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Transcultural Research on the 'Cultural Other' in European Films

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Olesya Dronyak, hereby declare that this dissertation and the work presented in it are my own. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is clearly attributed.

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

*The refugee crisis has highlighted a historical fact:
Europe's cultural, ethnic and religious diversity will increase
in a transformative way in the years and decades to come.
Which makes it a good time also to open a healthier
more cool-headed debate about our collective identity.*
(Natalie Nougayrède, *The Guardian*, January 5th 2016)

The main idea of this dissertation is to address transcultural developments, that is to say, the complex processes in different configurations of cultural mixes and cultural transformation, in contemporary European societies. The objective is to emphasise the importance of approaching, examining and analysing these developments in order to better understand the nature and dynamics of today's cultural diversity in Europe, thus challenging static cultural positions and elaborating methods and tools for further critical reflections on the re-conceptualisation of interculturality, multiculturalism, cultural connections, and contributing to a shift in the cultural paradigm as a whole. What is meant by a shift in cultural paradigm is re-directing the analysis and perception of cultures from an essentialist framework, meaning cultural essentialism as theoretically explained by Ralph D. Grillo (2003), to a transculturalist framework, as firstly thoroughly elaborated as a separate conceptual framework by Wolfgang Welsch (1999). While the essentialist framework implies a system of thinking which divides the world into homogenous and static cultural communities and pre-constructs individual identities as essentially belonging to one of those communities (Grillo, 2003), the transculturalist framework challenges this order by suggesting a shift in the theoretical and empirical cultural research. The use of cultural identity for the exemplification of this shift in analysis means the distancing from the simplification of cultural identities, especially if we talk about identities of today's heterogeneous social groups, in order to re-approach identities as complex, flexible and dynamic constructs of possibly antagonistic nature.

Selected European cinematic representations on the outcome specificities of post-colonial, post-war and contemporary global international migration, especially those addressing the experiences of the subjects with multiple cultural belonging, serve as empirical platforms through which the concept and the reality of transculturality is analysed, contextualised and developed further. Both fiction and documentary films are selected for analysis, while the selection comprises of a range of very different films in terms of genre, narrative and stylistic choices, as well as production and distribution opportunities. Such

different films as Berlinale-premiered *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011), recently re-discovered by festivals *El lugar de las fresas/The Strawberry Place* (2013), an independent production *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés/The other side...An approach to Lavapiés* (2002) and the latest Cannes-awarded *Divines* (2016) will compose the main corpus of the discussion. The first one is a story inspired by the biography of two German-Turkish sisters and their extended family in Germany, whereas the film is written and directed by these sisters - Nesrin and Yasemin Şamdereli; the second one is a transnational production that follows the development of a transcultural friendship between an elderly Italian woman and a Moroccan man who comes to Turin in search of job opportunities, and which was documented in the period of seven years by a Spanish film director Maite Vitoria Daneris; the third one is a visualisation of the multicultural life in one of Madrid's neighbourhoods called Lavapiés, a picture framed and mediated through the perspective of a Egyptian-Spanish filmmaker Básel Ramsis; and the fourth one is a youth drama by French-Moroccan Houda Benyamina set in Parisian *banlieues*. Additionally, I will briefly comment on Céline Sciamma's *Girlhood/Bande de filles* (2014) and the works of German-Turkish director Fatih Akin.

This selection of the main case studies results from the objective to address and analyse the films that are diverse in terms of locations, characters, plots, and united by the filmmakers' critical stance to cultural categorisations and a refusal to position their protagonists within enclosed cultural frames. Overall, these films share the ability to provide an insider perspective for the spectator and the narrative's active engagement in mediating transcultural realities in Europe, as they draw upon the protagonists' personal transcultural experiences that are further complicated within their contextual environments. This main corpus of films selected for the analysis makes a contribution to the development of transcultural research in a combined way by providing all together a multifaceted platform of examination of transculturality, of its different conceptual elements and factors as projected through the cultural meanings on screen. Furthermore, almost all of the selected titles, with the exception of *El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002), are new for the academic cultural analysis, the reason for which is also their recency in production and distribution. Moreover, these films are also 'new' in terms of communicating 'new' and fresh perspectives on the dynamics of cultural diversity in Europe, the perspectives that are completely released from the images of victimization (as the latter are pertinent to the majority of European films on immigration) and that position their subjects as the protagonists that speak for themselves, the protagonists that are active social subjects whose identity construction is negotiated within

multiple different socio-cultural spaces with all the ambiguities and complexities that these spaces encompass.

I will also make a reference to earlier films on immigration and diaspora into Europe such as *Las Cartas de Alou* (1990) by Montxo Armendáriz, *Tea in the Harem* (1985) by a French-Algerian filmmaker Mendi Charef, first German-Turkish films of the late 1980s by Tevfik Başer, as well as more recent *L'esquive/Games of Love and Chance* (2003) by a French-Tunisian Abdellatif Kechiche and Helena Taberna's documentary *Extranjeras* (2003).

Motivation and Justification.

The idea for transculturality as a research topic comes from the motivation to draw the connections between three fundamental notions: the different configurations of cultural diversity in Europe, the social justice related to this diversity, and the media and political construction of 'cultural others' in European transcultural space. This construction and reconstruction of 'cultural others' constitute the deriving point for the necessity to re-think the notions of how cultural interconnections come into being, and how the dynamics of these interconnections show the categorisation of cultures as a simplistic and essentialist act within a power relations framing.

Today, in contemporary democratic Europe, different forms of racism and discrimination on the grounds of origin are legally opposed, as declared by multiple international and national declarations and laws that include clauses on human rights, non-discrimination and tolerance. But the entrenched and constructed labelling in reference to certain cultures, ethnicities and nationalities as 'wrongdoers' seems to have been influencing people's perceptions, attitudes and relationships in a negative way. What is experienced on an interpersonal level, that is to say in people's attitudes and communication, is the cultural racism, or to put it differently, cultural essentialism. The latter is grounded in a system of belief according to which human beings are conceptualised as "'cultural' (and under certain conditions territorial and national) subjects, i.e. bearers of *a* culture, located within a boundaried world, which defines them and differentiates them from others" (Grillo, 2003, p.158). This conception of culture allows to refer to individuals' cultural identities as intrinsically attached to one certain cultural community and even to suggest, in generalised terms, that they "reproduce the assumed negative traits of that community" (Siebers & Dennissen, 2015, p.480).

The stigmatisation of certain cultural groups persists as projected from public, media and political discourses, while at the same time these groups are being homogenised in

reference to their cultural practices, values, beliefs and perceptions on democracy in the European socio-political space. One of the examples of this stigmatisation is analysed in a study on the positioning of the Dutch Moroccan Muslims within the Dutch society which was conducted by Siebers and Dennissen (2015). The authors have analysed how Dutch political and media migrant-hostile discourses have framed the public opinion of viewing Muslim immigrants and their descendants in the Netherlands as 'cultural others', and how this discursive exclusion impacts their life experiences and everyday interactions. As the study has concluded from the interviews with the Dutch-Moroccan respondents,

"the same negative connotations that media and politicians attribute to Muslims and Moroccans [(i.e. crime, terrorism and women's oppression) as well as notions of their incompatibility with Dutch norms and values] instigate comments from their colleagues that reflect the same cultural essentialism that characterizes the discourse in media and politics" (Siebers & Dennissen, 2015, pp.481-482).

The common characteristic of such discourses is their patronizing imposition of constructed essentialist identities, whereas the perception of incompatibility is based on the essentialist homogenizing idea of Islam and Moroccan culture. In this way, these discourses pre-construct Dutch Moroccans and 'native' Dutch within a binary of an opposing cultural difference, without taking into consideration the implications of the internal diversity of cultures as well as of cultural transformation that follows cultural encounters.

An important step is to be made into the acknowledgement that immigrants/immigrant descendents in Europe, whatever cultural or ethnic group they are categorised into, do not compose homogenous groups. Neither it is easy for an immigrant/an immigrant descendant to identify solely with one particular culture or another. Identifications are negotiated across different cultural spaces and platforms at which their voices are heard and/or which are more relevant to their worldviews. As the respondents of the Siebers and Dennissen's research have voiced, their "personal choices and meaning-making in a non-essentialist way, selectively drawing on Islam and Moroccan culture and on Dutch cultural resources, are not recognized, neither by Dutch politics nor by their colleagues" (2015, p.482). But what is the conceptual bridge which can lead to this kind of acknowledgement?

To put it differently, what re-conceptualisation will draw us closer to cultural equality and will initiate cultural de-essentialisation? How do we promote and reach, to a certain degree, the social justice and equal treatment for people of different, or constructed as different/conflicting/opposed, cultural backgrounds? How do we conceive the affirmation of the (cultural) diversity as a resource, as an eclectic potential and enrichment rather than an impediment or an issue to tackle, given that historically it has proven itself as the former? What are the competences, the language and the discourse that should and can be analysed

and developed for the purpose of understanding better what cultural diversity in all its contemporary complexity means? How do we approach the analysis of the questions of how those living on "cultural borders", both symbolic and actual borders (where nation is a synonym of culture), negotiate their relationship towards these borders, their lives beyond and across them?

In order to address these questions and to pave the way in the direction of cultural de-essentialisation we also need to consider the constructing framework for discursive stigmatisation from which the constructs of differentiation and bordering emanate, specifically the reference is to the politics of 'othering', or the politics of constructing 'the other'. As it has just been mentioned with the case of Dutch Moroccan Muslims' media portrayal, what is observed in the contemporary European political discourses is the continuous construction of a binary cultural order in which those who are involved into this negotiation, especially those with non-European cultural background, are labelled and constructed as 'others', specifically 'cultural others', consciously and unconsciously, directly and indirectly. But how is the process of 'othering' conceptually framed and what does it imply? In sociological and cultural studies, the 'othering' or the construction of 'otherness' can be approached through a wide spectrum of systems of interpretation as it has been explored across the categories of gender (De Beauvoir, 1952), race (Hall, 1997; Gilroy, 1993; Balibar, 2005), sexuality (Foucault, 1978/1990), religion (Said, 1977), and also in reference to the politics of colonial and post-colonial violence (Fanon, 1963). For the purpose of explaining the use of the concept of 'the other' and the politics of its construction in this dissertation, the emphasis is specifically on the production of such binary (European vs. non-European) in cultural terms. Furthermore, what is also important are the role of power relations and of stereotypical representations in the production of this binary, and the imaging of a fixed and simplified construct of a cultural identity which looks for support and justification in the essentialist conceptualisation of culture.

In broad terms, the conception of 'othering' is related to the construction of a certain identity, an identity of 'the self/'the us', in the course of which the relationship between 'the us' and 'the other' is explained through a series of antagonistic pairs such as, for instance, "similar - different; local-foreign; (...) friend-enemy; normal-deviant" (Fedor, 2014, p. 322). Okolie refers to this order as defining the self at the sake of the other. He points out to the power relations which are framed around the negotiation of identity of the 'us' and the dichotomic construction of its relationship with the 'other': "because groups do not have equal powers to define both *self* and the *other*, the consequences reflect these power differentials". It

means that "(o)ften notions of superiority and inferiority are embedded in particular identities" (Okolie, 2003, p. 2). This delimitation of power across 'groups', however, does not necessarily entail that the 'groups' are separated from each other in geographical, political or socio-cultural terms but that the majority group, the 'natives', separates itself from the (new) minority group, the 'immigrants', through the construction of the common and coherent identity of the majority in which the accumulation of certain set of cultural elements is conducted through the negation of other elements accorded to the minority. In this sense, the majority is able to construct itself through the use of positive connotations and to *other* the minority through the constructs of negative connotations. As Schriewer and Cayuela have also emphasised in reference to the construction of a national identity in cultural terms (nation is equalised with culture), the process of this construction has given a way to the political separation of what belongs to the "national identity" of 'the us' and what is marked and identified with 'the other' (2016, pp. 9-10), and the identity(-ies) of 'the other'. For instance, European Christian identity vs. non-European Muslim identity, Western progressive values vs. Oriental traditional values.

In reference to Foucault's "power-knowledge" conception (1980), within which the production of knowledge and its application is set within power relations, Hall emphasises in the analysis of this theorisation that the knowledge which is linked to power both assumes "the authority of 'the truth'" and "has the power to *make itself true*" (Hall, 1997, p.76). In other words, as the knowledge has been "once applied in the real world", it has "real effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true'" (Ibid.). Relating this 'power-knowledge' conception to the 'othering' of immigrant subjects of non-European descent, we can consider that the construction of the European 'cultural other' by the European 'native', 'the us', is performed within the order of continuous knowledge production and *truth*-production. And this production is dictated and regulated by the self-differentiated 'us' in the form of hierarchical imposition. The power relations scheme thus defines that 'the other' is positioned in subaltern, marginal location in relation to 'the us' and the perception of 'the other' substantially depends on how it is constructed by 'the us'.

Furthermore, within the differentiating power of dichotomies, the 'other' is always the opposite of 'the us', and thus the 'other' can be suppressed and set as an exclusion from the norm, as "abnormality" (Bauman, 1991, p.8), that is to say 'the other' is outsided from the common set of a social community of 'the us'. In the political structuring of the societal fabrics, this exclusionary differentiation also entails the simplification and homogenization of 'the other', stemming from, what Baumann suggests to be, the "necessity of ordering" (1990,

p.166), according to which the 'othering' is framed within an "effort to exterminate ambivalence: to define precisely - and to suppress or eliminate everything that could not or would not be precisely defined" (Ibid., p. 165). Bauman thus relates the politics of Otherness to "creating an image" which is fixed, which eliminates the mystery around the Other and informs on "what the Other needs" (1995, pp. 44-71), or, to continue this thought, what behaviour patterns we should expect from 'the other'. The construction of European 'cultural other' is reminiscent of this politics of imaging and it finds its justifications in the essentialist paradigm of culture. The aim is thus to perpetuate 'cultural otherness' in its constructed uniformity, homogeneity and invariability. Moreover, an inquiry into how 'the other' is represented and re-represented in European discourses (as it is shown through the example of Dutch Moroccan Muslims representation in national political and media discourses) leads us to a critical realisation. We are talking here about the imposition of 'the other' and of the identity of 'the other' in categorical, hierarchical, simplified and static illustration. But what about the discourses which produce the cultural meanings that counter and challenge this essentialist 'othering' construction? What is their role in approaching the de-essentialisation of 'cultural others'?

Whether this is due to 'the cultural others' trying to combine their multiple cultural selves in a world of presumed essentiality, uniformity and homogeneity or because they have already managed, to a certain degree, to carve out for themselves a hybrid cultural spatiality, they cannot be put in simplistic cultural frames of either their home (originating) culture or their host culture and society. Yet, the stigmatisation of the difference, especially in relation to the non-European background immigrant minorities in Europe, seems to be an entrenched and continuous project. It persists as part of the bigger processes of the construction of a common intra-EU European identity and as a powerful instrument for socio-political manipulation of public opinion in times of crisis (e.g. right-wing political discourses). In this view, it has been a difficult task for the expressions which challenge and counter stigmatising discourses to establish for themselves a stable critical framework of circulation and development. This has happened in this manner at least partly due to the lack of a consolidated theoretical basis that would be developed and empirically tested to address and explain the complex cultural ambiguities, the overlapping cultural practices and even the identity crises present in these counter-stigmatisation narratives and expressions. Although not a brand new theoretical notion (see Ortiz, 1940/1947; Bhabha, 1994; Pratt, 1992) but with a new, and sometimes conflicting and thus in-development, conceptual framework (Welsch, 1999; Delanoy, 2006/2012; Flüchter & Schöttli, 2014; Rings, 2016), transculturality as an

emerging academic trend for (re-)considering cultural engagements and cultural identities can become this theoretical basis. It can be utilised as a conceptual bridge, an instrument and a method for explaining better the counter-narratives and for combating cultural generalisations and essentialist perceptions.

As we will see in the theoretical discussion of the notion's implications, transculturality opens up the routes for a more holistic approach towards analysing cultural links. Expanding on Geertz theory of cultures (1973), Afef Benessaïeh asserts that transculturality "offers a conceptual landscape for considering cultures as relational webs and flows of significance in active interaction with one another" (2010, p.11). Taking this into consideration, cultures can be approached from a more complex inter-relational, multidimensional and multidirectional perspective, a transcultural perspective, within which the exploration of dynamic cultural positions and interrelated cultural meanings will be more overarching. It will go far beyond the essentialist study of culture as a closed entity, an autonomous, fixed and established set of practices and beliefs. In this view, this exploration will allow us to draw a more realistic and complete picture of the complexity and the potential of cultural encounters and will reveal reductive functioning of cultural essentialism and challenge cultural 'othering'.

My working definition of transculturality is based on the theoretical conceptualisations of the aforementioned authors (Bhabha, 1994; Welsch, 1999; Delanoy, 2006/2012; Flüchter & Schöttli, 2014; Rings, 2016) and is elaborated together with the suggestions to extend these theorisations. I will further provide a brief summary of its theoretical basis and suggest to approach transculturality within its extended definition.

In Ring's understanding, transculturality becomes a process-oriented phenomenon (new conceptualisation) that goes beyond "a more result-oriented notion of hybridity" (2016, p.11), which was developed by Homi Bhabha (1994) (older conceptualisation)¹. This process can be characterised as developing from a cultural contact, an encounter, which is followed by interaction, inter-influence and dynamic co-creations. Transcultural results of interaction can thus be interpreted through the hybrid cultural meanings (hybrid identities, values, lifestyles and practices) that, as Welsch (1999) would put it, overlap and emerge from one another. Intercultural dialogue, which is guided by transcultural perspectives and takes into consideration transcultural possibilities (Delanoy, 2012), can assist in identifying this overlapping by looking for and exploring shared cultural frameworks, cultural similarities and commonalities (dynamic positions and points from which different cultures speak and which

¹Bhabha's cultural hybridity is a result, a new product of cultural identity that goes beyond the original culture and a "received" tradition by combining the two (1994, p.2). It will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 1.2.

are common or intersecting for negotiatory cultures). As Bhabha also discusses this point, the aspects of a culture which are put together with another "are not prior in the sense of being original: they are prior only in the sense of being anterior" (Interview with Homi Bhabha, Rutherford, 1990, p. 211). Besides, Bhabha's cultural hybridity does not lose its essence as a result notion but it is re-conceptualised in more dynamic terms and composes one of the most important and configurative elements of transculturality. Specifically, it means that the negotiation and manifestation of cultural hybridity becomes closely interrelated with the contextual conditions in which it develops, and that define its recognition and re-invention. The process of cultural hybridisation is thus continuous and its negotiation and re-negotiation takes place in Bhabha's 'Third Spaces', a virtual cultural field where hybridisation enables new cultural positions to emerge (Rutherford, 1990, p.211). As Pieterse puts it in reference to its dynamics, cultural hybridity implies "the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices" (2004, p.64). Cultural hybridity is thus not a finished final product with definable cultural traits that will not or cannot be further changed, but a process in which different traits circulate in multiple ways and recombine in new cultural repertoires. In these terms, transculturality leads us to (re-)considering culture as an 'open formation' that is constantly ready for modification, reformation and re-configuration of its current and new elements.

Furthermore, I suggest to develop the concept of 'Third Spaces' to theorising it in two modalities. In its first modality, 'Third Space' is an extended definition of Bhabha's theorisation and it implies a pre-hybridity projection. More specifically, the first modality of 'Third Space' functions as a site that creates favourable conditions for a transcultural encounter to occur. Within this modality, 'Third Spaces' are the 'spaces' (both physical and symbolic) that facilitate the initiation of transcultural exchange and the negotiation of cultural identity that precede the development of cultural hybridity. In its second modality, it is Bhabha's 'Third Space' in which hybrid cultural positions emerge and symbolic cultural borders are contested.

In reference to Flüchter and Schöttli (2014), transculturality expresses itself in multiple different configurations which are provoked/conditioned/influenced by the specific context in which transculturality develops. In this view, the configurations for the cultural identities construction are multiple depending on their contextual influence. Not only cultural hybridity but also 'Third Spaces' are thus configured according to their contextual specificity. I further suggest that the contextual influence does not include only the socio-cultural and socio-

political environment, but also the role of individual agency, and the relationship/interplay between diverse cultural elements involved in transcultural negotiation.

Transculturality can be interpreted as both a process and a result of a cultural contact, which is based on the recognition of cultures as heterogeneous and overlapping. As a result of a cultural contact, inter-influence and exchange, it is manifested through a hybrid creation, and as a process-oriented dynamic phenomenon, it is incited by and developed in 'Third Spaces'. The latter are transcultural abstract territories that create conditions for a transcultural encounter to occur (first modality) and in which new cultural positions and further new hybridities emerge and rigid cultural borders are surpassed (second modality/Bhabha's conceptualisation of a 'Third Space'). Transcultural configurations are multiple and depend on the context in which transculturality develops, the individual agency, and the interplay of cultural elements involved in this negotiation.

It has to be noted that a transcultural paradigm acknowledges cultural encounters as dialectical events, as points that incite complex processes of cultural negotiation, both of antagonistic and complementing nature. As Dagnino puts it, transculturality can reveal the dialectical flows of the cultural circulation, that are "often asymmetrical but always multidirectional" (2013, p.153). On the one hand these flows are "marked by ruptures, disjunctures, and mutual tensions" and on the other "by commonalities and shared ventures, affects, or outlooks" (Ibid.). All these instances/states/findings, transitory or continuous, even those that are controversial to one another, can concurrently form part of a single cultural negotiation upon a cultural encounter; and transculturality as a theoretical concept is in-development to recognise and investigate this complexity. Being projected and negotiated in a complex and dynamic reality, transculturality is a complex and dynamic notion which makes it a valuable analytical tool for the analysis of this reality and for a better understanding of how the increasing cultural diversity in a modern world functions.

The production of transcultural meanings within the transcultural processes and their practical projection will be thus better illustrated and analysed through images and visual negotiations of identity contestation in films. In this view, the films were selected as empirical testing, explanatory and practical platforms through which transculturality can be analysed and contextualised.

Transculturality testing and its conceptual development via the discursive analysis of the films, as its visual meaning-creators, will assist in building the empirical frameworks of discussion and reflection through which the processes of questioning, extending and re-configuring the category of 'the us' and rethinking the construction of 'the others' can take

place in a more critical and reformative way. It will allow to find the ways to see how the dynamics of cultural encounters, interactions and inter-influences constantly re-invent self-perceptions, identities, practices and norms so they function as transcultural, as able to speak and act from and through multiple positions.

Research Objectives.

The main objective of this research is thus to analyse transculturality as an emerging concept and as a reality in its multiple configurations, to define its potential and to illustrate how via this analysis it is possible to build the frameworks (the methodological spaces) for critical questioning, discussion and reflection onto the essentialist cultural constructs and binaries. These essentialist and binary cultural constructs provide foundation for immigrant stigmatisation discourses, whereas developing methods of critical re-working of these constructs can assist in promoting and understanding better the counter narratives, and thus in recognising the potential of cultural diversity and a non-inferior character of difference and of transcultural connections.

With the help of the cinematic discursive analysis, I want to define and to research profoundly different elements and configurations of transculturality as a theory and to illustrate how transculturality works while taking into consideration new conceptualisations of the notion development. In this view, my research project aims to be a contribution to a better understanding of the nature and the post-factum of a cultural encounter and will thus contribute to a bigger picture of understanding the dynamics and complexities of cultural diversity. The territorial case study for this research is the European (trans-)cultural space and the specific type of a cultural encounter is an encounter that takes place within the studied space, an encounter between the whom and what is constructed as 'European', 'the us', the 'native' and whom and what is constructed as 'non-European', 'the other', 'the immigrant/immigrant descendant'. The societies in the centre of discussion are mainly those European societies that are major hosts of new minorities of non-European background: Germany, Spain, France, and Italy². The reasons for such selection are based on their wider cultural complexity due to the largest international migration flows in the post World War II period and onwards as well as on the availability of research cinematic material. The empirical platforms through which transculturality is to be analysed are recent cinematic

² While the main cinematic case studies selected for transcultural discursive analysis are contextualised in Germany, Spain, France, and Italy, the immigration and integration aspects in other European countries will be addressed too, including the UK, which is among the major hosts of (new) minorities of non-European descent.

works that address the questions of immigration, diaspora and cultural diversity in Europe, especially, but not limited to, those made by immigrants/immigrant descendants themselves.

The choice of addressing films as case studies for this research owes to the transformative potential of cinema. Cinema can be considered a valuable tool for the transcultural analysis due to its ability to speak from the multi-perspective angles and its potential to disrupt the popular constructs, while these constructs are stereotypes, generalisations or even entrenched notions, labels and the schemes of power relations. As a mediating perceptions instrument, cinema can be critical in identifying the existing schemes of power relations thus striving to challenge them.

Research Questions.

The first research question to pose is how, in what way and in what conditions is transculturality projected in the selected films and what do these projections say about visualised, embedded, perceived and contextualised cultural meanings. More specifically, the questions will be addressed within two lines of analysis:

1) How can transculturality, with its developing conceptual framework and components, be identified in the selected cinematic discourses? How does it explain the non-essentialist complex cultural meanings, including cultural ambiguities and overlapping cultural practices (for example, how, as explained by transculturality conceptual framework, do those living on 'cultural borders', both symbolic and actual borders negotiate their relationship towards these borders, their lives beyond and across them)? How does transculturality interact with essentialist cultural perspectives and with the contextual specificity in which transcultural identities are negotiated?

2) How at the same time does the cinematic analysis in the process assist in extending and developing further the existing conceptual framework of transculturality by identifying new meanings and drawing new explanations that derive from the transcultural and socio-cultural contextual analysis?

While answering these two research questions, it will be possible to connect them to analysing the re-constructive character of the films. At the same time, it has to be noted that the re-constructive character of the films can be examined with the help of transcultural research. That is to say, we can analyse how the films deconstruct the cultural 'othering' because transculturality explains this deconstruction. In this view, the question to be addressed is as to how, as explicated by transculturality, do the films deconstruct the 'othering'

of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe and how, in this way, they challenge the stigmatisation/marginalisation of 'difference'?

What is meant here by 'deconstruction' is not necessarily a direct counter-narrative that criticises particular discourses which create grounds for exclusions or include racist and anti-immigrant elements. It may include an expression that goes against the discourse (political, media, or even artistic discourse) that constructs and reinforces immigrant/immigrant descent subjects as 'cultural others', as bearers of a set of cultural characteristics that are assumedly contradictory or incompatible with the cultural characteristics of the 'natives'. Without necessarily performing as direct counter-narratives, this deconstruction can be of a complex indirect nature. It can be a deconstruction that negotiates transcultural meanings in its own way and it provides basis for a better understanding of multiple cultural possibilities and the combination of multiple cultural identities. Together with serving as platforms for the analysis of transculturality, the films will, in parallel, function as reflection points that depending on their context and their positioning will connect to specific cultural developments locally as well as transcend the cultural symbolic borders across, thus constructing frameworks for reflections both on the local and global levels.

Specific research questions to be posed to the cinematic case studies of this dissertation will address the interrelation of the themes of cultural diversity problematics, cultural symbolic borders, and transculturality. Since the object of the study are European cultural spaces, certain specific questions will be formulated as the following. How the idea of cultural Europeanness (values, practices, belief-systems, memories, languages, social lives and lifestyles) is negotiated and how is it extended to embrace the discursively segregated European 'cultural others'? How is the traditional understanding of Europeanness (understanding that is entrenched in political and media discourse) challenged by the illustration of transculturality throughout the cinematic discussion? What do the films refer to in order to discuss/contextualise/exemplify these ideas? For example, is it a discourse into the past - multiple and interconnected histories and/or exemplifying overlapping cultural experiences via hybrid subcultures within a diversified Europe today. Does culture become bigger than nationhood in the films? How does this work for extending the understanding of transculturality?

Furthermore, combining all these questions together, can we suggest that transcultural research can be a chance to deconstruct the essentialist 'otherness'? More specifically, how does the undertaken transcultural research contribute to de-essentialising the construct of

European 'cultural other' while paving the way for challenging and deconstructing the cultural essentialism.

The main research hypothesis can be formulated as follows. By combining a transcultural conceptual framework with its empirical testing and elaboration through the selected films, the undertaken transcultural research will open up the critical inquiry routes to de-essentialise the construct of European 'cultural other'.

More specifically, it will illustrate transculturality as an analytical instrument that proposes theoretical and inquiring methodological tools to approach, analyse and re-invent the European 'other' as a transcultural social subject, a subject who builds and exercises their individual identity across multiple and overlapping spheres of enunciation, while these spheres include, but are not limited to, the re-negotiated/re-negotiating 'spaces' of 'home' and 'host' cultural worlds with all the heterogeneity, ambiguity, fluidity, interconnectedness and dynamic socio-cultural and socio-political contextual specificity that these worlds encompass. The transcultural research will further illustrate that 'the other' cannot be culturally separated from 'the us' because 'the other' is culturally interweaved with 'the us', along historical inter-influences, contemporary cultural inter-penetrations, and shared spaces of reference and of social life, while their cultures and cultural identities are constantly re-invented through mutual dialogue, conflict, contestation and collaboration.

It has to be noted, however, that the suggested hypothesis is hopeful rather than reflecting the actual transcultural recognition of the constructed 'European other'. The disadvantaged marginal position of non-European immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe is a prevalent situation which continues to shape their lives, their social positioning and interferes into transcultural developments. As the 'othering' is reinforced by institutional, political and media discourses, the marginalisation is maintained and is predominantly viewed as a 'norm'. On the other hand, transcultural ideas and perspectives of inclusion are topical questions that are promoted by certain academics, intellectuals and artists in Europe. As their ideas defend the rightful belonging of European 'others' to Europe, they provide the grounds for conceptual, institutional, societal and individual-level re-consideration of cultural diversity implications. This dissertation has thus opted to refer to transcultural theoretical and intellectual approaches as well as their empirical projections in certain films in order to highlight the more optimistic aspects of living in between, of being transcultural subjects, and to point out the transcultural possibilities that can be extracted and developed from cultural encounters, exchanges, mixes, as well as from cultural identities re-negotiations. As one of the case studies selected for transcultural analysis - *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) - has been

described, it is "a documentary (...) that marks a hopeful course in the drama experienced by immigrants in Europe"³ (Espinosa, 2016).

Research Methodology.

The methodological objective of this research is thus to build a framework/a model/a methodological strategy of approaching the contestation and analysis of cultural representation. A transcultural model is elaborated through the application and at the same time validation of the theory with the aim of extending the theory's conceptual framework. Transculturality is applied as a methodological tool for the purpose of analysing cultural meanings, explaining dynamic cultural hybridity and understanding better what does the cultural diversity in all its contemporary complexities mean.

In the course of the theoretical discussion of the transcultural framework, a flexible conceptual model will be elaborated. This model, the theoretical-hypothetical model of transculturality will be applied to and tested through the film analysis. It will offer a discussion of the core elements and characteristics of transculturality together with the contextual 'interdependencies' that help to shape its framework and its dynamic nature.

The topics of transculturality's proposed framework are the following:

- **Transformation.** Transforming identities and transforming subjectivities in the process of identities construction.
- **'Third Space'.** The processes of the creation of a 'Third Space'.
- **Dynamic borders.** Flexibility and permeability of symbolic borders.
- **The cultural complexity.** The complexity of the process of (trans-)cultural transformation within a particular society (the process is dynamic and provokes further complex new hybridities in a long-term perspective).
- **Context.** Contextual specificity for dynamics and multiple configurations of transculturality.
- **Nation.** The role of the concept of the 'nation' and the process of its construction in transcultural developments and the understanding of transculturality.
- **Interference of monocultural perspectives.**

This theoretical-hypothetical framework of transculturality will provide a basis for the elaboration of methodological lines of analysis by suggesting the directions of conducting a

³ In original text as, "un documental (...) que señala un rumbo esperado dentro del drama que sufren los inmigrantes en Europa".

study and approaching the object of analysis. The object of analysis, that is to say the elements to be identified and examined in the film, are the creation, the negotiation and the different configurations of transcultural meanings. And what is meant by transcultural meanings is the dynamic constructs and implications that are being created, made visible and evident from a cinematic discussion, namely through the negotiation and re-negotiation of (trans)cultural connections, lifestyles, ways of communication, identifications, and practices on screen.

Deriving from the theoretical-hypothetical framework, the methodological model will be developed comprising of five lines of analysis. These five lines will function as supporting methodological dimensions for transcultural exploration, and will contain different but interconnected elements of transculturality categorised in separate sections for the purpose of structured analysis. They will refer to the conceptual, contextual and formal fabrics of an empirical transcultural analysis and will thus create the basis platform of interrogation and transcultural discussion of a film. These methodological dimensions will be structured as the following: Positioning of transculturality: context (discursive, socio-cultural and socio-political contexts), individual agency, cultural elements interplay; Transcultural spatiality: Framing spaces (physical localities/filming location and 'spaces of reference'), 'Third Space', activating the flexibility of borders; Indicators of transformation: Transforming identities and subjectivities, crisis of identity, multiple belonging, hybridity; Film reading methodology: formal, visual and discursive aspects of the film to assist transcultural analysis; and Critical stance of the filmmakers and transcultural resolution of the film.

These methodological lines will formulate the discursive analysis questions to be posed to the films. For instance, within the methodological line of Indicators of Transformation, such transcultural indicators as transformation of identity (emerging new or re-negotiated current identifications) and transforming subjectivities (changing visions, mentalities, behaviour and lifestyles without yet inciting the questions of belonging or identification) will be addressed and the question will be asked as to how this transformation takes place. What is the path that the protagonist goes through in the process of this transformation and what are the visual and discursive means (in reference to Film reading methodology) that are used to illustrate this transformation on screen? Or, within the line of analysing the Positioning of transculturality, the role of a specific socio-cultural context which participates, directly or indirectly, in the development of transculturality, will be addressed. One of the indicative questions within this methodological line will be formulated as the following: What is the political and socio-cultural background (of the specific society projected in a film) in which

transculturality occurs/will occur? More specifically, if we can deduce this from the films, what is the role within a specific national context, for instance of the governmental policies, in regards to immigration and inclusion? What is the role of the projected institutional elements in the immigrant protagonists' lives, their social relationships and transcultural possibilities?

Contents Summary.

The dissertation is composed of three chapters. The first two chapters embark on framing the political and socio-cultural background and theoretical discussion, and the elaboration of theoretical-hypothetical and methodological frameworks, while at the same explain the value of choosing cinematic representations as empirical projection of transcultural research. The third chapter provides empirical analysis of the selected films that is guided by the theoretical framework and methodological model elaborated in the previous two chapters.

Chapter I, *Transculturality and the Discourse of Multiculturalism: Framing the Background and the Theory*, consists of four subchapters. It begins with *Introducing the importance of transcultural research* (1.1) and continues to a brief discussion of the political and socio-cultural background of the situation and positioning of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in European societies. More specifically, the second subchapter (1.2), *Immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe: Between 'the West' and 'the Rest'*, addresses the socio-cultural and policies background in regards to cultural diversity, immigration in contemporary Western European societies, and the politics of constructing 'the other' in its historical and modern contexts. What is emphasised is the influence of multiple interconnected contextual as well as institutional factors that participate in positioning the immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in their host-(new)home societies, while at the same time these factors create conditions, directly and indirectly, for how different transcultural connections develop. The role of multicultural policies is discussed through the prism of their brief evaluation on the examples of different European countries taking into consideration (the construction of) the national and supranational narrative imaginary that have taken part in the policy development. It is suggested that current difficulties and challenges in cultural diversity studies and elaboration of approaches towards a better understanding of how cultural interconnections work are significantly due to the long reluctance of the nation-states to recognise the multicultural reality and its dynamics. As a result, there has been a long-term lack of elaborated and institutionalised programs directed at the analysis of rapidly increasing

cultural diversity and at accommodating emerging minorities. Furthermore, a continuous discursive reinforcement of 'the otherness' of 'non-European' immigrant/immigrant descent subjects is supported by the persistence of essentialist constructs across the media and political discourses that involve the elements of stigmatisation and marginalisation of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects. The showcase analysis of several stigmatising discourses point to that on the level of these discourses there is a deliberate lack of interest in a more elaborative cultural and social analysis of the lives of immigrant/immigrant subjects in Europe, which further contributes to continuing 'othering' and impacting their lives. The questions posed in this subchapter to the restrictive generalisations and discriminating character of the 'binary' division between 'the us' and 'the other' prepare the ground for the discussion of the transcultural theoretical framework and its implications for challenging this binary.

In the third subchapter, (1.3) *Transculturality and transcultural research as a way to break the essentialist cultural constructs: Theoretical opportunities and challenges*, the discussion starts with drawing upon the theoretical implications of transculturality in the context of contemporary cultural dynamics in Europe. Transcultural research is recognised as a necessary theoretical solution which will assist us to better understand the cultural changes that we observe and experience in contemporary European societies, at the same time contributing to de-essentialising the constructed cultural 'otherness' of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects. The main part of this subchapter is dedicated to the conceptual elaboration of transculturality and building the theoretical-hypothetical framework for empirical analysis. Here, a historical background of the formation of the theory is briefly addressed as well as the initiation of the theory's extensive elaboration by Wolfgang Welsch and the subsequent theorisations with the aim to expand Welschian theoretical framework. Apart from the conceptualisations of transculturality theorists, other authors who incorporate transcultural elements in their theoretical discussions and open up new lines for transcultural research will be addressed. The insights to be incorporated into transcultural research are the following: contradictory dynamics of cultural identities' construction (Jones & Krzyżanowski, 2008), flexibility of the 'border' (Schriewer & Cayuela, 2016), the nation-centered logic of cultural categorisation as a challenge for transcultural research (Robins, 2014), communication technologies as contextual elements for transcultural developments and a discussion on the nation construct transformation (Sieber, 2015), and the discourse on the disruption of the essentialist divisive constructs of cultures (Bhambra, 2014). The discussion of a theoretical-hypothetical model (which is also summarised above) goes into an elaborate explanation of

each line/topic of this framework, at the same time connecting their configurative elements with one another as interrelated characteristics of transculturality. All seven topics - transforming subjectivities, a 'Third Space', dynamic borders, cultural complexity, contextual specificity, the interplay of transculturality with the nation construct, and with the interference of monocultural perspectives - are explained and developed further into more detailed referential elements and empirically required discussion points. This model is later used as a basis theoretical framework for elaborating the methodology for discursive cinematic analysis.

The fourth subchapter (1.4) *Transculturality as a relevant strategy towards reconsidering multiculturalism: Incorporation of the transcultural paradigm within the discourse of multiculturalism and multicultural policies* embarks on the theoretical discussion on the possibility of transcultural implications for multiculturalism. The problematic of multicultural policies in their traditional understanding is referred to their maintaining of the essentialist perception of cultures and, as a result, insufficient practical measures to implement this policy. The questions are further developed in the direction of policies' re-consideration and re-definition by taking into account transculturality paradigm implications. A suggestion of 're-writing' multicultural as well as its 'alternative' intercultural paradigm goes in line with the incorporation of transcultural elements both on the institutional and policy implementation levels.

Chapter II, *Building a methodological model for transcultural analysis of a film*, consists of three subchapters. In the first subchapter, (2.1) *Transculturality in film: Cinematic representations (of immigrant/diasporic subjects) as important empirical platforms for transcultural research*, the transcultural discussion is focused on the filmic expressions explaining the value of cinema as an empirical platform for transcultural analysis. Cinema's multi-perspective ability as well as its revealing and disruptive potential can assist in reconstructing essentialist images, while as an artistic visual tool which mediates reality it becomes significant for the analysis of transcultural meanings. In this subchapter, I also refer to the cultural theorist Stuart Hall and his theorisations of the role of migrant and diasporic cinematic representations in the construction and negotiation of migrant/diasporic identities (1990). This discussion leads to recognising the ability of a film to function as the visualisation of the transcultural and of its complexity.

