

Andreouli, E., & Chryssochoou, X. (2015). 21 Social representations of national identity in culturally diverse societies. The Cambridge handbook of social representations, 309.

Angermüller, J. (2011). Heterogeneous knowledge: Trends in German discourse analysis against an international background. Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 6(2), 121-136.

Arango, J. (2000). Explaining migration: a critical view. International social science journal, 52(165), 283-296.

Archakis, A., Lampropoulou, S., & Tsakona, V. (2018). "I'm not racist but I expect linguistic assimilation": The concealing power of humor in an anti-racist campaign. Discourse, context & media, 23, 53-61.

Arias Cubas, M., Jamal Al-deen, T., & Mansouri, F. (2022). Transcultural capital and emergent identities among migrant youth. Journal of Sociology, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/14407833211066969

Arroyo, J. (2016). Transculturation, syncretism, and hybridity. Critical Terms in Caribbean and Latin American Thought: Historical and Institutional Trajectories, 133-144.

Attardo, S. (2014) *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies*. SAGE Publications.

Avila-Saavedra, G. (2011). Ethnic otherness versus cultural assimilation: US Latino comedians and the politics of identity. Mass Communication and Society, 14(3), 271-291.

Bakhtin, M. (1979). Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo [Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics]. Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya Publ.

Bakhtin, M. (1984). Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Theory and history of literature, 8, 124.

Barker, C. (2004). The Sage dictionary of cultural studies. Sage.

Bartczak, K., & Myk, M. (Eds.). (2014). Theory That Matters: What Practice After Theory. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Baumann, Gerd. Contesting culture: Discourses of identity in multi-ethnic London. Vol. 100. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Berry, J. W. (1980). Acculturation as varieties of adaptation. Acculturation: Theory, models and some new findings, 9, 25.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). The Location of Culture. London: Routledge.

Bhabha, H. K. (1996). Cultures in Between. Questions of Cultural Identity. S. Hall and P. Du Gay. London, Sage Publications.

Bhabha, H. (2001). 8.6 'Of mimicry and man: the ambivalence of colonial discourse'. In Deconstruction: A Reader (pp. 414-422). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781474470919-048

Bhandari, N. B. (2022). Homi K. Bhabha's Third Space Theory and Cultural Identity Today: A Critical Review. Prithvi Academic Journal, 171-181.

Bhatia, S., & Ram, A. (2001). Rethinking 'acculturation' in relation to diasporic cultures and postcolonial identities. Human development, 44(1), 1-18.

Bleiker, Roland. 2000. Popular Dissent, Human Agency and Global Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blommaert, J., & Varis, P. (2011). Enough is enough: The heuristics of authenticity in superdiversity. Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies, 2, 1-13.

Boskin, J. and Dorinson, J. (1985) 'Ethnic Humor: Subversion and Survival', American Quarterly, 37(1), pp. 81–97. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/2712764.
Boskin, J. (1997) The Humor Prism in 20th-century America. Wayne State University Press.

Bower, K. (2014). Made in Germany: Integration as Inside Joke in the Ethno-comedy of Kaya Yanar and Bülent Ceylan. German Studies Review, 37(2), 357–376. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43555104

Boyle, P. (2002). Population geography: transnational women on the move. Progress in Human Geography, 26(4), 531-543.

Brah, A. (1992). 5 DIFFERENCE. *Race, Culture and Difference*, *1*, 126.

Bucholtz, M. and Hall, K. (2005) 'Identity and interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach', Discourse Studies, 7(4–5), pp. 585–614. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605054407.

Butler, J. (1993). Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of" sex". Psychology Press.

Chen, Y. W., & Lin, H. (2016). Cultural identities. In Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication.

Cherti, M. (2009). British moroccans. Citizenship in Action. London: Runnymede Community Study.

Clifford, J. (1994). Diasporas. Cultural anthropology, 9(3), 302-338.

Clifford, J. (1997). Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century. Harvard University Press.

Costa, S. (2007). " Deprovincializing" sociology: the post colonial contribution. Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais, 3(SE), 0-0.

Cressey, G. (2006). "Chapter Three Homeland". In Diaspora Youth and Ancestral Homeland. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047410799_006

Crawley, H. (2010). Moving beyond ethnicity: the socio-economic status and living conditions of immigrant children in the UK. Child Indicators Research, 3, 547-570.

Cui, X. (2022). Hanfu as therapeutic governance in neo/non-liberal China: a multimodal discourse analysis of Hanfu videos on Bilibili. Chinese Journal of Communication, 1-18.

Czaika, M. and de Haas H. (2017) Determinants of Migration to the UK. Migration Observatory Briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford, UK, October 2017.

DeCamp, E. (2017). Negotiating race in stand-up comedy: interpretations of 'single story' narratives. Social Identities, 23(3), 326-342.

Double, O. (2018) 'The origin of the term "stand-up comedy" – update', Comedy Studies, 9(2), pp. 235–237. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/2040610X.2018.1428427.

Douglas, M. (1968) 'The Social Control of Cognition: Some Factors in Joke Perception', Man, 3(3), pp. 361–376. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/2798875.

Dunphy, G., Dunphy, R.G. and Emig, R. (2010) *Hybrid Humour: Comedy in Transcultural Perspectives*. Rodopi.

Elliot, S. (1999). Carnival and dialogue in Bakhtin's poetics of folklore.

Ellis, J. (1995). [Review of the book The Location of Culture]. Philosophy and Literature 19(1), 196-197. doi:10.1353/phl.1995.0004.

Ehgartner, U. (2020). The discursive framework of sustainability in UK food policy: The marginalised environmental dimension. Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning, 22(4), 473-485.

Ekou, W.J. (2018) ACTES DU COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL - ABILANG 2018. Vision Libros.

Eriksson, P., & Kovalainen, A. (2008). Discourse analysis. SAGE Publications Ltd, https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9780857028044

Escobar, A. (2011). Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World (Vol. 1). Princeton University Press.

Esteban-Guitart, M., & Vila, I. (2015). The voices of newcomers. A qualitative analysis of the construction of transnational identity. Psychosocial Intervention, 24(1), 17-25.

Farrell, E. (2008). Negotiating identity: Discourses of migration and belonging (Doctoral dissertation, Macquarie University).

Fatmawati, Z. R., & Cahyono, S. P. (2018). Power of Sakdiyah Ma'Ruf in Stand-Up Comedy Through Appraisal Approach. ETERNAL (English Teaching Journal), 9(2).

Ferguson, M.A. and Ford, T.E. (2008) 'Disparagement humor: A theoretical and empirical review of psychoanalytic, superiority, and social identity theories', 21(3), pp. 283–312. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1515/HUMOR.2008.014.

Filani, I. (2020) 'A discourse analysis of national identity in Nigerian stand-up humour', *Discourse Studies*, 22(3), pp. 319–338. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445620906035.

Franck, A. (2022). Laughable borders: Making the case for the humorous in migration studies. Migration Politics, 1(1), 004.

Frees Esholdt, H. (2013) 'The unifying force of humor: on self-directed ethnic humor and the dedramatization of ethnicity', in. *11th European Sociological Association Conference (ESA)*. Available at: http://lup.lub.lu.se/record/1e900fc7-c959-44ba-8e1d-fdb7ce698a3d (Accessed: 24 October 2022).

Gilroy, P. (1993). The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness. Harvard University Press.

Greenbaum, A. (1999) 'Stand-up comedy as rhetorical argument: An investigation of comic culture', 12(1), pp. 33–46. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.1999.12.1.33.

Grzymala-Kazlowska, A., & Phillimore, J. (2018). Introduction: rethinking integration. New perspectives on adaptation and settlement in the era of super-diversity. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 44(2), 179-196.

Guerra, J. (2008). Cultivating transcultural citizenship: A writing across communities model. Language Arts, 85(4), 296–304.

Hall, S. (1989). Cultural identity and cinematic representation. *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, (36), 68-81.

Hall, S. (1994). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. 1990. Identity: Community, Culture, Difference, 222-37.

Hall, S., & Du Gay, P. (Eds.). (1996). Questions of cultural identity: SAGE Publications. Sage.

Hall, S. (2015). □ Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory* (pp. 392-403). Routledge.