The next subchapter of this section, (2.2) *How to analyse transculturality in films: Methodological dimensions to approach and analyse transcultural meanings*, is the core part of the Chapter Two. The main objective of this subchapter is to answer the question of how

transculturality can be analysed in and through film. The discussion initiates with framing the methodological design for transcultural analysis of a film which derives from the theoretical-hypothetical framework of transculturality developed in Chapter One. It is further discussed what has been elaborated as main methodological dimensions of analysis, and what are the specific indicative questions of each dimension that will be subsequently applied to the transcultural analysis of cinematic works in Chapter Three. Each methodological line provides the framework scheme of the methodological design based on the referential points that approach different aspects of transculturality. The first two lines of analysis, Positioning of transculturality and Transcultural spatiality serve, respectively, as preparatory and negotiatory 'grounds' of transculturality. More specifically, the elements' structures within these lines of analysis formulate the questions to the conceptual and actual framework, the field of action, within which transculturality takes place and develops. The reference is both to a bigger contextual background such as socio-political and socio-cultural context, and to specific (physical and symbolic) spaces in which transcultural encounter occurs and within which the negotiation of transcultural identities initiates. The third methodological dimension of Indicators of transformation guides transcultural analysis to the exemplification of resultant configurations of transculturality (such as cultural hybridity and multiple identities). The methodological dimension of Critical stance of the filmmakers and transcultural resolution of the film explores two questions. The first one approaches a critical stance (open or indirect criticism) of the filmmakers towards essential or monocultural perceptions of culture as well as to discursive, social and spatial stigmatisation of European immigrant/immigrant descent subjects. And the second addresses transcultural resolution of the film towards deconstructing the 'otherness'. The line of Film reading methodology serves as complementary to other four methodological dimensions and functions as an assisting instrument for them. This methodological framework provides the ground for referential questions to formal properties of the films such as *mise-en-scène*, editing, cinematography, and sound, whose methodological suggestions and components are researched from the theoretical works of David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's (2008) and James Monaco (2000). These film techniques are discussed as important formal elements of the conceptual analysis of the film, and explained as the aspects of the film language to be examined on screen in order to identify the (trans-)cultural meanings constructed within a particular film scene and within a film as a whole.

Finally, the discussion in the third subchapter of Chapter Two addresses the process of the case studies selection, in which different stages of films selection are analysed.

Chapter III, *Cinematic discursive analysis: Visualising transcultural meanings*, embarks on the in-depth examination of selected filmic case studies elaborating the analysis in reference to the designed methodological model. It starts with (3.1) an overview of the selected case studies and then continues to the main second section of the chapter enquiring into both discursive and formal elements of the filmic pieces. The cinematic analysis (3.2) is divided in two parts. First part (3.2.1), *Transcultural negotiations in emerging multicultural societies*, addresses the films which are set in 'new hosts', Italy and Spain, *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) by Maite Vitoria Daneris and *El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002) by B́asel Ramsis. And the second part (3.2.2), *Self-construction across 'Third Spaces' by immigrant descent subjects*, addresses the films that are set in 'old hosts', Germany and France, *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011) by Yasemin Şamdereli and *Divines* (2016) by Houda Benyamina. The third and last section of this chapter, (3.3) *Transcultural implications for multiculturalism as explored via filmic discourses* emphasises the critical insights of the cinematic transcultural analysis for re-approaching multiculturalism. It is proposed to refer to transcultural analysis and its generated non-essentialist cultural meanings as the reasoning for re-considering the multiculturalism discourse beyond the essentialist paradigm of culture.

Chapter I.

Transculturality and the discourse
of multiculturalism: framing the
background and the theory

CHAPTER I.

TRANCULTURALITY AND THE DISCOURSE OF MULTICULTURALISM: FRAMING THE BACKGROUND AND THE THEORY.

1.1 Introducing the importance of transcultural research.

An introduction of the significance of transcultural perspectives and of transcultural research is offered in this chapter. The discussion is framed around and focused on the elaboration of a hypothetical-theoretical model of transculturality. In this way, it prepares the grounds for a discursive analysis of transculturality via the cinematic case studies. At the same time, the discussion embarks on connecting the theory of transculturality with multiculturalism, in particular with the political discourse of multiculturalism and its functional implementation in European societies.

The societies in the centre of this research, as already mentioned in Introduction, are mainly those European societies that are major hosts of new minorities of non-European background: Germany, Spain, France, and Italy. The reason for this selection are the increasing cultural diversity and intermingling cultural processes of these societies which have made them relevant, also different, examples to study and analyse transculturality and the implications of transcultural connections in contemporary Europe. However, even though in my cinematic analysis I am particularly referring to the representations contextualised within the afore-mentioned countries, my theoretical and historical background discussion is not limited only to these states. I will also address the implications of multiculturalism as well as the immigration and integration aspects in other European countries with the aim of drawing a bigger picture of the construction of cultural diversity in Europe. These references are significant taking into consideration the process of European integration, its enlargement waves, and the creation of a freedom of movement area within the EU borders which have facilitated migration movements in different directions and transit migration.

While the official current discourse of multiculturalism retains the paradigm of cultural homogeneity and cultural autonomy, the reality of a dynamic cultural hybridity reveals a restrictive character of such paradigm, its closed insensibility and divisive pre-conditionality. By divisive pre-conditionality I mean that cultural positions are pre-defined as static which gives the way to cultural labelling and construction of fixed oppositions, entrenched in time and space. In other words, in European societies in which cultural diversity proliferates and in

which the talks on multiculturalism have become a political question, cultural practices are divided and categorised by groups, ethnically or nationally separated, pre-conditioning a specific cultural identity for individual members of these groups and discarding the role and impact of constant cultural inter-influences and of personal choices. In this view, with the objective to approach and analyse the cultural dynamics, it is essential to refer to those first hand narratives that go against the grain of such perceptions and discourse. Having identified the manifestations of transcultural lifestyles and practices in cinematic discourses of, predominantly, but not only second and third generation of non-European immigrants in Europe, I have, therefore, decided to analyse the transculturality implications via cinematic analysis in order to exemplify and emphasise the new solutions for the cultural paradigm shift.

Cinematic case studies for this research compose a diverse selection of films that are made by transcultural filmmakers and/or focus on transcultural protagonists in European contemporary socio-cultural spaces. At the same time the films reveal the problematic aspects and the role of different contextual elements that condition the possibilities for transcultural connections and for practicing transcultural lifestyles. All selected films involve the European immigrant/diasporic subjects of non-European descent, especially the second- and third generation subjects who, as both directors and protagonists, can potentially construct and re-construct the cultural imageries around them. One of the selected films, for example, *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011) by German-Turkish director Yasemin Şamdereli re-approaches the complexities of integration of different generations of "Turks" in Germany. The film builds and opens the ways for new (trans-)cultural perspectives based on personal experiences of the director and a co-screenwriter - Nesrin Şamdereli. As an artistic discourse, it reworks certain perceptions on immigration and cultural encounter with the help of discursive and visual cinematic language. For example, the film applies light narrative techniques such as humour and irony to reconcile cultural clashes and to illustrate transformative subjectivities across pre-constructed binary German vs. Turkish cultural spaces. Furthermore, it indicates the institutional pitfalls in the integration of the Turkish minority in Germany showing how one of the main protagonists Hüseyin received the citizenship only after 50 years of living in his adopted country with his extended family.

The cultural paradigm shift that I am referring to envisages a move from 'monoculturality' to transculturality. It means the departure from the essential or traditional narrative of culture, according to which cultures are separate spherical entities seen within "the contraposition of ownness and foreignness" (Welsch, 1999, p.194) and "cultural

differences are portrayed as inferior" (Rings, 2016, p.1). Instead, this essentialist 'monocultural' framework of thought is challenged by a transcultural perspective which entails exploring more the interconnectedness, inter-influentiality and transformative potential of cultures and their constitutive heterogeneity.

It is important, in this view, to highlight the innovative nature of transcultural research in elaborating the strategies to approach the complexities of multicultural societies. Multicultural policies in Europe, in their current (political and institutional) understanding, had already been criticised for the inability to react adequately to the national internal cultural diversity and for drawing divisive lines between cultural communities. As I will also discuss it in this chapter, the problematics of these policies has been in their basis on the 'monoculturality'-guided concept of multiculturalism (which can be characterised as traditional multiculturalism). While the latter has advocated that cultures can co-exist with each other on the principles of mutual respect for different values, lifestyles and identifications, this has suggested that cultures can be differentiated by their conceptual and practical purity. However, little theoretical and institutional reconsideration of this essentialist basis of multiculturalism has been brought forward. For instance, as a conceptual response to multiculturalism another paradigm was developed - an intercultural paradigm. With the purpose of improving strategies of multicultural policies, intercultural paradigm has put a great emphasis on the cross-cultural dialogue, which goes beyond the multicultural paradigm's core principles of mutual respect and co-existence. But despite the new theoretical suggestions, interculturality and multiculturalism have remained within the essentialist framework by still viewing multicultural societies as divided in self-enclosed cultural entities. While comparing them to transculturality, Welsch has criticised both multicultural and intercultural notions as being based on "a conception of cultures as islands or spheres" (Welsch, 1999, p.195), pointing out that this idea of self-enclosure and delineated separatedness implies the opposition of cultures against one another and even a conflict. "Cultures (...), according with the logic of this conception, do nothing other than collide with one another", he argues (Ibid.). Transculturality, rather, distances completely from viewing cultures as autonomous and homogenous and proposes their analysis through the prism of "*inner differentiation and complexity*", while taking into consideration the interconnectedness and entanglement with each other (cultures as 'inner-content' or 'satellites' for other cultures) (Ibid., p.196). As Antor also contends, transculturality "problematize(s) the 'container theory' of national cultures as separate entities (still inherent in terms like 'multiculturalism' and 'interculturalism') and (...) emphasize(s) the hybrid interlocking interdependence of cultures"

(Antor, 2010, pp. 11-12). Ultimately, transculturality replies to multiculturalism's unresponsiveness to dynamic cultural developments and hybrid socio-cultural realities.

Therefore, this discussion additionally intends to justify the need for the incorporation of new transcultural solutions within the discourse of multiculturalism and multicultural policies in Europe. The incorporation of transcultural research within the discourses of multiculturalism and multicultural policies is topical for contemporary culturally heterogeneous European societies; as Steven Vertovec denominated it, a continent of "super-diversity" (2007). We, thus, need to depart from the divisive notions of cultural homogeneity with the aim of exploring and elaborating transcultural research and its cultural and political implications in the context of increasing cultural diversity in Europe. The reconsideration of multiculturalism will be further examined in more detail in the last part of this chapter. I will refer to the current essentialist conceptualisations of multiculturalism and interculturality denominating them as 'traditional multiculturalism' and 'traditional interculturality' respectively. The discussion will illustrate how the implications of transculturality can assist in reconsidering and reconfiguring these notions and thus the related policies which incorporate them.

1.2 Immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe:Between 'the West' and 'the Rest'.

"Because of the legacy of colonialism and neo-imperialism, essentialist notions of the West and the non-West have become increasingly untenable as their histories, cultures and peoples have become inextricably intertwined"
(Dennison & Lim, 2006, p.4).

1.2.1 Cultural diversity in contemporary Europe and the politics of constructing 'the other'.

Today's Europe represents an increasing eclectic diversity of people whose cultural affiliations and cultural practices are juxtaposed against one another. People construct and negotiate their identifications across multiple spheres of reference in cultural, social and political terms, while these spheres can be both juxtaposed and/or separated. At the same time, the cultural diversity in Europe is intense and dynamic. This intensity and dynamism are exemplified in representations on contradictory cultural clashes, or, to name it in a different manner, cultural misunderstandings, yet the diversity simultaneously proliferates in discourses that address a combination or a compilation of cultures and overlapping transcultural experiences.

Cultural misunderstandings may arise from the lack of knowledge about particular cultural references but it can also be a result of cultural prejudices and stereotypes. When a particular socio-cultural environment with a usually dominant 'native' culture hosts and becomes a platform of negotiation between different cultural references and meanings, the relationship of the latter with the dominant local culture defines the process of this negotiation. Likewise, and conversely, the process of such negotiation influences the construction and reconstruction of the relationship between the non-dominant minority cultural references and the dominant culture as well as between the minority cultures themselves.

But is it possible to define and delineate what belongs particularly to the minority culture and what the expression of the dominant/host/'native' culture is without finding oneself in the conceptual space of overlaps and inter-influences? Indeed, sometimes the task may prove difficult, even if the powerful dominant discourses endeavour to establish and communicate the imagined cultural rigid delineation. A search for such delineation is especially pertinent, for example, to the discourses that participate in the process of 'nation-building' aiming for an external (and internal) culturally homogenous image. As Gronemann notes, the discursive construction of the nation is undertaken by means of the discourse production that "forges the image of a general identity of the population of a particular territory", meaning a 'native' dominant population, and "homogenizes the internal differences and produces the external image"⁴ (2015, p.211). That is to say, a delineated image of a rigidly constructed dominant national culture is being created through cultural differentiation and selective categorisation thus excluding all the cultural elements and negotiations that do not enter this constructed image and diminishing the role and possibilities of a cultural contact. In contrast to such a general and homogenous culture and nation-based cultural identity construction, more complex heterogenous and hybrid cultural processes have been observed. The increasingly visible cultural inter-influences have been challenging the power relations between cultures, thus inciting the process of re-definition of the nature of a cultural contact and the potential implications of this contact.

The complicated processes of cultural inter-influences have been most visible in Western European countries, making them rich exemplary spaces for studying such processes.

⁴In original text as, "fomentan la imagen de una identidad general de los habitantes de un territorio, homogeneizan las diferencias inferiores y producen lo exterior".

NOTE: Quotes in other languages translated into English as they appear in the text will be referenced to their original texts in footnotes. This is the procedure that will be followed throughout the dissertation. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

At the same time, there have been difficulties in such studies due to the long official reluctance of nation states to recognise the reality of complex diversity or even denial of increasingly heterogeneous, in cultural terms, societies. To put an example, Germany officially recognised that it has become a country of immigration only in the beginning of the 2000s. This fact of late official recognition can also explain, if examined retrospectively, the long-term lack of elaborated and institutionalised programs directed at the accommodation and integration of emerging ethnic minorities in the country.

Cultural complications evolve as the outcomes of the growing cultural diversity and the development of even bigger cultural inter-influences. These complications have been particularly evident as a result of increasing migrations from Eastern and Southern populations to the West in the aftermath of the Second World War, including 'temporary' labour migrations and migration from former colonies, post-Berlin Wall transition, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as in the context of the European Union integration and its enlargement waves, the largest one in 2004 – in which ten Eastern European states joined the European Communities. Contemporary lifestyles of cross-border mobility and technological advances have also immensely contributed to the cultural diversification, to its complexity and dynamics.

At the same time, "migration and settlement patterns of immigrants in Europe have been diverse and have evolved unevenly across time and space, with some West European countries having longer immigration histories than others" (Penninx, Spencer, & Van Hear, 2008, p.2). France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK have been experiencing the large flows of immigration since 1960s and 1970s, characterised principally by post-colonial or/and recruiting/guest workers' programs immigration, as well as refugee migration from Eastern to Western Europe; these countries can be considered old hosts with the longest history of immigration in contemporary Europe.

Such European countries as Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece were emigration countries until the 1980s, yet they have been steadily becoming countries of immigration since then (Kaya, 2002, p.22), and therefore can be referred to as the new hosts. Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Finland as well as Ireland and Iceland can also be considered new hosts.

The new EU member states [such as Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, the Baltic countries, etc. simultaneously started to experience emigration, transit migration and immigration (Penninx et al. 2008, p. 2). In this context, people have been both leaving and entering the country as well as transiting/crossing different national territories on the way to other countries of destination. The latter processes have also involved change of directions as

many immigrants have ended up staying and settling down in the countries, which were initially planned to be their 'temporary station', or transit migration points. After ten states entered the European Union in 2004, the emigration from them has been predominantly to Western Europe and Scandinavian countries, while they have also become the main transit points to these countries. As Čaněk and Čižinsky explain about the case of Czech Republic, it has become "a destination of transit from the East to the more affluent West" (2011, p.327). In these post-2004-enlargement new EU member states, the immigration patterns have varied from country to country, yet in the majority they have consisted of large inflows from Eastern European states such as, for instance, Romania, Ukraine, the Russian Federation and Moldova, and in relatively lower numbers from Asian states.

There are different particularities, though, that specifically characterise the aspects of immigration in all these countries, and some of the examples will be discussed further. Each European country has had a different immigration history and different immigration and integration policies to accommodate this diversity which shaped (and continues to do so) the practical reality for migrant/diasporic subjects. It has to be noted also that different patterns of immigration in European countries as well as historic peculiarities are not only reflected in the size and composition of immigrant populations but are also significant factors of today's varied dynamics of cultural connections across the societies. Furthermore, different political and socio-cultural national contexts have played their specific roles in creating different conditions for political, socio-economic and cultural positioning of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in these contexts, their statuses, their social rights and opportunities. For instance, the study of Bommers and Geddes on immigration and the construction of European states' welfare can assist in explaining the role of (national) contextual factors by referring to multiple interconnected historical, political and economic frameworks. As the authors emphasise, nation states have "been affected by immigration in different ways relating to each state's international political relations such as its colonial traditions, involvement in competitive nation-building processes, as well as historically established concepts of the nation and specific welfare regimes" (Bommers & Geddes 2003, p.2). With reference to all these dimensions of both institutional and socio-political contextual background of European countries, it has to be taken into consideration that all these factors have had their direct and indirect influence on the positioning of the immigrant subject and, most importantly, on how different cultural connections have developed and are developing now.

Another significant factor of the complex dynamics of the cultural connections is the changed geographical nature of migration into Europe in general, which has diversified from

arrivals from the Mediterranean countries and former colonies up to 1980s-1990s to the subsequent immigration from all over the world since then and up until now. As Borkert and Penninx explain,

"Immigrants from all over the world come to Europe in significant numbers: expatriates working for multinational companies and international organisations, skilled workers such as nurses and doctors from the Philippines, refugees and asylum seekers from Africa, the Middle East and Asia, the Balkan states and former Soviet Union countries, students from China, and undocumented workers from African and Asian countries" among many (Borkert & Penninx, 2011, p.7).

While such exemplification can be in a way generalised, it provides an introductory picture of a contemporary culturally heterogeneous Europe, a continent of so-called "super-diversity" – a term coined by sociologist Steven Vertovec (2007). Besides, the predominant movement of immigrants to urban areas and their concentration and/or dispersal in different neighbourhoods of the cities have gradually transformed the particular neighbourhoods and influenced the cities' residential and infrastructural dynamics. These urban transformations have made the immigration processes more visible, while the cultural connections have become even more diverse conditioned and characterised by distinct residential patterns across the cities and countries, as well as differences in multicultural and transcultural connections across generations that include second, third and now even fourth generation of immigrant subjects. This kind of transformation and transformation-in-process will be illustrated in the films that are selected for the discursive cinematic analysis such as *Divines* (2016) and *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002).

Although specific to each country, the approaches towards multicultural policies (initially aimed to address 'the cultural clashes'), the policies of integration and inclusion, the presence/absence of anti-discriminatory policies, media and public discourses on immigration and immigrants, as well as cultural and national specificities of each country have all contributed to how migrant/of migrant descent subjects are perceived within a wider public of the majority population. As a consequence, a generalised image of an immigrant/immigrant descent subject has immensely influenced their positioning in the society of reference and their cultural and socio-economic location within it.

Multicultural policies, their specificity and the degree of their implementation have had a significant influence on the position and perception of the migrant/migrant descent subjects in the host societies. These policies can be generally characterised by the recognition of the cultural diversity within the nation-state and by the elaboration of the strategies towards dealing with and accommodating this diversity. As Dewing and Leman put it, they are directed at "management of diversity through formal initiatives in the federal provincial and

municipal domains" (2006, p.1) and have undergone different scenarios and trajectories in different European immigration host societies.

Often complex and controversial, multicultural policies in European countries have included the strategies that depended on the political and socio-political environment of the specific nation state, yet they frequently derived from the patronising position of the ethnic majority or were directed at the maintenance/construction of the essentialist narrative of a culturally homogenous society. Furthermore, these policies have been immensely attached to the parallel search for historical grounds and justifications of "Europeanness" and common European identity, a narrative in which the 'non-European' migrant minorities were not incorporated.

This contemporary exclusion of the immigrant subjects of non-European descent from the framework of the "common European identity" has its roots in the European exceptionalism rhetoric of the 18th century and in the further development of Euro-centric approaches, in which Europe was defined through its opposition to Asia, the East. As Stråth contends, Christianity was contrasted to Islam (2002, p.396); progress, science and constitutionalism to stagnation, prejudice and political arbitrariness; rationalism and liberty to irrationalism and oppression. Montesquieu's theory of climates, according to which only in Europe, contrary to Asia, there are favourable conditions for freedom, was further developed by many philosophers (Ambjörnsson, 1997, pp. 85-87). Furthermore, the rhetoric of the 'clash of civilizations' has become a base for many nation-centered discourses on immigration and integration of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects.

Echoing these constructs, today, the distinction between the European and the non-European has been mainly justified by alluding to "unique" contemporary Western values; namely, a commitment to democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, gender equality, freedom of speech, and peaceful co-existence, in spite of the fact that there is a lack of consensus towards what constitutes each of these notions and their moral boundaries and controversies.

Similarly, there is a diversity of approaches towards what is meant by 'European identity' and particularly, European unique cultural elements. One of the EU recent initiatives *European Identity - Made in Europe Video Project* has collected the reflections of leading architects from several European countries on what constitutes 'European architecture' and how 'European identity' is projected on and through it. In the description of the project, the European Commission argues: "Architecture is one area where a clear European identity is developing" (European Commission, 2014). To debate this, American architect Patrick Lynch

has analysed the project by emphasising the problematic of the construct of 'European identity' due to its multiple and usually controversial interpretations.

"I see European architecture as more of a collage of entities, than of one single identity", argues Italian Fabrizio Barozzi, while Danish Bjarke Ingels communicates that, "The work that we are producing, which you could argue would be Danish architecture, is actually created by people from all over Europe working in Copenhagen" (Lynch, 2015). Lynch uses these reflections to juxtapose them and asks the following questions: "If European architecture is rooted in local identity, how could someone from a different culture help to create and inform that country's identity? There are many non-Europeans also contributing to projects in Europe. Would those projects not count as European architecture?" (Ibid.).

These simple questions challenge the rigid borders of 'European identity' by mentioning non-Europeans as active constructors, as participants in 'European architecture' together with Europeans, a reality which can be also taken in a metaphoric and symbolic way. However, a current building process of 'European identity' has been searching for 'exclusively European' elements to get embraced and form part of the delineated construct.

As a rule, an identity of 'the other', the 'non-European', has been gradually imposed on a migrant/of migrant descent subject. As Mayda argues, in a time when Europe is constructing its European identity, immigrants are seen as "odd" elements as the incorporation of "non-Western" cultures would produce the need for a re-shaping of this identity (2006, p. 515). There are also various reasons why a search for a modern European identity based on common cultural values is topical and in vogue nowadays. Verena Stolcke writes that there is a "growing sense that Europeans need to develop a feeling of shared culture and identity" which would provide the ideological "support for European economic and political union" (Stolcke, 1999, p. 25). Furthermore, the incorporation of the non-EU immigrants is viewed as complicating the establishment of the clearly defined European common identity narrative because this identity is perceived as a composition of the European "family of nations", to use Anne McClintock's definition (1995, p. 357), where "nations" are uniform entities formed as such historically. In Kevin Robins words, "the maintenance of national cultural integrity" is what is seen as the main issue in the political discourse on immigration in Western European societies (2014, p. 23). All the cultural constructs that do not match with the elements of a constructed national culture are thus viewed as entering into conflict with this culture and subsequently as fragmenting or destabilising the "integrity".

The immigrants coming from the South and East therefore figurate as 'aliens' in this composition, 'the others' whose only way to be transferred to 'the us' category is to fully

integrate into the cultural, social and political structures of the Western nation. In conceptual terms, 'integration' and 'assimilation' imply different scenarios of adaptation of immigrants in their host societies, the difference between which broadly lies in the possibility to preserve the 'home culture' in case of 'integration' and its complete substitution with the 'host culture' in case of 'assimilation' (while the retention of the 'home culture' is also frequently viewed as impeding the process of 'integration'). It has to be noted, though, that in the European research and discourse these terms have predominantly been treated as nearly identical. As Hamberger contends, the "'well integrated' migrant is the one who has assimilated functionally into ways of speaking, thinking, and behaving in the host society" (2009, p. 4). Yet, it is highly problematic to define the 'well integrated' migrant in practical terms, since the complications arise in connection to the degrees of integration, the contextual factors that contribute to this process (as discussed above), and the policies that are involved.

1.2.2 The role of multicultural policies in positioning the immigrant subject.

In spite of the mainstream official rhetoric on the "failure of multiculturalism" since Merkel's speech in 2010 and blaming this "failure" on the "reluctance" of immigrant/immigrant descent communities to "integrate" (Weaver, 2010), many recent studies on multiculturalism suggest that multicultural policies, as seen in their extended understanding, have been weak and insufficient in most European countries (Parekh, 2005; Banting, Johnston, Kymlicka, & Soroka 2006). As follows, the "failure of multiculturalism" can be blamed on its poor implications and its overall "half-hearted" nature, to use Rattansi's definition (Rattansi, 2011) rather than on the new minorities' reluctance to integrate.

According to Banting and Kymlicka (2006), there are different varieties of multiculturalism and the degrees to which it can be launched and developed. Among the major classical principles that yield multicultural policies, the authors name the following: constitutional or parliamentary affirmation of multiculturalism at the central and regional levels, the adoption of multiculturalism in the school curriculum, the inclusion of ethnic minority representation in public media, funding support to ethnic minority groups' cultural activities, the funding of bilingual education or mother tongue instruction, dress code exemptions according to cultural specificities, and allowing dual citizenship, in particular. Measuring the multicultural policies of the governments according to this scheme of principles, Kymlicka argues that most of the European immigration countries have been 'weak' adopters of multiculturalism (France, Germany, Norway, Italy, Spain, Switzerland – scoring less than three principles) or 'modest' (the Netherlands, Sweden, UK – scoring

between three and 5.5 principles). To compare, Australia and Canada have been characterised as 'strong' adopters of multicultural policies – scoring more than six principles (Banting & Kymlicka, 2006, pp. 56-57).

Although such a measurement could appear to be highly institutional and quite general, it does provide us with a deriving point, an approach to evaluate the so frequently contested multicultural policies in Europe due to their youth and their inexperienced character. Indeed, in many European states the multicultural strategies meant to address and regulate the relations between the majority and the new minorities have been in delay for decades, which resulted in policy makers' encountering more challenges while new immigration movements have been observed. As Marco Martiniello notes in his work on multicultural democracy, European societies started to become aware of their multicultural reality only in late 1980s-1990s (2011). Most of the contemporary multicultural policies have thus been a response to the policy vacuum or ad hoc initiatives towards immigrants-natives' co-existence in a moment when the increasing diversity, now so obvious in Western European nation states, has become impossible to deny. And if we are referring to the new hosts, the questions of the adoption of multiculturalism have come to the national agendas only in recent years.

In this regard, it is important to suggest that multicultural policies have been partial and uneven across the European space. In other words, the policies meant to institutionally address the increasing cultural diversity have not been elaborated in accordance to specificities of each European immigrant societies. Before discussing the development of these policies in Western European hosts, I would like to briefly focus on particular situations and developments in the Southern European countries in which multicultural policies have not been formulated and institutionalised as such. These countries have started to experience a marked shift in their migration dynamics several decades after the immigration had become an everyday phenomenon in Western European countries. In comparison with their northern counterparts, Spain, Italy, Portugal and to a certain degree Greece, have found themselves in multicultural societies "almost overnight" which could be one of the reasons for the fact that the multicultural policies have not had enough time to evolve.

On the one hand, the reasons can be related to the protectionist agenda of nation-states in the context of the construction of 'national identities' released from foreign elements. So-called 'national identity' protectionism is an important characteristic of most of the European countries, yet the strategic policies differ from country to country and also depend on the referential elements such as the interpretation of historical and modern developments and the tools for building the 'common national narrative'. Furthermore, the presence of

immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in public domain of Southern European countries is still quite limited in comparison to the public visibility of new minorities in old hosts. This can be exemplified in relation to the representation of minorities in the artistic sector. While we can already talk about the German-Turkish filmmakers in Germany, as well as the representatives of Asian-British cinema in the UK and Arab-French cinema in France, it is difficult to find a similar presence of immigrant minorities in the new hosts countries of Southern Europe⁵. On the other hand, it is also early to talk about the second and third generations of immigrant populations in the new hosts as the numbers would be relatively small⁶. Yet, there are different factors that contribute to current and further developments in cultural diversity dynamics and the visibility of these dynamics that include particular socio-political circumstances of the countries, the newness of the phenomena of immigration and later introduced policies of regulation of immigrants' legal status, as well as the public opinion towards immigration and immigrant subjects in general.

At the same time, it can be suggested that it took time before (the possibilities of) the social and cultural structural changes incited by immigration processes in Southern European societies have moved to the centre of attention of academics and policy makers. For example, there has been a limited research on the transformation of the urban fabrics in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Greek cities, which are the major spaces of the destination and concentration of immigrant/diasporic subjects. As Malheiros argues, the relative recency of the process of immigration in the countries of Southern Europe has been one of the major reasons of a scarce empirical research on the results and developments of immigration here (1997, p. 94). Only recently, the visibility and spatial spreading of diversity in urban spaces as well as transformations and cultural developments within new hosts societies' have started to attract the attention of scholars and got included into the agendas of the national policy makers.

In the case of Spain, the change has occurred rapidly over the past two decades. While until the second half of the 20th century most people emigrated from Spain, mainly heading for Latin America, and between 1950s and 1970s almost 2 million emigrated to other European countries such as the Netherlands, France, Germany and Switzerland, since 1980s-

⁵ However, it is interesting to note that, according to the European Commission Media programme, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom are considered the only five Media programme participation countries with the highest production capacity, that is to say with the highest number of productions in the artistic field of filmmaking (EACEA, 2016, p.12).

⁶ It is not to say, however, that there are no artists of 'non-European' immigrant descent in Southern European countries. Several prominent examples from the filmmaking world are Italian-Turkish director Ferzan Özpetek, young Spanish film director Santiago Zannou, who is of a mixed Spanish-Beninese origin, and Jonas Carpignano, a young Italian director who was born in the USA to Italian father and Barbados-American mother.

1990s the trend changed (Villanueva & Gonzalo, 2003, p.87); as the situation started to reverse. Many Spaniards came back after the Franco era which added up to the increasing immigration from Latin American countries, but also from the Western African countries and Maghreb, as well as Asia and Eastern Europe. For Spanish authorities, an increasing cultural diversity has created additional challenges for the maintenance of the uniform construct of the 'national identity'. The latter has already been in the process of re-construction due to the culturally and ethnically heterogeneous profile of the state, particularly in reference to the growing influence of Basque, Catalan, and Galician linguistic and cultural autochthonous ethnic minorities. An increased flow of immigration and the permanent settlement of immigrant populations in Spain, especially those of geographically non-European origin, seem to have brought additional foundations for challenging the constructed borders of the national or 'native' culture, or even to re-evaluate its historical basis. Sieber, Abrego and Burgert argue that because of the immigration "within just a few decades the cultural diversity has become a reality of Iberian Peninsula which dramatically transforms the cultural understanding of 'the national'" (2015, p.19)⁷.

Yet, in spite of these transformations on site, the policies related to immigration and its outcomes have been predominantly concentrated on the regulation of the flows and addressing the questions of legalisation of (undocumented) migrants, while the instruments for accommodation and integration have been regarded of a minor urgency.

As Martínez Ariza concludes, "the integration occupies the last place among the political-judicial initiatives that concern immigration"⁸ (2011, p.1740). On the one hand, this can be justified since the expression and implications of 'integration' are translated by the policy within the concepts of co-existence, multiculturalism and equality. But, on the other hand the reason why the question of 'integration' has not yet been developed, formalised and institutionalised in Spain is because it is "the last aspect of migration phenomena that has been addressed by the public authorities"⁹ (Martínez Ariza, 2011, p.1740). Interestingly, what has been instead observed on the political level is distancing from the integrationist goals, especially regarding irregular migration treated as an issue to be confronted and dealt with post-factum.

⁷ In original text as, "la diversidad cultural se ha convertido en el término de unas pocas décadas en una realidad de la Península Ibérica que transforma fundamentalmente la comprensión cultural de 'lo nacional'".

⁸ In original text as, "la integración ocupa el último lugar en las iniciativas político-jurídicas relativas a inmigración (...).

⁹ In original text as, "el aspecto del fenómeno migratorio al que más tarde se ha atendido por parte de los poderes públicos".

In their study on the legal situation of foreign workers in Spain, Charro Baena and Sanz Benlloch suggest the interrelationship between the state's approach towards irregular migration (and towards its regulation) and how this approach conditions the progressive integration of newcomers to Spain and thus their positioning within the society. One of the reasons is the existence of the black economy, as the authors argue, and the existence of a large number of undocumented workers/residents in Spain, which has created a gap between the reality and the necessities of the economy and its distorted vision by the administration. "(T)he real demand of the foreign workforce in the Spanish job market was much higher than official predictions"¹⁰, amounting approximately to "the necessity of about 250.000 foreign workers per year"¹¹ (Charro Baena & Sanz Benlloch, 2006, pp. 191-192). Spain and Italy are two European countries that attracted temporal migration for the reasons of economic development in 2000s. There has been an increasing necessity for labour force for the boosting sector of construction (Sandu, 2006), in which Spain, for instance, had 22% of immigrant population working in 2005 (Reyneri & Fullin, 2008). It is interesting, however, that the attitude towards the labour immigration in Spain was reminiscent of the one around German guest-workers programmes. The immigration has been considered a temporary phenomena and the necessity for integration policies wasn't put on the political agenda. The difference between the policies in these two countries was, however, in the institutional facilitation (contractual formalities). In contrast to Germany, the official agreements between the receiving labour market in Spain and the coming workers themselves were not facilitated by the government in most of the cases.

Only since 2000 the international migration in Spain started to be recognised as an important phenomenon and social integration of foreign residents (as denominated by the laws) became part of the political discourse agenda¹². The steps towards the legalisation of irregular migrants were taken with the introduction of *Documentación por Arraigo* in 2001, which partly resolves the questions of legal statuses, yet a large irregular market persists. It is also important to note here that the foreign workforce in the irregular labour market is mainly

¹⁰ In original text as, "la demanda real de mano de obra extranjera del mercado del trabajo español era muy superior a las previsiones oficiales".

¹¹ In original text as, "la necesidad de trabajadores extranjeros de alrededor de 250.000 personas al año".

¹² In 2000 the Law on Rights and Liberties of Foreign Residents in Spain and their Social Integration (Ley 8/2000 sobre los Derechos y Libertades de los Extranjeros Residentes en España y su Integración Social) was adopted. This law referred to immigration as a mutual benefit, stipulating the latter is possible when it is adequately controlled and regulated (Rico Becerra, 2016, p.161). This was the first law that recognised the necessity to address international migration as an important question. The actual first Spanish law that addressed the foreign population was adopted in 1985, in which the main focus was on the necessity to reinforce the border control (Rico Becerra, 2016, p.155).

comprised of newcomers from outside the European Union, as the economic/labour mobility within the EU political space constitutes a free movement of people and is institutionally facilitated. In this view, many labour immigrants who came to Spain from outside of the EU, as a response to the demand in the foreign workforce, have not, for years, been included into the accommodation schemes or granted basic legal residence rights which influenced immensely their positioning in the society, conditioned their life trajectories and their integrationist endeavours.

Portugal's situation of immigration resonates in a way with the Spanish one as it has also been predominantly a country of emigration before 1970s. Following the political change initiated by the Carnation's revolution and the end of the dictatorship of Estado Novo, and after the remaining Portuguese colonies were granted independence (the Indian colonies Goa, Damão and Diu), a moment arrived when Portugal started to rapidly shift from a country of emigration to a country of immigration. The immigration movements commence from former colonies in Western Africa and Mozambique as people come and settle down in Portugal. What is important to mention is that the Portuguese legislation, specifically Decree from 1975, has facilitated "the attribution of Portuguese nationality to those coming from ex-colonies" (Malheiros, 1997, pp.99-100). Thus, for example, many people of Indian origin who have come mainly from Goa and Mozambique¹³, both of Hindu and Catholic religious backgrounds, have been settling down in Portugal since the end of 1970s, while after 1989 this has shifted to Hindu community coming directly from India, but also from Pakistan and Bangladesh (Ibid., p.101). Certainly, as one of contextual factors, this facilitation for post-colonial immigrants in obtaining social and political rights equal to those of autochthonous population of Portugal has had a significant impact on their positioning and integration in the host society.

After Portugal became a member of the European Union (1986) a growing number of Brazilians added up to the immigration movement and at the beginning of 1990s Eastern Europeans, especially from Romania and Ukraine, started to arrive (Sieber, Abrego & Burgert, 2015, p.18). Whereas in 2002 the number of foreign residents in Portugal was 350.000, in 2005 it grew up to 765.000 (Malheiros, 2002), although these numbers do not take into consideration the nationalised citizens who came from former Portuguese colonies.

¹³ There have been an established community of Indian traders in Mozambique since the second half of the 19th century who migrated mainly from Goa as the new commercial developments took place there under the auspices of the Portuguese Empire. After the de-colonisation and as the political power was transferred to African leaders, many ethnic Indians opted for moving to the metropolis (for more see Malheiros 1997, pp.98-99).

Furthermore, the historical and political contextual factors have contributed to differing deriving conditions for immigrants from former colonies and for immigrants from other countries after the EU accession.

What is also important to note is the current phenomena of a negative net migration in Spain and Portugal. In recent years, more people leave the countries than enter, which is mainly due to the emigration of young people as a result of job shortages in a post-2008 economic crisis. In this view, parallel processes of immigration and emigration characterise contemporary Spanish and Portuguese societies, while immigration has not decreased substantially even after the worsening of the economic situation in these countries.

Italy also started to become a country of immigration in 1970s-1980s. Different factors made the rapid and large inflows of immigration possible such as for example the absence of structural policies that would regulate immigration, but also a labour shortage in the country in general, which have also been among the factors in Portugal and Spain (Morén-Alegret & Ruiz, 2007) and the availability of jobs that were unattractive to Italian nationals, elderly care and domestic work in particular (Einaudi, 2007). According to the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat), in 2010 the largest share in immigrant population had nationals from Romania, followed by Morocco and Albania; what has also been recorded is an increase of foreign citizens coming from Eastern Europe and South-East Asian countries such as Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh (Istat, 2011). The characteristic feature of the situation of the immigrant population in Italy is that there is a high proportion of undocumented migrants. This feature is present even in the context of the latest legalisation of the immigration status of domestic workers and caregivers that occurred towards the end of 2009, which Istat also refers to as one of the inciting factors that contributed to continuing immigration flows to Italy. As Zincone concludes, the situation with undocumented migrants is due to the existence of a large informal economic sector that facilitates entering the country on a tourist visa and overstay until finding a job on a black market (2011, p.249). At the same time, while the Immigration law of 1998 (so-called Turco-Napolitano Law) gave immigrants, both legal and undocumented, numerous social rights, new legislations from 2000 onwards made it much more difficult to obtain a permanent residence permit for temporary legal residents and reduced their social rights.

All in all, the policies have been concentrated rather on dealing with the immigration as a temporary and predominantly economy-driven phenomena, centring on immigrants as a workforce (usually cheap labour). Rather than developing integration and responsive multicultural policies, the decision-makers have been working on finding a balance (middle

ground) between the economic necessity (employers demand) and the public pressure on restricting (illegal) immigration, while the latter is also partly incited by political discourses. As for the attitudes towards immigrants, two lines are observed: a strong anti-immigration backlash among Italian 'native' public, and a pro-immigrant counter-pressure. The former is represented mainly by a right-wing party Lega Nord and the latter by interested economic groups who contributed to the anti-discrimination legislation such as, for example, the aforementioned Turco-Napolitano Law of 1998.

The rapid change in the demographic ethno-cultural profile has been observed in Greece that historically has been one of the countries from which people emigrated to more economically advanced societies. Although the immigration flows to Greece have not been comparable to those to Portugal and especially to Spain and Italy, they have still influenced the country's cultural dynamics. A booming cultural diversity has been reflected in the general increase in the population. In 1991 the population increase due to immigration was around 33% while in 2001 the number went up to 95% (Malkidi, 2003). The change is also specifically demonstrated through a dramatic increase in the cultural diversity among the school population: from 1.6% of foreign born students in 1995 to 10% in 2002 (Baris & Spinthourakis, 2002). For Greece, which has been traditionally a monolingual society, this demographic transformation has required a quick response in the form of policies of integration as well as drawing strategies to accommodate and approach a new cultural reality.

As seen from the discussion, the positioning of immigrants/immigrant descent subjects in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece can be analysed from both a differentiated and a common perspective approach. As new immigration countries and at the same time emigration countries themselves, they show of a number of common characteristics that can assist in addressing similar conditions for (trans-)cultural developments, the restrictions for these developments and their possibilities. These characteristics concern the lack of political mechanisms of integration and of an elaborated analysis of a rapidly increased and increasing cultural diversity on the political level. Agreeing with Izquierdo Escribano that political decisions influence how the immigration is perceived (1996, p.37), it is important to note that they also indirectly influence the perception and attitudes towards immigrant subjects and their integrationist and transcultural possibilities. At the same time, these countries differ in their specific constructions of the 'national culture', their historical background and socio-economic dynamics, all of which has to be taken into account while analysing the conditions for cultural connections. Furthermore, in quantitative terms, Spain and Italy have been impacted by immigration from non-European countries much more than Greece and Portugal.

The current leaders in immigration from non-EU countries are Germany, UK, Italy, France and Spain. As also aforementioned, Spain is the only country among these states that has a negative net migration due to the economic crisis (*Infoeuropa Eurocid*, 2015), that is to say, more people leave the country than choose it as their destination. This point is also frequently emphasised in current research on immigration in Europe as Spain's distinguishable characteristic as an emigration-immigration country (Sieber et. al. 2015; Berger & Komori, 2010).

In the 1980s and 1990s, immigration policies of many Western European countries, while generally perceiving the immigrants as temporary residents or self-isolated communities of strangers, were directed at favouring the preservation of the emerging diasporic communities' homeland identities without their integration into the host societies. At the same time, these policies have contributed to the separation of the 'newcomers' communities from the 'natives', by encouraging such separation in physical terms and on the discursive level. This has been particularly the case of the policies, usually ad hoc, in Germany and the Netherlands based on the perception of the "temporality" of the guest workers' residency. After finishing their contracts, guest workers were expected to leave and the need for the multicultural policies was not considered.

In Germany, for example, the projection of such perception of "temporality" can be exemplified in cultural public policies. When in the late 1970s-1980s Turkish migrants started to communicate their presence by means of cultural manifestations such as literature and films, these artistic representations had limited channels/ways for reaching the audiences; and in order to increase their funding opportunities, they had to adapt to the popular trends in cultural representation. The appearance of filmic manifestations, for example, coincides with the movement of so-called New German cinema of 1960s-1980s whose key tendencies were the portrayal of the "outsider protagonists", to use Rings words (2016, p.78), namely referring to the characters marginalised in economic terms and in their existential searches.

It can thus be suggested that in order to increase their chances for public funding first German-Turkish films were attracted by the ideas of the construction of "outsider-ness" and exploited the topics of Turkish guest workers as cultural outsiders who did not belong to the German society. Indeed, the subsidies from the federal or regional funding authorities were allocated to sponsor those works of German Turks that dealt with the topics of displacement, nostalgia for home and irreconcilable cultural differences, which meant the funding was directed at the construction of "cultural outsiders". Among such films the most famous ones are Tevfik Baser's *40 Square Meters of Germany* (1985) and *Farewell to a False Paradise*

(1988) with their female outsiders Turna and Elif. These characters are depicted as victims of their Turkish culture and restrictive Turkish traditions which prevent them from the interaction with the emancipated German world. Rob Burns argues that German-Turkish migrant literature of the 1980's also succeeds in depicting the cultural alienation. It is projected in the form of resistance by Turkish migrant workers by accentuating "the growing sense of [their] cultural dislocation" and by showing the crisis of identity or the alleged incompatibility between German and Turkish cultural traditions (2007, pp.359-360). This is one of the examples of indirect public policies' influence on the discursive separation between the 'natives' and the emerging immigrant minorities. Yet, the problem arises around the issue that while the examples of separatedness and isolation have been emphasised and reinforced, it took time for the questions of integration and multiculturalism to be introduced to the political discourse. Furthermore, the reinforcement of cultural dislocation construct is exemplified through German directors such as, for instance, Hark Bohm, who also start to portray Turkish migrants' non-belonging within a cultural hierarchy framework. His *Yasemin* (1988) won the German Film Prize Award (also called Lola Award), considered one of the most important German film prizes, and was nominated for Golden Bear award at the Berlin International Film Festival 1988. This discursive separation represented in popular culture has played a significant role in the creation of a generalised image of German-Turks as a homogenous community, and as unable to integrate into the German society. This 'inability' or impossibility to become part of the host society has been related to the supposedly unsolvable cultural conflict, which involves incommensurable cultural differences and identities that exclude one another.

For several decades, Germany has been following the policies that were based on the perception of immigration as a temporary phenomenon. The policies derived from "the belief that immigration did not require structural changes"¹⁴ and only in 2000¹⁵ the state recognised and "declared itself a country of immigration as a result of a political consensus"¹⁶ (Vicente, 2015, p.297), while integration was defined as a legal obligation only in 2005.

In the Netherlands, the policy of so-called 'pillarization' endorsed the co-existence of different ethnic groups with the retention of the groups' mother tongues and cultures but minimising a contact between these groups, as well as between them and 'natives'. Following

¹⁴ In original text as, "la creencia de que la inmigración no requería cambios estructurales".

¹⁵ Other sources such as DOMiD (Documentation Center and Museum of Migration in Germany) state a different year in which Germany declared itself a country of immigration, specifically 2005, which followed the implementation of new immigration law. According to this law, language courses became a legal requirement for the first time and the institutionalisation of integration was initiated (DOMiD 2015).

¹⁶ In original text as, "se declara país de inmigración como resultado de un supuesto consenso político".

the 'Ethnic Minorities' programme, the policy supported the newspapers and separate channels on television of the largest ethnic groups, particularly the newcomers from Turkey and Morocco as well as from the Dutch previous colonies of Surinam and Indonesia (Rattansi, 2011, pp. 18-19). In this way, the immigrant subjects have been institutionally kept from the interaction with the 'natives', an issue that has been complemented by urban planning and housing policies that segregated many of them on a spatial level. On the one hand, because of this 'pillarization' policy since the 1960s-1970s, immigrant subjects obtained certain social and cultural rights within the framework of the multiculturalism policy model. As facilitated and encouraged, they grouped in ethnic communities and created separate institutions to support the community's members in their social rights on the labour market. Yet, at the same time, this structural organisation resulted in limited labour market opportunities for immigrant/immigrant descent subjects, which did not extend beyond the spheres and influence of their ethnic communities. This was especially the case of Moroccan and Turkish communities. As Bommers argues, the 'pillarization' policies led to cultural exclusion and at the same time emergence of divided (and enclosed) ethnic minorities. When in the late 1990s, on the political level there was initiated a shift from cultural 'pillarization' to social integration, with the intention to improve the situation of immigrant minorities on the Dutch labour market, it has turned out a difficult task, mainly because of the legacy of the 'pillarization' model (Bommers, 2016, p.40).

1.2.3 Media and political stigmatising discourses as reinforcing 'the otherness' of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects.

In the aftermath of the 2008 global economic crisis, the image of the immigrant/immigrant descent subjects becomes a powerful speculation tool in political anti-foreigner rhetoric. Immigrants/immigrant descendants are increasingly seen as a threat to the welfare and socio-economic prosperity of the nation-state – a discourse that has been particularly used and forged by right-wing parties throughout Europe. This rhetoric of new socio-economically-grounded racism sums up to the cultural threat allegations. According to the views of voters of France's right-wing National Front led by Marine Le Pen, immigrant subjects are seen as a challenge to the national identity and the traditionally "French" way of life (Schofield, 2012). Referring to more recent developments, it is important to mention the United Kingdom's 'Brexit' campaign and point to the rise of racist discourses and their use within this campaign. In the process of the preparation for Staying or Leaving the EU referendum which took place in June 2016, the UKIP (Tory Right wing party) took the lead

in, what Neil Faulkner called organising and mobilising "(t)he discontent at the base of society" (2016). Within this discontent what was centralised as one of the essential arguments for Leave, (leaving the European Union), was an anti-immigrant argument. This argument inferred that staying in the EU was a problem because "immigrants from the EU were a problem", or in more implicit terms the message was "anybody 'not like us' was the problem" (Ibid.). Whereas officially the Remain or Leave binary was promoted and explained as a divide between the elite class and the working class, an anti-immigrant element was incrustated within this divide. The working class (of British 'natives') was targeted by the campaign as prospective Leave voters deriving from the promotional argument that immigration is the cause of working class social problems. In this view, the 'Brexit' campaign with its racist discourses succeeded in inciting hatred, and enforcing a divide within the working class across racial, ethnic, and religious lines. The complexity of this issue in the UK resides in the fact that it can be regarded as a local projection of a rise of anti-immigrant sentiment around Western Europe, and in the use of such rhetoric as a tool of redirecting the people's discontent with the government because of social problems into the discontent with the immigrants, who are constructed as responsible for these problems. As Faulkner has argued, "we are seeing a qualitative shift to a harder form of racist populism in the context of a general crisis of the neoliberal order and the relative decline of Western capitalism" (2016).

The 'otherness' of immigrant subjects is thus being reinforced on different levels, generally making them the "undesirables" of the society and forcing the immigrant descendants to "enjoy" the "vulnerable role of perpetual outsiders" (Gilroy, 2005, p.123).

It is also true though that 'otherness' is a label that can also carry positive connotations, namely when a particular immigrant minority or minority subject are being exoticised by the 'native' majority. The perception of exoticism is associated with the unknown, but as interesting and attractive. But how constructive or de-constructive can be such labelling? While at first look such perception could be appealing and desired, this is not normally the case of how immigrant/diasporic subjects are viewed. And even if 'non-Europeans' are viewed in exoticising perspectives, such a vision is usually related to seeing them merely as a source of aesthetic pleasure (exotic food and customs, for instance), to put it in Bauman's words (1996, p.71), or as sources for selective cultural appropriation and commodification conducted within the system of "the West and the Rest" power relations. Kien Nghi Ha draws our attention to the role of these power relations in instrumentalising 'the other' for Western consumption market as something "funky-fresh" or "exotic-erotic" (2006). This implies the

objectification of 'the other' and reinforces both its inferior status within the power relations and the binary division.

Conceptualising the figure of the stranger, Bauman refers to their ambiguity, namely having two faces, both of mysterious character. One is inviting, promising pleasure, joy and adventure, while the other is sinister, intimidating and menacing (1995, p.137). The latter would be more common for imagining the "strangers" in Europe – those who allegedly do not belong. But even the former characterisation in reference to 'the other' tends to be marginalising as it implies objectification and a hierarchical relationship. The non-European 'otherness' is thus a label which one would strive to contest. A desire to contest the imposed identity is mainly due to its negative connotation which is a tendency.

Thus, it is important to specify how the constructs are regarded in this paper and why I consider it important to pose a question of whether there could be a creative (and disruptive) way to approach and challenge them. This dissertation explores the ways in which the symbolic borders between 'the West' and 'the Rest', between what has been constructed as 'the us' and what has been constructed as 'the other', can be disrupted.

The departing meaning is the marginalisation of the 'otherness' as it derives from most of the 'us' vs. 'them' discourses, in which this binary construct of 'us' vs. 'them'/others' envisages a positive, a 'right' connotation for the former and a negative, a 'wrong one' for the latter. The discursive 'us' vs. 'them'/others' construct seems to be entrenched in European identity talks and public thinking. It emerges and re-emerges in European media, political and public discourses on a continuous basis. It is prevalent in Western European societies, and by being so it reinforces the construct of the superiority of the 'Western world' and the inferiority of the 'Rest'. And 'the Rest' is different because it is from beyond the European borders, both actual and symbolic borders.

Many discourses that stereotype ethnic minority communities that live in the West nourish the grounds for prejudices and generalisations towards individuals of migrant background. Such discourses reinforce the individuated prejudices and a divisive binary between the cultural worlds constructed as opposing. They contribute to the creation of the dichotomy between being 'European' and being 'non-European', or, in Ali Rattansi's words, "a sort of rigid binary opposition between the West and the Rest" (2011, p.47). Rattansi, in particular, refers here to the anti-multiculturalism discourses, criticising Susan Moller Okin's controversial paper "Is multiculturalism bad for women?". Okin answers "yes" to the posed question and grounds all her analyses of immigrant cultures on the perception of ethnic minority communities as entirely separate and internally integrated wholes, giving examples

of such non-Western "cultural practices" as polygamy, forced marriages, and female genital cutting, in particular. Rattansi criticises the essay mainly for discarding the internal complexity of ethnic minority communities. He contends that Okin's-type discourse, namely her stereotypical representation of immigrant cultures, leads to forging the binary, "with the West (or 'us') being represented as lovers of liberty and equality while the Rest ('them') are painted as uncivilised, barbaric 'others' with scant respect for women's dignity and rights" (Rattansi, 2011, p. 47). This is just one of the examples of the discursive segregation of the constructed 'other'. Yet, such anti-non-Western immigrant discourse has been frequent and at times gaining popularity among the majority population in Europe, in recent years mainly in reference to the debates on the multiculturalism and the "failure" of the latter, as has been mentioned above. It has also increased due to the rise of right-wing parties and of, as Balibar and Wallerstein indicate, the so-called "immigration complex" (1991, p. 220), by considering immigrants responsible for such social problems as high unemployment rates, public health and housing issues, among others.

The identity of the discursive 'others' has, thus, become a construction under constant manipulation by someone else, while 'the others' themselves play a minor part in challenging this biased construction. Yet, will it be easy to say that European 'others' are somewhere-else's 'us'? Or, in other words, if 'the other' does not belong to 'the West', does it belong in simplified terms to 'the Rest'? If someone who feels European is regarded as essentially non-European, what does such a clash of perceptions make them? Immigrant/of immigrant descent subjects in Europe tend to find themselves marginalised in terms of identity reference. They are not perceived as 'Europeans', while research illustrates that immigrant descent/diasporic subjects usually would find it difficult to refer to themselves as to non-Europeans either. Sociological studies on Paris *banlieues* riots of 2005 provide evidence that most of the immigrant origin youth-participants in the riots, whose parents and grandparents immigrated from outside of Europe, mainly from North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Caribbean, identified themselves, first and foremost, as French before their allegiance to the homelands of their parents (Duprez, 2009; Hargreaves, 2007; Mucchielli, 2005; and others). It is important to note that these riots aroused from a protest against racism and discrimination of immigrant-origin youth and an intention to voice the rights for equal employment opportunities as the participants were alluding to their attachment and belonging to France and their desire to be acknowledged as such. In this view, the discursive segregation of immigrant/immigrant origin subjects and a refusal to acknowledge their European attachments has an indirect influence on their socio-economic position within European

societies, namely their socio-economic marginalisation. Therefore, the identity segregation can be one of the inciting factors of the socio-economic marginalisation (and vice versa). One of the films that will be addressed in the discursive cinematic analysis - Houda Benyamina's *Divines* (2016) - has been inspired by the 2005 riots; it is set in one of the French *banlieues* and narrates a story of an immigrant descent Muslim youth.

Despite being discursively positioned into this homogenised category of non-Westerners, with usually assertive claims for their inability to integrate, namely to accept and acquire Western values because they are just not intrinsically Western, immigrant subjects find themselves accommodating a space between 'the West' and 'the Rest', or 'the West' and 'the other'. Whether it is a continuous crisis of identity or a struggle for recognition, the process of identity construction and re-construction within this in-between space has been reflected in many artistic immigrant self-representations. A number of them intend to challenge the homogenous 'otherness' and search for the ways to depart from being seen as "entirely separate, internally integrated wholes", to use Ali Rattansi's words (2011, p.46), whose cultural values, lifestyles and practices supposedly tend to be in confrontation to the European (Western) ways of life, such as gender inequality (usually in reference to women's subordination in Muslim cultures), suppression of freedom of expression or freedom of assembly, to name a few.

In this view, I derive from the assumption that the issue of discursive segregation of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects lies in that such segregation has been in a process of constant reinforcement on political, media and public levels, going in parallel and interconnected with the reflection upon and the outcomes of the integration and multicultural policies. On a political level, it is the discourse of the Conservatives and the right-wing parties, where "immigrants/immigrant subjects" have been powerful instruments of political manipulation in regards to jobs shortages and the cuts to the social benefits. A generalised image of an "immigrant" that has been in construction in the popular media throughout Europe usually carries a negative connotation and immigrant cultures are oftentimes voiced as a "threat" to 'native' European cultures. As Ballesteros suggests, media coverage on immigrant subjects "typically limits itself to sensationalist accounts that include the demonization of the 'immigrant' as 'illegal', 'delinquent', or 'terrorist'" (2015, p.12). An interesting addition to the migrant-hostile discourses of the recent years has also been an emphasis on intrinsic and incompatible cultural and religious differences between European 'natives' and migrant populations, especially in reference to Muslim populations (Tyrer & Sayyid, 2012). Such discourses are framed in cultural essentialist terms.

In their study on the discursive exclusion and oppression of migrants in the Netherlands¹⁷, Siebers and Dennissen point out the power and the impact of political and media migrant-hostile discourses. Following the analysis of the Dutch media and political texts, the authors conclude on the general characteristic that these texts share in referring to or discussing immigrants in general or Muslim immigrants in particular. The common characteristic of such discourses is their aggressiveness, an insulting form and their labelling of immigrants as cultural others by frequently suggesting that the "migrants should be forced to assimilate into Dutch culture and society" (Siebers & Dennissen, 2015, pp.473-474). The core element of such perception is "the assumption of cultural incompatibility between [non-Western] migrants and Dutch society, which justifies exclusion" (Ibid.), an exclusion which is based and pre-constructed on opposing cultural difference, and which is reinforced in case of failure to eliminate this difference, to eliminate the cultural gap by the means of integration-assimilation¹⁸. As these discourses justify migrants'/migrant descendants' exclusion just because of their migrant, geographically non-European or culturally non-Western background, they indirectly influence the lived experiences, everyday interactions and even life trajectories of migrants/migrant descendants in their host societies.

Siebers and Dennissen conducted interviews with Dutch Moroccan Muslims asking the questions on their visions towards the political and media discourse on immigration and migrants and, if the case, the impact of this discourse on their social relationships, specifically in a working context. As many participants voiced, they "feel portrayed as individuals who derive their identity from their community membership and who reproduce the assumed negative traits of that community" (Siebers & Dennissen, 2015, p.480). Furthermore, referring to the conversations and comments of their colleagues, the respondents indicated that their colleagues use and appropriate the constructs and connotations that media and political discourses impose on Moroccans and Muslims, e.g., crime, terrorism and women's oppression (Ibid., p.482). These connotations thus discursively homogenise Islam and Moroccan culture and position migrant subjects as opposing to Dutch culture, norms and values.

Therefore, the existence of this type of discourses testifies to their irresponsible nature as they choose to generalise and stigmatise immigrant populations for the purpose of

¹⁷ The authors take as their case study the positioning of the Dutch Moroccan Muslims within the Dutch society.

¹⁸ According to Dutch civic integration programmes, the integration is equated to assimilation as it implies refusal from one set of cultural values that are 'incompatible' with progressive Dutch values and acceptance of these progressive values. The right-wing Dutch liberal such as Geert Wilders have 'nationalised' the progressive values such as equal rights for homosexuals, sexual freedom and gender equality as essentially Dutch, that is to say as forming part of the Dutch national identity, at the same time have constructed Muslim migrants as cultural others who follow a religion or ideology that goes in opposition to these progressive values (Siebers & Dennissen, 2015, pp.476-477).

strengthening certain ideologies (that the immigrant cultures undermine national cultural integrity) or making migrants' cultures responsible for certain societal problems (e.g. high unemployment rates, crime, decreased welfare). This further illustrates that on the level of popular media and political discourses there is a deliberate lack of interest in a more elaborative cultural and social analysis of the lives of immigrant/immigrant subjects in Europe. Meanwhile this insufficient interest persists, the stigmatising texts indirectly but significantly continue to impact the lives of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe.

At the same time, it seems difficult or even impossible to find a universal or fit-it-all way and means with which the issue could be tackled. Different European countries are characterised by different political contexts, historical legacies, socio-cultural and socio-economic environments, while these environments tend to be also fragmented and diverse within one single national territory. The intention, therefore, is to find or build a particular configuration, a model, according to which the position and the perception of European 'cultural others' can be addressed from a combination of multiple complementing perspectives, taking cinema (migrant and diasporic cinema in Europe) as a core platform for cultural analysis and as a guiding methodological instrument. With the help of cinema, specifically the transcultural analysis of cinematic images and cultural meanings, I will contribute to the construction of a transcultural research model of discussion and reflection through which the processes of questioning, extending and re-configuring the category of 'the us' and rethinking the construction of 'the others' can take place in a more critical and reformative way. It will allow to find the ways to see how the dynamics of cultural encounters, interactions and inter-influences constantly re-invent self-perceptions, identities, practices and norms so they function as transcultural, as able to speak and act from and through multiple positions.

Although the issue of prejudices, stigmatisation and generalisations has been addressed and responded to in artistic circles, the dimension of the visibility and encouragement for such response has still been of a minor scale. Indeed, a proliferation of immigrant/diasporic cinematic (self-)representations in Europe has been observed in recent decades. The potential of these films to question stereotypes transmitted by the mass media is explained by Isolina Ballesteros, as she points out to their ability "to expose and denounce the stereotyping of a naturally heterogeneous migration" (2014, p.13). Yet, most of these filmic representations do not reach the commercial cinema markets and therefore do not reach mass audience, as for example is the case of a low budget documentary *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002) of Básel Ramsis, and a scarcely distributed Spanish-Italian documentary, *El lugar de*

las fresas (2013), directed by Maite Vitoria Daneris, both of which I will discuss in my discursive analysis of films.

1.3 Transcultural research as a way to break the essentialist cultural constructs of 'pure self' vs. 'pure other': Theoretical opportunities and challenges.

How can transculturality be theoretically framed and practically analysed and explained in the context of European contemporary cultural fabrics? What is the role of the continent's increasing cultural diversity in facilitating the development of transcultural research, its complexity and its potential to disrupt the essentialist cultural constructs of 'pure self' and 'pure other'? What elements should be taken into consideration as theoretical opportunities and challenges regarding the specific contexts, and how do we address practical transcultural implications deriving from the theory and re-address the theory deriving from practical transcultural implications?

1.3.1 Transculturality in the context of cultural dynamics in Europe.

Let's first refer to how transculturality is defined by the notion's contemporary theorists, whose conceptualisations will form part of my transculturality theoretical model. Wolfgang Welsch theorises transculturality as a phenomenon resulting from a cultural blend, in which cultures "interpenetrate and emerge from each other" (1999, p. 203). In the research of Grüner and Prodöhl, transcultural developments are specific expressions of worldwide entanglements which can be explained by analysing "the interplay between the various ethnic groups" (2011, p.17). Flüchter and Schöttli discuss transculturality as a process that is based on "a continuous change and transformation of cultures" (2014, p.2), whereas the morphology of this process and the configurations of transculturality will differ according to different historical, social and perceptive contexts (Ibid., p.3). Transculturality derives from the "interactions and exchanges that contribute to the development of a pool of global cultures potentially facilitating cultural choices", emphasises Guido Rings as he focuses on the idea of the cultural choice which can be conditioned by different contextual circumstances (2016, p.11). From these theorisations, the first important point can be suggested that transculturality is both a process and a result. And that its dynamics and configurations involve personal and contextual influences.

This is the initial idea of a transcultural conceptualisation with which I start my theoretical discussion. As a process, it involves a transcultural encounter, which can be, for

instance, an encounter between individuals with different cultural/ethnic backgrounds and which constitutes a chance for transcultural connection, exchange and the subsequent formation of transcultural practices. Transcultural practices combine different (or considered as such) cultural lifestyles, cultural meanings and references - they are both a result and a dynamic process characterised by multiple cultural configurations. Transculturality, further, is a complex notion which encompasses and interrelates with the factors of the socio-cultural environment where it takes place, while transcultural connections can develop in multiple dimensions across the categories of subjectivity, gender, generation, class, society, etc.

What needs to be considered is that transcultural complexity is still in the process of theorisation and empirical testing. Yet, as a concept and a reality, transculturality can be a chance to deconstruct the essentialist cultural 'otherness'. It can become a conceptual shift from the obsessive preoccupation for cultural differences and cultural categorisations towards a better understanding of cultural commonalities, towards recognizing and examining the dynamic positions and points that different cultures share. This is to be done through the analysis of multiple and intermixed cultural identifications as well as of interweaving and dynamic transcultural practices (that all function in multiple overlapping cultural webs).

In this subchapter, I am discussing the initiation and the necessity of transcultural research, revealing it as both a feasible and a challenging process. As Alistair Ross, the International Coordinator of Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network, envisages, "(w)e are moving towards a stage where we can discern particular variations and commonalities in what constitutes the cultures of the new Europe" (2003, p.1). The changes, he continues, "brought about by cultural migration and intermingling", produce "uncertainties and tensions, but at the same time they bring strengths and causes for hope and aspiration" (Ross, 2003, p.1). This is a hint for challenges that await transcultural research in the contemporary contexts, yet the findings in the process of such research will assist in and contribute to developing a better understanding of these cultural changes that we observe.

The myth of danger of the 'otherness' creates a tension on different levels. It may be less visible or more visible in one European society or another, yet its effects are in place. Rattansi names the influence of the anxieties onto the socio-economic location of immigrant descent/minority communities as well as the migrant subjects' search for new forms of belonging (2011, p. 66), and I have also referred to these issues in the previous subchapter. A vision of a differentiation between a 'pure self' and a 'pure other' denies hybrid and multiracial face of Europe, and avoids considering the contradictions between this reality and the homogenising narratives that promote such vision.

On the way of redefining nationhood by extending the conceptualisation of a nation and a national identity, it is important to consider that cultures fuse naturally into one another. Welsch explains this fusion via *external networking and entanglement* (cultures as 'satellites' or 'inner-content' of other cultures), which means that cultural practices cross the borders of national cultures (1999, pp.195-196). The result of this fusion leads to different cultural configurations as well as the transformation of political, social and socio-cultural environments in a long-term perspective. This redefinition is one of the most important points that lays in the basis of transculturality paradigm and it will be one of the deriving points of the concept's analysis.

The reality of Europe's "super-diversity" (Vertovec, 2007), cultural complexity and multiple belongings provide grounds for such redefinition, as soon as such reality is communicated, analysed, discussed and recognised on a larger scale. As Minnaert contends, the 'real situation' of cultural diversity and its dynamic configurations interfere in the process of 'nation-building' (by dominant discourses) and prove "the impossibility of a clearly defined national identity" (2014, p.105). Transcultural experiences, namely those that happen as a result of different cultural encounters, modify 'the others' and the cultures of 'the others' as well as they modify 'the us', and the cultures of 'the us'. In this view, the research on the nature, specificity and dynamics of cultural transformations is of significant importance. And this is another point of what transcultural research is about.

Furthermore, 'super-diversity', to use Vertovec's words, is not only a current reality. This is also the future of Europe, a hint for further and greater cultural identity complexities, characterised by increasing overlapping cross-cultural experiences, practices and lifestyles, modifications of social structures and the inter-influence and interconnection of this process with globalisation. According to Rattansi, and against the omnipresent anti-migration rhetoric in Europe, migrations will be necessary and will continue as required by "the hungry economies of all advanced industrial nation states (...) in the age of declining birth rates and skill shortages" (2011, p.124). These predictions of migrations necessity may have different projections for different European countries depending on each specific case, their further socio-economic and political developments, as well as the role of European supranational institutions and of European integration in general. Yet, it becomes evident that the simplification of the international migration to Europe to its negative consequences for the European economy and for the European culture(s) is missing an important point. Specifically, such simplification diminishes the role that this migration has played in the construction of these economy and culture(s).

Francisco Cobo talks about immigration as a positive phenomenon from an economic point of view, arguing that immigration "maintains sectors of production that are not taken by the originary ('native') population, while at the same time it increases the internal consumption and contributes to the distribution of the tax burden" (2009, p.37)¹⁹. Furthermore, a number of research studies on the effects of immigration have generated the evidence which discards negative effects of immigration for the economy and the welfare of the European host country.

In his presentation "Making Immigration Work: How Europe can overcome its immigration crisis", Randall Hansen concludes his analysis of the studies by referring to the immigration's positive effects. Hansen emphasises that apart from making population aging and declined birth rate more manageable, immigration creates modest positive economic benefits (2015). Furthermore, by alluding to Putnam's research on the relationship between increasing diversity and decreasing trust (2007), Hansen argues that while the latter is clear, there is "no evidence of the relationship between increased diversity and decreased spending on welfare" (2015, p.124); and thus, the deduction that immigration and diversity constitute a threat to the welfare state results erroneous²⁰. The welfare support in its turn is rather a question of governmental regulation, including the combination of integration policies and the incorporation of immigrants into work (Hansen, 2015). Bommers goes even further in this direction, analysing in his study the direct interrelationship and even interdependence between international migration and the construction of competitive welfare states. He argues that the construction of the European welfare state has been directly connected to the state's policies on immigration and integration. In agreement with Klaus Bade (2003), Bommers comes to the conclusion that international migration has never been a one-dimensional, usually considered as a non-desired, consequence of globalisation, but has been provoked and encouraged by the welfare states themselves. This encouragement is of course related to specific necessities of the welfare states, particularly to the expectations and/or calculations that the states have in regards to the economy growth/economy restoration, or the demographic compensation, etc. (Bommers, 2016, p. 27). As an example of the necessity of economy restoration, this has been the case, for instance, of the Western Germany's aspirations for an economic reboot and subsequent creation in the 1960s-1970s of guest-worker programmes which brought several

¹⁹ In original text as, "mantiene sectores de actividad y producción que no asume la población de origen, además de incrementar el consumo interior y distribuir las cargas fiscales".

²⁰ According to a study conducted in the UK in 2015 by the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics, it was observed: "There is still no evidence of an overall negative impact of immigration on jobs, wages, housing or the crowding out of public services" (Dearden, 2016).

waves of immigrants from outside of the European Communities, predominantly arriving from Turkey. As Bommers points out, Western European states overall have been "actively attracting"²¹ immigrants throughout the 1950s-1970s (2016, p.27). Regarding more recent examples, we can refer to the booming construction sector in Italy and Spain throughout the decade of 2000s and onwards, which has attracted large numbers of non-European immigrants as a labour force. Many of them have formed established communities in these host countries.

The fact that Europe has become one of the main regions of world immigration has therefore been, to a great extent, a consequence of different economic circumstances and different policies of European welfare states which facilitated the immigration, yet in different configurations and each with different processes of acceptance and adaptation of immigrants (Bommers, 2016, p.27). All this illustrates an important connection between international migration to Europe and the construction of Europe in the post-World War period, both in cultural and economic dimensions, and provides another basis for projecting the implications of this connection for now and for future developments.

At the same time, the analysis of the 'super-diversity' current and future positive implications is of significant importance. As Nathan (2015) suggests, in order to manage the increasing cultural diversity effects, this diversity should be approached and analysed within a far-sighted perspective. In his study on the economics of diversity Nathan recognises the economic impacts of the urban "diversity shocks" (2015, p.3), as he calls the dynamic shifts in size and composition of population and workforces which have taken place following the booming processes of international migration. As he argues, "(w)hile short-term labour markets effects are small, over time low-value industrial sectors may become migrant-dependent. Diversity may help raise productivity and wages through innovation, entrepreneurship, market access and trade channels" (Nathan, 2015, p.3). This confirms the necessity to perceive diversity within multiple frameworks as an asset rather than an impediment. While transcultural research will help to better understand the dynamics of cultural diversity, it will pave the way to the mechanisms of its critical analysis within the research on (multi-)cultural policies as well as its value for other fields, including economy.

²¹ In original text as, "han 'atraído activamente'".

1.3.2 Conceptual elaboration of transculturality: building the theoretical-hypothetical framework for empirical analysis.

It is worth noting that transcultural research has been developing for a couple of decades already, yet different transcultural processes and transculturality elements have been approached with different conceptual definitions and theorised in reference mainly to historical cultural evidence in the past. The studies of more recent and contemporary cultural complications have been widely disregarded for a long time. In European research, this could have been due to the necessity of national consolidation and economic integration in the aftermath of the Second World War, and the predominance of essentialist cultural uniformity theories.

I will further approach the conceptualisation of transculturality more explicitly referring to its historical background and modelling its theoretical framework for this research. This discussion will address transculturality's configurative elements, as they will form the transcultural analysis basis for the theory elaboration and then will be applied to the discursive analysis of filmic case studies. This will further lead the discussion to constructing a theoretical-hypothetical model for transcultural research, which will be based on the theory's configurative elements, and will create seven lines of reference for the research methodology. The configurative elements of transculturality will include the theorisations of the notion of cultural hybridity, a 'Third Space', and multiple configurations of cultural identities construction. Additionally, transcultural implications will address the non-fixedness of initial cultural positions, that is to say viewing cultures and cultural identities as dynamic in their inventory and the links between cultures as flexible, and emphasise the heterogeneity of cultural groups, specifically that the negotiation of cultural identities takes place across multiple different cultural spaces, which, in their turn, may involve both complementary and mutually exclusive cultural constructs and identifications.

Transculturality as a concept for (re-)considering cultural engagements and cultural identities has only recently become a trend in academic research. The conceptual framework of the notion is not new and many of its important elements such as cultural hybridity, Bhabha's 'Third Space' (1994) and Mary Louise Pratt's 'contact zones' (1992) have been in the process of theorising throughout the second half of the 20th century.

The notion of *transculturation* was coined by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in 1940, later extended by Mary Louise Pratt (1992), and elaborated by Wolfgang Welsch into its current understanding as transculturality (1999). Although, as aforementioned, it is still in its early stages of theoretical framing and empirical testing, this scientific category offers

fresh and innovative solutions with regard to cultural connections, cultural interactions and to culture as a whole.

Taking into consideration the recency of the concept and the danger of its incomplete theorisation, I have decided to opt for referring to both early-stage theorists, meaning Welsch and pre-Welschian theorisation of cultural hybridity and cultural encounters, as well as to more recent attempts to expand the Welsch's understanding of the concept, namely the research by and under edition of Flüchter and Schöttli (2014), the discussion of transcultural implications in contemporary Europe by Guido Rings (2016) as well as referring to the ideas of new interculturalists such as Heinz Antor (2006/2010) and Werner Delanoy (2012). Furthermore, I address and incorporate into my analysis the model of belonging construction elaborated by Jones and Krzyżanowski (2008), which, although not explicitly positioned within the transcultural research framework, offers important theoretical implications for a cultural paradigm shift. This model challenges fixedness of identities and opens up multiple theoretical dimensions for explaining the complex and contextual factors-dependent process of migrant-identity construction.

Let us start from the framework basis conceptualisation, developed by Welsch. Some aspects of his theorisation have been introduced above, emphasising the interconnectedness of cultures. The theorist refers to transculturality as a phenomenon resulting from a blend of cultures that "interpenetrate and emerge from each other"²² (Welsch, 1999, p. 203). As the author asserts, cultures are heterogeneous by nature and vary within themselves already in their inventory. Transcultural formations that come about within this process of interweaving and interpenetration result from "transcultural networks, which have some things in common while differing in others, showing overlaps and distinctions at the same time" (1999, p. 203). In this way, the concept denies invariability and promotes dynamic cultural identities that are pushed forward by transcultural permeations.

Deriving from these conceptualisations, the links between cultures are, therefore, to be recognised as flexible and dynamic ones. In Yolanda Onghena's words, namely agreeing with the definition in her introduction to *I Training Workshop on Methodologies for Research on Media, Migration and Intercultural Dialogue*, cultures are to be referred to, "not as closed, restricted areas (identities), but rather as processes (identifications) with their multiple causes

²² The phenomenon of 'interpenetration' was also discussed by Fernando Ortiz, as he talked about transcultural foundations of a Cuban nation. By referring to transformative character of cultural encounters under colonialism, Ortiz described transculturation as a process of "mutual penetration of cultures" (interpenetración cultural) and pointed out the role of "physical mixing that occurred in the colonial milieu" (Křížová, Sabol, & Massé, 2010, p.39).

and effects" (2014, p.7). In echo with this definition, let us refer to the theoretical study on identities, belonging and migration by Jones and Krzyżanowski (2008), as the authors' theorisations can be positioned within the framework of transcultural research. They argue that the construction of identities (they refer to it as a process of belonging construction) does not only involve multiplicity of ways and thus multiple configurations of this construction. It also often includes dialectical and contradictory processes, in which seemingly opposing positions and memberships, e.g. memberships in different collectives such as ethnic groups or citizens, overlap (Jones & Krzyżanowski, 2008, pp. 38-42). This point that focuses on the contradictory dynamics of cultural identities construction (cultural belonging construction) will also form an important part of the theoretical-hypothetical transcultural research framework developed in this dissertation.

Homi Bhabha's notions of cultural hybridity and 'Third Space' (1994) are important transcultural components that will also be referred to in the course of cinematic analysis. Bhabha developed a concept of hybridity within the contemporary post-colonial studies referring to it as a process which creates a new product of cultural identity that goes beyond the 'originary' culture and a 'received' tradition (1994, p.2). Bhabha's conceptualisation of hybridity is significant for transcultural research not only because it theorises hybridity as a new form of cultural invention. The value of Bhabha's discussion is also in illustrating the hybridity's performative function in the de-construction of 'otherness' and in disrupting the essentialist narratives of pure cultural structures, practices, established categorisations and hierarchical positions of identity. It has to be noted that in post-colonial discourse and its cultural theorisations, hybridity occupies a central role by being celebrated as "a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (Hoogvelt, 1997, p. 158). This aspect of cultural hybrids' ability to negotiate (and to re-negotiate) difference resonates with Bhabha's examination on how culture and identity (of minority subjects) are constructed within conditions of colonial power. The latter implies the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised as hierarchical in which the coloniser ('the us') as the governing authority exercises its power with the objective to translate the identities of the colonised ('the other') "into a collective body" (Bhabha, 1994, pp.2-3). But this translation, which is designed in essentialist terms (and can be equalised with assimilation), fails. What emerges instead is the cultural hybridity as a new cultural invention, which interweaves the cultural elements of the coloniser and the colonised. The act of cultural hybridity thus challenges the power relations and the marginal position of 'the other', as 'the other' becomes empowered in being able to

construct his/her identities across the cultural borders. As Paul Meredith makes a reference to Bhabha's discussion, cultural hybrids "have encoded within them a counterhegemonic agency" as they can "transverse both cultures and (...) translate, negotiate and mediate affinity and difference within a dynamic of exchange and inclusion" (1998, p.3). In this view, the counterhegemonic agency also stands for the ability to disrupt the cultural hierarchy and claims for the de-essentialisation of the 'otherness'.

Certainly, the performative empowerment of cultural hybridity should not be analysed as detached from its contextual specificity. Different political, social and socio-cultural factors acting within the environment in which a specific cultural hybridity develops will participate in the possibility of the empowerment to be exercised. For example, if expressions of cultural hybridity are not recognised in a certain society/community but rather stigmatised (discursively), cultural hybrids will encounter themselves excluded and powerless. In this view, Bhabha's cultural hybridity can be elaborated further in more dynamic terms as a configurative element of transculturality. It means that the negotiation and manifestation of cultural hybridity becomes interrelated with the contextual conditions in which it develops, and that define its recognition and further re-invention.

Another important transcultural notion, the 'Third Space' (Bhabha 1994), is closely connected to the concept of hybridity, as it represents the 'space' and the functioning mode in which hybridity is articulated and rearticulated and in which new cultural possibilities are provoked and facilitated. As Bhabha has put it, 'Third Space' is a transcultural abstract territory or a virtual cultural field where the process of hybridisation enables the emergence of new cultural positions (Rutherford 1990, p. 211). The most important characteristic of a 'Third Space' is its ambivalence, which means that it provides the terrain for contrary cultural positions to be negotiated and combined (Bhabha, 1994, pp.1, 38), an idea which also resonates with Jones and Krzyżanowski's contradictory dynamics of cultural belonging construction (2008). Furthermore, Bhabha points out that the negotiation of identity in a 'Third Space' is characterised by instability which "presages powerful cultural changes" (1994, p.38), and thus instability is considered a positive development.

Although Bhabha's theorisation of a 'Third Space' is formulated specifically in the context of colonial and post-colonial cultural contact²³, the notion's basis aspects are relevant for any transcultural encounter and can be projected and elaborated for the exploration of contemporary transcultural developments in Europe. Similarly to the extended understanding

²³ As Bhabha puts it, "It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance" (1994, p.38).

of the notion of hybridity, 'Third Space' is also to be approached as a configurative transcultural component whose properties and functioning depend on contextual factors of the cultural contact as well as on the personal agency of subjects involved. The concept of the 'Third Space' will thus be another key concept in the cinematic analysis and will assist in explaining different configurations of symbolic spaces that dispose of/create conditions for the process of hybridisation. Specifically, the analysis will derive from how dynamic multiple, including contradictory, cultural positions negotiate and reconcile, and what are the configurations of spaces in which this negotiation takes place. Furthermore, I will explore the 'Third Space's element of instability as expressed through the protagonists' crisis of identity.