Hall, S. (2016). Diasporas, or the logics of cultural translation. MATRIZes, 10(3), 47-58.

Hall, S. (2018). Seven Thinking the Diaspora: Home-Thoughts from Abroad [1999]. In D. Morley (Ed.), Essential Essays, Volume 2: Identity and Diaspora (pp. 206-226). New York, USA: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478002710-012

Hall, S. and Whannel, P. (2018) The Popular Arts, The Popular Arts. Duke University Press. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822374688.

Hall, S. (2021). thirteen Cultural Identity and Diaspora [1990]. In P. Gilroy & R. Gilmore (Ed.), Selected Writings on Race and Difference (pp. 257-271). New York, USA: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478021223-016

Hamilton, H. E., Tannen, D., & Schiffrin, D. (2015). The handbook of discourse analysis. John Wiley & Sons.

Hannerz, U. (1990). Cosmopolitans and locals in world culture. Theory, culture & society, 7(2-3), 237-251.

Hannerz, U. (1996). Transnational connections (Vol. 290). London: routledge.

Hornberger, N. H. (2007). Biliteracy, transnationalism, multimodality, and identity: Trajectories across time and space. GSE Publications, 149.

Howarth, C. (2002). So, you're from Brixton?' The struggle for recognition and esteem in a stigmatized community. Ethnicities, 2(2), 237-260.

Hoy, M. (1992). Bakhtin and popular culture. New Literary History, 23(3), 765-782.

Huddart, D. (2006). Homi K. Bhabha. Routledge.

Irena, L., & Rusadi, U. (2019). The Commodification of Chinese Stereotypes in Humour of Stand up Comedy Indonesia. International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding, 6(2), 376-384.

Jackson, J. J. L. (2001). Harlemworld: Doing race and class in contemporary black America. Chicago, IL:University of Chicago Press.

Kanungo, P. (2019). Identities in the transnational lifeworld Individual, community and nation. The Newsletter, Heidelberg University. (84 (Autumn)), 31. Available at: https://www.iias.asia/sites/default/files/nwl_article/2019-10/IIAS_NL84_31.pdf (Accessed: 21 November 2022).

Källstig, A., & Death, C. (2021). Laughter, resistance and ambivalence in Trevor Noah's stand-up comedy: Returning mimicry as mockery. Critical African Studies, 13(3), 338-355.

Kapoor, I. (2008). The postcolonial politics of development. Routledge.

Kaptani, E. and Yuval-Davis, N. (2008) 'Participatory Theatre as a Research Methodology: Identity, Performance and Social Action among Refugees', *Sociological Research Online*, 13(5), pp. 1–12. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.1789.

Kawalec, A. (2020) 'Stand-up comedy as a hallmark of western culture', *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, 12(1), p. 1788753. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/20004214.2020.1788753.

Khan R., Malghani M., Ayyaz S. (2021). Discursive identity of immigrants: A review. International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, 15(7), 483-494. https://ijicc.net/images/Vol_15/Iss_7/15734_Khan_2021_E1_R.pdf (accessed February 17, 2023).

Kierans, D. (2022) Where do migrants live in the UK? Migration Observatory briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford.

Kraidy, M. M. (2002). Hybridity in cultural globalization. Communication theory, 12(3), 316-339.

Krause, S. (2016) Transculturation. Available at: https://www.iaa.uni-rostock.de/forschung/laufende-forschungsprojekte/american-antiquities-prof-mackenthun/project/theories/transculturation/ (Accessed: 21 November 2022).

Kymlicka, W. (1995). Multicultural citizenship: a liberal theory of minority Rights. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Laurencin, M., & Roy, S. (2014). Inside/Out: Negotiating Multiple Identities in a Globalized Postcolonial World. Introduction. *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, *36*(36.2), 5-9.

Limon, J. (2000) Stand-up Comedy in Theory, or, Abjection in America, Stand-up Comedy in Theory, or, Abjection in America. Duke University Press. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822380504.

Malmberg, M., & Awad, I. (2019). (In/exclusion) Humor and diversity in Finnish public radio:'If all immigrants were as funny as you guys, nobody would have any problems'. European Journal of Cultural Studies, 22(2), 213-230.