In the past few years, a number of new research works on transculturality have been published (Grüner & Prodöhl, 2011; Flüchter & Schöttli, 2014). The approaches of academics to transcultural research vary, as well as the empirical examples which are being selected for the transcultural discussion. Grüner and Prodöhl's study, for instance, focuses on transcultural developments in a globalised city of Harbin, the eighth most populous Chinese city that was founded more than a century ago by the Russians. The authors refer to transcultural processes as "the interplay between the various ethnic groups" (Grüner & Prodöhl, 2011, p.17) as they examine the relationships between different groups that inhabited the city in the first half of the twentieth century (Chinese, both Manchu people and Han Chinese, Russians, Japanese, Jews, and Poles, among others), while these relationships were complicated by further immigration. An important aspect of this research is establishing the interconnections between the outcomes of transcultural interaction on the one side and the socio-political and socio-cultural context in which these interaction and development take place on the other. More specifically, their study strives to explain the development of transcultural practices by taking into consideration the role of such contextual factors as political circumstances (no official administration until 1932), language differences, cultural clashes, resolution of conflicts, and the relationship between the local and the global, which all compose that specific historical context of the city. Harbin is viewed as a representation of a cultural 'contact zone', with border-crossing and transcultural developments as everyday cultural practices, whereas these practices as such were eroding cultural and ethnic symbolic borders and disallowing and disrupting ghettoisation of communities (Ibid., pp.17-18). Considering this, contemporary studies of transculturality strive to bring attention to such important element of transcultural developments as their contextual specificity, and the role of the interplay of multiple contextual factors (political, social, socio-cultural and located in their historical moment) in formulating a specific configuration of transculturality as a process and a result.

A more recent transcultural research by Flüchter and Schöttli (2014) takes into consideration this role of contextual specificity and addresses the dynamics of transculturality with the objective to expand Welsch's conceptual scheme. Flüchter and Schöttli maintain the importance of transcultural research for disrupting essentialist notions of culture, specifically as they argue that it "challenges the traditional idea that cultures are internally cohesive, homogenous, self-contained, or hermetically sealed against external influences" (2014, p.2). Yet, the authors go even further in their conceptualisations. Flüchter and Schöttli consider transculturality as "a timeless, structural element" that is present "in all human societies, practices, and institutions", but whose dynamics vary according to its historical and contextual specificity (2014, pp. 2-4). They argue that "while everything may be transcultural, it is not always transcultural in the same way but is always changing" (2014, p.2). This vision testifies to the significance of further developing the idea of transculturality provided its recency but also in view of its immense theoretical and practical potential.

In agreement with Flüchter and Schöttli, I use their understanding of transculturality as an extended Welschian theorisation for the discursive analysis of selected cinematic case studies. Deriving from the point that different environments create different conditions for the dynamics of transculturality, thus influencing the nature of transcultural connections, several important interdependencies may be revealed. Among others, there may be those that concern the relationship between the degree of an immigrant-friendly inclusive society and its influence and effects on and the degree of practicing transcultural lifestyles within this society. It can be the influence on a combination of what it is believed to be proper and improper in one culture or another, or going beyond the conventional restrictive borders of what allegedly constitutes one particular culture.

In view of this discussion on the base framework of the concept of transculturality and for the purpose of projecting the possibilities of its extension, there is a need to define the **theoretical-hypothetical framework of transculturality** as it will be applied to the methodological model and tested through the film analysis. This framework will offer a discussion of the core (configurative) elements and characteristics of transculturality together with the contextual 'interdependencies' that help to shape its constitution and its dynamic nature, or take part in its multiple configurations. Whereas the following list, that draws upon the framework, is sectioned in categories, this is not to say that these categories do not overlap or do not derive from each other. Other than that, the objective is to emphasise these specific theoretical traits and interconnections of the transculturality theoretical model that need to be empirically analysed. At the same time, this illustration will structurally assist with the

empirical testing. I have thus sectioned the discussion of the theoretical-hypothetical framework in seven topics and will elaborate on their theoretical specificities further:

- **(1) Transformation.** Transforming identities and transforming subjectivities in the process of identities construction.
- **(2) 'Third Space'.** The processes of the creation of a 'Third Space'.
- **(3) Dynamic borders.** Flexibility and permeability of symbolic borders.
- **(4) The cultural complexity.** The complexity of the process of(trans-)cultural transformation within a particular society (the process is dynamic and provokes further complex new hybridities in a long-term perspective).
- **(5) Context.** Contextual specificity for dynamics and multiple configurations of transculturality.
- **(6) Nation.** The role of the concept of the 'nation' and the process of its construction in transcultural developments and the understanding of transculturality.
- **(7) Interference of monocultural perspectives.**

All these seven topics are to be explained and developed further into more detailed referential elements and empirical discussion points.

(1) Transformation. Transforming identities/Transforming subjectivities in the process of identities negotiation composes the broadest section of this transcultural framework and includes several important elements within. These elements are:

- transcultural networks and overlapping cultures, as defined by Welsch (1999);
- dual/multiple belongings (e.g. double presence and double consciousness);
- multiple configurations of belonging construction (multiple causes and effects);
- cultural hybridity (cultural practices that are mixed);
- contradictory dialectics or contradictory dynamics of cultural identities construction (a combination of "proper" and "improper" as defined by discursive cultural frames).

All these elements function both as results of a transcultural encounter and as processes through which further transcultural negotiations (of identity, belonging, positioning) occur. These elements are incorporated in subsequent topics of theoretical-hypothetical transcultural framework as they 'visualise' the (outcomes of the) cultural transformation and as such form part of the conceptual composition of transculturality. Whereas all of them have been discussed above, I will concentrate a bit more on the characteristic of contradictory dialectics

as I make a primary focus on this characteristic in my film analysis, and because I consider it one of the most important processes within this transcultural framework.

What is meant by **contradictory dialectics** is the characterisation of transcultural identities construction as a usually controversial and conflictive process. I have referred to this theorisation through the discussion of identity re-conceptualisation by Jones and Krzyżanowski, or how the authors put it, "conceptual unpacking" of the concept of identity. One of the important theoretical suggestions that the authors have proposed has been to analyse multiple attachments of an individual, whether these attachments are linked "to more than one nation of more than once cause", with taking into consideration the possibility of sometimes "mutually exclusive belongings" (Jones & Krzyżanowski, 2008, p.48). Mutual exclusiveness here is usually a result of discursive practices in the specific society or across societies that construct identities and 'belongings' as oppositional to one another, for instance in generalised terms based on religious differences or certain lifestyles. In broader terms, this would also be a projection from the construction of a specific nation and national identity as equated to singular culture and uniform cultural identity in a rigidly defined construction. For instance, a (perceived) common frame of references on what is "Germanness" or what is "Spanishness" will discursively come into conflict with an intention to include non-Christian identity into this frame, a frame in which certain culture and sometimes also religion compose the basis of the nation. Even more, these closed cultural frames based on nation or national community "as an entity, defined by a specific culture and language" (Kaya, 2002, p.38) exclude the possibility of integrating cultural elements of discursive 'others'. In the case of Germany, this has been particularly exemplified within the integration of immigrants' model based for a long time on differentiation (Ibid.), in which immigrants' languages and cultures are considered oppositional to the basis German culture, *Leitkultur*. However, what has been observed, and will also be illustrated through films analysis, is that immigrant/immigrant descent subjects have been re-constructing their cultural attachments beyond the physical, political and symbolic borders of the nation-state. In many cases, especially in the cases of established diasporas, transnational belonging has been developed, in which a combination of attachments pre-constructed as conflictive or mutually-exclusive has been managed and reconciled in different transcultural configurations. Moreover, since such mutual exclusiveness is also substantially a result of discursive practices, contradictory dialectics is also related to contextual influence on transculturality (topic 5).

(2). **Creation of a 'Third Space'**. This theoretical-hypothetical framework of transculturality adopts the definition of a 'Third Space' as formulated by Homi Bhabha (1994), and I also suggest several new framing aspects to its conceptualisation (as will be elaborated further below). In reference to Bhabha's discussion, a 'Third Space' stands for a liminal space in which cultural hybridity develops. Different multiple cultural positions merge and interweave and new cultural positions emerge here. The creation of a 'Third Space', therefore, responds to the mutual exclusiveness of cultural identities, belongings or cultures in general and illustrates the possibility of opening the closed cultural frames. It is the space that exists simultaneously within and beyond all the essentialist political and symbolic borders and is thus related to crossing these borders (this point is directly connected to topic 3 of this theoretical framework - Dynamic borders).

At the same time, I also extend Bhabha's conceptualisation to incorporate the following aspects:

- A 'Third Space' can function both within physical spaces and within certain conceptual platforms that will facilitate its existence. Yet, in both cases the 'Third Space' will be conceptual, it will be an abstract transcultural territory, in which the conditions are created for the processes of hybridisation.
- The construction of a 'Third Space' can be projected via two modalities: a 'Third Space' construction as a facilitator of transcultural encounters and transcultural connections (first modality) and a 'Third Space' construction as a platform for transculturality in the process of development (second modality). In this first case, it performs as a 'space' which creates conditions for the transcultural connection to happen, and in the second case it is based on Bhabha's definition (1994) and functions as the 'enunciative' platform for the process of transculturation in development, and which is frequently accompanied by the crisis of identity.

In this extended definition, the suggestion is that 'Third Spaces' of first modality function as negotiatory spaces for the transcultural processes that do not (yet) involve the actual resultant hybridisation. They are rather characterised by multidirectional negotiations that precede the event of a (tangible) hybridity and which invoke transforming subjectivities (changes in cultural behaviour and small modifications to cultural practices and lifestyles without posing questions of belonging or identification). However, these negotiations also anticipate future cultural changes and the formation of new identities.

- 'Third Spaces' are constructed in multiple configurations and these configurations are influenced by their contextual specificity. The analysis of the conditions created and facilitated in a 'Third Space' will thus assist in examining how and in what circumstances the transcultural processes develop, so that they favour the negotiation and reconciliation of multiple, including contradictory, cultural positions and meanings. The creation of specific conditions and the circumstances for functioning of a 'Third Space' are the questions to be connected to the Contextual specificity of the theoretical-hypothetical framework (topic 5).

(3). **Dynamic borders.** Another central feature of transculturality is that it activates the flexibility and permeability of symbolic borders. I would like to exemplify this process by referring to the binary construction of 'the us' vs. 'the other' and relating it to the transcultural possibility of extending the essentialist concept of the 'nation'.

Defining a self as a recognised member of a group of 'the us' requires the construction of distinctiveness and, as Schriewer and Cayuela emphasise, affirmation of this group in relation to other groups (2016, p.9). In this framework, what is significant to consider is the specificity of the relationship of 'the us' with the constructed 'the others'.

The specificity of this relationship is marked by hierarchy, conflict or collaboration which all draw a line of spatial and symbolic differentiation between one group and another. And this line is the border (Schriewer & Cayuela, 2016, p.9). The construction of the border in national terms, Schriewer and Cayuela continue, has given a way to the political separation of what belongs to the "national identity" and what is marked and identified with 'the other' (2016, pp.9-10), and the identity(-ies) of 'the other'. In other words, the construction of the modern nation state has aspired and has succeeded in 'freezing' symbolic cultural borders basing them on the affirmation of actual physical national borders. The national identity has thus become equalised to the cultural identity, and its construction and re-affirmation have influenced the process of the 'othering' and distancing 'the others', those whose 'cultures' did not form part of or were discursively constructed in opposition to the national projects (e.g. European Christian societies vs. non-European Muslim societies) or whose belonging to the nation-state was problematised by their non-autochthonous character (in contrast to autochthonous national minorities of the state). The process of 'othering' becomes problematic and even paradoxical in the situation when the constructed others have been increasingly becoming part of the spatial national loci inhabited and majoritised by 'the us'.

In this view, what is of critical relevance and consideration is the recognition of the multifunctionality and flexibility of "the border", both in contemporary and historical perspectives. Agreeing with Schriewer and Cayuela, as they contend, the border, and especially this exact border between 'the us' and 'the other' is both static and mobile. "The border is porous (...), it has facilitated the first exchanges of goods and people, the cultural transmissions, the pilgrimages of identity"²⁴ (2016, p.9). Even more, these authors address the question of the border within a more global and historical perspective, drawing our attention to the fact that we, humans, have always been migrants. "In fact, the human species has been defined from its beginnings as a migrant, always transiting spaces from one spaces to others, violating those boundaries - (...) real or symbolic - seemingly paradoxical of their identities"²⁵ (Schriewer & Cayuela, 2016, p.9). Considering these suggestions of re-discovering the flexibility of symbolic cultural borders, what is relevant for further discussion is the essence of this flexibility within the concept of transculturality. Within the framework of the transcultural model it will be possible to address and explain the flexibility and permeability of these symbolic borders.

(4). **Cultural complexity.** The process of cultural transformation within a particular society is not a closed internal process, but can be characterised as a dynamic combination of multiple processes which leads to even more complex cultural hybridity in a long-term perspective. The processes of cultural transformation provoke emergence of new cultural hybridities, recombining and restructuring different elements of seemingly separated cultural identities, and thus strengthen the basis for challenging the fixed cultural constructs and positions. Mutual inter-influences incite mutual modifications of cultural practices. In another general illustration, as it was already discussed above, the cultures of 'the us' modify the cultures of 'the others' and the cultures of 'the others' modify the cultures of 'the us'. Increasing cultural complexity and thus complex re-constructed cultural identity(-ies) are exemplified in overlapping cross-cultural experiences, practices and lifestyles, modifications of social structures. Furthermore, in specific circumstances and within a time, transcultural networks provoke the re-defining of 'nationhood' and extending the cultural meaning of constructed

²⁴In original text as, "La frontera...es porosa...en ella se realizan los primordiales intercambios de bienes y personas, las transmisiones culturales, las peregrinaciones de identidad."

²⁵In original text as, "De hecho, la especie humana se ha definido desde sus inicios como migrante, transitando siempre de unos espacios a otros, violentando esas fronteras - (...) reales o simbólicas - aparentemente paradójicas de su identidad."

'national identity' (interrelated with topic 6). In the long term, the cultural transformation of a society in favour of more complex cultural hybridities becomes a natural change.

(5).**Context.** The role of contextual specificity for different scenarios of transculturality is significant too. Specifically, the contexts contribute in different ways to transcultural possibilities and to the dynamics and multiple configurations of transculturality. Different contextual environments (both symbolic and actual) create different conditions for transculturality to happen and develop in multiple directions, while the power relations are involved in this contextual specificity. There are several interdependencies that I would like to focus on in the analysis of transculturality and some of them were already mentioned as examples for explaining the transcultural research approach of Flüchter and Schöttli (2014).

I divide these interdependencies in two bigger groups, emphasising their complex influence onto the dynamics and configurations of transculturality:

- Discursive Influence.
- Actual influence of the socio-cultural context.

The first group addresses the interdependencies between the configuration of transculturality and the discursive practices that influence it. For instance, this is the role of pre-constructed deriving points created and reinforced discursively (who matches these points or is more approximate to them and who doesn't and isn't) and the discursive influence on the inclusiveness of the society (e.g. to what degree this is an immigrant-friendly inclusive society and how this degree varies under the influence of discursive practices, including the role of political and media discourses).

The second group addresses the relevance of the socio-cultural context, which embraces the following elements: pre-existent visible hybridity (e.g. hybrid music, architecture, dance, cultural traits), the construction of the social life across gender and class (e.g. gender-roles attitude, social class situation), or even the impact of physical environment (e.g. inclusive infrastructure across urban spaces). All these interdependencies are also interconnected, while discursive practices impact the social-cultural context and vice versa.

Furthermore, it is important to discuss these elements in more detail and elaborate further on the importance of the specificity of contexts for transcultural developments and their different configurations. I am referring here to the idea that the socio-cultural context matters. The differences in the cultural climate of the countries would also contribute to an effect on how the immigrant/of immigrant origin subjects are perceived and which indirectly influence their positioning within the society they live in.

I develop this idea of the importance of contextual factors while projecting it in parallel from a recent research on the effect of a country's gender-role attitude on female labour supply, conducted by the sociologist Wilfred Uunk (2015). The study illustrates how the cultural climate, namely a cultural set of values of a given society, influences how the women are seen in that society.

It is interesting to use the framework of this research while addressing transcultural connections since it refers to the cultural context as one of the most important influential factors of inclusion or exclusion. In the case of Uunk's research, it is about the effect of attitudes in the society towards the gender roles and the perception of women as equal to men which influences the actual positioning of women on a labour market (2015). In line with this framework, egalitarian attitudes towards immigrant/immigrant origin subjects, namely referring to their rights for equal opportunities in political, economic and social life of the country, would mean a higher degree of achievement in an inclusive-oriented society. This factor of egalitarian attitudes is significant as it participates in the construction of an inclusive, and thus transculturality-friendly, society, and it should be taken into account while analysing the dynamics of transcultural connections in different socio-cultural environments. As the cultural climate affects the feeling of immigrant/immigrant origin subjects' attachment to the society, it influences transcultural dynamics too.

It is also true that the degree of an immigrant-friendly inclusive society is not a static configuration that is pertinent to such society by default. The cultural attitude context towards immigrants and those of immigrant descent includes a socio-political element too. Thus, the attitudes and perceptions towards immigrants and the immigrant descent subjects can change over time shifting from higher degree of inclusive-oriented society to lower one. And the main influential factors in this shift are usually politically-driven.

For the purposes of exemplifying this point, it is important to listen to the transcultural voices. In her story for the "Invisible success" series (portraits of ethnic minority women in Denmark), Asmaa Abdol-Hamid recalls the changes she experienced in the perceptions towards her from the population of the country's ethnic majority. When Asmaa was growing up, she lived with her family among Christian community in a small Danish village, "where the villagers went to church on Sundays" and "religion was a normal part of life", she knew that "people were accepting of the fact that we (author: Asmaa and her family) were practising Muslims" (KVINFO, 2007). While finishing her school, Asmaa saw how in the lead-up to the General Election 1998 the political discourse on immigration was acquiring a

harsh tone. In the course of this debate, the changes in the perceptions and the attitudes followed, as Asmaa expresses in her discourse:

"Immigrants learnt that they didn't have the same basic values as Danes, and those of us from ethnic minorities didn't feel included in the community. Up until then the only difference between me and Danes was that I am a Muslim, but now being an immigrant became a very complex issue: I came from an ethnic minority, was a woman refugee, a Muslim, and so on" (KVINFO, 2007).

In these terms, Asmaa came to the realisation of herself as 'the other' in the eyes of 'the us', of someone who does not belong to the 'native' society because of her immigrant background, an imposed identity that she hasn't conformed to. We could thus say that Asmaa and her family was accepted in the Danish society and was part of it, within an inclusive socio-cultural context. And that once, the situation has changed under politically-driven factors, the socio-cultural context became less inclusive and the perceptions towards Asmaa and her family have shifted.

However, the analysis of the context for transcultural implications is important as well as the changes within this context. It would be a simplistic generalised conclusion to analyse this story in its context by saying that Denmark (a similar situation can be also projected to other European immigration societies) went through a radically quick and linear change from a friendly inclusive society to a fearful of immigrants/little trust and prejudices society. The issue is much more complex.

The attitudes towards immigration vary at a given moment even inside a host society and sometimes the change in attitudes is more radical at different levels of social relationships and is lighter at others. Yet, it is more likely that the influential factors for this change have political foundations, as it is shown with an example of Asmaa, whether it is a direct influence (open political discussions and discourses, official communications in media and in state-owned media outlets) or indirect influence (mediated policies). The political element is one of the significant factors that has a power to change the attitudes and thus to influence the degree of the inclusiveness of the society in general, including on a mass scale. Therefore, in the analysis of the socio-cultural context for transcultural dynamics, we should take into account that the degree of the inclusive-oriented society is subjected to changes and that it is essential not to discard the possibility that such changes can be politically-driven. At the same, the policies such as anti-discrimination laws on the grounds of race, culture, religion can have a reversal effect and influence and contribute to the construction of more cohesive and inclusive multicultural environments.

Another influential contextual factor for transcultural dynamics is the role of a physical environment and its involvement into the engagements between the majority population and

the immigrant origin minority. I am referring here to urban spaces together with urban and housing policies and their setup and characteristics in relation to transcultural engagements. The Council of Europe emphasises the importance of a city physical environment for intercultural communication calling up for a more inclusive town planning. In 2008 the organisation provided recommendations for more open spaces in urban areas advocating their necessity as platforms for facilitating an intercultural dialogue:

"(...) urban space can be organised in a "single-minded" fashion or more "open-minded" ways. The former include the conventional suburb, housing estate, industrial zone, car park or ring road. The latter embrace the busy square, the park, the lively street, the pavement café or the market. If single-minded areas favour an atomised existence, open-minded places can bring diverse sections of society together and breed a sense of tolerance. It is critically important that migrant populations do not find themselves, as so often, concentrated on soulless and stigmatised housing estates, excluded and alienated from city life" (Council of Europe, 2008, p.33).

While the Council of Europe argues the value of "open-minded" urban spaces for breeding "a sense of tolerance" (2008), the functional role and the power of such spaces can go even further. They can become an essential instrument of the development and better understanding of transcultural connections, not only through dialogue but also through exchange and communication of what the interlocutors have in common as well as of the critical stance towards what they differ in.

Furthermore, the spaces for transcultural connections are not only geographical but also symbolic. This is where transculturality comes into being in a natural way as the properties and the conditions of the spaces make the transcultural process possible. In early 1990s Weber and Rausch talked about transcultural experiences without naming them as such, yet referring to cultural encounters as the ones with transformative potential. They approached them via the concept of the places or spaces in which these encounters take place – frontiers – defining them as "geographical zones of interaction between two or more distinctive cultures" (Weber & Rausch, 1994, p. xiv). At the same time, theorists pointed to the configuration of cultural intermingling and its dynamics depending on the socio-cultural and historical context, arguing the dynamics to be "unique to time and place" (Ibid.). Whether "frontiers" in words of Weber and Rausch or "contact zones" in Mary Louis-Pratt words, the talk is about the spaces where encounters and clash between cultures occur, while these spaces can be exclusively geographical or symbolic. As a conceptual example of the latter, a transcultural 'Third Space' can be incorporated here. Weber and Rausch did mention transculturation as phenomena of the frontier, yet specified it to be more likely a phenomenon of a "frontier of inclusion" rather than of a "frontier of exclusion", as formulated by a geographer Marvin W. Mikesell (1960, p. 65).

In these terms, as a recipe for transcultural interactions, a favourable inclusive socio-cultural environment may be required, where the function of the inclusion of minority is to be performed by both the minority and the majority, whether it is being done via institutions (e.g. communication, integration, urban spaces and urban housing policies) or on an individual level. Projecting these theories onto the contemporary realities of cultural contact within urban spaces, the use of these spaces as physical spaces of transcultural interaction will be addressed too in the following chapters while doing cinematic analysis. In *Divines* (2016) there is a depiction of a "conventional suburb" such as Parisian *banlieues* while *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) uses as one of its main settings an "open-minded" space such as Turin's Mercato di Porta Palazzo market.

(6). Nation and (7) the interference of monocultural perspectives.

The sixth and the seventh topics to be addressed within the theoretical-hypothetical model of transculturality are loosely interrelated and compose significant theoretical and methodological challenges for the conceptualisation of transculturality. (6) The sixth topic focuses on **the nation-centered logic of cultural categorisation** (Robins, 2014), and the discussion will address the essentialist conceptualisation of the nation and specifically its role in transcultural research. (7) The seventh topic focuses on **the interference of monocultural perspectives** (Rings, 2016), and the discussion will address the impact of this interference onto transcultural research. At the same time, the questions to be posed towards meeting these challenges can be formulated as follows:

- what are possibilities of extending the concept of the nation through the prism of transcultural research,
- how can the transcultural analysis take into consideration the interference of monocultural perspectives for understanding the functioning of transcultural dynamics.

While discussing these challenges, I will firstly refer to the nation-centred rhetoric on immigration as well as to the role of national imagination in this rhetoric, which is particularly voiced by Kevin Robins (2014). Subsequently, as such nation-centred rhetoric has already entered the process of questioning within cultural and postcolonial studies, it is important to address some recent examples of such questioning, too. Namely, I will refer to the globalisation and communication technologies evoked discussion on re-negotiation and transformation of the concept of the 'nation' with the objective of departing from the concept's traditional exclusionist and essentialist terms. All these questions compose an important part

of transcultural study as they interact with the research in the process of testing and extending the transcultural paradigm and will also be projected and incorporated in my discursive cinematic analysis.

If a transcultural encounter has a chance to occur in a "contact zone" or a "frontier", this point or environment of encounter is to be a "frontier of inclusion" to make the possibilities of transcultural connections and cultural permeations higher. In other words, transculturality is likely to be a phenomenon of a transcultural-friendly context, an environment which enables the circulation and dynamics of transcultural practices. At the same time, the dynamics of transcultural practices as well as different cultural configurations of these practices will depend on multiple factors. Among these factors there are, as discussed above, the specificity of a socio-cultural environment (both physical and symbolic) in which the transcultural encounter takes place; the governmental policies - including multiculturalism, integration and inclusion policies; media and political discourses on immigrants and immigration, etc.

However, transcultural research should not be restricted to its identifiable factors in their current understanding, but should also take into account the deconstructive outcomes of the process of shifting the paradigm. Due to the recency of the concept of transculturality, yet not confined to this reason, there might be theoretical challenges in operating with the transcultural terms and the dimensions and ambitiousness of transcultural research.

As Kevin Robins suggests, the challenges for the transcultural connections as well as for the transcultural research reside in "the (nation-centric) logic of cultural categorization" (2014, p. 28). According to Robins, such logic can be found up to date in most of the research that is conducted on migration as well as in the majority of media discourses. Nation-centric logic views migrant populations as subordinated subjects that have to conform, that is to say to adhere to the (imagined) cultural order of the national majority - to be integrated or assimilated. Robins contends that the confinements of the national mentality in the form of the fear of the "migrant other[s]" who threaten "to create their own cultural order" is the nucleus impeding factor for the possibilities of transcultural communication and thus for understanding transcultural developments. He poses a question of whether to move beyond this restrictive paradigm would mean moving beyond the position of this "national condition of mental internment and confinement"; and proposes conceiving minorities as "unprogrammed actors" who establish their livelihoods within improvisation and spontaneity and whose transcultural engagements are to be addressed, both theoretically and empirically, without pre-set beliefs and/or "a supposed knowledge of an always abstract other". This theorisation moves away, as Robins puts it himself, "from the concept of identity to the more

complex phenomenological conception of a person" (2014, pp. 27-35). This emphasis on the phenomenological approach towards perceiving the 'other' can assist in starting to analyse the cultural diversity and to learn from interaction within this diversity rather than pre-setting/pre-conditioning and pre-stereotyping the learning.

While agreeing with this theoretical deconstruction, I would like to point out the challenging aspects that such approach provides for transcultural research. In this regard, one of the important questions that may raise concerns is the re-construction of the concept of the 'nation' and the 'nationhood', a process which will require a participation of multiple frameworks of negotiation of these concepts. Can transculturality as a process and a concept have damaging consequences for the viability of the notions of national culture and national/cultural identity? Will it endanger the concept of the national identity as such or will it enable us to look at the nationally-bound cultural identification as a flexible notion able to absorb multiple values, as well as the possibility of cultural combinations within one or several national identifications? If it does, is there a way of finding the balance and objectivity in the transcultural research without building frameworks of non-existent connections or of transcultural connections in which the starting points of identities/identifications are difficult to distinguish? The multicultural and integration policies are therefore to be addressed within beyond-the-nation-centered perspective as well, while what such perspective exactly means is yet to be searched for in the process of transcultural research. At the same time, to use Robins' words, "the sheer force of the national imagination"(2014, p.28) and the grounds for this imagination should not be underestimated.

Having said that, what about the research that goes against a traditional exclusionist concept of the nation? Whereas a traditional concept of the nation implies "a space that is defined as imaginary, homogenous and specifically 'rooted' in one territory" (Sieber, 2015, p. 68)²⁶, contemporary exemplifications of increasing trans-border interactions, transnational lifestyles and double presence and belonging, as simultaneous belonging to two different national contexts, go against this exclusionary and restrictive conceptualisation.

In this view, it is important to consider the discussion that exemplifies the questioning of the construct of the 'nation'; and which already at its beginning suggests that the extension of the construct is a feasible development. I would like to refer to the example of the globalisation-evoked discussion that focuses on communication technologies granting them a role of defining mediator, namely to a discussion on the nation construct transformation by

²⁶ In original text as, "un espacio definido por un imaginario homogéneo y específico 'arraigado' en un territorio".

Cornelia Sieber (2015, pp.59-69). Other important research in relation to the re-conceptualisation of the nation also include works by Braidotti (2002), Elsaesser (2005), Laacher (2007) that concentrate on cosmopolitanism, "double consciousness", and redefining the links between citizenship and nation.

National physical demarcated borders do not necessarily delineate cultural identities and affiliations, and new technologies and the new additional mediums through which we communicate today have made such disparities even more visible. At the same time, it would be limiting to say that the technological advances have been main facilitators in the creation of hybrid-type lifestyles and cross-border (trans-national) affiliations. The latter have been in constant process of re-creation and re-negotiation even before the globalisation and all the advances that have stemmed from it. It is just that contemporary hybrid lifestyles and identities are negotiated within different, usually more complex, configurations in comparison to how they were negotiated in the past. What is significant is that if new modes of communication across borders assist us in blurring and questioning these borders, we should then consider these modes not only as factors of the transformation of concepts but also as elements of contextual influence and having a contextual impact on the development of transcultural connections. In this view, it is interesting for transcultural research to address the study conducted by Sieber because it embarks on releasing the construct of the 'nation' from its physical and symbolic borders and focuses on communication technologies as contextual elements for transcultural developments.

Sieber refers to the 'nations' as plural categories, as "relational and combined" (2015), while mobility and dynamic interaction of the populations of the 'nations' make the combinations and plurality visible. While according to Benedict Anderson, the nations have been formed as 'imagined communities' through the idea of a defined common territory and a shared sense of time (2006), these elements compose the main essential framework of the 'nation' construct structure, yet find it difficult to compose a well-defined explanation of what it means to belong to one nation or another in cultural terms. As Sieber brings it into light, "(n)o nation in particular can be well-explained today as a uniform entity with specific characteristics which distinguish it from other nations" (2015, p.60)²⁷. These conceptualisations make a step towards challenging the rigid culturally static borders of the 'nation' and thus indirectly engage into the process of developing the concept of transculturality.

²⁷ In original text as, "Ninguna nación en particular se explica bien hoy como una supuesta entidad con características específicas que la distingue de las otras naciones".

Now, we need to ask another question, as to what are the transcultural elements that indicate to this possibility of re-inventing and extending the understanding of the 'nation'. If the aforementioned definitions open the ways for non-traditional non-essentialist understanding of the 'nation' construct, what questions should be posed in order to approach its transformation? Sieber starts a discussion in this direction by interrelating immigration as mobility with trans-border communication as mediated by new technologies. She emphasises that the 'nation' construct has new possibilities of transformation because of the double presence, namely a simultaneous engagement of an immigrant subject within both home and host societies. Sieber uses García Canclini's notion of "imagined globalisation" (1999/2000), which implies that double belonging is facilitated by advanced communication technologies, to suggest its transformative impetus for the conceptualisation of the 'nation'. The "imagined globalisation", therefore, prepares grounds for the re-positioning and the restructuring of the 'nation' construct by detaching it from a sense of delineated and defined territory. The urban anthropologist Nestor García Canclini, himself an example of this transcultural configuration of double belonging, in one of the interviews alludes to his own experience of being 'argenmex', specifically perceiving himself as belonging to both Argentinean and Mexican national contexts (2008). In the process of theorising the "imagined globalisation", he advocates for the necessity to release the construct of the 'nation' from its physical and symbolic borders and go into the direction to analyse the 'otherness', to engage with heterogeneity and differences with the purpose to confront discrimination that is based on stigmatisation of these differences (Canclini, 1999/2000).

By granting a significant role to contemporary communication advances, Sieber argues that the 'imagined globalisation' proposes a hybrid notion of the nation as a "belonging that is preserved and always updated by distance communication"²⁸ as well as "the interweaving of certain symbols and cultural signs that are being selected in a new living context"²⁹ (2015, p.62). This "double presence" and "double belonging" function with the assistance of contextual influences, both physical and virtual, and are configured according to personal choices of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects.

Furthermore, transcultural research needs to take into account the complexity, multidimensionality and differing configurations of transcultural connections both across contemporary societies and across time while interrogating the transculturality in historical

²⁸ In original text as, "pertenencia guardada y siempre actualizada por la comunicación a distancia".

²⁹ In original text as, "el entretrejimiento de ciertos símbolos y signos culturales que se seleccionan en el nuevo contexto de vida".

perspectives. As Rings summarises, the role of transculturality on the one hand is to be able to redefine the culture as it is seen today, and on the other, to interrogate our concepts of culture and identity by digging into the past and identifying and analysing 'transcultural memory'. Rings uses the Moses and Rothberg's notion of 'transcultural memory' (2014) to emphasise that transculturality is not only a result of contemporary global processes of interconnectedness, but has also been a phenomenon of the past (2016, pp.10-11), an argument which, similarly, is part of transculturality conceptual discussion, as mentioned before, by Flüchter and Schöttli (2014). In this view, transcultural research can be used for redefining the cultural paradigm not only because 'the times have changed' and the new complex cultural diversity requires new definitions and appropriate analysis of contemporary cultural inter-influences. By interrogating the conceptualisation of culture and cultural identities in general and projecting these interrogations on the examples of cultural hybridity from the past, transcultural research can assist in challenging the entrenched constructs of division of what belongs exclusively to one (national) culture or another, of what has emerged and developed as a dynamic construction of diverse cultural inter-influences.

This discussion and the transcultural analysis combine different elements of the elaborated hypothetical-theoretical model of transculturality. What is the most relevant in this combination is the necessity to take into consideration the influence of these entrenched constructs of division. In other words, the analysis should address the influence of previous (previously constructed) dominant monocultural power discourses and constructs. The influence of these discourses and constructs is what impacts the development of transcultural narrative and what projects and intervenes into transcultural perspectives.

In this view, let me conclude this subchapter by referring to the seventh topic of the transcultural model which at the same time composes one of the most significant challenges for the transcultural research. This topic is the **interference of monocultural perspectives into transcultural developments** and into the theorisation of transculturality. The topic is loosely connected to the Contextual specificity (topic 5), and to the previously discussed Nation-centered logic of cultural categorisation and the possibility of challenging this logic by transcultural research (topic 6).

The discussion of the interference of monocultural perspectives will be conducted via two dimensions:

- The question of parallel or rotating co-existence of monocultural and transcultural perceptions. This question will be examined in reference to the discussion as initiated and developed by Rings (2016). The discussion addresses

the interconnection between monoculturality and transculturality in terms of that not everything has been, is and will be transcultural.

- The question of the entrenched cultural binary, with a usually antagonistic basis. This question will be discussed in connection to the postcolonial studies' reflections by Bhabra (2014), specifically on a cultural binary construct between 'European' and 'non-European' as rooted historically and (re)-defined within the production of knowledge power relations. Transculturality should consider and analyse the implications of the power relations in their contemporary and historical projections.

As Rings contends, "although there is a clear evidence of an increasing process of cultural hybridisation, there are also many examples of growing xenophobia" (2016, p.16). Moreover, cultural hybridisation, which is an indispensable component of transculturality, can sometimes lose its potential to destabilising monoculturality. This especially happens when cultural hybridity becomes a fashionable object of consumption, an exoticised 'other'. It can then refer to power relations and enhance binary oppositions.

The interference of monocultural perspectives into transcultural developments is thus constant, or as Rings points out, these perspectives compose the "apparently never-ending attraction" which is "confirmed by spectacular right-wing success in the European Parliament elections in 2014" (Rings, 2016, p.16). Even more, in 2015-2016 the right-wing parties' rising popularity in Europe continues, 'consolidating' the powers in the context of and at the expense of the refugee crisis who flee from the wars to Europe. The editorial board of the journal *Pueblos* in their introductory communication "No Vengáis a Europa" mentions a couple of examples of the extreme right-wing leaders in Europe. The reference alludes to Hungarian Viktor Orbán from Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance or Polish Jaroslaw Kaczynski from Law and Justice as the ones who "represent xenophobic extreme right that consolidates its strength in Europe based on exacerbating the cult of the national identity which is supposedly threatened by the arrivals of refugees from the Orient"³⁰ (Pueblos, 2016, p.4). These are just a few examples, yet today we can even talk about a rise of rightwing populism throughout the Western Europe and its powerful influence on public opinion. Apart from the mentioned examples of an increasing nationalist party's popularity, the other instances would be Geert Wilders party in the Netherlands, the True Finns in Finland, and already mentioned before Marine Le Pen party in France, Lega Nord in Italy, and the UK Independence party Ukip. The

³⁰In the original as, "exponentes de una derecha xenófoba que se afianza en Europa a base de exacerbar el culto a una identidad nacional supuestamente amenazada por la llegada de personas refugiadas de Oriente".

political discourses that are popularised by these parties' leaders stigmatise the phenomenon of immigration in general and produce a racist and xenophobic demagogue which uses certain immigrant groups as "scapegoats" for nationalist nostalgia and economic insecurity. They further marginalise and (re-)invent the immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe as "cultural others". (As it was discussed in the previous subchapter with an example of an anti-immigrant rhetoric related to 'Brexit').

In this view, this interference of monocultural perceptions impacts the positioning of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe through multiple lines of contextual influence. This influence is transmitted while forming part of discursive practices and impacting the policies of integration and the actual integration through the societal and interpersonal relationships.

On the other hand, there is another complementary element to be examined regarding the power of monocultural perspectives. This element is the (historically) constructed, enrooted, fixed and further discursively supported binary position of the differentiation between 'the West' and 'the Rest'. What should be taken into consideration in transcultural research is thus how to work with these entrenched cultural binary categories. Or at least, how to build a response from the transcultural perspective. This dissertation considers what questions have to be posed in regards to the discourses and representations that forge essentialist conceptualisations of culture, specifically to the binary divide between 'the us' and 'the other', in order to create a critical basis for challenging this divide.

It is important to note that such a divide exists because the conceptualisation of cultural difference in the perspective of 'the West' has appropriated the model of exclusionary cultural bifurcation with a "positive" vs. "negative", or a "superior" vs. "subaltern" divide. And this model takes its roots in the construction of Europe in the context of its colonial power negotiations between the colonizer and the colonized.

In her article "Postcolonial and decolonial dialogues", sociologist Gurminder K. Bhabra argues that this divisive system of European self-negotiation at the expense of the differentiation from the others without conceiving the understanding and exploring the cultures of these "others" has organised "the world into homogenous, separable categories arranged through hierarchical dichotomies and categorical logics" (2014, p.118). In this view, reflecting upon the theorisations of postcolonial studies' authors (Said, 1995; Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1988) as well as introducing their connection to the modernity/coloniality school (Quijano, 2007; Lugones, 2007; Mignolo, 2002), Bhabra makes an important point. She argues that in the process of challenging the dominant conceptual frameworks what has been

important is the disruption of these frameworks within their critical discursive, sociologically and historically combined contextual analysis (2014, p. 116). In other words, the disruption of the essentialist and divisive constructs of subordination should be approached from a complex interconnected multi-perspective interrogation.

If we address a cultural representation, its examination needs to be deconstructive. This deconstruction needs to interrogate the essentialist cultural meanings and the contextual conditions in which they operate; and then de-link all the static and inferior position points. The analysis becomes critical when it addresses the interrelationship between the transcultural and the monocultural within a given discourse or a representation more complexly. This analysis should strive for explaining and questioning the cultural meanings as they are inscribed in certain discourses and representations and see how these meanings can be transformed and reinterpreted from the transcultural perspective. For example, analyse what are the conditions in which 'the other' is positioned in subaltern, marginal location, and then strive to find the ways as to how to displace 'the other' from this position.

The task is difficult because this discursive bifurcation which has divided the cultures into antagonistic categories has, as Bhabra concludes, penetrated all the knowledge production and perceptions towards culture and society (2014). The essence of transculturality is thus to distance itself from the established dominant construction of binaries, and from the system of power itself which constructs and reinforces those binaries. Yet, this distancing should be performed inextricably with the interrogation of essentialist constructs, with learning and addressing them in order to (re-)incorporate transcultural meanings into the monocultural pure cultural constructs, or pre-constructed as such.

Taking into consideration the influence of the pre-constructed cultural binary, the following questions are to be addressed: why is it difficult to explain cultural heterogeneity, or why is it challenging to name/denominate cultural hybridity phenomena and thus develop transcultural research. Transculturality thus intends to give explanations to this cultural heterogeneity, to the multiplicity of identities (as well as varied conceptualisations of gender and sexuality). Transculturality says that what has been considered a 'norm' (according to the cultural binary) is actually a non-realistic imagined construct because of which the difference is stigmatised and exclusions from the 'norm' are marginalised. But this disruption is facing the system of dominant power, a power that has been feeding and maintaining itself through centuries (with the instruments of creating Eurocentrism, Orientalism, the discourse on the "clash of civilizations", etc.) And this is where the difficulties in transcultural research complicate even further.

Transculturality has still limited 'language' with which it can work against monocultural interference, and as the 'language' of monoculturality is much more developed, it is unavoidable to work with monocultural 'vocabulary' in order to influence and re-construct it. Transculturality can only challenge the essentialist conceptual framework, the framework that reinforces the expressions and interpretations of cultural binary, when it gets to analyse the influence of its framework onto transcultural research and when it learns to convert its influence into its own instrument.

1.4 Transculturality as a relevant strategy towards reconsidering multiculturalism: Incorporation of the transcultural paradigm within the discourse of multiculturalism and multicultural policies.

The transcultural reality as well as the further development of transcultural connections and practices also depends on what we know about this reality, and on what we know about how it works. If to put it in Wolfgang Welsch words, the "reality" of culture is also a result of "our conceptions of culture" (1999, p.201). In other words, this "reality" is directly related to our vision of culture, to how we perceive what the culture is and what else it can be.

These perceptions and conceptualisations indirectly influence the processes of integration, namely the continuous integration of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in their host societies, or their (new) homes. Apart from structural integration on social and political levels (employment and residence or citizenship), the integration also incorporates experiential or phenomenological elements which are of significant importance for a more inclusive society. These elements include the feeling of belonging of the immigrant and immigrant descent subjects on the one hand and the perceptions towards them and towards the process of accommodating the cultural diversity in the host society, on the other. According to Welsch, exclusions are inevitable if we think of culture as a "homogeneity event" (1999, p.201). Yet, thinking in inclusive terms is possible when we view culture as the incorporation of "the foreign" and "do justice to transcultural components" (Welsch, 1999, p.201).

The problem is that the essentialist or monocultural conceptualisations of contemporary cultural reality continue to occupy a significant space even in the societies of large cultural complexities, not to mention their presence in emerging European multicultural societies such as, for example, Spain and Italy. By cultural complexities here I mean multiple and dynamic cultural configurations of inter-relations between different cultures, including those cultures that are constructed or generally viewed as different or even contrasting, and whose inter-

relations are exemplified, for instance, in overlapping transcultural practices, hybrid identities and transnational lifestyles.

1.4.1 Traditional multiculturalism and the reproduction of essentialist perception of cultures: towards the question of policies' re-consideration.

As transculturality and film researcher Guido Rings observantly points out, although since the 1960s "a growing public acceptance of greater diversification in Europe" has been observed (2016, p.9), "monoculturality is not a phenomenon of the past" (2016, p.9), as we also discussed this in the previous subchapter. What is important to note is that this acceptance of diversity predominantly implies the acceptance of coexistence of different cultures in terms of their coexistence as if in parallel dimensions. Such a status quo usually ignores or discards the natural modes of cultural inter-influences, processes of intermingling and the possibilities for transcultural connections that, among other elements, constantly create new hybrid practices.

Such an essentialist stance towards cultures, which involves viewing cultural identities in these terms too (that one person can be either one or another, can belong to one culture or another, without the possibility of belonging to both or combined several cultures), has been in construction or under influence of multiple factors. One of such factors has a political dimension. This are the politics of multicultural policies or partial multicultural policies in European host societies, which I would suggest to be one of the most influential determinants. Traditional multicultural policies have been formed when at local, regional and national levels the policy makers have encountered the impossibility to deny the increasing presence of cultural diversity in their societies and thus the urgency of elaborating the immediate strategies to accommodate this diversity.

Why do I refer to these policies as traditional multicultural policies rather than simply as multicultural policies? Is there a difference between the two? This differentiation stems from the necessity to explain multiculturalism as it has been elaborated and implemented traditionally and currently remaining as such, while at the same time to introduce a new understanding of multiculturalism, a reconsidered and re-shaped multiculturalism. The new understanding implies that multiculturalism as a concept, a strategy that derives from the multicultural reality, preserves its place in integration policies of European host societies, yet acquires a new dimension by approaching and incorporating a transculturality paradigm as developed by transculturalist thinkers and sociologists such as Wolfgang Welsch (1999) and others.

Guido Rings (2016) analyses the afore-mentioned concepts and embarks on the transculturality discussion introducing the differentiation between traditional multicultural policies and the multicultural policies yet to come. In my discussion, I refer to the former as guided by traditionalist philosophical approaches to culture. Centring on essentialism, these policies have been constructing and regulating the frames and borders of cultural diversity landscape since their first introduction in the politics of European countries. Regarding the multicultural policies yet to come I agree with the Rings' approach thus incorporating it within the conceptual framework of this paper. This approach envisages viewing new multiculturalism as the one that embraces transcultural components. The question to resolve is what will be the way (instruments and methods) of incorporating transcultural paradigm with its conceptual development in the discourse of multiculturalism and the actual re-definition and the implementation of multicultural policies.

Therefore, by differentiating between traditional multiculturalism and multiculturalism with transcultural implications, there is no need for discarding multiculturalism as such, because of its conceptual implications and its practical implementation and potential. In this view, it is noteworthy to reiterate the emphasis on the lack of multicultural practices, both in their legislation and implementation projections, as the main cause of its "failure", a "failure" as it was verbalised via political discourses on immigration and integration throughout Western Europe in 2011. The lack of multiculturalism I am referring here is also specifically a lack of both the institutionalisation of multicultural policies as well as insufficient practical measures to implement such policies.

The deficiency of the traditional multicultural policies resides in their unresponsiveness to dynamic cultural developments and hybrid socio-cultural realities as well as in their inability to analyse the increasing diversity and anticipate its implications and dynamism. By doing little justice to transcultural developments, traditional multicultural policies have scarcely contributed to the challenging of essentialist cultural conceptualisation.

Traditional multicultural policies have been directed at promoting co-existence of different cultures in European societies, usually emphasising one of functional characteristics of this coexistence, namely its "peacefulness". In his edited book *Retrieving Origins and the Claim of Multiculturalism*, theologian and philosopher Antonio López questions the notion of multiculturalism in its liberal Western understanding and its claims for difference. López notes that the Western conceptualisation of multiculturalism implies the "relatively peaceful coexistence of different cultures within a liberal society" (2014, p.ix). In other words, multiculturalism derives from the principle of peaceful coexistence and this principle defines

multiculturalism itself. Striving for the objective of achieving "peacefulness" implies the pre-conditioned fact or the possibility of an antagonistic relationship between cultures, indirectly referring to the relationship between 'native' and 'immigrant' cultures, or "from-here(s)" and "come-here(s)" cultures, to use Law's terminology (2011). In this view, the contact between different cultures is perceived as *per se* containing a possibility of leading to a conflict, and sometimes even irreconcilable, be it a conflict on a personal or societal level.

These elements of reference reiterate that the problematic of traditional multicultural policies has been in their essence, specifically reaffirming that they have been based on essentialist principles of cultural connections. In other words, the basis has been on the understanding of cultures as separated by their conceptual and practical purity, and that can coexist with each other on the principles of mutual respect for different, including opposing, values, lifestyles and identifications/self-references.

This is still the reality of contemporary multicultural policies and of an ongoing multicultural discourse in Europe. As Rings contends, what continues is the "insistence on clearly definable cultural borders and on the perception of individual cultures as autonomous, self-sufficient and coherent" which "is a highly problematic aspect" (2016, p.9). Furthermore, as argued by Jones and Krzyżanowski, the EU cultural policy practice directed at the official construction of 'European identity' and Europe's 'unity in diversity' within the framework of supranational discourses has been based on identities' fixed positions, usually in reference to national identities (2008, p.45), as well as on rigid delineation between these identities. It can be suggested, thus, that this policy practice and its discursive work have contributed to the development of traditional multiculturalism too.

1.4.2 From multicultural to intercultural paradigm: Transcultural elements.

The challenges of redefining and reconsidering multiculturalism lay in the preconditioned rejection of multiculturalism in its traditional understanding for the sake of developing a notion of and a framework for an intercultural dialogue. Multiculturalism has thus been set as point of departure for linear re-conceptualisation of culture from a multicultural to an intercultural paradigm. But it is relevant to ask how easy it is to delineate these paradigms if in their theoretical and conceptual construction they derive from one another and the process of elaborating policies depends rather on the specific selective approaches towards interpreting and reinterpreting one concept or another. Both paradigms can or cannot contain transcultural elements and it is the adherence to transcultural elements what differentiates traditional multiculturalism from new multiculturalism, traditional

interculturality from new interculturality. All concepts can be mutually complementary rather than mutually exclusive. In this view, I would like to discuss the incorporation of transcultural elements within the intercultural paradigm at the same time illustrating that such incorporation is due for multiculturalism too.

Understanding the construction of an intercultural paradigm is not possible without the reference to its differentiation or even development from multiculturalism. To exemplify this relationship, let us refer to official, but this time European supranational, discourses. The Council of Europe has been the number one supranational advocate of interculturality by expressing an acceptance of cultural diversity in Europe and urging for the necessity of the intercultural dialogue development for accommodating and working with this diversity. In the organisation's *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*, which includes recommendations and approaches to cultural diversity in Europe, multiculturalism is rejected for failing to provide the favourable grounds for co-existence; to show "how different cultures and religions could peacefully coexist in mutual tolerance and respect" (Council of Europe, 2008, p.18). In this way, multiculturalism, in its traditional understanding, is blamed for the lack of encouragement of a dialogue and its limitations for being satisfied with a parallel coexistence.

Multiculturalism, that came as a substitution for assimilationist perspectives, is now given a rejected verdict for being "seen by many as having fostered communal segregation and mutual incomprehension" (Council of Europe, 2008, p.19). Instead, an "intercultural paradigm" is introduced as the one that combines the alleged "the best" from an assimilationist concept that is the "focus on the individual" and the multiculturalism's "recognition of cultural diversity" (Ibid.). Furthermore, according to the *White Paper*, interculturality adds up "the new element, critical to integration and social cohesion, of dialogue on the basis of equal dignity and shared values" (Ibid.). In other words, a suggested intercultural paradigm extends beyond "co-existence" by adding "interaction" for a better mutual understanding.

However, basing interculturality solely on a dialogue does not resolve the rigid borders of cultural differentiation, thus still remaining within the essentialist framework. This prescription for interculturality establishes the necessity for interaction in order to provoke empathy and, again, mutual understanding rather than going even further to recognise the inter-influence and the creation of overlapping 'Third Space' cultures (reconciliation between different ways of thinking, combination of contrasting lifestyles, etc). In this view, the intercultural perspective appears as a limited conceptualisation unable to address more complex cultural inter-influences and interactions that go beyond a mere dialogue. As Gilles

Dupuis underlines while marking the differences between transculturalism and interculturality:

Transculturalism (...) does not limit itself to two cultures facing each other, trying to work out what they assume to be their intrinsic discrepancies. Transculturalism takes place when at least two—and sometimes three or more—cultures are not only engaged in dialogue, but partake in a more profound and often contradictory process, in which enlightenment, understanding, and continuous reassessment of identity are at play. The ultimate aim is to transform each other's identity through a long, arduous, and sometimes painful negotiation of Otherness (2008, p.500).

The Council of Europe has introduced some transcultural elements in the intercultural paradigm, even though the communication, the *White Paper*, has predominantly concentrated on essentialist frameworks of intercultural dialogue. According to the Council of Europe's stance towards defining and interpreting the intercultural paradigm, while approaching cultural diversity it is important to consider the possibility of multiple cultural affiliations and the complexity of cultural identities with overlapping elements. The document emphasises a "freedom to choose one's own culture", and that "everyone may adopt different cultural affiliations" (The Council of Europe, 2008, pp. 18-19), while arguing that it is a contributing role of intercultural dialogue to respond to the challenges of managing these multiple cultural affiliations. At the same time the complexity of cultural identities with overlapping elements alludes exclusively to international co-dependency and interaction due to the technological advances (Ibid.), thus implying that complex cultural overlapping elements are exclusively products of contemporary global communication developments.

In this view, what is observed is the re-negotiation of the intercultural paradigm with the intention to introduce specific transcultural elements. The re-negotiation remains incomplete by falling within essentialist borders of a delineated dialogue between one culture and another although, at the same time, it illustrates the awareness of transcultural reality and the intention to elaborate the strategies of working with cultural diversity within this reality.

The intercultural paradigm that falls within essentialist borders cannot respond and react adequately to increasing cultural complications in contemporary Europe. The question arises whether the intercultural paradigm is able to reinvent itself in the process of accommodation of cultural diversity, for example by being applied to the creation of platforms for intercultural dialogue where the redefining can take place. If the intercultural paradigm comes as a substitution for a multicultural paradigm, in a linear and rejecting way, is it also a transitory corridor full with reflections and interrogation that will lead towards a transcultural paradigm? This question is a complex enquiry, yet Rings proposes to look at transculturality as present together with "monoculturality". Since monocultural perspectives are still popular,

their presence suggests that we cannot talk about "linear and progressive developments from monocultural to transcultural societies" (Rings, 2016, p.16). Therefore, transculturality persists in parallel with 'monoculturality', but the way we perceive, interpret and implement the policies that involve multiculturalism and interculturality will either support monocultural perspectives, as in case of traditional interculturality and traditional multiculturalism, or will do justice to transcultural perspectives, as it can be the case of new interculturality and new multiculturalism.

Interculturality has thus been a concept of self-renegotiation. Different approaches defined and elaborated it in a different way. What is the difference between a traditional intercultural paradigm and an intercultural paradigm that incorporates a transcultural conceptualisation of culture? In its traditional understanding, interculturality implies an interaction and a dialogue, while transcultural interculturality, to put it in a more general way, implies an intercultural interaction, a dialogue and a transformation. The most important aspect here is that a dialogue takes into consideration and is aimed at exploring the presence of transcultural elements now and further transcultural possibilities in the future. Let us explore this re-conceptualisation from a traditional intercultural paradigm to an intercultural paradigm with transcultural implications more closely.

By alluding to interculturality in its contemporary conceptual forms, as also discussed by Guido Rings (2016), new interculturality theorists such as Heinz Antor (2006; 2010) and Werner Delanoy (2006; 2012) advocate the significance of the concept for the theorisation and practical application of transculturality. Delanoy has suggested that interculturality and transculturality are not mutually exclusive notions but rather complementary and interconnected ones. What derives from the theorist's discussion is the complementarity of the ideas from the intercultural (dialogue) and transcultural (transformation) theorisations, specifically that a combined approach to analyse a cultural encounter can be developed. Yet, in the process of the development of this approach the traditional essential aspects of intercultural paradigm are to be re-configured within the framework of transcultural thinking. In other words, the departure from viewing cultures as closed and intrinsically delimited structures to flexible open formations is to be implemented.

Whereas traditional interculturalists have focused on 'building bridges' for bridging cultural differences (Gudykunst, 2004; Schmidt, 2007) rather than 'building bridges' for finding out about cultural commonalities, new interculturalists have emphasised the importance of incorporating transcultural elements in intercultural discourse without completely discarding the theoretical elaborations of the latter. The recognition of cultural

interdependence, the role of a dialogue that helps to cross the cultural borders and the necessity to learn more about 'transcultural phenomena' (Delanoy, 2006, p. 239; Antor, 2006, p.29; Antor, 2010, p.12) are all among the foundational elements of intercultural learning and interculturality as a redefined concept. In traditional intercultural paradigm, an intercultural dialogue is emphasised as bridging the cultures in order to learn about each other through the prism of becoming aware of, understanding and accepting the differences. This implies that an intercultural dialogue will exclusively result in the identification of differences suggesting that differences are the only outcomes to be expected. The application of a transcultural paradigm to an intercultural theorisation re-invents the 'dialogue' expanding its role as a multifunctional platform of identities negotiation. More specifically, the combined approach includes both drawing upon differences (intercultural learning) and exploring the similarities (transcultural learning). The exploration of similarities will mean identifying what cultural elements are shared/have a common ground or similar as results of previous hybridisation processes, and foreseeing prospective transculturation and the possible implications of the transculturation processes which are currently in the process of development. In this view, a dialogue as theoretically elaborated within intercultural paradigm serves as the basing platform that assists in the development of the concept of transculturality.

The interrelation of transculturality with interculturality in its new understanding is thus relevant and deserves further exploration. Intercultural dialogue does not only lead to the exchange of cultural knowledge, on an interpersonal level and in general, but also poses questions about this knowledge. As Delanoy argues, transculturality can become a consequence of intercultural exchange (Delanoy, 2006, p.239), which, to extend this idea, also includes the realisation of transculturality upon an intercultural exchange. The question arises here as to what the conditions and the configurations of an intercultural contact should be so it leads to the creation of transcultural practices and/or the realisation of already present transcultural practices. Antor instead argues that transculturality is a separate concept that evolves with "blurring" the borders of individual cultures (Antor, 2006, p.30), and thus does not require interculturality as intermediary. However, the re-negotiation of interculturality as illustrated in this discussion testifies to the importance of intercultural paradigm theorisations for understanding and developing transculturality.

As in case with multiculturalism, there is no need to discard elaborations and implications of an intercultural paradigm, but rather to use it as a platform for building up additional components and reconfigure the structural elements. In the process of negotiation between the intercultural paradigm and the development of a transcultural paradigm,

transculturality embraces interculturality, releases it from essentialist "monocultural" elements and enriches it with transcultural ones.

In this view, while analysing transculturality I refer to it within the theoretical framework of transcultural research, test and develop it through the empirical platforms in which multicultural and intercultural paradigms, as interconnected concepts, are also involved and intersected.

Chapter II.

**Building a methodological model
for transcultural analysis of a film**

CHAPTER II.

BUILDING A METHODOLOGICAL MODEL FOR TRANSCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF A FILM

As previously discussed, this research approaches and analyses the creation and negotiation of transcultural meanings in such cultural productions as films. It takes the selected cinematic pieces which address immigration, mobility and cultural diversity in Europe as empirical case studies for cultural analysis. What is meant by transcultural meanings here is the dynamic constructs and implications that are being created, made visible and evident from a cinematic discussion through the negotiation and re-negotiation of (trans)cultural connections, lifestyles, ways of communication, identifications, and practices on screen. In this view, the discussion provided in this chapter starts with the examination of a film medium as a valuable platform for a transcultural analysis, and proceeds by building a methodological model for transcultural analysis of a film. The methodological model will be based on the theoretical-hypothetical framework as developed in Chapter I.

2.1 Transculturality in film: Cinematic representations (of immigrant/diasporic subjects) as important empirical platforms for transcultural research.

"(...)vast global economic and structural changes since World War II have ushered in the postmodern era characterized in part by massive displacement of peoples (...), creating a veritable "other worlds" of communities living outside of their places of birth and habitus. Transnational filmmakers not only have given expression to these other worlds but also have enriched the cinemas of their home and adopted lands" (Naficy, 2003, pp.203-204).

For cinema, there is "the need to critically interrogate, revise, and amend popular short-term memory of mass immigration to Europe as reflected and enhanced in contemporary mass media" (Rings, 2016, p.12).

Cinema has always been a tool of cultural and political expression. As Shiel argues, this medium has the potential to intervene in the transformative process that the represented object/subject undergoes (2001, p.4). The author continues praising the potential of the medium, as he advocates that cinema actively intervenes in society, contributing to maintain, alter, or subvert the existing power structures (Ibid.). On the one hand, "cinema, in its timeless exercise of reflection, analyses life and functions as a chronicle of its time" (Tello Díaz, 2016,

p.10). And on the other, it can become an instrument of re-representing, re-locating and re-negotiating different cultural meanings.

Furthermore, cinema can be considered a valuable tool for transcultural analysis due to its ability to speak from multi-perspective angles and its potential to disrupt popular constructs, whereas these constructs are stereotypes, generalisations or even entrenched notions, labels and the schemes of power relations. Since self-perception is always mediated (Hall, 1990), the process of rethinking images is a result of a mediated work on the construction and re-construction of images.

In this regard, Ballesteros proposes that "cinema plays an important role in showing the boundaries between the insiders and outsiders of a society" (2015, p.12). In other words, the cinema may be essential in identifying the existing schemes of power relations thus striving to challenge them. This approach resonates with a strategic attitude that transcultural research needs to take towards monocultural perspectives, as suggested and discussed in the previous chapter.

Ballesteros refers particularly to "immigration cinema", and she defines it as the cinema "that documents or fictionalizes the social phenomenon of immigration" (2015, p.13). The author praises the ability of such cinema to provide alternatives to the partial/generalised media coverage. She further suggests to distinguish the common patterns of representation of such cinematic works across different European countries, namely in terms of cinematographic formats, genres and ethical commitments of the filmmakers (Ibid.). What derives from Ballesteros' discussion on the construction of the "immigration cinema" category is the idea that the cinematic representations on immigrants and immigration function within and reflect upon the space of residence and belonging that exists beyond the traditional/conventional idea of the nation as well as beyond the concept of the "national cinema". Yet, my intention here is not to categorise certain cinematic representations on immigrant/immigrant descent subjects, but to use existing categories for testing their potential for transcultural meanings as well as to explore how they re-position/re-situate the immigrant/immigrant descent subjects. For instance, if a certain selected film is a French production, it is set within French national borders and includes French nationals of (non-European) immigrant descent, it is interesting to examine the politics of the film's 'location' within the category of 'national cinema' as well as its ability to construct transcultural meanings.

Since transculturality is an emerging notion, it still needs to be tested within multiple socio-cultural frameworks, both in contemporary and historical contexts. It also requires

further extensive and interdisciplinary research to explore its broader meaning. Films, and especially diasporic cinematic representations, are interesting and important testing platforms in this regard since they function as points where reality is mediated through art and is thus negotiated within art. While being attached to the socio-political, cultural and historical contexts in which they are created, these representations also dispose of a powerful border-crossing potential. They create the cultural meanings that can be recognised and related to beyond one politically and/or culturally demarcated environment. Films that approach and discuss the questions of immigration, mobility and borders are not exclusively enrooted locally. The experiences of immigration have a universal dimension and the visual language of a film offers global codes to communicate these experiences. (Silent films can do well in this communication, too: even in case of no sound films - visual language, characters, composition and light play a significant role in communicating the images and the constructs). Furthermore, film discourses as types of representation are not only telling the stories and rendering the ideas of the directors, but by reaching the audiences they can also construct new meanings and new realities and influence the process of people's self-identification.

At the same time, the methodological framework of this research aims at forming part of alternative methodological approaches to the study of contemporary cinema. This means not only revealing and interpreting the film images beyond the national borders, beyond the concepts of national cinemas, beyond the traditional forms of production and distribution by approaching the film within the local and global, intercultural contexts. This also means referring to these intercultural contexts as spaces of cultural interaction and cultural transformation that are located within and across both formal and symbolic borders, such as the frontiers within contemporary European societies.

Furthermore, and most importantly, addressing the negotiation of transculturality in contemporary European films has socio-cultural value. Such investigation provides insights into how the re-configuration of the self and the other is exercised on an artistic level. More specifically, what strategies are being used to challenge the recurring essentialist constructs of 'pure native culture' vs. 'pure immigrant cultures', as well as discursive segregation and stereotyping of 'cultural others' in media, political and public discourse on (ethnic) minorities in migratory societies in Europe.

To conclude this subchapter and to reassert the point that cinema is indeed a valuable platform for both transcultural research and transcultural communication, I would like to refer to Stuart Hall, a recognised British-Jamaican cultural theorist, political activist and sociologist who contributed to expanding the scope of cultural studies to the analysis of race and gender.

Hall reminds in relation to diasporic and immigrant filmic representations, that cinema has been a crucial site for diasporic identity construction. In this view, cinema is a platform for transcultural communication. Since cultural identity is created in the act of representation (Hall, 1990, p. 222), the negotiation of this identity is continuous as it is being constructed and reconstructed through ongoing filmmaking and spectatorship. Cinematic representations on immigration and diaspora are thus the platforms for a continuous reconstruction of the cultural identity of immigrant and diasporic subjects. Yet, they do not solely address and challenge the cultural identities of immigrants and diasporic subjects as if those persisted in a cultural vacuum. What contemporary migrant and diasporic communities as well as their cinematic representations do is to defy traditional ideas of national identity and of 'imagined communities'³¹ (Hall, 1997), those bonded by a cultural national heritage. As Hall suggests, they put in question the "notions of national belonging and identity constructing instead alternative socialities, based around transnational networks and connections"; "(....) diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference" (1990, p. 235). This theorisation reaffirms the potential of transcultural discourses and transcultural research to re-invent the essentialist binaries. Since cinema is chosen to be used as a platform for such re-invention, the research is well-equipped from the very beginning. This is because the research's empirical platforms - the films, the visualisation of the transcultural - have the ability to reflect and replicate the transcultural complexity.

³¹ 'Imagined communities' as defined by Benedict Anderson (2006 [1991]).

2.2 How to analyse transculturality in films: Methodological dimensions to approach and analyse transcultural meanings.

2.2.1 Framing the methodological design for transcultural analysis of a film.

It is important to emphasise that the methodological framework of this research uses the thematically-specific cinematic discourses. It is applied to a selection of films on immigration, diasporas, mobility, borders and cultural diversity in Europe. They are films that narrate the immigration and mobility from culturally and geographically defined non-European countries and/or the lives of immigrant/diasporic subjects in their host/(new) home societies of European countries. Apart from serving as empirical platforms, the cinematic case studies also function as critical interrogators and mediators of reality. Functioning as visual 'mediators', these films interfere in the discursive construction of 'European' vs. 'non-European' cultural borders and their analysis thus aims to provide an intervening effect on the re-imagining of European 'cultural others'. As Gronemann concludes, the contemporary politics of 'the other' resonate with what has been emphasised within *Postcolonial Studies* since Franz Fanon and Edward Said (2015, p.215). The discursive production of 'the other' (by hegemonic discourses) has had an immense influence on the construction of identity of this differentiated 'other', both on individual and collective levels (Ibid.). In the same way, a transcultural intervention into the essentialist discursive production will influence the construction of this identity too, but this time by contributing to the process of its deconstruction. To put it differently, a transcultural intervention will re-draw, in Bhabha's words, "an image of narration" (1990). In this view, in the course of the analysis there is a need to consider the discursive value and re-constructive potential of the filmic empirical platforms. While cinema can be an ideological tool, it is also "a tool of intervention in the transformative process that the represented subject undergoes" (Shiel, 2001, p.4), and is thus a mediation of such process.

So how can transculturality be analysed in and through film? More specifically, how can we draw upon transcultural meanings as produced within a cinematic discussion? The notion of transculturality is a guiding tool and an instrument of analysis that will explain the negotiation of non-essentialist meanings and cultural complexities in a filmic work. The methodological model is thus to be designed on the basis of theoretical-hypothetical framework of transculturality developed in Chapter One (pp. 57-75), specifically guided by the understanding of transculturality that derives from this framework.

In this view, in order to frame the methodological model for transcultural analysis of films, the main elements of the concept of transculturality will be summarised further. As it has been proposed to discuss and analyse transculturality as a combined model of different theoretical schools, it includes Welschian theorisation (1999), Flüchter and Schöttli's extended understanding of transculturality (2014), the discussion of transcultural implications in contemporary European societies by Guido Rings (2016), and the incorporation and extended interpretation of Bhabha's (1994) transcultural elements of Cultural hybridity and a 'Third Space'. At the same time the framework construction incorporates the references to the ideas of new interculturalists (Delanoy, 2012), and theoretics of the complexity of identity/belonging construction (Jones & Krzyżanowski, 2008). As a result of this combined theoretical discussion and with the aim to extend the conceptual design of transculturality, the hypothetical-theoretical framework was developed in chapter one to serve as a reference structure in elaborating the methodology. According to the proposed extended theoretical framework, the concept of transculturality can be summarised in the following four points (this summary will assist in preparing the methodological model for transcultural analysis of a film):

1. *Transculturality is manifested through a hybrid cultural invention.*

Transculturality is a result of a cultural contact, a transcultural encounter, followed by interaction, inter-influence and combination of different cultural elements which is manifested through a **hybrid cultural invention**. In Bhabha's theorisation, cultural hybridity goes beyond the "originary identity" and the "'received' tradition" and is expressed through a new cultural form which interweaves the elements of the two (1994, p.2).

2. *Transculturality acknowledges cultures as heterogeneous and overlapping.*

Transculturality acknowledges the **pre-constituted inner differentiation, external entanglement and networking of cultures**, specifically that the cultures are heterogeneous, interconnected and **overlapping**, as they compose 'inner-content' and function as 'satellites' for each other (Welsch, 1999). Intercultural dialogue, which is guided by transcultural perspectives and takes into consideration transcultural possibilities (Delanoy, 2012), can assist in identifying this overlapping by looking for and exploring shared cultural frameworks, cultural similarities and commonalities (dynamic positions and points from which different cultures speak and which are common or intersecting for negotiating cultures). Considering this entanglement, cultural hybridity does not imply there was no hybridity before. As Bhabha notes, the aspects of a culture which are put together with another "are not prior in the sense of being original: they are prior only in the sense of being anterior" (Rutherford, 1990, p.211).

3. Transcultural hybridisation is a continuous process that develops within 'Third Spaces'.

Transculturality recognises **cultures as open formations** that are in constant process of re-invention, ready for modification, reformation and re-configuration of its current and new elements. Therefore, transculturality is not only a result-oriented (creation of cultural hybridity) but also a **process-oriented dynamic phenomenon** (Rings, 2016, p.11), which is expressed through the negotiation and re-negotiation of identities as they undergo transformation. Transculturality's continuous dynamics are thus expressed through new hybridities, new entanglements and updated/new identities, which are built on previously developed hybridities and (hybrid) identities.

Transculturality develops within '**Third Spaces**', which in Bhabha's theorisation stand for a virtual cultural field where hybridisation enables new cultural positions to emerge (Rutherford, 1990, p.211). 'Third Space' evolves in two modalities: (1) 'Third Space' as a facilitator of a transcultural encounter and (2) 'Third Space' as an evoking hybridity platform that develops upon a transcultural encounter. In the first case, it is an extended definition of Bhabha's 'Third Space' which implies a pre-hybridity projection (first modality). More specifically, 'Third Spaces' also function as sites that create favourable conditions for a transcultural encounter to occur. Within this modality, 'Third Spaces' are the 'spaces' for cultural identity negotiations that precede the transformation of identity but can incite transforming subjectivities. In the second case, 'Third Space' (second modality) creates conditions for the contradictory dynamics of cultural belonging construction (Jones & Krzyżanowski, 2008)/ambiguity negotiation (Bhabha, 1994). It means that this negotiation involves instability in the form of estrangement and the crisis of identity. Here, multiple identities (discursively constructed as different or opposing) are reconciled, combined and exercised together which signifies that **symbolic cultural borders** are contested and surpassed. 'Third Space' thus converts rigid cultural borders in porous sites of cultural interaction and provides the platform for the resolution of identity crisis. In this view, transculturality points to the links between cultures as flexible and that the negotiation of cultural identities takes place across multiple different cultural spaces.

4. Transcultural configurations are multiple and depend on the context, individual agency and the interplay of cultural elements involved.

Transculturality expresses itself in **multiple different configurations** which are provoked/conditioned/influenced by the specific context in which transculturality develops (Flüchter & Schöttli, 2014). In this view, the configurations for the cultural identities

construction are also multiple. Furthermore, a combination and juxtaposition of the following aspects/variables influence transculturality and its resultant multiple configurations: contextual factors of influence (socio-cultural, socio-political, discursive, physical contexts), phenomenological agency (personal experiences and choices), and the relationship/interplay between diverse cultural elements involved in transcultural negotiation. In other words, transculturality is a complex notion which encompasses and interrelates with the contextual factors of the socio-cultural environment where it takes place, while transcultural connections and practices can develop in multiple dimensions across the categories of subjectivity, gender, generation, class, etc.

Therefore, transculturality acknowledges cultures as heterogeneous and overlapping and can be defined as both a result of a cultural contact, manifested through a hybrid creation, and a process-oriented dynamic phenomenon, which is incited by and developed in 'Third Spaces'. The latter are transcultural abstract territories that create conditions for a transcultural encounter to occur (first modality) and in which new cultural positions (and further new hybridities) emerge and rigid cultural borders are surpassed (second modality). Transcultural configurations are multiple and depend on the context in which transculturality develops, the individual agency, and the interplay of cultural elements involved in this negotiation.

2.2.2 The methodological lines of discursive analysis to guide transcultural discussion.

Taking this summary into consideration, the present methodological model is composed of five lines of analysis. These five lines function as supporting methodological dimensions for transcultural exploration; they contain different but interconnected elements of transculturality and are categorised in separate sections for the purpose of structured examination. They refer to the conceptual, contextual and formal fabrics of a transcultural empirical analysis of a film. The questions elaborated within these methodological lines focus on the exploration of transculturality and the process of transculturation, which means that they will thus create the basis of interrogation and transcultural discussion of a film. These methodological dimensions are structured as follows:

1. **Positioning of transculturality:** context (discursive, socio-cultural and socio-political contexts), individual agency, cultural elements interplay.
2. **Transcultural spatiality:** Framing spaces (physical localities/filming location and 'spaces of reference'), 'Third Space', activating the flexibility of borders.

3. **Indicators of transformation:** Transforming identities and subjectivities, crisis of identity, multiple belonging, cultural hybridity.
4. **Film reading methodology:** formal, visual and discursive aspects of the film to assist transcultural analysis.
5. **Critical stance of the filmmakers and transcultural resolution of the film.**

The deriving point for the exploration of transcultural meanings via the proposed model is an emphasis on a transcultural encounter and a transcultural possibility, which alludes to the configuration of a transcultural development after a transcultural encounter. The first two lines of analysis, Positioning of transculturality and Transcultural spatiality serve, respectively, as preparatory and negotiatory grounds for transculturality. More specifically, the elements structured within these lines of analysis formulate the questions to the conceptual and actual framework, the field of action, within which transculturality takes place and develops. The reference is both to a bigger contextual background such as socio-political and socio-cultural context and to specific (physical and symbolic) spaces in which transcultural encounter occurs and within which the negotiation of transcultural identities initiates. Contextual elements can either facilitate or impede transculturality in its development as well as influence its multiple configurations (with the combination of different contextual elements the configuration of transculturality will be different). In this view, Positioning of transculturality and Transcultural spatiality compose the background and the contextual aspects that participate in and influence the transcultural possibility (what happens after a transcultural encounter or a transcultural contact) and the further transcultural development, namely the negotiation of transcultural identities and practicing transcultural lifestyles (contradictory dynamics in the identities negotiation, recognition, resistance).

The third methodological dimension of Indicators of transformation guides transcultural analysis to the exemplification of resultant configurations of transculturality. It prepares the inquiry of cultural meanings that express the ongoing transformation of identities or transforming subjectivities as well as the cultural hybridity solutions for the resolution of the identity crisis. The ultimate question formulated within this methodological dimension is how does a specific expression of cultural hybridity or the process of cultural hybridisation deconstruct the 'otherness' (of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe)? The fourth methodological dimension of Film reading methodology prepares the inquiring framework for the examination of formal, visual and discursive elements of the film that produce transcultural meanings (editing, cinematography, mise-en-scène, digetic and non-digetic sound). This methodology will be incorporated within other four lines of this methodological

framework as reference grounds of the film language. The last methodological dimension Critical stance of the filmmakers and transcultural resolution of the film will be based on the cinematic discussion that derives from all previously elaborated methodological dimensions. There are two major questions to be addressed within this methodological dimension. The first one approaches a critical stance (open or indirect criticism) of the filmmakers towards essential or monocultural perceptions of culture as well as discursive, social and spatial stigmatisation of European immigrant/immigrant descent subjects. And the second addresses transcultural resolution of the film towards de-constructing the 'otherness'.

As it will be more specifically illustrated below, each of the lines embraces a range of questions to be asked to the films or the questions that serve as starting and referential points for addressing specific cultural elements in a film. All the questions will be addressed to the selected cinematic case studies and specific questions in a more elaborated way to selected scenes where they are applicable. Certain questions, as will be shown, are interconnected and overlapping.

2.2.2.1 Methodological dimension 1. Positioning of transculturality.

The objective of this methodological dimension of analysis is to examine how the identified transcultural meanings (communicated through and composed from the elements or wholes of the images, perceptions-identities, practices, lifestyles, ways of communication, etc.) are being contextualised in political and socio-cultural environments, within their discursive frameworks, and what the role of the contexts is. In other words, what is the interplay between transculturality and its contextual environment?

The understanding of the context is important. As discussed in the previous chapter, transculturality requires inclusive environments while at the same time it is important to analyse how particular contexts participate in transcultural meanings-creation and how the dynamics of transculturality can differ from one context to another. The context shapes an artwork (a film, a literature piece, etc.) and thus the context is mirrored, constructed in and reconstructed through the artwork. Even if it is a personal reflection of the author, a filmic text (the narrative and its discussion) is a text in context. Just as literature, it is not only a product of its creator - a writer, a director -, but of the culture and the society in which the filmic piece has been created. The significant value of the contemporary context is that it naturally takes into consideration the interrelationships of contemporary societies and cultures, whether these interrelationships can be antagonistic, dividing, tense or enriching, complementing, unifying.

As transculturality can exemplify itself in different forms, there are different degrees, variations and configurations of transculturality. At the same time, different forms and configurations can overlap and interact in some socio-cultural circumstances and develop through a more independent trajectory in others. In this way, I refer to the socio-cultural context (environment) as one of the most important factors that influences the dynamics of transcultural connections and thus, the configurations of the creation of transcultural practices. What are these configurations? For instance, it can be suggested that more inclusive environments have higher levels of inclusion and are more open to cultural differences, including embracing and accommodating these differences. In other words, transculturality is likely to be a phenomenon of a transcultural-friendly context, a "frontier of inclusion", to use Weber and Rausch's term (1994), an environment which enables the circulation and dynamics of transcultural practices. If we can deduce it or analyse from the films, what are the contextual environments' configurations for their stories? What are the possibilities for transcultural connections? For instance, are there conditions for the engagement created on a multicultural policy level? What are the roles and methods of local authorities and emerging communities themselves in establishing platforms for such engagements? What cinematic discursive elements can help us to understand how open the native local community is to the perceived 'other' and to different forms of cultural engagement?

Let us structure these methodological questions within their referential lines of transculturality positioning. The context that is referenced here for a critical analysis encompasses multiple interconnected variables that compose a contextual basis for Positioning of transculturality. Deriving from the theoretical-hypothetical framework of transculturality, elaborated in Chapter One, these variables include:

- a contextual factors variable (discursive influence and socio-cultural environment influence, which include the dynamics of the socio-political climate).
- an individual agency (connected to personal experience, choices, and perceptions, e.g. readiness for intercultural communication).
- the interplay of cultural elements involved (pre-constructed deriving cultural points/pre-existent perceptions of certain cultures).

These variables each one separately and as a whole combination influence transcultural possibilities upon transcultural encounters/transcultural contact. They can provide conditions to either facilitate or impede cultural exchange and different dynamics of cultural permeations. In this view, this first methodological dimension is directed at elaborating the

inquiry into each of these variables of the context. The context is the macro positioning framework, a wider political space with its socio-cultural specificity, within which a specific transcultural encounter takes place. The reference to it will thus prepare the ground for analysing the properties of the specific framing spaces (will be discussed within the following methodological dimension) in which transculturality comes into being.

A **contextual factors variable** can be projected through discursive influence or socio-cultural environment influence, while at the same time it includes the dynamics of the socio-political climate. The combination of these elements creates conditions, challenges or impediments for transcultural connections to occur and develop. Furthermore, the political element within a specific context is an important factor that has a power to change the attitudes and thus to influence the degree of the inclusiveness of the society in general, including on a mass scale. Having said this, the indicative questions can be formulated as following.