Mark, T.G. (2022) ‘Stand-up comedy and the performance of race and identity in Trevor Noah’s It Makes No Sense and Learning Accents’, *South African Theatre Journal*, 0(0), pp. 1–17. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/10137548.2022.2136743.

Martin, F. and Griffiths, H. (2012) ‘Power and representation: a postcolonial reading of global partnerships and teacher development through North–South study visits’, British Educational Research Journal, 38(6), pp. 907–927.
Matras, Y., & Leggio, D. V. (2018). Community identity and mobilisation: Roma migrant experiences in Manchester. In Open Borders, Unlocked Cultures. Taylor & Francis.

Mbembe, Achille. 2001. On the Postcolony. Berkley: University of California Press.

Medhurst, A. (2007) ‘Notions of nation’, in *A National Joke*. Routledge.

Meredith, P. (1998). Hybridity in the Third Space: Rethinking Bi-cultural Politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand Paper Presented to Te Oru Rangahau Maori Research and Development Conference 7-9 July 1998. In Meredith Hybridity in the third space: rethinking bi-cultural politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand Te Oru Rangahau Maori Research and Development Conference (pp. 7-9).

Michaud, M. C. (2011). The Italians in America, from Transculturation to Identity Renegotiation. *Diasporas. Circulations, migrations, histoire*, (19), 41-51.

Miller, Z. (2020). Stand-up Comedy and Young India: The Expression and Construction of Identity. Changing English, 27(4), 446-459.

Mintz, L.E. (1985) ‘Standup Comedy as Social and Cultural Mediation’, American Quarterly, 37(1), pp. 71–80. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/2712763.

Mintz, L.E. (2008) ‘Humor and popular culture’, in Humor and popular culture. De Gruyter Mouton, pp. 281–302. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110198492.281.

Müller, C. (2019). Discussing Mobility in Liminal Spaces and Border Zones: An Analysis of Abbas Khider's »Der falsche Inder« (2008) and »Brief in die Auberginenrepublik« (2013) Textpraxis.

Moskal, M. (2011). Transnationalism and the role of family and children in intra-European labour migration. European Societies, 13(1), 29-50.

Moss, J. L. (2016). Defining transcomedy: Humor, tricksterism, and postcolonial affect from Gerald Vizenor to Sacha Baron Cohen. International Journal of Cultural Studies, 19(5), 487-500.

Newton, K.M. (1997). Homi K. Bhabha: 'The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse'. In: Newton, K.M. (eds) Twentieth-Century Literary Theory. Palgrave, London. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-25934-2_54

O'Neill, M. (2008, May). Transnational refugees: The transformative role of art?. In Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research (Vol. 9, No. 2).

O'Neill, M. and Hubbard, P. (2010) 'Walking, sensing, belonging: ethno-mimesis as performative praxis', *Visual Studies*, 25(1), pp. 46–58. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/14725861003606878.

Ortiz, F., & Fernández, F. O. (1995). Cuban counterpoint, tobacco and sugar. Duke University Press.

O'Toole, M. (1994). The language of displayed art. Fairleigh Dickinson Univ Press.

Park, S. and Gerrits, L. (2021) 'How migrants manifest their transnational identity through online social networks: comparative findings from a case of Koreans in Germany', Comparative Migration Studies, 9(1), p. 10. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-00218-w.

Pérez, R. (2013). Learning to make racism funny in the 'color-blind' era: Stand-up comedy students, performance strategies, and the (re) production of racist jokes in public. Discourse & society, 24(4), 478-503.

Phillimore, J., Humphris, R., & Khan, K. (2014). Migration, networks and resources: the relationship between migrants' social networks and their access to integration resources.

Portes, A. (2001). Introduction: The debates and significance of immigrant transnationalism. Global Networks, 1(3),181–194.

Puksi, F. F. (2018). Presupposition contributions in stand-up comedy (discourse analysis of Raditya Dika's stand-up comedy on YouTube). Journal of Applied Studies in Language, 2(2), 135-143.

Rahman, R., Hidayat, D. N., & Alek, A. (2021). A critical discourse analysis of Bintang Emon's humor discourse entitled 'Ga Sengaja'. Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities, 8(2), 94-105.

Ramamurthy, A. (2017) Advertising and colonial discourse, Imperial persuaders. Manchester University Press, pp. 1–23. Available at: https://www.manchesterhive.com/view/9781526118578/9781526118578.00007.xml (Accessed: 7 January 2023).

Rojas, R. (2008). Fernando Ortiz: Transculturation and Nationalism. In Essays in Cuban Intellectual History (pp. 43-64). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

Rubio, R. (2016). Stand-Up Comedy, Beyond the Stage: Mediated Ethnicity, Sexuality, and Citizenship. Racial and Ethnic Identities in the Media, 79-94.

Ruitenberg, C. W. (2007). Discourse, theatrical performance, agency: The analytic force of" performativity" in education. Philosophy of Education Archive, 260-268.

Rutter, J. (1997). Stand-up as interaction: Performance and audience in comedy venues. University of Salford (United Kingdom).

Ruiz-Madrid, M. N., & Fortanet-Gómez, I. (2015). A multimodal discourse analysis approach to humour in conference presentations: The case of autobiographic references. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 173, 246-251.

Sarkar, I., & Siraj, A. (2022). Exploring Indian stand-up comedy through the lens of ideology, identity and gender: a discourse analysis. Comedy Studies, 13(1), 41-55.

Schiller, N. G., Basch, L., & Blanc, C. S. (1995). From immigrant to transmigrant: Theorizing transnational migration. Anthropological quarterly, 48-63.

Schlote, C. (2005) 'The sketch's the thing wherein we'll catch the conscience of the audience': Strategies and pitfalls of ethnic TV comedies in Britain, the United States, and Germany. Brill, pp. 177–190. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401202930_013.

Schneider, F. (2013). How to Do a Discourse Analysis: A Toolbox for Analysing Political Texts. Politics East Asia. http://www. politicseastasia. com/studying/how-to-do-a-discourseanalysis.

Scott, D. T. (2016). Reconciling Hall with discourse, written in the shadows of '"Confederate" and Rainbow Flags. Critical studies in media communication, 33(5), 424-437.

Seirlis, J. K. (2011). Laughing all the way to freedom?: Contemporary stand-up comedy and democracy in South Africa.

Sen, A. (2007). Identity and violence: The illusion of destiny. Penguin Books India.

Sender, K., & Decherney, P. (2016). Stuart Hall lives: cultural studies in an age of digital media. Critical Studies in Media Communication, 33(5), 381-384.

Setyaningsih, N. (2013). Ethnic Stereotypes in Stand up Comedy. Prosiding the, 5.

Sheringham, O. (2010). Creating' Alternative Geographies'. Religion, Transnationalism and Everyday Life. Geography Compass, 4(11), 1678–1694. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2010.00393.x.

Shouse, E. (2007). The Role of Affect in the Performance of Stand-Up Comedy: Theorizing the Mind-Body Connection in Humor Studies. Journal of the Northwest Communication Association, 36.

Shumar, W. (2010). Homi Bhabha. Cultural studies of science education, 5, 495-506.

Sibley, D. (1995). Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West. Psychology Press.

Smith, L., DeMeo, B. and Widmann, S. (2011) 'Identity, Migration, and the Arts: Three Case Studies of Translocal Communities', *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 41(3), pp. 186–197. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/10632921.2011.598418.

Stebbins, R.A. (1990) *Laugh-Makers: Stand-Up Comedy as Art, Business, and Life-Style*. McGill-Queen's Press - MQUP.

Stuart, J., & Ward, C. (2011). A question of balance: Exploring the acculturation, integration and adaptation of Muslim immigrant. Psychosocial Intervention, 20, 255-267. https://doi:10.5093/in2011v20n3a3

Tamaki, E. (2011). Transnational Home Engagement among Latino and Asian Americans. Resources and Motivation. International Migration Review, 45(1), 148–173. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2010.00842.x.

Taylor, D. (1997) Transculturating Transculturation. Interculturalism & Performancs B. Marranca and G. Dasgupta. New York, PAJ Publications: 60-74.