What is the political and socio-cultural background (of a certain society projected in a film) in which transculturality occurs/will occur? More specifically, if we can deduce this from the films, what is the role within a specific national context, for instance, of the governmental policies in regards to immigration and inclusion? This can be projected through the scenes that communicate bureaucratic complications for getting work permits/citizenship or from the story in general. What is the role of these projected institutional elements in the immigrant protagonists' lives, their social relationships and transcultural possibilities?

It is also important to consider the impact of political and media discourses on immigrants and immigration such as, for instance, the polemics of the right-wing parties (open political discussions and discourses, official communications in media and in state-owned media outlets). This point is relevant because depending on how immigrant/immigrant descent subjects are portrayed in media and political discourses, the public opinion towards immigration will be influenced and formed accordingly. Discursive practices that stereotype or homogenise the immigrant 'other', impact the positioning of an immigrant/immigrant descent subject in a certain society, and thus indirectly influence the possibilities for a transcultural exchange. Some of the films can incorporate the direct reference to this kind of discourses. For instance, *El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002) refers to the stigmatising media discourses with the objective to discuss their negative influence on immigrant subjects positioning in their host society. But the socio-political contextual framework of the films can also be projected in the opinions and rhetorics of individual protagonists. The further questions to pose are how does the film story interact with its socio-

political and discursive background and how does it use it to communicate transcultural meanings?

In the cases of diasporic filmmaking, it is also worth considering that the cinematic self-representations of diasporic filmmakers (in their second, third and fourth generation) can be discursively influenced by the anterior cinematic self-representations of their diasporic community. This influence can be transculturality-oriented from some films and composing the essentialist scheme of cultural ordering from others. The example of the latter is when anterior cinematic self-representations of immigrant/diasporic filmmakers portray themselves in stereotypical and victimising terms. This portrayal can further fall into the cultural binary constructs of the superior 'natives' vs. the marginal 'immigrants/others', thus reinforcing media and political discourses which stigmatise immigrant subjects. In this view, the questions to be posed to the analysed films made by diasporic filmmakers are the following: How are the films impacted by the anterior self-representations and the previously (discursively and visually) constructed images of the immigrant subjects/the diaspora? What is the possible influence of anterior narratives on their film stories? How different the films are from previous cinematic representations in negotiating the cultural identities of their diasporic protagonists and what are the points of this differentiation? How can these films be positioned within the discursive cinematic world of their diasporic community as well as within the national and transnational cinema?

Another important element of contextual factors variable is the context of urban spaces in reference to the urban and housing policies. If the main film setting is located, for instance, in suburban areas of big European cities (e.g. Parisian *banlieues*), and these areas are mainly populated by immigrants and immigrant descendents. The questions to ask here is what is the role of the institutional policy and accommodation patterns of these areas, their setup and characteristics in the development of transcultural engagements (e.g. centre-periphery urban planning, inclusive and maintained infrastructure)?

Furthermore, in some films it will be possible to discuss the socio-cultural transformation or changing socio-cultural dynamics as the ongoing process incited by different internal and external factors. The question to ask is what is the socio-cultural transformation context for the film plot/film narrative? Here, an increasing international migration (both immigration and emigration) can be one of the inciting factors in re-configuring the socio-cultural, socio-political and physical contexts of the society. What is the role of this ongoing transformation for changing urban fabrics, diversification of cultural and social life and most importantly for transcultural developments? What is the role of the

internationalisation of the immigrant/diasporic subjects which as a characteristic phenomenon of contemporary societies serves as a platform for transcultural connections. Internationalisation is a significant transcultural positioning element to approach in the film analysis as it reflects changing and changed configurations and even more complexity of transcultural connections in comparison to previous dynamics of cultural diversity in Europe. It reflects the change in dynamics in the ways of interaction between people with diverse cultural backgrounds, including linguistic backgrounds. In this view, it is suggested that the internationalisation of the immigrant/diasporic subjects serves as a platform for transcultural connections and is a transcultural practice in itself.

Finally, what are other contextual developments that interplay with and contribute to framing the changing contextual picture within which a transcultural encounter takes place (e.g. economic developments and workforce shortages within certain industries, urban restructuring and gentrification, the role of globalisation, development of communication technologies and capitalist society in configuring the ways of how people interact) and what is their role in transcultural developments?

An individual agency addresses personal experiences of the immigrant/immigrant descent subject, both previous and ongoing, or, to put it in other words, personal trajectories, and includes the role of individual choices and their relation to the context and circumstances. Furthermore, this dimension is closely interrelated with the contextual factors (discursive, socio-cultural and socio-political environment). Whereas the context participates in framing of transcultural perspectives, it is communicated on an individual level how and whether these perspectives are projected. For instance, taking into consideration a racist and xenophobic demagogue by Marine Le Pen party in France, Lega Nord in Italy, and the UK Independence party Ukip, can we see the impact of this rhetoric as projected on an individual level? This means that in cinematic transcultural analysis the contextual framework can also be addressed as present in film in its projection via individual protagonist characters. In this regard, the questions to be asked are the following.

How open people are to an intercultural communication (and transcultural possibilities) in the societies where we can find major support for right-wing parties? If we refer to the openness of 'natives' to the interaction with immigrant/immigrant descendant subjects, can we spot the impact of discursive practices and politics of 'othering' to be projected on an individual level? In other words, how does transcultural communication happen on an interpersonal level? Do people reproduce the negative connotations that media and political discourses attribute to certain ethnic groups or to immigrants/immigrant descendants in

general (i.e. crime, terrorism and women's oppression)? How do the protagonists respond to the projection of cultural essentialism? Are there instances that counter discursive stereotypes and cultural categorisation? Can we find the examples of transcultural relationships within which each subject is conceived, to use Robins words, as an 'unprogrammed actor' (2014)? In other words, can we spot the relationships which are based on transcultural perspectives, namely guided by openness to adherence of an intercultural knowledge, transcultural exchange and void of pre-set beliefs of perceiving the interlocutor as 'the other'? If so, how do these transcultural relationships develop further?

In the same way, what is the role of individual agency in recognition of cultural hybridity (as the possibility to have multiple cultural identities, e.g. expressed through dual affiliation with the host society and the home/originary society)? What is the 'legitimate' position of such hybridity in the host society in which national 'culture' is constructed as the only legitimate culture? How do the individual perceptions and attitudes (specifically of the 'native' population) towards cultural hybridity influence the cultural hybrid's perception of themselves? How comfortable do people feel with themselves as cultural hybrids in their host/new home societies? The ultimate question to ask here is what the role of an individual agency and individual present and past experiences is in facilitating the transcultural encounter and the further development of transcultural exchange.

In reference to communication technologies as a contextual element for transcultural developments, its role can be examined in the film too. As they facilitate trans-border communication and create conditions for the creation of hybrid-type lifestyles and cross-border (trans-national) affiliations, how is the use of communication technologies related to protagonists' transcultural identities?

The interplay of cultural elements variable stands for a result of a discursive contextual influence and is defined by the pre-constructed deriving cultural points/pre-existent perceptions of certain cultures. In other words, the pre-constructed deriving points are created and reinforced discursively, usually on a political level: who matches these points or is more approximate to them and who doesn't and isn't, or, as Schriewer and Cayuela put it, what belongs to the "national identity" and what is marked and identified with 'the other' (2016, pp.9-10). In this view, the interplay of cultural elements that are involved in the transcultural communication implies the framing background within which the cultural borders are pre-constructed. Specifically, it refers to the constructs of delimited 'national cultures', the symbolic borders of 'the us' vs. 'the others' which exist even before a specific transcultural encounter occurs. The interplay between cultural elements thus depends on this pre-

constructed separation and the construction of the symbolic border in the process of national identities construction. For instance, within the construct European Christian societies vs. non-European Muslim societies the interrelationship between French Catholics and Moroccan Muslims is pre-constructed as intrinsically opposing/conflicting. As the essential cultural paradigm has contributed to 'freezing' these cultural borders based on assumingly authentic and unchangeable pure national identities, this provides the stigmatisation for the minority/immigrant 'others' at the same time interfering in and even preventing the transcultural connection (and relationship), exchange and development/recognition of transcultural hybridity.

Because transcultural analysis requires starting points from which the exploration-explanation can take place, these points will be cultural characteristics that identify belonging of an individual to a particular cultural formation, be it a subculture group, a local community, or nationally positioned society. Therefore, transcultural analysis will derive from the pre-constructed cultural positions. Yet, at the same time it will search for the evidence of dismantling these positions as static by examining, for instance, where the cultural meanings are negotiated beyond the nation-centric logic of cultural categorisation. The main objective will be to discuss the role of the pre-constructed deriving cultural points/pre-existent perceptions of certain cultures in transcultural communication and the development of transculturality.

If it is possible to see it in films, what are the projections, on an individual or group level, of the pre-constructed cultural positions (generalised imaging of certain cultures, cultural prejudices and stereotypes)? On a group level, for example, the projection of a stigmatised perception of immigrant subjects can be seen in open racist attitudes towards the immigrants and the actual manifestations of these attitudes through certain campaigns and protests.

In some cases, the analysis of these cultural positioning elements will not be conducted due to the absence of cultural pre-conditioning. For instance, when the ethnic origin of a protagonist is not revealed (in some cases it can be an intentional choice of a filmmaker). Yet, it is a frequent practice in the films that address immigration to fall into the pre-conditioned cultural structures or to use these structures as a framework for cultural deconstruction. In this view, a cultural encounter as addressed in a film is to be understood as an encounter between two or more set of values (practices, lifestyles) that are hegemonically constructed and/or generally believed as pertinent to one culture or another. The task is thus to see further how these cultural points are subverted within transcultural negotiation in the film. A pre-

constructed cultural border is to be visualised and negotiated upon transcultural encounter. It can be further deconstructed (shown as flexible and possible to surpass) in the 'Third Space', a space that facilitates process of (contradictory) identities negotiation ('Third Space' will be analysed within the next methodological dimension of Transcultural spatiality).

Finally, all the three positioning points emphasised here also form basis and influential fabric composition for the activation and configurations of 'Third Spaces' and for the dynamics and configurations of cultural hybridity. This means that the dynamics of transcultural practices as well as different cultural configurations of these practices will be influenced by these contextual factors.

2.2.2.2. Methodological dimension 2. Transcultural spatiality.

This methodological dimension of Transcultural spatiality refers to the examination of a specific physical and/or symbolic space within or across which transculturality occurs or has the potential to occur, and where transcultural identities are negotiated and re-negotiated. The questions elaborated here are based on the premise that transcultural developments evolve and function in different configurations in different (physical and symbolic) spaces. This methodological dimension of analysis includes the following referential points:

- Framing spaces (physical spaces such as filming locations where the action in the film takes places or symbolic spaces to which there are references, e.g. memberships in certain social groups)
- 'Third Space'
- activating the flexibility of borders (pre-constructed rigid cultural borders become flexible, anterior cultural borders are shifted).

Let us discuss each of these points in more detail and at the same time formulate questions to the films based on these elements of Transcultural spatiality. All these elements derive from the theoretical-hypothetical model of transculturality elaborated in the Chapter One. The element of framing spaces stands as a common denomination of all the specific spaces of reference, locations and settings where a transcultural encounter takes place. The main objective of referring to it is to explain how specific physical and symbolic platforms become 'Third Spaces' and further how the flexibility of pre-constructed cultural borders is activated within these 'Third Spaces'.

Framing spaces are multiple physical and social spaces that are located within their socio-political, socio-cultural and discursive context, within a bigger context of a specific

society or across societies (e.g. when facilitated by communication technologies). Framing spaces can be both the physical loci that frame the actual transcultural encounter and the symbolic social spaces across which transcultural negotiation takes place upon a transcultural encounter. They can thus be grouped in two bigger categories: (1) Physical localities with transcultural potential (specific filming locations where the action in the film takes place, e.g. physical urban context - open-minded/narrow-minded spaces for intercultural communication), and (2) 'Spaces of reference' for identities' enunciation and negotiation (multiple different social frameworks, memberships, affiliations across which the subjects negotiate their identities, e.g. family, membership in a diasporic community, membership in an intercultural dance club, a group of friends representing a certain urban subculture or united by shared interest, etc.).

In both cases these framing spaces are concrete areas of social interaction that can function as a mirror of a city's socio-cultural context. In some cases, they will also reflect/explain/allude to the historical background behind.

Taking the transcultural potential of framing spaces into consideration, the methodological questions to films can be posed as the following.

With reference to **physical localities**, what are these spaces, as communicated through films, in which transcultural encounter takes place and transcultural communication proceed? What are the characteristic of these framing spaces that have potentially favourable conditions for transculturality to develop? If it is a public space within a physical urban context, what are specific features of this 'space' so it functions as a platform for a transcultural encounter and transcultural communication?

In regard to '**spaces of reference**', the questions can be posed to affiliations/memberships in a specific community in the host society and the relationship between memberships in different communities. For instance, the participation of an immigrant subject in the diasporic community of his/her home/origin country and in an international community. If there is such a thing as an international community in a host society, how is the immigrant/diasporic subject incorporated in and related to this community? (Whereas the methodological line of Positioning of transculturality refers to the contextual factors that incite the creation of an international community and its functioning within and across national borders, Transcultural spatiality focuses on specific social frameworks within which this community expresses itself, e.g. organisation of leisure groups of interest, human rights activist groups, etc.). What are the conditions and configurations of self-reference and self-engagement within the international community in the host society and

the diasporic community of the home society? How do the differences between engaging in these communities, if the case, come into life on screen? The common language and sometimes ideologies may play an important role in formulating those engagements and relationships. Languages of the host societies (both on national and regional levels) can thus function not only as integrationist paths. They can also be the only common tools of intercultural communication that facilitate intercultural exchange, whether this exchange is between 'natives' and multiple immigrant diasporic communities or within and between the communities. In order to approach this element for analysis, it is also important to figure out what the nature and the basis of questions are that we want to ask in regards to the situation and (self) positioning of immigrant/diasporic subjects? Are the questions about to where and to what extent one belongs in terms of choosing between the home or the host society? Or, is it about to where exactly one belongs within the host society and how is this belonging articulated? This examination will be adjusted to the film images that communicate certain social affiliations of the protagonists.

Furthermore, as it was discussed within the previous methodological dimension of Positioning of transculturality, contextual factors and individual agency are the elements that form the ground for the process of transculturality. In this view, it is also significant to examine the role of the phenomenological complexity in the production of transcultural meanings within framing spaces. For instance, there could be multiple circles of enunciation for cultural identity such as the spheres and spaces (e.g. family, school/work, friends, clubs of interest, environment of the neighbourhood, etc.) in which different elements of the cultural identity are negotiated simultaneously. The task will be to identify, wherever the case, those spheres and their influential factors on the construction and negotiation of the immigrant/immigrant descent subjects' cultural identities, as well as the links or the abruptions of the links between those spheres and their compiled role in forming part of personal experiences and constructing identification trajectories.

Finally, what is the relationship between different framing spaces, both physical and symbolic? For example, between those that are more open and those that are more closed for transcultural encounters and transcultural communication. How are these relationships articulated as the transcultural negotiation on an individual level initiates? As the negotiation of transcultural identities takes place across different spaces and encounters contradictions between one space and another, this negotiation enters the 'Third Space', as it is discussed further.

Creation of a 'Third Space'. As it has been discussed within the theoretical-hypothetical framework of transculturality, a 'Third Space' stands for the constructed conceptual space which facilitates the transcultural encounter to occur (first modality) and in which the process of transculturality develops and transcultural identities are re-negotiated (second modality). In its second modality, it is Bhabha's symbolic 'Third Space' that suits and functions as a comfortable environment for transcultural existence. This 'Space' disposes of conditions in which dynamic multiple, including contradictory, cultural positions negotiate and reconcile. In this view, 'Third Spaces' are to be identified and discussed in the selected filmic discourses with the objective of illustrating how transculturality comes into being.

The first question to ask in this regard is how does the converting of framing spaces in 'Third Spaces' transpire? Taking into consideration the role of the factors defined in Positioning of Transculturality, how do we see certain physical spaces becoming 'Third Spaces' of first modality? How do they function as facilitators of a transcultural encounter and of a potential transcultural connection development? Furthermore, what are the further invoking factors, as discussed/illustrated in a film, that trigger the creation of 'Third Spaces' of the second modality?

The specific questions to be discussed here are the crisis of identity and double (not)-belonging as characteristic features of a 'Third Space', the possibilities of reconfiguring the spaces from less-inclusive to more-inclusive, and the resolution of the 'crisis of identity' within 'Third Spaces'.

As regards the crisis of identity and double (not)-belonging, these are characteristics of transcultural identities negotiation in a 'Third Space'. While the 'Third Space' of second modality facilitates the process of hybridisation (new cultural positions emerge here), it is also both a positive and ambivalent area of identities negotiation. On the one hand, it is characterised by the revealing of already existing overlaps - inner contents and satellites (pre-existent hybridity), and it provokes and encourages further hybridisation and its multiple configurations. On the other hand, it involves contradictory dynamics that incite crisis of identity and, at some points even estrangement from all cultural identities that are being negotiated. In this view, the crisis of identity in the form, for instance, of double not-belonging, is an important characteristic of a 'Third Space' to be addressed. At the same time, what has to be taken into consideration here is the role of cultural elements interplay (pre-constructed cultural positions and cultural borders) as part of Positioning of transculturality methodological dimension, and examine the functioning of 'Third Spaces' towards subverting these pre-constructed borders.

"Ya no soy ni china ni española"³² , - voices one of the protagonists of Helena Taberna's documentary *Extranjeras* (2003). This perception/realisation resonates with questioning the binary opposition, the cultural border, between the West and the Rest, that was discussed in the previous chapter, such as: If 'the other' does not belong to 'the West', does it belong in simplified terms to 'the Rest'? If someone who feels European is regarded as essentially non-European, what does such a clash of perceptions make them? The realisations of not belonging either to 'the West' or to 'the Rest' forge the crisis of identity while at the same time these realisations initiate an active search for the resolutions of this crisis as the subjects intend to find and accommodate a space/place of belonging, in which they will be able to say they feel 'both Chinese and Spanish', if we draw a projection from the aforementioned example from *Extranjeras* (2003). The questions to address in the films are how the denominated 'others' negotiate their statuses in the process of confronting the questions of identity and belonging or not belonging. What are the spaces where the (re)negotiation of belonging and identifications take place and which of them facilitate such (re-negotiation) more than others? What spaces are more confined and discriminative towards the combination of identities and where are the possibilities of this combination to occur? As an example of confined framing spaces, we can refer to the case of a Muslim woman wearing a hijab, in *Extranjeras* (2003). One of the protagonists Algerian Safia argues that, in her opinion, wearing a veil in the streets of Madrid triggers criticism and that young Muslim women know that if you do not wear it, it makes it all much easier for you. The question to pose is how do framing spaces become 'Third Spaces'?

If there are instances of reconfiguring the spaces from less-inclusive to more-inclusive; from those that aggravate the crisis of identity to those that provide certain resolutions for this crisis, what are the cultural, social and human practices that are undertaken and facilitate the transformation of the spaces. In other words, what can be the role of the contextual and phenomenological factors in converting framing spaces that are not inclusive into inclusive 'Third Spaces'?

Furthermore, whereas the contradictory dynamics and the crisis of identity are pertinent to a 'Third Space', how can this crisis be addressed? The objective is to examine and question whether there are examples in the film stories when the crisis of identity is overcome within a 'Third Space'? In this case, what are the specific conditions and configuration that indicate to the presence and the confident negotiation of cultural meanings within the 'Third Space'? And

³² In English, "I am neither Chinese nor Spanish anymore."

how do the 'Third Spaces' suggest new perspectives of re-addressing the crisis of the cultural identity? For instance, the suggestion can be to look at the crisis of identity not as a problematic identity quest which indicates subject's inability to find his/her identity and a comfortable space to express it. But rather the film images may propose to approach the cultural identity crisis as a transcultural process which indicates the problematic of essential neat and delineated cultural categorisations, and reveals these categorisations as main inciting basis for the identity crisis. In other words, because discursively constructed purity tells you that these cultural elements are opposing and that you can be only either one or the other, the crisis of identity in the process of transcultural identities negotiation is inevitable. In her book *Borderlands – La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, American-Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa talks about not being accepted in any of the two cultures that she identifies with because of her non-pure hybrid identity in both cultural and gender ways. She emphasises: " [w]hat we are suffering from is an absolute despot duality that says we are able to be only one or the other" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 41). And this statement confirms the power of the essentialist constructs and its interference in the process of transcultural cultural identities constructions. Furthermore, as the transcultural negotiation develops, what are the implications and consequences of the 'Third Space' for the 'from-heres'/host imagined "national identity" and the 'come-heres'³³ imagined homelands identity? How does the carving out of a 'Third Space' shake the binary order between those who 'culturally belong' to the nation and those who are 'culturally othered'? In other words, how do the cultural borders become flexible within 'Third Spaces'?

Fluctuating/flexible borders whose surpassing is activated within the 'Third Space', as they open up at upon transcultural negotiation and facilitate the development of transcultural connections and cultural combinations and transformations. These flexible borders can be positioned in contrast to rigid borders that create dichotomy, and thus to any pre-constructed binary of 'the us' vs. 'the other'.

In reference to transcending the borders, the question to be posed is in what way do the films challenge and disrupt the rigid borders between 'parallel cultures'? Is it possible to spot the materialising of the preservation and re-creation of home cultures in a rigid parallel to host cultures? Is it really possible to demarcate those borders between spaces where the home

³³ The terminology of 'from-heres' and 'come-heres' is used by Page R. Laws to refer to the research project "*From-Heres*" and "*Come-Heres*": *Transculturality and the Immigrant Other in Virginia and North Rhine-Westphalia*, which later become a title of a book that compiles the undertaken research. Laws' article is presented in Chapter 13 of the book under the name *Cinema of Acceptance: Changing perspectives of the immigrant other in recent American and European film laws* (2011, pp.238-261).

culture and the host culture are separately practised? Do not they naturally interweave in everyday practices? The task will be to identify the specific scenes when this interweaving occurs and analyse them through the prism of 'Third Spaces' creation and its functioning across the cultural borders.

Finally, with the objective to challenge the essentialist constructs of nationally-demarcated cultural borders, the question should be asked as to how those living on symbolic cultural borders negotiate their relationship towards these borders, their lives beyond and across them. When do transcultural subjects cross the symbolic borders back and forth in a natural way? The following methodological dimension of Indicators of transformation continues the explanation of how the borders become flexible, specifically by pointing to the expressions of cultural hybridity, transforming identities and transforming subjectivities as the manifestations of the act that the cultural borders have been surpassed. As the cultural hybridity is created, it is performed, in general terms, through straddling two or more cultures, which means the delineated cultural borders have been opened in a process of hybridisation.

2.2.2.3 Methodological dimension 3. Indicators of transformation.

This methodological dimension of Indicators of Transformation guides transcultural analysis to the exemplification of resultant configurations of transculturality. The indicators of transformation (or transformation in process) can be shown via the following variations and processes:

- Transforming identities and subjectivities
- multiple belonging
- cultural hybridity
- crisis of identity.

All these expressions are interrelated, they derive from one another, and can also serve as characteristic of each other. The expressions of cultural hybridity (a combination of different cultural elements) will be addressed both as an already existent transcultural constitution and as a resultant transformation as illustrated in the film. When cultural hybridity is expressed through mixed cultural practices, values and lifestyles without posing a question to changing identities' positions, this kind of hybridity will signify transforming subjectivities. On the other hand, a cultural hybridity that apart from mixed cultural practices also expresses itself via dual and multiple belonging (e.g. double conscience and double presence), will signify the transformation of identity. Even though identities are not

questioned (yet) in the case of transforming subjectivities, in both cases cultural change is present so is the process of transculturality. Furthermore, as crisis of identity is an indicator of ongoing transformation, its presence thus signifies that the transculturation is in process too. As a significant component of a 'Third Space', crisis of identity is also an indicator of transcultural transformation which has to be taken into account within both Transcultural spatiality and Indicators of transformation methodological dimensions.

Indicative questions within this methodological dimension are to be asked to the formation of (trans)cultural meanings on screen, specifically the manifestations and indicators of transformation or transformation in process. The questions are to be posed in reference to transcultural elements emphasised above.

In regard to **transforming identity**, how does the transformation take place? What is the path that the protagonist goes through in the process of this transformation? Is it, for example, a re-negotiation/re-definition of one's relation to a set of values, practices and ways of communication? What are the visual and discursive means that are used to illustrate this transformation? For instance, the transformation could be shown through re-visiting of the past, which will signify the importance of cultural elements from the past for understanding and re-negotiating the present. Another instance of transformation can be related to the personal change in approaching the ideas of home. This can involve a process of change from a feeling/a realisation of separation and the (self) negotiation of personal attitudes towards this realisation, to the feeling of belonging to multiple homes as well as the manifestation of learned ability to code-switching between these multiple homes.

This also brings us to the manifestations of **multiple belonging** in the form of 'double presence' and double consciousness, which means a simultaneous engagement of an immigrant subject within both home and host societies. The question to be asked is how these meanings are 'visualised' and discussed in the film. For example, considering the role of such contextual element of Positioning of transculturality as communication technologies, specifically in carving out hybrid lifestyles and cross-border (trans-national) affiliations, how are these lifestyles and affiliations expressed within the film story? How do the expressions of 'double presence' and 'double consciousness' challenge and transform the nationally-bounded conceptualisation of cultural identities or even extend the concept of the 'nation' to its hybrid performativity? This element can be examined in reference to Sieber's suggestion to analyse contemporary nations in hybrid terms: as the construction of "belonging that is preserved and

always updated by distance communication"³⁴ on the one hand, and as "the interweaving of certain symbols and cultural signs that are being selected in a new living context"³⁵ (2015, p.62) on the other. The further question to pose is how the filmic images deliver the exemplification of double/multiple belonging through the protagonists' actions, discourses and discussions, and through the film story in general.

In cases where identity does not figure as a central element in the process of transformation, but rather changing visions and mentalities prevail and the protagonists do not pose or incite the questions of belonging or identification, the task is to identify what the elements and meanings are to follow and analyse in such disposition. The question to be posed is to what extent can the renegotiated cultural meanings be spotted as indicators of **transforming subjectivities** without transforming cultural identities? For example, the changes in cultural behaviour (private space/intimacy; degrees of formality or informality; modes of communication), and small modifications to cultural practices and lifestyles, tastes, beliefs would not necessarily imply the changes in self-identification, but will define transforming subjectivities. Here, the analysis can accentuate, for instance, the change of perceptions towards migrants' gender roles with the aim of identifying different configurations of the change. The question to ask in this regard is whether the change of perceptions towards gender roles is interrelated to transforming subjectivities and new cultural identifications.

Transforming subjectivities can also be identified and analysed in the process of accommodation of cultural difference in the host society. How does the accommodation of cultural difference occur? Does the immigrant protagonist perform a mimetic reproduction of the (popular) practices and behaviours in a new/a host environment? Does the scenario of the accommodation process involve the rejection of getting oneself accommodated, locking out or feeling/being locked out/isolated? Is it possible to mark the symbolic and actual platform where such accommodation can take place and how is the access of the immigrant protagonist subject to this platform articulated? Marks defines mimesis as "a form of yielding to one's environment, rather than dominating it" (2000, p.141). Yet, it is interesting to see how the protagonists of immigrant descent resolve the question of 'getting accommodated' in their own way and in response to what is expected, required or demanded from them. Is it a question of assimilation that is demanded or is it rather a re-interpretation of integration in new terms?

³⁴ In the original, "pertenencia guardada y siempre actualizada por la comunicación a distancia".

³⁵ In the original, "el entretnejimiento de ciertos símbolos y signos culturales que se seleccionan en el nuevo contexto de vida".

The elements that the analysis is to approach are the use, the appropriation, and the modification of different patterns of communication, namely gestures, different ways of using language, face expressions that render the meanings, even expression of emotions.

Cultural hybridity is to be addressed within three questions: how can cultural hybridity express itself through the **crisis of identity** resolution; how can it be projected through the self-reflection of the protagonists; and how does a specific expression of cultural hybridity or the process of cultural hybridisation approach deconstructing the 'otherness'?

In reference to the in-betweenness of a 'Third Space' and the crisis of identity that arises from this in-betweenness, what is specifically proposed by cultural hybridity for the resolution of this crisis? How does the expression of cultural hybridity reinvent the living in-between? If the crisis of identity/uncertainty is about feeling at the border of discursively constructed cultural opposites, how does cultural hybridity makes it a comfortable living in the space that combines discursive opposites? For instance, it can be about what is considered proper/improper in one cultural environment that becomes natural and characteristic of a hybrid 'Third Space' cultural environment. The feelings of uncertainty or confidence of living in-between are possible to deduct from the questions that the protagonists ask themselves and the questions that they pose to other characters.

To analyse how cultural hybridity can be projected through self-reflection of the protagonists, it is important to take into consideration the style and format of the film, whether the film is a documentary or fiction. In case of documentaries, this self-reflection can be communicated as protagonists tell their stories, answer the questions about their belonging or their experiences that they want to share. In case of fiction films, this self-reflection can be projected indirectly through the dialogues between the characters. Whether it is a talk into the past or a comparison between the present and the past, a talk into the imaginary and metaphors, the characters are creating their stories and creating themselves in the process of telling their stories. In both cases the characters will speak from their current physical and symbolic positions reflecting upon their transcultural personalities formed as such dialogically and experientially. They can thus be addressed as transcultural subjects for being able to negotiate their current positions by reflecting upon their previous cultural positions. Furthermore, it will be interesting to analyse in this regard how the self-reflection upon cultural hybridity engages with the spaces of reference that overlap and across which this hybridity has been constructed.

Lastly, it is important to analyse how a specific expression of cultural hybridity or the process of cultural hybridisation approaches deconstructing the 'otherness'. Because cultural

hybridity eliminates cultural borders, the hybrid subject speaks from two or more cultural positions that were previously considered as mutually exclusionary, as belonging to separated cultural worlds. 'The other' thus shares the common ground with 'the us' because one of the cultural positions of 'the other' is 'located' in the cultural world of 'the us'. On the other hand, the cultural world of 'the us' is not homogenous either. Within the multiple multidirectional cultural processes which are influenced by external, locally-specific and personal factors, the cultural world of 'the us' is also modified by the cultural world of 'the other'. As 'the other' carves out cultural hybrid worlds within the (national) cultural worlds of 'the us', the cultural complexity of the latter develops further and (new) overlappings and commonalities in the process of identities negotiation are inevitable. Now, the question to ask in this regard is whether the film images communicate specific characteristics of cultural hybridity that challenge the construct of 'otherness'. Furthermore, how can these characteristics participate in challenging and extending the imaging of the national cultural identity?

2.2.2.4 Methodological dimension 4. Film reading methodology.

Within this dimension, the film reading methodology is elaborated. It serves as an assisting instrument which envisages the reference to formal and technical aspects of the cinematic work. The objective of this elaboration is to connect a detailed discussion and questioning of the cultural elements and meanings in the films (methodological dimensions 1,2,3) with the reading and analysis of the film language (methodological dimension 4). The examination of the formal elements of the films is a complementary framework for the transcultural analysis, for the detailed discursive analysis of transcultural meanings.

Having researched the theoretical works of renowned authors on technical reading of the film language such as David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's *Film art: An introduction* (2008) as well as James Monaco's *How to Read a Film...* (2000), the following discussion of cinematic formal elements and techniques derives from the theorisations and methodological suggestions that the authors emphasise as the ways and directions into the conceptual analysis of films, specifically through the examination of such film techniques as mise-en-scène, editing, cinematography and sound.

This discussion will make discursive cinematic analysis assisted with the aesthetic-technical cinematic analysis. With the help of aesthetic-technical cinematic analysis it will be possible to determine the positioning of objects and subjects in each context. On the one hand, the use of the theoretical approaches to film language reading (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008; Monaco, 2000) will allow for the examination of the formal contextual elements within which

the subjects/objects/ideas are positioned (for instance through the analysis of the formal aspects of composition, the construction of the perception of space, the camera focus on specific elements in the film, or the functional role of the selected setting/shooting location). And on the other hand, with a parallel and intertwined discursive analysis it will be possible to define the role of aesthetic and formal elements in a wider context of social and political realities. Furthermore, within the discursive analysis of the film, the focus will not only be on film content but the study will equally allude to the political and social landscape of the filmmaking process of the specific film itself. In this way, wherever film's formal elements generate transcultural meanings to assist the analysis within the Positioning of transculturality methodological dimension, these elements are to be examined in details.

The choice to incorporate the formal (aesthetic-technical) analysis into the discursive analysis derives from Monaco's suggestion that film is powerful in generating its own connotative meaning and that the connotations are already attached to the statements in a film because the subjects/objects/ideas are contextualised within the film shots (2000, p. 163). For instance, a Turkish national flag, when depicted in a film as looming above the parliamentary building in Ankara, will carry the meaning of the Turkish national emblem to symbolise the Turkish nation or country. However, when illustrated as hanging on the wall of the room of a Turkish immigrant in Germany, the flag's meaning could be connoted as "connection of immigrant with his homeland", or "the imaginary projection of homeland in the host country". Therefore, in order to identify the meanings ascribed to particular subjects (objects, ideas) in a film, it is necessary to examine the contextual elements within which they are positioned. For the purpose of this research, the contextual elements will be analysed through the film editing, cinematography (photography and camera work), *mise-en-scène* (the arrangement of the scene, the setting and surrounding), as well as the functional meaning-constructing role of the sound. Since *mise-en-scène* is inextricably related to cinematography, specifically in that these two techniques participate together in the creation of the shot, they will be frequently examined in their integrity and their collaboration in the production of specific meanings.

Let us then discuss these film structural and aesthetic elements in more detail and illustrate their methodological relevance for this research. The term "***mise-en-scène***" (from French 'putting in the scene') has its origins in the theatre and designates the contents of the stage and their arrangement. When applied to the cinema, *mise-en-scène* stands for the specific film scene contents (lighting, décor, costume, colour, sounds as part of the scene, the behaviour of the figures/actors and the 'performance', language of communication, the setting, etc.), their organisation and relation to one another. *Mise-en-scène* encompasses both what the

audience can see, and the way in which we are invited to see it, while the latter is also contributed by cinematography. The combination of the elements of *mise-en-scène* is responsible for establishing a special emotional tone of a film (Gibbs, 2002, pp. 5-15). However, *mise-en-scène* is primarily an important element for the cinematic transcultural analysis because it offers the understanding of the contextual, both physical and symbolic, framework in which transcultural meanings are produced and negotiated, as well as of the compositional details that form part of this contextual specificity. By being emphasised within the narrative, certain elements of *mise-en-scène* can produce specific cultural meanings. For instance, the modification or contrasts in the elements of costume, make-up and hair styles can signal changes in characters and even project transforming subjectivities (e.g. a change in a lifestyle or/and cultural appropriation). Here, the reference is to the Indicators of transformation (or transformation in process) methodological dimension. Furthermore, by assisting the discursive examination within the Transcultural spatiality, the elements of *mise-en-scène* will be analysed in search of the projection of a 'Third Space' within a certain contextual physical framework, e.g. the setting in the film and its functioning as a 'Third Space' of the first modality.

It is also important to address *mise-en-scène* in terms of the function of its tools altogether. They may aim at arousing interest and curiosity for certain elements and the task is to see which ones; they can show controversy within the character or can create the intimate 'framing' to bring attention to the relationship between certain protagonists.

Editing is responsible for the relation of each shot to the next. One must ask how the shot is presented; whether the film is done in a continuous shot or a jump-cut; if there are any sound and fade bridges; how the specific effect influences the sequences in a film and the preservation of the natural flow of the story; and what the role of these technical choices is in the production of cultural meanings. Examination of editing will help to analyse the created links between the two different pieces of film, what these links say and what the created compiled picture communicates. Editing can serve as a communicator of the contextual positioning of a certain space/an environment which is related to the story, or present multiple separated spaces as a single area (with a purpose of constructing a certain meaning in this regard). Additionally, by joining together several different spaces, editing is aimed at constructing a bigger picture (including a background picture) around the film's narrative. Editing is also responsible for the single shots duration, and adjusting the length of shots to one another will contribute to specific rhythm in the film and put accents on those moments or elements that are outside of the created rhythm pattern (e.g. the shot duration is different or

contrasting the other shots, or the elements that are present/repetitive throughout different shots). Such important role can also be played by the editing technique of temporal relations control, through an intervention into the continuity of the narrative with the manipulations with time (e.g. flashbacks or continuous interweaving of past and present time frames). This manipulation can reorder the presentation of events or it can use flashbacks to communicate, for example, the role of the memory, or the significant relevance of certain past events for the present (without which the present would not be fully comprehended).

Analysis of the **cinematography** is the interpretation of the choices of camera work, such as focus, shot distance, the angle at which the camera is pointed at the subject. For instance, high-angle shots diminish the importance of the subjects while low-angle shots emphasise their power. Moreover, camera work is an important element of examination as it provides us with the perception of space as it is rendered and communicated through a film. Examination of the camera work will also help with defining the accents, interrelate them with their context and will help with interpreting the cultural meanings that are created visually rather than verbally. Additionally, the composition of the specific scene will be usually a result of a camera work (cinematography) and the contents arrangement in the frame (*mise-en-scène*).

Furthermore, the cinematography and the narrative composition of a film itself can figurate as a mirror of the complex negotiation of cultural meanings. Specifically, when the negotiation of transcultural identities is complicated by involving not only the spatial 'spheres of reference' and enunciation but also the temporal dimension. This can be the case when the film breaks with the classical narrative structure by rather applying and mastering aesthetic visuals that intend to tell the story in a complex non-linear form. For example, in his analysis of a transcultural film by Vietnamese-French director Lâm Lê, Sicard-Cowan identifies the disruptions of "the aesthetic conventions of classical Western cinema" (2010, p.145), as he refers in this way to the linear narrative composition. According to the researcher, in the pursuit of challenging such composition Lê's film *Vingtnuits et un jour de pluie* narrates the story in a different way, with the "use of flash-backs and flash-forwards" (Ibid.) Such appropriation can also have a more dimensional interpretation. Namely, this visual technique does not simply go against the 'classic narrative' for distinguishing or rebellious purposes. What it carries is also a hint at the individuality of experiences and the projection of the complexity and an unstructured non-linear nature that characterise the process of immigrant/diasporic subjects' identities negotiation. In a similar way, attention to creative visual aspects of the films to be analysed is an important task.

Special attention is also paid to the analysis of such important element of film as **sound** which is both part of the *mise-en-scène* (diagetic sound) and of the editing - sound beyond *mise-en-scène* (non-diagetic sound). Sound is important because it can shape how we interpret the image, and in certain cases it can be an integral part of the image itself. While within the context of *mise-en-scène* the analysis is directed at the diagetic sound which is part of the depicted events (e.g. music at the concert attended by protagonists; buskers singing in the street), the analysis of sound beyond *mise-en-scène* is directed at the use of the non-diagetic sound, sound bridges and the background music which is added at the stage of editing (Monaco, 2000, pp. 172-227; Bordwell & Thompson, 2008, pp. 112-263).

All the properties of *mise-en-scène*, editing, cinematography, and sound will be analysed to identify the cultural meanings constructed within a film scene and within the film as a whole. This methodological dimension will thus be incorporated within three previously discussed methodological dimensions of transcultural cinematic analysis. For instance, in reference to complementing and supporting the film analysis along the methodological dimension of Positioning of transculturality, film reading methodology can be applied to identifying and analysing the illustrations of socio-cultural transformation.

Since cinema can function as an echo for transformation evoked by migrations (Caballero Wanguemert, 2015, p.197), it is important to analyse the way films communicate the new cultural reality or bring to the light the transformations within the society; for example, when we refer to the societies that are becoming multi- or pluri-cultural. Both fiction and documentary films are important to be considered and both serve as mediators of reality, each in its own form and way. This research refers to both fiction films and documentaries, and is interested in how the discussion of the processes of transformation are visualised and negotiated through both forms. While analysing documentaries the technical and narrative structure of the film will greatly define the accents of the latter. As María Caballero Wanguemert argues in her research on Spanish cinema and immigration, the documentary's structure, specifically editing, framing, angle of perspective, and comments will help to understand the emphasis of the film (Ibid, p.199), that is to say what the film brings to the fore as the mediator of the reality. The accents will become the valuable points of attention decided as such by filmmakers themselves. At the same time, the contextual reality that surrounds the focused reality (where the accents are) will function as a performative context which makes the focused reality possible. Within this perspective of analysis, it is possible to examine cultural meanings more profoundly. On the one hand, the analysis will separately discuss the elements that are brought to the attention of spectators

within cinematic technical means and artistic choices. On the other hand, the elements-in-focus will be analysed together with their contextual frame (compiled from *mise-en-scène* and cinematography).