Tedeschi, M., Vorobeva, E., & Jauhiainen, J. S. (2022). Transnationalism: current debates and new perspectives. GeoJournal, 87(2), 603-619.

Toninato, P. (2009). The making of gypsy diasporas. Translocations: Migration and Social Change, 5(1), 1-19.

Triandafyllidou, A. (2009). Sub-Saharan African immigrant activists in Europe: Transcultural capital and transcultural community building. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 32(1), 93–116.

Trueba, E.T. (2004). The new Americans: Immigrants and transnationals at work. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Tudor, A. (2022). Ascriptions of migration: Racism, migratism and Brexit. European Journal of Cultural Studies, 13675494221101642.

Turner, V. (1979) 'Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality', *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 6(4), pp. 465–499.

Van Dijk T., Ting-Toomey S., Smitherman G., & Troutman D. (1997). Discourse, ethnicity, culture and racism. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.). Discourse as social interaction, Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction, Volume 2. London: Sage, 144-180.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2018). Discourse and migration. *Qualitative research in European migration studies*, 227-245.

Vertovec, S. (1999). Conceiving and researching transnationalism. *Ethnic and racial studies*, *22*(2), 447-462.

Vertovec, S. (2001). Transnationalism and identity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration studies*, *27*(4), 573-582.

Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. Ethnic and racial studies, 30(6), 1024-1054.

Vertovec, S. (2009). *Transnationalism*. Routledge.

Vertovec, S. (2011). The cultural politics of nation and migration. Annual Review of Anthropology, 40, 241-256.

Wagg, S. (2004) *Because I Tell a Joke or Two: Comedy, Politics and Social Difference*. Routledge.

Waldinger, R. D. (2015). The cross-border connection. Immigrants emigrants and their homelands. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press Available online at http://www.degruyter.com/view/product/430598.

Welsch, W. (1999). Transculturality: The puzzling form of cultures today. Spaces of culture: City, nation, world, 13(7), 194-213.

Wertsch, J. (1991). Voices of the mind. A sociocultural approach to mediated action. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

YouGov, (2022), Stand-up Comedy Popularity and Fame, Available at: https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/explore/activity/Stand_up_comedy. (Accessed: 21 November 2022).

Young, S. L. (2009). . Journal of International and Intercultural Communication, 2(2), 139–167.

Zambon, K. (2017). Negotiating new German identities: Transcultural comedy and the construction of pluralistic unity. Media, Culture & Society, 39(4), 552-567.

Zhang, L. (2017). How to understand Stuart Hall's "identity" properly?. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, *18*(2), 188-196.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Overview of the comedians included in the sample

	Name	Background information	Name of the project and status of comedian	Resource for analysis (link to performance)
1	Fatiha El-Ghorri	second-generation migrant, British, of Moroccan descent	headliner from the No Direction Home project	*Fatiha El Ghorri - Comedy Store.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zd_cC4gP9GA
2	Romesh Ranganathan	second-generation migrant, British of Sri Lankan descent	headliner from the No Direction Home project	*Romesh Ranganathan's Reveals his Real Name.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vSaEMXtXEY
3	Athena Kugblenu	second-generation migrant, British of Indian and Ghanaian descent	headliner from the No Direction Home project	*British Culture, Gender & More with Athena Kugblenu.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qO-xUFQZqZI
4	Ola Labib	second-generation migrant, British of Sudanese descent	headliner from the No Direction Home project	*Lateish Introduces... Ola Labib | The Lateish Show*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjZkSVrVNeo
5	Nabil Abdulrashid	second-generation migrant, British of Nigerian descent	headliner from the No Direction Home project	*Life as a Nigerian...* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N96iSyppRts&t=604s
6	Victor Patrascan	first-generation migrant, Romania	Resident of The Immigrant Comedy show	*Victor Patrascan. Friday 24 September*