Another aspect to address within the methodological dimension of film reading is an element of linguistic transculturality that is interconnected with all other methodological dimensions and reflects the context, the transcultural transformations and the choices of the director of introducing this element and of the ways to deal with it.

Linguistic transculturality is to be approached from two points that recognise the complexity of the contemporary polyphony of verbal communication. On the one hand, the speaking language may situate the action in time or space. On the other hand, the speaking language(s) can redefine the localities. The task is to look at how divergences function in communication between protagonists and how they interrelate with spaces in which they function. Where do the spaces define the linguistic purity, intermingling of languages, accents, lost in translation episodes and where is the situation inverted to give the language/accented language the role and/or power in defining the spaces? What is the role of communication in a language in enforcing a social distance or abolishing social boundaries? What are the practical and symbolic repercussions of (intentional) communication in non-host languages? As Martínez-Carazo concludes in her analysis of the selection of Spanish films on immigration, the immigrants are 'inaudible' when they speak their own language, "she or he has no voice and is enclosed in an impenetrable circle" (2010, p.158). Taking this perspective as a reference, what are the associated and derivative meanings of polyphonic communication in the films to analyse. The task will also be to define transcultural flexible borders where shifting from one language to another occurs in a natural way (as expressed within *mise-en-scène*).

Moreover, in reference to urban context it is interesting to consider the implications of the re-invention and re-appropriation of languages as an ongoing process which is observed in multicultural urban environments, especially in the case of older European host societies. The reference here is to the presence of the migrant's accent and the formulation of new urban lifestyles invoked by immigration which in Chambers' words "disturbs the previous order" (1994, p.23). In this view, the initiation of hybrid transcultural processes is involved as the "language is appropriated, taken apart, and then put back together with a new inflection, and unexpected accent, a further twist in the tale" (Chambers, 1994, p.23). The question to pose in the context of accented communication is what the role of the language re-appropriation by

immigrant subjects is in the (re-)negotiation of cultural identities, of cultural 'otherness' and 'sameness' both by the immigrant subjects themselves and the 'natives'.

2.2.2.5 Methodological dimension 5. Critical stance of the filmmakers and transcultural resolution of the film.

The discursive analysis within this last methodological dimension of Critical stance of the filmmakers and transcultural resolution of the film will be based on the cinematic discussion that derives from all previously elaborated methodological dimensions. In other words, as the indicative questions of Positioning of transculturality, Transcultural spatiality, Indicators of transformation and Film reading methodology provide guidance to the transcultural analysis of the films, the obtained answers from the cinematic discussion will lead to concluding implications for this methodological dimension. Additionally, the questions will be posed to the 'location' of the film, specifically different aspects of its production, exhibition and distribution. These questions will further draw upon the interrelation between the film's story/messages/critique/transcultural value and its production, distribution and exhibition specificity.

Two major aspects that will be addressed within this methodological dimension are:

- Critical stance (open or indirect criticism) of the filmmakers towards essential or monocultural perceptions of culture and to discursive, social and spatial stigmatisation of European immigrant/immigrant descent subjects.
- Transcultural resolution of the film towards de-constructing the 'otherness'.

With reference to **critical stance of the filmmakers**, the questions are to be formulated as follows. How does the filmmaker present the story/the narrative of the film? Does the filmmaker ask questions that inspire a dialogue and can encourage spectators for active reflection? What are these questions and what are the formal techniques that are applied in the film to communicate certain enquiries (from mise-en-scène, editing, cinematography). Furthermore, if it is feasible to identify the factors and processes that construct the filmmaker's story, how does the film negotiate or reconcile its images with the contextual (and the background) factors and processes? If the film goes against the entrenched conventions, such as stereotypical representations of immigrant/diasporic subjects, then is it possible to identify what can be a critical force (both discursive and visual) of reading and presenting differently from conventional filmic representations? For example, as Marco Kunz has analysed the typical portrayal of the immigrant subject in Spanish fiction, it seems as if the Spanish literature, theatre and films on immigration have had a continuous re-

representation of the stereotypes to reinforce the conventions. As Kunz concluded, the conventional image of the immigrant has been constructed as the following: an African person who immigrates to Spain for usually dubious reasons and "lives in the country in a clandestine way, dedicating himself/herself to illegal jobs or criminal activity (drug trafficking, robbery, etc.)" (2015, p.171)³⁶. In the course of continuous re-representation of conventional images, these images become entrenched in popular perceptions and influence the 'othering' of immigrant/diasporic subjects. In reference to Foucault's 'power-knowledge' notion, this stereotypical image production resonates with the *truth*-production thus becoming the 'true' representative of a 'non-European' immigrant subject in Europe. In this view, it is important to define what the identifiable elements that make the film critical are, and to ask whether these elements function to create a bigger picture, a picture that includes the perspectives of questioning the conventions. At the same time, to be able to identify a critical force of the film, the analysis itself must become critically engaged with the film. The bigger picture of the image of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe, mediated and positioned, will not come together through the collection of numerous representations. The bigger picture will be drawn through comparing the hegemonic discourses with oppositional cultural meanings and their interpretations. As Bauer suggests in her research on representation and performance as art, we should strive for analysing the art as a "movement of embodied thought" and refuse to fix artistic expressions as recognisable representations (2008, p.41). Seeing in a filmic image the projection of a critical stance of the director will be possible through approaching an artwork via individualising lenses: as a combination of personal thought and its context. This is a practice which will help us to be more critical and identify the new cultural elements that we would not expect to see.

Furthermore, critical stance of the filmmakers can be approached through the analysis of what is emphasised in the film and how the filmmaker engages in challenging and resolving the cultural binary.

More specifically, critical stance of the filmmakers can also be expressed through accents and directing the spectator's eye to what the filmmaker considers important. For instance, what is emphasised in the process of communicating specific cultural meanings? If a new knowledge is introduced, how does the director operate with this new knowledge by explaining what means what and what is important, according to what is accentuated in the film? For example, the introduction of the new knowledge can be undertaken via bringing

³⁶ In original text as, "vive en el país de manera clandestina dedicandose a trabajos ilegales o actividades criminales (narcotráfico, robos, etc.)".

attention to the culture of the immigrant 'other' as something unfamiliar, little-known or partially studied or analysed, thus departing from the pre-conditioning of the knowledge conveyed by prejudices, stereotypes and pre-conceptions. The questions that bring 'unfamiliar' in the focus of attention provide this 'unfamiliar' with the role of the protagonist. They thus invite the spectator to get to know the 'other' as 'self'. Within these conditions, the process of acquiring the knowledge requires interest, analysis and involves multiple possibilities, including the possibility of finding shared cultural forms and norms thus making 'unfamiliar' resulting in 'familiar'.

Regarding challenging the cultural binary, the first question that the analysis should address is whether the films illustrate or derive from contrasting cultural oppositions. It is further important to examine the specificities of these oppositions, the power relations that are involved and the director's choices, as well as to address the question as to how the films challenge and resolve this embedded binary, if the resolution is the case.

As Cristina Johnson argues in reference to earlier films on immigration in France, in particular *banlieue* films, what can be usually spotted in these cinematic pieces is the portrayal of intergenerational conflicts (2010, pp. 89-98). Second-generation migrants are portrayed as tending to identify themselves more with the social values and the dominant culture of France while they usually enter in conflict with the more traditional values promoted by their parents, first generation migrants. In *banlieue* films this conflict is "often marked verbally" (Johnson, 2010, p.89); it is made visible with the use of at least two languages in separate circumstances, "typically standard French (...) and dialectal Arabic" (Ibid.), while the subtitling of Arabic in French marks it as the 'other'. Deriving from the criticism of such a straightforward binary, Johnson draws our attention to the multiple factors that work in the host society for immigrant/diasporic subjects and to how these subjects are engaged within the cultural frameworks of their conditions and possibilities. Although, as Johnson contemplates, "the specificities of individual subjectivities" emerge in schematically and hegemonically divided symbolic areas of 'traditional' home and 'modern' public space, they in fact demonstrate "a far more pluralist reality that the republican model (meaning French metropolitan republican model) is yet ready to admit" (2010, p.91).

Using the elements of this discussion as methodological incitements, the questions to be posed to the films will start with identifying the binary conflict (wherever the case) and analyse its transcultural resolution within the film. What are the conclusions that the process of identities negotiation through opposition leads to? Is it related to the further complication of identities construction, the realisation of double or more identities, and how can the 'other'

become embedded within the 'national' in the process of this binary negotiation? Whether it is releasing the spaces of 'homeland'/origin/roots/ from the physical confines of the family home and bringing them into new places of interaction or taking the 'modern' public (multicultural) spaces of interaction as the platforms for the re-negotiation of 'homeland' identities, this movement through fluctuating symbolic borders makes transculturality-in-progress come into being.

In reference to **Transcultural resolution of the film** towards de-constructing the 'otherness', the following questions are formulated for the examination of the transcultural analysis findings:

1) Following the transcultural analysis of the film, what can we say about the transcultural position or transcultural perspective of the filmmaker? How do the film directors generally use and address the increasing cultural eclectic diversity in Europe (cultural complications) and how different their portrayal and discussion is from official European discourses? Do they follow/ignore/challenge the official discourses (or let's say media discourse) and how independent are they in their approaches to cinematic representations of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects? For the purpose of analysing the 'independent' character of the film different aspects of production, exhibition and distribution of a film will be addressed. These aspects will be referred to as additional contextual factors that form part of the filmmaking process.

2) How can we summarise the transcultural character of the film? How do the transcultural meanings developed in the film frame a better understanding of the complexity and contextual interdependency of transcultural developments in Europe?

3) How do the filmmakers approach, portray, and analyse the contemporary cultural complications positioning them in different and mixed European spaces? What is being understood by 'European cultural spaces' and how are these spaces re-defined in the films? In what way Europe becomes a space for transcultural existence on screen? Or, in other words, how is the concept of European space as a whole (and/or the national/regional European spaces in a more localised perspective) extended to embrace more cultural meanings and complications?

4) How is the idea of cultural Europeaness (in terms of values, practices, belief-systems, memories, languages, social lives and lifestyles) negotiated and extended to embrace the discursively segregated European cultural others? How is the traditional understanding of Europeaness (understanding that is entrenched in political, media and mainstream cultural discourse) challenged by cinematic discussion? What do the films refer to in order to

discuss/contextualise/exemplify these ideas? For example, is it a discourse into the past - multiple and interconnected histories and/or exemplifying overlapping cultural experiences via hybrid subcultures within a diversified Europe today. Does culture become bigger than nationhood in the films? How does this work for extending the understanding of transculturality? Within this discussion, it is essential to be ready for multiple interpretations of and views at the same notion. For example, different concepts of Europe and Europeanness as seen on character's conceptual maps. This variable is inspired by Guido Rings' idea of the necessity to discover and compare "alternative concepts of Europe in contemporary migrant cinema" (2016, p.3).

2.3 The process of the case studies selection.

To conclude this chapter, it is also important to discuss the process of the case studies selection because it contributes to framing the scope of thematic specificity and its interrelation with the objectives of the research to provide an intervening effect on the re-imagining of European 'cultural others'.

The process of the case studies selection has been composed of three stages. Within the first stage, the emphasis of selection has been on filmmakers. In search of cinematic works that would critically engage with transculturality and re-invent the way the cultural diversity, the 'otherness' and identities are negotiated, specific attention has been given to self-representations. In this view, I have opted for referring to the filmmakers who can be considered transcultural themselves, namely the European immigrant/diasporic subjects of non-European descent, especially the second- and third generation directors who can potentially construct and re-construct the cultural imageries around them.

As Doy argues:

"We need a theory of the historically situated subject, individual and at the same time part of a social totality, who consciously and unconsciously engages with a contradictory and changing reality to create new representations, not passive reflections, of her/his material and psychic existence" (1998, p. 109).

At this stage the selection of films directed by diasporic transcultural filmmakers has been made. What makes them diasporic transcultural filmmakers is their mixed inter-ethnic or/and immigrant heritage and the questions of culture, identity and memory that they address in their films, even if we refer to the filmmakers whose filmography on these questions is scarce or is a one-off initiative. At the same time, in the process of the case studies selection it has been found that most of the selected filmmakers do not directly intend or imply their cinematic works as carriers of transcultural meanings. The directors explore the topics of their

personal and artistic interest, and the result, the films which show a value for transcultural research or the transmission of certain intercultural knowledge, is not always intentional. The production of transcultural meanings in the films is an outcome of a wide range of factors, one of which involves the vision that derives from the director's personal experiences. And these experiences can also include either or both an experience of using a film as an exploration of the meanings and contexts of interest related to a personal cultural quest (e.g. *Divines*, 2016) or as a tool for the negotiations or projections of their personal cultural research, particularly in reference to multiple selves, the re-discovery of the roots or cultural heritage (e.g. *Almanya - Welcome to Germany*, 2011). Referring to diasporic (and exilic) filmmakers as 'accented filmmakers', Hamid Naficy has pointed to the transcultural features of such filmmaking by emphasising the following:

"Accented filmmakers (...) cross many borders and engage in many deterritorializing and reterritorializing journeys, which take several forms, including home-seeking journeys, journeys of homelessness, and homecoming journeys. However, these journeys are not just physical and territorial but are also deeply psychological and philosophical. Among the most important are journeys of identity, in the course of which old identities are sometimes shed and new ones refashioned. In (...) accented films identity is not a fixed essence but a process of becoming, even a performance of identity. Indeed, each accented film may be thought of as a performance of its author's identity. Because they are highly fluid, exilic and diasporic identities raise important questions about political agency and about the ethics of identity politics." (2001, pp.5-6).

The most important element in this regard is the performative function of cultural identity of an immigrant/diasporic subject, as it can be analysed both as a projection and a (self-)exploration of immigrant descent/diasporic directors. The value of diasporic films for transcultural research is thus indispensable. As they address the cultural points that destabilise and reconcile the process of identities construction (borders, 'journeys', re-negotiations), these films will thus reveal important empirical (discursive) frameworks within which transculturality acts and reconfigures itself.

The second stage alludes to the European institutional framework of the films that deal with cultural diversity. European funding opportunities for filmmaking together with awards and festivals compose an institutional ensemble which is an important platform to consider in the process of the filmic case studies selection. Because as Guido Rings argues, "the heterogeneous membership of most funding panels and award committees as well as the openness of such guidelines (...) and linking with the Council of Europe's wider mandate to human rights and multicultural acceptance leave a wide space for the development of individual film projects" (2016, p.18). In this way, the platforms for scanning have included European contests and programmes that are functioning both on EU and the Council of Europe levels such as MEDIA and Creative Europe EU programmes and Eurimages. The

specific funds and prizes to refer to are European Script Fund (SCRIPT), European Film Distribution Office (EFDO), FELIX and LUX prizes. The main mission of the latter, for instance, is to help European films to reach a wider audience by granting an award for subtitling and distribution to a selected film each year. One of the selection criteria is that the films "illustrate universality of European values, diversity of cultures or themes raising the public debate on European building process" (Luxprize)³⁷.

The third stage is composed of scanning through the recent editions of European film festivals in search of case studies that address the theme of problematic of cultural diversity, cultural symbolic borders, and transculturality (films on diasporas, mobility and borders). Scanning of films has been done from recent editions of European film festivals: Festival de Cannes, Berlinale, Rotterdam, The European Independent Film Festival (ECÚ) in Paris, Sarajevo Film Festival, San Sebastián International Film Festival, etc.

Within the selection criteria, special attention has been paid to a search for the recent films that present the following characteristics:

1. The protagonists are discursively separated Europeans and non-Europeans (immigrant and diasporic subjects of non-European descent, geographically and symbolically speaking, eastwards and southwards from Europe), in which the division between the two is either blurred or irrelevant, but something else becomes more important than this binary opposition, an opposition which is pertinent to earlier diasporic films. For example, the films that address, negotiate and challenge symbolic cultural borders - when it is difficult to say (it is unclear) what can be referred as 'European' and what can be referred as 'non-European', culturally-speaking.

2. Films that embark on a discussion of the "transculturality" in its understanding as a process and a result of a combination of conflicting cultural selves, lifestyles, practices, belief-systems, as well as extend the conceptual framework of the transculturality paradigm by narrating new and fresh scenarios of cultural engagements, cultural mixes, and cultural transformation.

3. Films that contextualize the experiences of "displacement" and "in-betweenness" (the notions that usually carry negative or problematic connotations in European political, media

³⁷With the exception of Celine Sciamma's *Girlhood / Bande de filles* (2014), which will be briefly referenced in the film analysis, several other films such as Fatih Akin's *The Edge of Heaven/Auf der anderen Seite* (2007), Philippe Lioret's *Welcome* (2009), Andrea Segre's *Shun Li and the Poet/lo sono Li* (2012), which were either nominated for or awarded the LUX prize, are not included in the discursive film analysis of this dissertation but are interesting to consider for future research as they address the questions of transcultural connections in European societies and also approximate us to the analysis cultural diversity as an organically incorporated part of European building process.

and even present in academic discourses) in contemporary European socio-cultural environments, and introduce new ways of looking at these experiences. For example, re-shaping them in the way released from victimisation, self-victimisation, stigmatisation of equivalence to exclusion.

The main selected films from these three stages are *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011) by German-Turkish **Yasemin Şamdereli** (Berlinale premiere) and the most recent *Divines* (2016) by young French-Moroccan director **Houda Benyamina** (Caméra d'Or at Festival de Cannes). I will also refer to another immigrant descent director, the German-Turkish **Fatih Akin** with a short overview of his cinematic works as a preceding discussion for Şamdereli's film. Another film which will be briefly addressed is **Celine Sciamma's** *Girlhood / Bande de filles* (2014) (Festival de Cannes, TVE Another Look Award at San Sebastián International Film Festival). It will be referred to in terms of the discursive elements that it shares with *Divines* (2016).

Furthermore, I have selected a couple of works, which are mainly low budget films that I have encountered in the process of the research at film festival screenings and through online platforms. These will be two documentaries *El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés/The other side...An approach to Lavapiés* (2000), a take on the multicultural transformation of one of the districts in Madrid, directed by **Bázel Ramsis**, and an insightful and intimate story of a transcultural friendship that develops in the Italian city of Turin *El lugar de las fresas/The Strawberry Place* (2013) by **Maite Vitoria Daneris**.

All in all, the main case studies selection (*El lugar de las fresas*, 2013; *El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés*, 2002; *Almanya - Welcome to Germany*, 2011; *Divines*, 2016) results from the objective of addressing and analysing the films that would be diverse in terms of locations, characters, plots, and will be united by the filmmakers' critical stance on cultural categorisations and a refusal to position their protagonists within enclosed cultural frames. Overall, these films share the ability to provide an insider perspective for the spectator and the narrative's active engagement in mediating transcultural realities in Europe, as they draw upon the protagonists' personal transcultural experiences that are further complicated within their contextual environments. This main corpus of films selected for the analysis makes a contribution to the development of transcultural research in a combined way by providing all together a multifaceted platform of examination of transculturality, of its different conceptual elements and factors as projected through the cultural meanings on screen. Furthermore, almost all of the selected titles, with the exception of *El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002), are new for the academic cultural analysis, the reason for which is also their

recency in production and distribution. Also, an important point to emphasise is that *El lugar de las fresas* (2013), *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011), and *Divines* (2016) are all directed by women, thus providing a valuable female perspective, including a perspective of self-representation, on the questions of immigration and diaspora in Europe. *Divines* (2016), especially, grants its female characters major protagonism and in this way it contributes to destabilising the unequal representation of male and female voices in European films in general, and in films that address the lives of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe, in particular.

Moreover, the main filmic case studies are also 'new' in terms of communicating 'new' and fresh perspectives on the dynamics of cultural diversity in Europe, perspectives that are completely released from images of victimisation (as the latter are pertinent to the majority of European films on immigration) and that position their subjects as protagonists that speak for themselves, that are active social subjects whose identity construction is negotiated within multiple different socio-cultural spaces with all the ambiguities and complexities that these spaces encompass.

Finally, I would like to mention some challenges that have arisen in the process of building the methodological model for this research, namely the ones connected to the interrelation between the analysis and the selection of films. The main challenges in building the methodological framework for analysis have been posing a question of how transculturality comes into being and what are the 'locations' of the films. The most complex question to answer is to how the transcultural connections actually come into being on screen. Identifying this process of transculturation would mean to start challenging 'monoculturality' as well as de-constructing the prejudices and seeing immigrant and diasporic subjects in terms of a threat of creating a separate 'cultural order'.

Then, during the process of the case studies selection, I also decided to pay attention to where those films that create the basis for shifting perceptions are. A shift in perceptions from viewing migrants as 'cultural others' or 'cultural threat' to migrants as a social and cultural capital, as social subjects each with their own individual agency. It was assumed that there should be artistic expressions that treat migrants in this way, and thus wanted to find out where they were. In other words, what are the loci of their exhibition and the channels of distribution that make them arrive to the spectator? As it has been already mentioned in the discussion of the Methodological dimension 5, these questions are going to be addressed for every selected film and will be simultaneously used for contextualising the films analysed.

Chapter III.

Cinematic discursive analysis:

Visualising transcultural meanings

CHAPTER III.

CINEMATIC DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS: VISUALISING TRANSCULTURAL MEANINGS.

3.1 An overview of the selected case studies analysis within the transcultural paradigm.

The following film analysis will further illustrate how to examine the visualised transcultural meanings that develop within and across (cultural) borders. Similarly, it will be of significant interest for the transcultural research to draw upon the interdependencies between the social, the cultural, the political and the personal that participate in the production of these (trans)cultural meanings.

As it has been discussed in the previous chapters, immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe have been re-constructing their cultural attachments beyond the physical, political and symbolic borders of the nation-state; and the illustration of this flexibility of the borders will be exemplified through the analysis of the selected films. In many cases, transnational belonging has been developed through a combination of attachments pre-constructed as conflictive or mutually-exclusive. Such attachments have been managed and reconciled in different transcultural configurations. Furthermore, transcultural negotiation within a single nation state, especially in the case of the second and third generation of immigrants, has been fundamental in the articulation of multiple identities. This negotiation is contextualised in the hybrid overlapping environments and 'Third Spaces' whose 'loci' are situated within the national borders. Whereas these 'spaces' include the elements of individual cultural heritage, building of interethnic relationships and development of cross-cultural lifestyles, the activation of their transcultural potential is influenced by the combination of multiple contextual factors. Among these factors there are, for instance, the perceptions and positioning of cultural difference, and of immigrant subjects as 'the other', as well as people's personal attitudes towards re-configuring cultural constructs of 'othering'.

The selected filmic case studies are those that directly or indirectly deal with the cultural encounter of discursively constructed 'Europeans' and 'non-Europeans'. The transcultural analysis of these films serves as an instrument for dismantling the essentialist system which does not involve the potential power of a cultural transformation. A phenomenological stance towards analysing the experiences of non-European/non-EU

immigrants/immigrant descendants in Europe is implemented, and the individual agency of each protagonist is emphasised.

The selected cinematic representations approach and illustrate different cultural meanings which are, significantly, the results and outcome specificities of post-colonial, post-war and contemporary global international migration. By addressing the experiences of the subjects with multiple cultural belonging and those in the process of transforming subjectivities, the films serve as empirical platforms through which the concept and the reality of transculturality are analysed, contextualised and developed further. The selection comprises both fiction and documentary films while they all differ in genre, narrative and stylistic choices, as well as production and distribution opportunities. The first two films to be discussed profoundly are both independent documentary productions, mainly financed by their own writers-directors. These are Spanish-Italian *El lugar de las fresas/The Strawberry Place* (2013) by Maite Vitoria Daneris and *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés/The other side...An approach to Lavapiés* (2002) by Básel Ramsis. The other two films that form part of the main selection are *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011) by Yasemin Şamdereli and *Divines* (2016) by Houda Benyamina. These latter two films are commercially-distributed works with successful box office³⁸ nationally and internationally (*Almanya*, 2011), with transnational funding for production (*Divines*, 2016), and which have received several awards and accolades at international film festivals³⁹.

This main corpus of films selected for the analysis makes a contribution to the development of transcultural research in different ways. Daneris' *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) can be described as a personal investigation of the implications of intercultural encounters through documenting the development of a specific transcultural relationship between two protagonists. This investigation proceeds within a combined approach of being an insider and an observer at the same time thus creating 'a bridge' for the spectator to look at and analyse transcultural developments from within. Through the exploration of a multicultural Madrid's neighbourhood in his *El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002) Básel Ramsis takes a stance against the construction of a generalised image of an immigrant 'other' in Europe, while we can analyse through film visual and discursive images the impact of stigmatisation on the development of transcultural relationships.

³⁸ In April 2011 *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* was the third most watched film in German cinemas with more than 500,000 viewers since its premiere in March 2011 (Filmhitliste: Monat 2011). It was also successfully distributed to commercial cinemas in Austria, France, Spain as well as the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

³⁹ *Divines* won Caméra d'Or at 2016 Cannes Film Festival and Cine Vision Award (best film by a new, non-German director) at Munich Film Festival, whereas *Almanya* received a 2011 German Film Award Deutscher Filmpreis for Best Script in Gold and Best Film in Silver.

Almanya - Welcome to Germany (2011) is discussed in the context of German-Turkish cinema as a representation by a third generation of German-Turkish filmmakers while its stylistic and narrative approaches differ from those of the second generation film directors, the main representative of which is Fatih Akin. The analysis of *Almanya* (2011) identifies the contextual and phenomenological specificities of constructing 'Third Spaces' by its transcultural protagonists and draws upon the reformulation of the crisis of identity as a necessary way of carving out these 'Spaces'. Houda Benyamina's *Divines* (2016) offers a new take onto the *banlieue* filmmaking by protagonising pro-active and individualist female French youth of West-African and North-African origin. Céline Sciamma's *Girlhood* (2014) is referenced in the conclusive analysis of *Divines* (2016) to draw upon their shared cultural agency of re-drawing the France's cultural map.

The further cinematic analysis of these films is based on the methodological model that was developed in the previous chapter. This model has been specifically developed for the transcultural examination of a film that protagonises and gives voice to a European 'cultural other'. The elaborated five lines of the analysis (Positioning of transculturality, Transcultural spatiality, Indicators of transformation, Film reading methodology, Critical stance of the filmmakers and transcultural resolution of the film) function as supporting methodological inquiries and the formulated discursive analysis questions are posed to the films. The methodological dimension of Film reading methodology is incorporated in the discussion of the questions that derive from other four methodological dimensions. For instance, within the methodological line of Indicators of transformation, such transcultural indicators as transformation of identity (emerging new or re-negotiated current identifications) and transforming subjectivities (changing visions, mentalities, behaviour and lifestyles without yet inciting the questions of belonging or identification) are addressed and the question is asked as to how this transformation takes place. What is the path that the protagonist goes through in the process of this transformation and what are the visual and discursive means (in reference to Film reading methodology) that are used to illustrate this transformation on screen.

The findings of the film analysis that provide insights for the re-consideration of multiculturalism are further referred to in the last section of this chapter, (3.3.) *Transcultural implications for multiculturalism as explored through filmic discourses*.

3.2 Discursive analysis of the selected films.

3.2.1 Transcultural negotiations in emerging multicultural societies: *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) and *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002).

3.2.1.1 *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) by Maite Vitoria Daneris.

El lugar de las fresas (2013)
Documentary.
Directed by Maite Vitoria Daneris.
Production: Italy, Spain
Languages: Italian, Spanish, Arabic.

A profound narrative composed from the excerpts of everyday life routines of three different, yet inextricably unified characters, is what lies in the basis of *El lugar de las fresas* (2013), or, in Italian translation, *Il luogo delle fragole* (2013)⁴⁰. It is an Italian-Spanish documentary which centres on the life of Lina, an elderly peasant and very hard-working woman from the north of Italy. Lina lives and works on her own field in the outskirts of Turin with her husband Gianni and then goes every day to sell her strawberries and other agricultural products in one of the world largest open-air markets in the centre of the city - Mercato di Porta Palazzo. This is where one day she encounters Hassan, a young Moroccan immigrant who comes to Italy in search of a job, and the story develops further as a closer human relationship between the characters evolves.

El lugar de las fresas (2013) is an interesting work to consider for transcultural analysis for several reasons. First of all, it refers to the phenomena of contemporary international migration into Europe and draws attention to how Italy, although being a 'new host', has already become a multicultural society. Yet, it also embarks on the political and social discussion of the situation and status of immigrant subjects in European nation states, and foregrounds the need to explore the implications of this multiculturalism and its transcultural possibilities through the examination of interpersonal relationships. The question of new waves of immigration is topical on the European political agenda, and is usually referred to as problematic, or a 'pathology'. Whereas mainstream discourses address immigration as a social emergency to be resolved, and the image of an 'immigrant', especially non-Christian Muslim

⁴⁰ An English title of the film is *The Strawberry Place*, however I have opted to use the original title *El lugar de las fresas* throughout the dissertation. The reason for this choice is that *El lugar de las fresas* is an official title of the documentary which is also used in this version across international film festivals.

immigrant, is generalised and simplified to either a voiceless and passive or menacing and aggressive subject, *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) engages with this discourse from a critical position. The film contextualises the friendship that evolves between Lina, a Catholic Italian 'native', and Hassan, a Muslim immigrant in Italy, within its socio-cultural and socio-political environment. And through this story, *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) delivers a perspective which does not only defy generalisations but also contributes to framing immigration as an opportunity. It also explores and emphasises the role of egalitarian attitudes in a transcultural encounter and in the development of transcultural communication and exchange.

The cinematic discussion of this film thus focuses on the analysis of the framing space (Porta Palazzo market as main film setting) in which the transcultural encounter takes place and transcultural communication develops. What is emphasised is the functioning of an individual agency as an important contextual factor which contributes to the transpiring of framing spaces into 'Third Spaces', and thus opens the paths for the confident negotiation of transcultural practices and transforming subjectivities.

Positioning of transculturality.

El lugar de las fresas (2013) was filmed by independent Spanish cinematographer Maite Vitoria Daneris during the period of 6 years in the region of Turin, Italy. The filming started from a motivation of its director to create her first feature documentary; that was an idea with which she came to Italy in search of artistic inspiration. Daneris was shooting a scene at the Porta Palazzo market and the arrival of Lina marked the beginning of the story that would later evolve into this documentary. As the director comments, she went to the market to shoot a scene for one short film for which she needed the place to be empty (Cinestel, 2014). Lina was spotted as the earliest vendor at the market, the first one who came to Porta Palazzo at around 2 a.m. and started to prepare the produce at her stall. She caught the attention of the filmmaker, who describes at the beginning of the film how interesting as a character Lina was and how curious the filmmaker became to find out more about her. This is how the story begins. Daneris introduces the main filming location Porta Palazzo market with a wide angle shot as it shows how busy it becomes during the day. And then the next shot introduces Lina with her morning preparations before the market opens to the public. Daneris uses her own voice-over to introduce the main filming location. As she talks about the market, she emphasises its rich history of being a place of encounter and convergence of different people and different cultures. This introduction sets up the story that will develop for the rest of the film. On the one hand, it contextualises the filming location in its national socio-

cultural environment, and on the other hand it makes a reference to the cultural diversity which is part of this environment.



Figure 1. Food market Mercato di Porta Palazzo. Still from *El lugar de las fresas* (2013).

An important question to ask here is, what is the role of the contemporary Italian national socio-political context in influencing the ('native' public) attitudes towards this cultural diversity? More specifically, what is the political background in relation to current cultural dynamics incited by international migration? Italy has been experiencing increasing international migration in the recent decades. And the main feature of the contemporary dynamics of cultural diversity in the country is that the attitude of the 'natives' to this diversity is defined by dividing forces that influence people's perception towards (non-European) immigrant/immigrant descent subjects. On the one hand, there is a strong anti-immigration backlash which is led and represented mainly by a right-wing party Lega Nord⁴¹, although the general position towards immigration on the political level has always⁴² been defensive. On the other hand, there is a pro-immigrant counter-pressure, expressed predominantly by interested economic groups who represent migrant-dependent business areas. However, there is also a certain inter-influence between these dividing forces. Whereas within the years, the necessity of immigrants for Italian labour market became recognised, and this is the sphere where they "are accepted and economically integrated – albeit in 'subordinate integration' -

⁴¹ In English as, The Northern League.

⁴² Meaning since immigration became a question of a political debate in 1980s.

cultural and religious integration is a theme that is rarely discussed and is never considered carefully" (Ambrosini & Caneva, 2010). Ambrosini and Caneva have thus summarised the situation of immigrant subjects in Italy:

"Migrants are accepted as silent workers, with a specific and well defined position in the labour market, when they are useful but they do not demand rights or social benefits. By contrast, if they become a visible community and demand public and institutional recognition, the opposition to them increases" (2010).

In order to justify this situation, the political opposition to immigrants is projected through the populist political discourse that emphasises the need to 'defend social order' (immigration is related to illegal activity, crime, etc.) and to preserve 'the Italian cultural identity' (Ibid.). Indeed, Italy continues to consider itself as relatively homogenous in cultural and religious terms society⁴³. Having been historically shaped by Catholicism, the nation's relationship with other religions is shaped within the perception of differentiation, and this differentiation is especially conflictive in reference to Islam (Ambrosini & Caneva, 2010). Thus, this element is important to consider when addressing the analysis of a transcultural encounter between a Catholic Italian 'native' and a Muslim immigrant subject in Italy. The interplay between the cultural elements in this specific encounter is pre-constructed within framing Muslim subject as 'the other', even before a transcultural encounter takes place.

Additionally, the projection of the necessity to defend the national social order is reflected through restrictive immigration laws (the majority of which were adopted during the Berlusconi's ruling coalition) that have limited labour rights and complicated the procedure of obtaining the citizenship. The influence of this rigid legislation is illustrated later in the film as projected through a bureaucratic experience that Lina and Hassan go through. As Lina decides to make Hassan officially her partner in the strawberry business she runs, the complications arise with the paperwork and they are confronted with a difficulty to obtain a proper license, while this situation points to how the national laws restrict the labour rights of immigrants.

Furthermore, increasing international migration in Italy is a separate contextual factor which provokes the change in the socio-cultural dynamics within Italian society. And these dynamics are illustrated in *El lugar de las fresas* (2013). As a result of international migration, the transformation of cultural fabrics of the country is reflected through its urban environments, and the city of Turin is one of those physical environments to illustrate the

⁴³ Whereas 'native minorities' are given a 'special statute' with guarantees of their great autonomy (Ambrosini & Caneva, 2010).

changed cultural dynamics. In more specific terms, Porta Palazzo market functions as a micro reflection of the new cultural diversity in Italy.

Yet, what is interesting about Daneris' introduction of Porta Palazzo market is that although she refers to it as a point of encounter for different cultures, she does not emphasise recent transnational immigration as a new impetus for an urban transformation in cultural terms. Porta Palazzo is described as something that has always been diverse and has maintained the confluence of different peoples and cultures throughout centuries. It is just that in different periods the configuration of this diversity has varied, but the idea of the market as the centre which has been serving not only as economic, social but also a cultural hub has always been in action. To support her discourse in the history of the market, Daneris incorporates old footage of Porta Palazzo which she received from the archive of the Municipality of Turin and added to the film at the post-production stage (Torino Film Festival). Certainly, if we refer to internal cultural differences in Italy and the fact that in 1950s and 1960s Turin was a popular destination of internal migration from the southern cities of the country, as emphasised by Petrini (2012, ix), a picture of the city's internal multiculturalism is projected. Today, the market reflects the results of the recent increasing migration movements from North Africa and the Middle East (we see later in the film people of different races, and people wearing clothes that serve as cultural markers such as, for instance, women wearing hijabs), both individuals and families with children coming to buy products at the market. It becomes a place whose cultural fabrics is changing, but whose connecting and unifying spirit is always present. In this view, the specifics of Porta Palazzo's functioning as a transcultural space will be analysed in the following section of Transcultural spatiality.

Transcultural spatiality.

As Daneris continues filming Lina, she becomes part of her protagonist's life. The filmmaker discovers Lina's world, with her house, her husband, her hard work on her agricultural fields, full of strawberries, celery and other green vegetables and herbs, and her everyday road trips from San Mauro, the 'town of strawberries', to the food market of Porta Palazzo and back. "Home, church, work"⁴⁴ (*El lugar de las fresas*, 2013) is how Lina summarises her life in three words, and this comes as an exact description of her everyday unchangeable routine.

⁴⁴In original subtitles in Spanish as, "Casa, iglesia, trabajo".

All these spaces - Lina's fields, her house, and her working place Porta Palazzo market - are framing spaces in which a transcultural connection between Lina and Daneris develops. What is meant here by transcultural connection is evolving relationship between the subjects following a transcultural encounter. At the same time, the inquiry into these spaces prepares the ground for the exploration of their functioning within a transcultural encounter with Hassan.



Figure 2. Lina and her fields. Still from *El lugar de las fresas* (2013).

After Hassan enters the frame, the director starts to give us more hints on the existence of cultural diversity within the city. Daneris brings into the frame the characters of different descent, who speak multiple languages and wear different cultural outfits. However, these hints are not directed at emphasising the differences, but rather function in multiple directions towards presenting this diversity as a normality, as a natural part of human lives which includes a variety of behaviours, lifestyles, situations, and results of mobility. One of the examples of this diversity is connected to acquiring new intercultural knowledge when the spectator finds out that the Arabic name Said means 'cheerful' in a scene in which Hassan talks to a little boy who came to the market with his mother to buy fruit. Another example is also about intercultural knowledge, this time based on an observation that is made by Lina. This example reminds us about the power of being able to listen, to observe and to learn from each other. In one of the scenes, Lina makes a comment on the amount of celery that she has sold during Ramadan, and mainly to Muslim women. She sits and observes that she has sold much more celery than usual, and that this is during Ramadan. Lina says she found out that

celery gives men more sexual potency, so she concludes that women buy celery and add it to the food that they make for their husbands in order to compensate for the lack of energy during Ramadan.

Rather than delineating the symbolic borders between people or groups of people, all these examples that refer to cultural diversity present themselves more as a production and negotiation of intercultural knowledge. This knowledge does not construct the oppositional differentiation but looks at the 'difference' as an essential part of the society, as interesting and explainable. This is the kind of difference that is individualised to be present in names, cultural everyday practices and special occasions rituals.

At the same time, the presentation of cultural diversity dynamics makes a reference to the framing spaces in which a transcultural encounter takes place, thus emphasising the functioning of these spaces as 'Third Spaces' of first modality. Mercato di Porta Palazzo is an open market that is one of the central settings of the film, and functions as a transcultural space within itself, ready for transcultural connections to be activated and negotiated; ready for the symbolic borders to be crossed and be re-constructed. The transcultural encounter between Lina and Hassan as well as short scenes of intercultural communication at the market confirm the functioning of Mercato di Porta Palazzo as a 'Third Space' of first modality, a liminal space where cultures connect. In this view, it is important to examine the specificity of its functioning as a platform for transcultural connections, and to pose the question as to what the possibilities and contextual configurations are of Porta Palazzo's becoming a 'Third Space' of the second modality, a space where hybrid cultural positions emerge.

"Living in Europe, I found that markets offered an entry into the social world of my adopted country" - writes American researcher Rachel E. Black in the Introduction to her book *Porta Palazzo: The Anthropology of an Italian Market* (2012a, p.1). And this is exactly what the protagonist filming location of the film is about. The food market of Porta Palazzo is a symbolic platform which serves multiple cultural functions, one of which is a connector with the social world of Turin. From the very first shots it is shown and talked about as one of those points in which a diversity of people coincides. Porta Palazzo, on the one hand, epitomises the whole city as we see there all the varieties of people coming to sell and buy their produce. But on the other hand, it serves as a separate entity with its particular atmosphere and its specific functional properties which facilitate its ability to be a basis for the confluence of different people, events and situations.