		born, based and performs in the UK		*2021 at the London Comedy Store* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r17qEZj57Dc&t=972s
7	Ashish Suri	first-generation migrant, India born, based and performs in the UK	Resident of The Immigrant Comedy show	*Ashish Suri tearing it up at The Comedy Store, London.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByBly0t57d0&t=710s
8	Joshua Bethania	first-generation migrant, India born, based and performs in the UK	Resident of The Immigrant Comedy show	*I'm A Minority Everywhere I Go | Joshua Bethania | The Blackout.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qkNAiksYnQ
9	Ginnia Cheng	first-generation migrant, Hong Kong-born, based in the UK	Resident of The Immigrant Comedy show	*MAKING RACISM RELATABLE WITH GINNIA CHENG.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhmXcYOS_f0
10	Vlad Illich	first-generation migrant, North Macedonia-born, based in the UK	Resident of The Immigrant Comedy show	*Immigration, Marriage & More with Vlad Illich.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spwAn5pJ3KE&t=569s

Appendix 2. Code System of the Thematic Structure

Code name	Frequency
1 Transcultural Experience	101
1.1 Connection to more than one culture/country	6
1.1.1 Multicultural family	5
1.1.2 Comparison of cultures	6
1.1.2.1 racism outside the UK	3
1.1.2.2 First and third world, ‘the West’ and ‘the Rest’ discourse	4
1.2 Mimicry and mockery of stereotypes	11
1.3 Confusion about belonging/ “in-between” sense	23
1.3.1 ‘I am from...but also from...’	6
1.3.2 ‘not welcomed in either culture’	4
1.3.3 ‘I look like.. but I sound like..’	3
1.3.4 ‘can't fit in with anybody’	1
1.3.5 rejected from the host/home society	5
1.3.6 being a minority	3
1.3.7 identity crisis	4
1.4 Identity transition after transculturation	4
1.5 Discovering own hybridity	15
2 Immigration	71
2.1 Stereotypes about immigrants	9
2.1.1 “go back to where you came from”	8
2.1.2 “immigrants come here to steal jobs”	3
2.1.3 “Immigrants need to be more English”	2

2.1.4 ethnic minority communities/diaspora	**5**
2.1.5 terrorism	**6**
2.1.6 criminality	**5**
2.1.7 poverty	**3**
2.1.8 cheap labour	**7**
2.2 Immigrant experience	**17**
2.2.1 integration problems	**4**
2.2.1.1 Workplace racism	**8**
2.2.1.2 Status of immigrant	**6**
2.2.1.3 Socialization and the school experience	**1**
3 Host culture	**87**
3.1 British people	**15**
3.1.1 Friends	**2**
3.1.2 the host culture is unaware of the home culture	**5**
3.1.3 Friends/Communication with people from the host country	**6**
3.1.4 Neighbors	**2**
3.2 Living in the UK	**14**
3.2.1 districts and regions	**4**
3.2.2 prestigious and non-prestigious areas	**3**
3.3 Being British	**11**
3.3.1 Nationalism	**2**
3.3.1.1 Discrimination against migrants/racial/ethnic discrimination in the UK	**9**
3.3.2 Racial positioning	**20**

3.3.2.1 racist attacks in the UK	3
3.3.2.1.1 "I met a racist the other day"	3
3.3.2.2 Racism and Racial Discourse	19
3.3.2.2.1 ‘I am (not) racist’	7
3.3.2.2.2 politically correct term	3
3.3.2.2.2.1 racist jokes	10
3.3.2.2.3 ‘white privilege’	6
3.3.3 political discourse	4
3.3.4 colonial discourse	5
3.4 British culture	3
3.4.1 Food	3
3.4.2 Western culture	9
3.4.2.1 British Media	4
3.4.3 Lifestyle	1
3.4.3.1 Dating	3
3.4.4 Language	2
3.4.5 First meeting with British culture	4
3.4.6 Football	2
4 Society of origin	91
4.1 Bringing up/growing up	9
4.2 Appearance	4
4.3 Nationality	10
4.3.1 stereotypes about home culture/ethnical/national	17
4.3.2 National behavior and traits	6

4.4 An accent/language	**5**
4.5 Religion	**7**
4.5.1 hidjab	**5**
4.6 Family	**13**
4.6.1 first- and second-generation immigration	**6**
4.6.2 conflicts within migrant family	**4**
4.7 Name	**12**
4.8 communication with the society of origin	**1**
4.9 cultural background as a heritage	**2**