The food market of Porta Palazzo, which is considered one of the largest open-air markets of Western Europe, is certainly more than just a market. It is a meeting point, it is a

dynamic platform for cultural and knowledge exchange, which resonates with the Rachel E. Black's argument on that, "(i)n an age of supermarkets and online commerce, markets offer unique social and cultural opportunities and bring together urban and rural worldviews" (2012b, abstract). On the one hand, this can be referred to as the market's function as a promotional 'space' of a more sustainable food consumer culture. Yet, the objective of 'sustainability' can also be projected to the field of culture and human relations in general, promoting a greater openness of people to people, an attitude which does not pre-construct generalised perceptions about other people because of their origins but which is interested in getting to know different people and make judgments by personalities, not by cultures, or by a stereotyped perception of certain cultures.

If we think back about the Council of Europe's recommendation for more open spaces in urban areas, an aspect that was discussed in Chapter One, it advocated the necessity of more open spaces as platforms for facilitating an intercultural dialogue. Resonating with this recommendation, Mercato di Porta Palazzo becomes a space that is constructed in more "open-minded" ways and can be contrasted to such comparatively single-minded areas as, for instance, supermarkets, in which the communication between the vendor and the clients is minimal and predominantly formal. But it takes a combination of Porta Palazzo as a transculturality-minded space and its participants as transculturality-minded people to have a basis configuration for a transcultural connection. And here we have Lina and Hassan who are both this kind of 'participants' who met and started to develop their collaboration, their work together and friendship in this market, which is this transculturality-minded kind of place.

Therefore, apart from functioning as a 'Third Space' of the first modality, it also appears as a 'Third Space' of the second modality. The market's 'conversion' into a transcultural abstract territory, which foresees cultural transformation, is activated by Lina and Hassan together (through their mutual individual agency of openness for intercultural communication and exchange). As Lina and Hassan develop their close working relationship and their friendship, their interaction is followed by a transcultural exchange and a negotiation of the self. There is no specific scene which fixes the moment when Hassan makes a pact to work with Lina and sell her produce together at her store at the market. We hear people saying in the background that a Moroccan man was searching for a job the other day and then we see he starts to work with Lina and how they collaborate from the very beginning. Yet, we can assume that it is Lina who has taken the first step towards their collaboration since it is her who hires Hassan to work. In this way, the individual agency factor from Lina's side has played a determining role in their transcultural connection to happen and in the further

development of this connection. It should be emphasised that Lina's readiness to initiate this transcultural relationship is marked by her readiness to make this relationship a part of her life. As selling her produce at the market is an integral part of Lina's daily life, Hassan becomes an equal part of this life too.

As the story evolves and the protagonists live their lives, Daneris manages to emphasise certain defining moments that become essential to understanding how Lina's and Hassan's friendship and mutual trust to each other develop. After Hassan has worked for some time at the market, we see that one day Lina takes him in her van to her 'strawberry place' and thus Hassan obtains an additional job working at the field, too. In the very beginning we can see that Hassan is very surprised at the quantity of work to be done and wonders how Lina manages to do it all by herself. But soon Hassan realises that the work, and specifically working in the field, is Lina's credo of life or even her life essence in general, and thus starts to understand her and accepts Lina's passion to be gradually rendered to him too.

We can further see how Hassan becomes essential part of Lina's life and how a strong bond develops between them. In the scenes where Lina shares her family private space with Hassan at her household (they frequently eat together in Lina's house, talk to each other about the things not related to work, and share moments altogether - Lina, Hassan and Lina's husband Gianni), we can see that they establish an enduring relationship that is not only work related anymore. It seems like they have become an extended family.

Apart from the market Mercato di Porta Palazzo, other film locations such as the road from the market to Lina's field by her house, and the actual field together with Lina's household - all become locations of action and interaction. They all function as both 'Third Spaces' of the first modality in which transcultural encounter occurs and 'Third Spaces' of second modality in which transcultural exchange between Lina and Hassan takes place. All these spaces become "frontiers", to use Weber and Rausch's concept, "geographical zones of interaction between two or more distinctive cultures" (1994, p. xiv). And they are not only physical, but also symbolic transcultural spaces.

Furthermore, the limited number of main film settings and the camera choices that underline their significant roles (static camera and sometimes slightly moving camera, long takes and selective close-ups) allow the spectators to explore these locations as extremely intimate, private, and cosy areas. We are as if inside those locations too, in the place of the filmmaker or as a present observer. The camera work of Daneris which is able to communicate all the intimacy of the scenes permits us to conclude that only through the "inside view", a view of curiosity, of a focused interest, we are able to understand the

experiences and the cultural connections of the protagonists in work. And this can also be interpreted as a message to understand how cultural interactions come into being and what kind of perspective is required to observe and analyse these interactions.

The key observation is that neither Lina nor her husband Gianni see Hassan as 'the other'. The awareness of cultural specificities and difference is present, but this awareness is not used as a tool of differentiation. It is rather used as a tool of extending the cultural knowledge. For instance, if we take an example of hijab as a pre-constructed deriving cultural point, we can say that there is a pre-existent perception of the Moroccan culture even before a Moroccan travels/migrates to the North. This constructed perception is that of Muslim women in Morocco cover their heads with headscarves in public spaces. When Hassan shows to Lina a picture of his mother wearing a headscarf inside the house, in the kitchen, Lina expresses her surprise as she didn't imagine this practice to be followed in the private space (in the household). Yet, Lina takes this knowledge as an individual characteristic of Hassan's mother, and preserves this moment in her memory as an association with Hassan. Later in the film, when Hassan is back to Morocco for some time, in one of the scenes it is shown how Lina remembers him and expresses how she feels, in a very interesting way. While sitting in her kitchen, Lina covers her hair with a bandana, as if it was a headscarf, and from her attitude and face expression it is visible how she misses Hassan. Lina's 'headscarf' functions as a personalised symbol associated with Hassan's mother who also wears it in the kitchen, and thus, Lina, in a certain way, connects herself to Hassan. In this view, the headscarf does not carry that much a connotation of a cultural element, but a connecting small detail which functions as a memory or nostalgia and as an element of perceptive re-connection. In this view, the individual agency as a positioning factor in approaching transcultural connections and carving out 'Third Spaces' becomes defining. As Lina's attitude is guided by a non-essentialist perspective, she rejects the 'othering' of Hassan as an immigrant or as a representative of Muslim culture. As their transcultural relationship develops, it surpasses the pre-constructed borders between the 'Catholic self' and the 'Muslim other'. Their intercultural communication is conducted within a 'Third Space' in which the borders become flexible from the very first point of their transcultural encounter. This facilitates their learning from each other and of the confident negotiation of the acquired transcultural knowledge in relation to their selves.

The practice of video recording and video sharing function as another projection of a 'Third Space' in the transcultural friendship of Lina and Hassan. When Hassan goes back to Morocco, he keeps in touch with Lina as it is understood by both that he is coming back and

will continue working with her. While in Casablanca, he sends to Lina photos and personalised videos, on which he makes a tour especially for her. Lina thus gets acquainted with Hassan's world there, a symbolic cultural window that she enters as Hassan sends her videos recorded on his phone. Video recording and video sharing (sending) as virtual practices for sharing the living intimate spaces become an equation or a response to that Lina was sharing her family private space and her working space with Hassan when he was in Italy. This mutual sharing both ways frames the discursive symbolic spaces in which their transcultural communication is always two-sided. It is not only Lina's 'world' which is important in this communication but also the 'world' of Hassan is. At the same time, the processes of cultural inter-influences with these two 'worlds' take part in the 'worlds' modifications and transformations.

Indicators of transformation.

The appropriation of the cultural difference and transforming subjectivities.

(Cultural) transformation can be considered a focal and foreseeable element of the film. While the global capitalist transformation is in the background⁴⁵, cultural transformative processes on an individual level are taking place. This is not to say that we can identify major changes in cultural identities and practices of the protagonists that derive from a transcultural encounter and from a continuous transcultural communication which has developed, as it has already been pointed out, into a transcultural friendship. Time is required in order to draw a comparative analysis of the change in self-perceptions 'before' and 'after' migration. Furthermore, as we look at the life trajectories of immigrant subjects, each case has to be analysed individually. Nevertheless, several conclusive points related to transforming subjectivities (modifications in behaviour, self-expression, modes of communication, cultural practices) can be noticed from the cultural meanings that the film creates. In reference to a point of transcultural theoretical framework, specifically to the mutual inter-influence of the participants of a transcultural encounter (the 'cultures' of 'the us' modify the 'cultures' of 'the others' and vice versa), the modifications are negotiated through several behavioural patterns and within the self-reflexive discourse.

⁴⁵ Lina's 'strawberry fields' and open-air markets can be referred to as symbols of 'difference' in a globalised world, as exceptional spaces in the era of mass consumption, rapid production and supermarkets.



Figure 3. Hassan and Lina on the way to 'Strawberry Place'. Still from *El lugar de las fresas* (2013).

Regarding behavioural patterns, there is one scene that projects an element of cultural mimicry⁴⁶ and emphasises its role in transcultural transformation. When Hassan and Lina are on the road and Lina is driving the van, an interesting form of conversation develops between the two. Not only does it project a very warm atmosphere which communicates to us a strong friendly relationship between the protagonists as they make jokes about each other, it also reveals how Hassan experiments with accommodating himself in the Italian society. They argue in a joking way about Lina's driving and Hassan starts to gesticulate and speak with an intonation and manner that can be characterised as the way of arguing by an Italian man. On the one hand, it is an intentional mimicry that he adopts for this specific situation, that is to say to express his disagreement with Lina in an enduring way. But on the other hand, as he feels comfortable in being open and being himself with Lina, this allows him to try on the 'Italian' way of communication/self-expression and signal the aspirations and possibilities for his cultural accommodation.

In contrast to Mark's definition of mimesis as "a form of yielding to one's environment, rather than dominating it" (2000, p.141), Hassan performs mimetic appropriation of an Italian way of communication in the form of the proactive initiative rather than in conforming terms. As the symbolic 'Third Space' inside Lina's car and in Lina's company forms the basis for the

⁴⁶ I am referring here to mimicry as a tool for cultural appropriation, as adhering to selective modes of behaviour or modes of expression rather than a mimicry as a colonial power subversive strategy as theorised by Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994).

comfortable and confident articulation of this initiative, this 'space' functions as a facilitator of any experiments of cultural appropriation that Hassan decides to undertake, while Hassan's cultural experimentation indicates to his transforming subjectivity.

Critical stance of the filmmaker and transcultural resolution of the film.

As a first-hand narrative *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) also contains another important feature which testifies to its rich transcultural character. The director herself is a newcomer in the society of Italy as she travels there with an intention to stay for some time and then stays for much longer. Daneris is transculturally-minded herself. Not only she is able to speak from multiple cultural positions (both as a European and a 'foreigner' in Italian society herself); she also manages to set and direct the camera from multiple perspectives (Lina's perspective, Hassan's perspective, and the director's point of view) and reflect transculturality-in-development through these perspectives. Through understanding and the projection of an egalitarian relationship with the subjects of her film, Daneris is able to catch and communicate the most detailed implications - cultural, social and personal - that are involved in the relationships between her subjects.

This is the first feature documentary made by Daneris and it received recognition at the festivals and screenings in Italy, France and Morocco (Torino Film Festival 2013, Sguardi Altrove Film Festival in Milán 2014, International Festival of Italian Cinema in Annecy 2014, Festival international du cinéma d'auteur de Rabat 2013). At the International Film Festival of Turin, *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) won two awards for best documentary film ("UCCA" and "Gliocchiali di Gandhi" 2013 awards). In 2014, the film received the Grand Prix Du Jury for best documentary film at the International Festival of Italian Cinema in Annecy, France and First Prize for the best documentary film at the Sguardi Altrove Film Festival in Milán, Italy (*El lugar de las fresas* Web site). In September 2016 the documentary started to gain visibility and recognition in Spain (and also more attention on the international film scene). After its screening at the film festival Alcances, the "Festival de Cine Documental de Cádiz", it was awarded the best documentary prize "Caracola al Mejor Largometraje Documental" as well as Cima Prize for the Best Female Artist-Director "Premio Cima a la Mejor Cineasta" (Alcances 2016). It also won a Special Mention Interculturality Award at Cine Invisible Film Festival, celebrated in Bilbao, - "Mención especial Interculturalidad" (2016). The jury of Alcances Festival provides the following explanation for awarding a prize to the film, "being a documentary of pure characters with an exciting cinematic work that marks a hopeful course

in the drama experienced by immigrants in Europe"⁴⁷ (Espinosa, 2016). Therefore, the narrative components of the film appear to be topical in contemporary European societies, as the questions of immigration, the situation of refugees fleeing from the war-torn areas, as well as the rise of popularity of right-wing parties (in comparison with previous years and even previous decades) are headlining the public discourses agenda in Europe. As *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) delivers a pro-immigrant point of view, it critically engages with the discourses of immigrant's stigmatisation. On the one hand, it doesn't only point to discursive but also to institutional restrictions that influence the situation and positioning of immigrant subjects in European nation states. And on the other hand, the film emphasises the power of an individual perspective (towards an intercultural relationship) in countering any confinements that are constructed within cultural or political borders.

In this view, the film provides some suggestions on how the analysis of cultural diversity in Europe is to be re-approached and what important factors need to be taken into account in this analysis. While the created cultural meanings on screen hint at the combination of the contextual (e.g. Mercato di Porta Palazzo as a platform for transcultural communication, as a 'Third Space' in its first modality) and phenomenological conditions (proactive, initiative and unprejudiced attitude of the subjects such as Lina and Hassan) for transcultural connections to evolve (and for the 'Third Space' in its second modality to develop), these implications frame a better understanding of the complexity and contextual interdependency of transcultural developments. A particular attention is thus brought to the role of physical (urban) spaces as important frameworks for a transcultural encounter in new multicultural societies. As a European cultural and urban space, Porta Palazzo has been historically defined as a space with transcultural potential, with its physical and social properties of an open-minded platform, ready to facilitate an intercultural interaction. Conceptually, it is transculturality-minded, and as its functioning as a 'Third Space' is activated by transculturality-minded Lina and Hassan, their interaction, exchange and mutual inter-influence contribute to Porta Palazzo's performance as a space for transcultural existence.

Finally, the fact that *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) is a documentary which refrains from constructing or complementing the story through the arranged testimonies of its heroes and heroines, makes it an interesting work beyond the classical formats of the documentary film genre. This narrative choice of the director and the further exploration of its formal

⁴⁷ In original text as, "por ser un documental de personajes en estado puro con un trabajo cinematográfico emocionante que señala un rumbo esperanzado dentro del drama que sufren los inmigrantes en Europa".

possibilities turns out to meet the necessity of focusing on the subjects in the closest way possible and examining all the small details and complexities that shape their relationship with each other. As the story develops, the actions, the behaviours and the everyday routines of the characters become the actual testimonies without words as they communicate and frame their meanings in non-descriptive linear language. This formal approach can also be considered a form of transcultural inquiry. It emphasises how a closer observation and a focused interest become a necessary tool in understanding how transcultural connections come into being and analysing the subjects' experiences in the process of developing these connections.

Conversely, the formal structure of the following film to be discussed *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés/The Other Side... An Approach to Lavapiés* (2002) is completely different to the one of *El lugar de las fresas* (2013). Here, in *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés/The Other Side... An Approach to Lavapiés* (2002), the director intentionally chooses to focus on testimonies prioritising them as the main instrument for composing the story of the film, as a tool of intercultural interaction and inquiry with the aim of collecting as many diverse perspectives as possible. The testimonies and the dialogues play a significant role and we will further see how the application of different strategies, including cinematic techniques, is used in this documentary to produce equally important cultural meanings.

3.2.1.2 *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés*⁴⁸ (2002) by Básel Ramsis.

El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés (2002)
Independent documentary.
Directed and produced by Básel Ramsis.
Languages: Spanish.

The director of *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002) Básel Ramsis is an Egyptian-born screenwriter and filmmaker who came to Madrid in 1998. According to the audiovisual school where he teaches, Ramsis has been working transnationally and directing films in Egypt, Spain, Lebanon and Palestine (EICTV). *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002) (thereinafter as *El otro lado...*) is his first feature documentary which became the result of documenting and narrating what was surrounding him at that moment. As the

⁴⁸ In English as, *The Other Side... An Approach to Lavapiés*. However, throughout the text I will be using the original title in Spanish.

main idea of the film is directed at providing the insights into the lives of major immigrant groups of the neighbourhood of Lavapiés such as Chinese, Latin-Americans (Ecuadorians, Colombians, Argentines, Cubans, Brazilians), Bangladeshi, Arabs, and sub-Saharan Africans, it can be considered an important documentary research on the contemporary multicultural becoming of Spain as well as on specific dynamics of new multicultural societies in Europe.

Further cinematic discussion of the film will contextualise the story within its socio-political and socio-cultural environment. It will refer to the questions of discursive 'othering' of immigrants in Europe, and in Spain in particular, as it is addressed and criticised in the film, and will subsequently introduce the neighbourhood of Lavapiés as the framing space for transculturality and a transcultural setting in itself.

Positioning of transculturality.

As I have discussed in Chapter One, the construction of European 'cultural others' has been a process taking place within multiple discursive frameworks, both on national and supranational levels. Contemporary exclusion of the immigrant subjects of non-European descent from the framework of the 'common European identity' as well as from the 'national imaginary' is based on the constant reinforcement of intrinsic cultural differences both in historical perspective and within the framework of contemporary socio-political developments. Within the historical perspective, the examples are the development of Eurocentrism and the rhetoric of the 'clash of civilizations'⁴⁹ which have become a basis, directly or indirectly, for many contemporary nation-centric discourses on immigration and integration of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects. In many Western European societies where right-wing parties are gaining popularity, discursive stigmatisation of the 'non-Western cultures' is on the rise. The discourses delve into the abstract statements on the incompatibility of cultures, a danger to Western civilisation from the cultures from the East and the necessity of the defence and preservation of Western democratic values against the 'arrivals' from the non-West. Furthermore, fears around a symbolic cultural danger go together with preoccupations in regards to high rates of delinquency as a 'delinquent' is frequently identified with an 'immigrant', both in political and media discourses.

⁴⁹ The thesis of 'clash of civilizations' was developed by Samuel Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1997), according to which the world is divided into religious and cultural civilizations whose ideas and values enter into a conflict with one another. At the same time, Huntington's theory emphasises the civilizational conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims as the most 'prevalent'.

At the beginning of his documentary, Básel Ramsis makes an introductory reference to the theoretical narrative of the 'clash of civilizations'. The director does so by denouncing Huntington's theory that marginalises non-Western cultures and constructs non-Westerners within a framework of cultural stereotypes. Together with his filmmaking team, Ramsis thus makes a contextual statement against the Western-centric construction of cultural binaries and gives the spectator a hint of the deconstructive exploration of the film. At the same time, as the film makes a reference to this point of discursive 'othering' and marginalisation of non-European immigrants, it recognises the presence, the power and the interference of the essentialist/monocultural perspectives.

Divisive pre-conditionality, that is to say cultural labelling in the form of contrasts, accompanied by generalised stigmatisation is what is entrenched and reinforced in the European societies that are experiencing the transformation due to continuous immigration (but also emigration) processes. This labelling is exemplified through the discourses in which cultural practices are divided and categorised by groups, ethnically or nationally separated, pre-conditioning a specific cultural identity for individual members of these groups and discarding the role and impact of constant cultural inter-influences and of personal trajectories and choices. The effect is that this labelling interferes into the transcultural communication and plays a major role in the lack of such communication. *El otro lado...* (2002) explores this question with a genuine sensibility. The film illustrates that, as the stigmatising labelling and essentialist perspectives persist, this situation not only impedes and interferes into transcultural communication but also into the development of transcultural practices and into the recognition of transculturality.

Ramsis intends to show that there is an alternative perspective within which to address the life of an immigrant - without pre-conditioning their personal trajectories and choices on the ground of ethnic origin. And this is the perspective within which the filmmaker approaches his subjects. Transcultural developments as communicated in the film are thus framed within an inquiring research into the contextual background, both socio-cultural and socio-political environment, of the space in which immigrant subjects reside and interact (among each other and with the 'natives'). Ramsis approaches the lives of the immigrant community members through dialogue and observation, and then combines their stories and perspectives into an edited compilation of images, acts and perceptions that create a multifaceted picture of transcultural life in Lavapiés.

The main emphasis will be on the question of openness and restrictiveness of urban spaces as platforms for the development of transcultural connections as well as the role of

discursively pre-constructed and politically-maintained stereotypes and prejudices in configuring and even defining the functioning of those spaces.

The choice of the setting (the filming location) is not arbitrary as it can be characterised as one of the most symbolic places in the city that illustrates the impact of the recent transnational international migration on the cultural fabrics of Spain, in this case of Madrid. Furthermore, the composed shooting material of the documentary assists in creating a historical picture of the transformation-in-process of the city's urban, cultural and social landscape. We can see how, within the framework of a rapid increase in cultural diversity, the physical and symbolic spaces intertwine in order to negotiate their old and new functions.

Within the recent two decades, Lavapiés has become the neighbourhood with the highest number of foreign born population in Madrid. As Castillo-Villanueva points out, multiple factors have contributed to this configuration. Starting from the late 1990s-beginning of the 2000s (which was also the period of sustained economic growth in Spain), the place has become attractive for immigrants because of its low-budget rent prices of housing and its close proximity to the centre⁵⁰ (2014, pp. 85-88). This area has been especially suitable, although not exclusively, for the workers in the construction sector who came to Spain in response to the 'boom' in the industry and its necessity for a manual, predominantly cheap labour. Many things have started to change rapidly since then, the major one related to the attraction of the national and international business capital to the area and the initiation of the processes of gentrification. The rent housing prices have started to increase and different business offices have started to appear in the area. This is the socio-cultural context in the process of transformation in which the film is set and which contributes to understanding the circumstantial conditions of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects' lives and the impact of ongoing changes. Furthermore, a generalised, predominantly negative image of an immigrant subject that is present at the time of filming in the society is another part of the contextual picture to consider. With the testimonies of immigrant subjects and those of the 'natives', *El otro lado...*(2002) demonstrates that the stereotypes about immigrants form part of the Spanish national consciousness and their influence on transcultural possibilities is significant.

⁵⁰ Before the increase of immigrants' arrivals the area was for a long time mainly populated by aging local population since most of the younger population moved to the peripheries to live in bigger houses (Castillo-Villanueva, 2014, p.87).

Transcultural spatiality.

The transcultural analysis of the film further examines the protagonists of *El otro lado...*(2002) in their framing spaces, and as the characters are approached through the camera lens and dynamic editing. The further emphasis is on the exploration of a public space of Lavapiés as a 'Third Space'.

The introductory scene which lasts for more than three minutes is an edited sequence of a combination of different types of shots (close-ups and more angular shots to show the context in the streets). This edited compilation shows different people of different ethnic backgrounds in the streets and urban public spaces of Lavapiés. A Muslim woman in hijab, a collective of men of multiple distinct origins, an African descent women in a traditional outfit are just a few among several examples. The camera movement selects to focus with close-ups only on those people who look distinguishably non-native Spaniards, and later the editing work results in the intermixes of these images with the focus on 'native' Spaniards, in one shot also showing older Spanish men sharing the benches with 'non-natives'.

The cultural meanings here are created visually rather than verbally. The camera works as an observation eye, while at the same time it directs the eye of the spectator towards the elements that point to the cultural diversity in the area and note the rich character of this diversity. All in all, Lavapiés appears as a lively place with a vibrant busy life, in which the spaces of interaction and leisure overlap with the spaces of work (we see construction workers, bartenders, shop-assistants, street performers all in action and interaction). The editing work of this scene is not only an important element in communicating the 'cultural landscape' of Lavapiés, but also in emphasising small relevant details that introduce the results of transnational immigration (e.g. "Carniceria Islamica Tanager" reads the sign of one of the shops). Editing manages to render the piece of reality in terms of cultural composition and intercultural interaction while at the same time engages and invites the viewer to ask the questions of who the participants of this interaction are.

Dynamic editing continues throughout the film, as individual and group stories and testimonies are combined with other testimonies, shifting from one to another, trying to build as complete a picture as possible from the variety of ideas, opinions and perceptions. Entertaining music interludes do not simply complement or balance the main critical narrative line but function as essential parts of the whole narrative themselves. They contribute in their own way by telling the stories through the music, the lyrics and through the performances and performers.

Music is both in the background (the scenes where construction workers paint the interiors of the future offices) and in the foreground (as the multicultural team of musicians gather in the street or in a bar to play a prepared or improvised piece together). With the latter, the film skilfully demonstrates how enriching the cultural diversity is. The variety of multiple artistic expressions in music and performances reflect both a hybrid collaboration and interpretations that are more authentic to the place of origin of the performer and which serve as manifestations on intercultural exchange (singing songs in the mother tongue of an immigrant subject). All the live performances caught on set reflect different configurations of transcultural connections, but what most of them have in common is a scarce, although not absent, participation of 'natives' in the gatherings and intercultural exchanges between people of different origins. What we also see is that the Spanish world exists in the immigrants' tastes and relationships even without having a lot of direct contact with Spaniards, and is projected through the language and songs sang in Spanish.

As voiced by a Spanish film director Carlos Iglesias (*Un Franco, 14 Pesetas*, 2006; *2 francos, 40 pesetas*, 2014) in one of his interviews, "(t)he language [of the host society] is the most necessary thing for any migrant. It opens doors to you (...), without it the interaction is impossible"⁵¹ (Sierra Del Sol, 2014). In *El otro lado...*(2002) we see the residents of the neighbourhood of Lavapiés of different origins, with different migrant experiences, different circumstances and time of residence in Spain. With the exception of few recent arrivals, they all speak Spanish. In terms of self-identification, almost all the respondents identify themselves with the neighbourhood as their home. Although the word 'home' is not used explicitly, the belonging to the quarter and the local attachment to it is verbalised in most of the interviews. In this view, Lavapiés can be referred to as a framing space both in its physical and its symbolic understanding. In the first case, it is projected through, for instance, the public spaces in the streets, bars and small shops in which the residents interact on a daily basis, a dance school and social clubs of interest. And in the second case, Lavapiés becomes a space of reference of constructed/constructing belonging, of developing local identity of its immigrant/immigrant descent residents.

Since the public spaces of Lavapiés can be referred to as the contextual platforms for transcultural encounter, it is thus important to analyse how they become 'Third Spaces'. In other words, how does Lavapiés appear as the point of reference for immigrant protagonists, as their physical and symbolic area of affiliation? What do the protagonists specifically refer

⁵¹ In original text as, "El idioma es lo más necesario para cualquier emigrante. Te abre unas puertas (...) sin él es imposible relacionarse."

to in order to interpret their affiliation with the neighbourhood? How do they position themselves and explain their local identity? In order to address the contextual factors that contribute to converting framing spaces into 'Third Spaces', we should emphasise the role of the individual agency element. The construction of a 'Third Space' is to be related to the subjects themselves and the relationships that they construct in regards to their contextual spaces. Many informants talk about the neighbourhood as a place with special atmosphere of togetherness and close social interaction, which points to its transcultural potential. Lavapiés is denominated as a refuge and a comfort zone, where people of different origins find a common platform for interaction and elaboration of cooperative spirit. "Here people take refuge (...) In other places the same people would not find mutual points of understanding", voices one of the protagonists, then adding "because it is a place where people get together"⁵² (*El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés*, 2002, 00:21:30 - 00:21:50). This provides Lavapiés with a determining role in facilitating the formation of interethnic solidarity and transcultural communication that happens here in a natural way. In this view, Lavapiés becomes a 'Third Space' of the first modality: it facilitates a transcultural encounter to take place and anticipates the possibilities of transcultural exchange and the subsequent development of transcultural practices. But the question that arises for transcultural research is if the streets of Lavapiés become 'Third Spaces' of second modality. In other words, whether and how do they become symbolic spaces in which multiple cultural identities are comfortably negotiated and re-invented?

This question appears to be complex because different contextual influences interact in configuring Lavapiés as a space for transcultural communication and as a potential space for transcultural negotiation. Let us discuss these differing dynamics of how Lavapiés articulates its transcultural function, according to the film. On the one hand, this happens through networking as the neighbourhood is referred to as a networking place for transnationals. Specifically, it functions as the platform of establishing contacts that are based on guidance, information exchange and advice for newcomers. This element becomes possible as a combination of the contextual factors of international migration and individual agency. On the other hand, Lavapiés develops as a project of a multicultural work-in-progress with different factors that interfere in the process of integration (attitudes and prejudices). Self-protection thus appears as a reaction to prejudices and racism: "If there is racism and xenophobia you are

⁵² In original text as, "Aquí se refugia la gente (...) Que en otros sitios ellos así mismos no se comprenderían, (...) porque es un sitio donde se está juntando gente."

forced to close up and protect yourself"⁵³ - is voiced in the film by a female protagonist (*El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés*, 2002). Lavapiés is thus a favourable space of transcultural communication because of its existing vibrant cultural diversity, and the openness of many of its residents for interaction. Nevertheless, it is also a space that impedes transcultural communication because of segregation and marginalisation, both discursive and actual.

In this way, contextual influences (socio-cultural dynamics of the contextual environment, socio-political climate and its projection on an individual level) define the construction and transcultural configuration of 'Third Spaces' in Lavapiés. Although not explicitly expressed but compiled as a recurring element in the stories told and opinions expressed, the segregation and marginalisation (as projected on an individual level through the attitudes towards immigrants) can be understood as the most influential factor that impedes the transcultural communication and thus the construction of 'Third Spaces'. The immigrants feel and know that they are looked down upon, that the attitude to them is projected within double standards, while at the same time they are blamed for the 'failures to integrate' and self-enclosurement in ethnically-divided ghettos. "The policy directed at the marginalisation of the immigrant (...) has begun many years ago. It considers the immigrant as an inexpensive guest labour"⁵⁴ (*El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés*, 2002), - voices one of the protagonists. As one of the Spaniards expresses his opinion that the local authority of the neighbourhood hasn't done anything to accommodate and integrate the immigrants, another one manifests strong prejudices about crime or disorder based on ethnic origin: "I'm not a racist, but whoever arrived here is more bad than good"⁵⁵ (Ibid.). Media and political discourses on immigration and immigrants are understood as the sources, usually working on an unconscious level, that have facilitated the construction of this kind of prejudices and perceptions within the framework of cultural essentialism. The specifics of these perceptions can be found at different levels of intercultural communication, but the most important point to consider is that they can actually prevent the initiation of this very communication.

In spite of this, Ramsis intends to break some of the entrenched imagery nurtured by media images and discursive essentialist constructs in people's perceptions. The film hints at different trajectories, different backgrounds of Lavapiés residents at the same time contrasting certain opinions with actual happenings. One of the sequences combines two different shots,

⁵³ In original lines as, "Si hay racismo y hay xenofobia, te tienes que cerrar y proteger".

⁵⁴In original lines as, "La política de marginación al inmigrante...ha comenzado hace un montón de años. Considera al inmigrante como una obra de mano barata, invitada".

⁵⁵In original lines as, "Yo no soy racista, pero aquí ha venido más malo que bueno".

and subsequently illustrates their contents as related with one another. The first shot shows a couple of friends, who are immigrants themselves and who express their opinion about the other immigrants' readiness for intercultural interaction. While they talk about which group is more isolated within themselves, they say that, in their opinion, the Bangladeshi are reluctant to interact because of the religion (Islam) which draws them from connecting with people of other religions. And then the second shot immediately deconstructs this opinion-perception by framing and focusing on the Bangladeshi man interacting with a man of African origin as they play and sing together in an improvised street performance for their friends. This second scene stands as a reflection of intercultural exchange and learning from each other, but at the same time, it dismantles the cultural essentialist statement of the previous scene. The combination of these scenes thus produces a deconstructive meaning and shows that the immigrant subjects themselves fall within the construct of Orient/Occident divide. They do so by drawing upon the pre-constructed cultural prejudices and blaming on certain cultural identities for restraining from the dialogue.

With the compilation and contrasting of these two scenes Ramsis illustrates the possibilities of intercultural connections. This thus indicates to the potential of Lavapiés streets' development into 'Third Spaces' of second modality (intercultural exchange and transcultural negotiation are initiated). Yet, this development is restricted in the view of essentialist perspectives that persist and (politically) maintained.

In a different formal technique of editing and narrative composition, Ramsis arranges certain similar testimonies together, through which a bigger picture is compiled to communicate the simplifying character of media negative images and the constructs of confrontations. Once again, the emphasis is on the fact that the labelling of immigrants (constructed and reinforced by media) impacts the possibility of interaction. The protagonists discuss several examples of labelling, such as a Dominican or Cuban woman marked as a 'prostitute', a Colombian associated to a 'drug trafficker', a Chilean or a Peruvian as a 'pickpocket'. While circulated in mass media, these constructs influence and impact the way how immigrants are perceived in their host society. The relationship between delinquency and immigration is denounced as the former is expressed as related to the poverty and lack of social bonds and not the origin. On the one hand, it may seem that such stigmatised culturally-bounded constructs are issues of the past and that contemporary European societies, especially within urban cosmopolitan environments, have overcome this kind of narrow-minded thinking. However, the preoccupations of immigrant subjects about these type of

constructs and their desire to stand against and deconstruct them signifies that the immigrant stigmatisation as a process in itself is entrenched and continuing.

The projection of this narrow-minded stigmatised perception can be seen in open racist attitudes towards the immigrants and the actual manifestations of these attitudes through certain campaigns. As shown in the film, there has been a cycle of demonstrations organised under the motto "decolorear Lavapiés" (de-colour Lavapiés). Furthermore, an expression of non-acceptance of 'coloured' has also been observed through the actions of the city's institutional body. As the neighbourhood theatre group Friks, based in the local Sala Triángulo, created different critical works in relation to immigration, the Regional Government of Madrid started to cut the pre-planned funding because, as a member of the group said, "they do not like the cultural policy that we develop in our art space"⁵⁶ (*El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés*, 2002). These contextual elements of social attitude are individual and collective projections of a bigger socio-political environment and discursive 'othering' of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects. They configure the framing space in which they develop as a close-minded space fearful of a transcultural encounter, of cultural mixing and the further development of transcultural exchange and transformation. The creation of 'Third Spaces' becomes uncertain and unlikely here within these essentialist perceptions.

More open transcultural perspectives do exist, though, and facilitate transcultural development, but these perspectives are obliged to share their functioning spaces with monocultural perceptions, whose power is overwhelming. Urban (public) spaces of Lavapiés thus become 'Third Spaces' of second modality only fragmentarily as they function both within the dimensions of openness and restrictiveness as the platforms for the development of transcultural connections. The transcultural communication and interactions take place on a daily basis but are conditioned by personal proactivity and open-to-difference attitude of the participants of this interaction. Figure 4 illustrates a scene which recurrently appears in parts to show a friendship between a 'native' Spanish woman and a man of an immigrant descent while they sit on the bench and talk about music and life in general. In one of their scenes the woman expresses her dislike of Julio Iglesias' music while the man tries to understand the reasons by asking her questions, as their conversation continues in the direction of looking for the tastes in music that they would share. The director intends to underline the friendship between these two characters as they appear frequently throughout the first half of the film.

⁵⁶ In original lines as, "no les gusta la política cultural que estamos dando en nuestro espacio".

The composition within *mise-en-scène* is framed only for them two and they are in focus against the background of Lavapiés' streets. However, together with the emphasis on their friendship, the scene also points out the rarity of such transcultural ('native'-'non-native') relationship in the neighbourhood of Lavapiés. As they re-appear in the film several times and are the only protagonists in the streets of Lavapiés who represent this 'native'-'non-native' transcultural communication, this indicates that such situation is not common⁵⁷.

Furthermore, the role of discursively pre-constructed and politically-maintained stereotypes and prejudices defines whether the interaction is to be initiated at all, as we see from the testimonies of several Spaniards how far away they are from the reality of immigrant paths, even if they live in the same streets and share the same public spaces. In response to the lack of awareness by 'natives' of the lives of immigrant subjects, Ramsis manipulates with the composition and the camera techniques to propose how this question can be resolved. Most of the *mise-en-scène* shots focus on a certain individual subject, and the other shots that focus on



Figure 4. Still from *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002).

a group of people positioning this group within one frame. As the protagonists express their opinions and tell their stories, the frame is static which allows examining all the elements within *mise-en-scène* and seeing the subject/the subjects in their environment (the protagonists sitting in a bar, on the bench in the street, or in their household). Further, after

⁵⁷ Another later scene, shows the family of a Muslim man and a Spanish woman, filmed in their household. The emphasis here is on the testimony that the woman gives on the secular character of their family. She says that although she was raised Catholic and her husband is Muslim they will not make their son opt for one religion or the other, that he will be raised in a secular family environment and then will decide himself in the future whether he wants to take up any religion or not.

having positioned the protagonists within a wide frame, the camera zooms in. This technique can be interpreted as suggesting that the analysis of diversity should start with examining the context/the background of the analysed subject and then develop into approaching this diversity with a closer and closer look at individual characters.

Indicators of transformation

While presenting the contemporary story of Lavapiés, Ramsis takes the audience into the past, in order to communicate the 'transcultural memory' of the neighbourhood. A tale about the origins brings attention to cultural transformation as an organic yet contextually-influenced process. The tale refers to the different cultural fabrics of Lavapiés in the past emphasising the fact that the area was mainly populated by Jewish people. "Many years ago, different people lived here. Every Saturday they were going to the synagogue. The one that is now the church of San Lorentzo where you go every Sunday"⁵⁸ (*El otro lado...Un acercamiento a Lavapiés*, 2002, 00:14:43 - 00:14:53) - says the tale told by a female voice-over.

These scenes are the elements of discursive preparation that point at the transcultural memory of the neighbourhood of Lavapiés on the one hand and hint at the new transcultural possibilities in present days on the other. At the same time, they foreground the inevitable character of transforming subjectivities and the role of the socio-cultural environment and individual agency (including transcultural perspectives) in facilitating the process of this transformation as an acceptable event.

Indeed, whereas the stories and self-reflections of protagonists indicate their transforming subjectivities, their transculturality has little space for recognition in the socio-cultural and socio-political spaces dominated by nation-centric and essentialist perceptions. In this view, as the 'non-recognition' (of belonging, transcultural developments and cultural hybridity) persists, how do the immigrant protagonists respond to this 'othering' through their self-reflections, interactions and joint intercultural activities? Let us discuss the two elements of the question in more detail.

Despite their long-term residence in Spain and mastering of the Spanish language, we can conclude from the film images and stories that there is a lack of social recognition of immigrant residents of Lavapiés as a rightful part of Spanish society, or even of the district area on a local level. In reference to the influence of discursive 'othering', this 'non-

⁵⁸ In original text as, "Hace muchos, muchos años aquí vivía la gente distinta. Cada sábado iban a la sinagoga. La que es ahora la iglesia de San Lorentzo donde tú vas cada domingo".

recognition' of their belonging is projected through the construction of an imposed identity of an outsider, a marginal, a delinquent, and 'the other' enclosed in his/her ethnically-delimited ghetto. This construction resonates with the expressions of symbolic injustice of what Nancy Fraser called "authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one's culture [...] and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions)" (1997, p. 14).

If we think back to *Las Cartas de Alou* (1990) by Montxo Armendáriz, one of the first Spanish film productions that addressed the question of interculturality, it also depicts the prejudices towards 'non-European' immigrant subjects revealing the impeding role of these prejudices for transcultural communication and transcultural relationships. The main protagonist of the film is Alou, a Senegalese young man who comes to Spain in search of a job and in spite of many difficulties learns the language, embraces the local lifestyle and accommodates himself in his host society. However, his continual positioning as an undesirable 'visitor' leads to that Alou refuses to fight for being recognised as part of his adopted 'home' and accepts his 'otherness':

- Neither you nor I will ever be from this country.
- Why?
- Because we will not be accepted ... You see those people. I feel their stares fixed on me. I have felt them many times...⁵⁹ (*Las cartas de Alou*, 1990).

In contrast to Alou's 'rendition', this is not the case of the protagonists of Lavapiés. They fight for their recognition - they stand for themselves on a daily basis against their discursive stigmatisation and one day they express their discontent in the form of a strike. They explain their positions, tell their stories and contemplate what role, in their opinion, the prejudices and stereotypes play in their lives, and their self-perceptions and self-identifications.

The protagonists intend to carve out their recognition through their own stories in which they contemplate their feelings of belonging to Lavapiés. As they reflect on their lives in the neighbourhood and their relationships with other inhabitants of the area, they create their cultural (and transformed) selves in the process of telling their stories. Although anonymous, the characters are distinguishable and centralised, and as they are positioned as such, they become active storytellers whose voices are important and relevant. Most interestingly, *El otro lado...* (2002) accentuates the heterogeneity of the neighbourhood embracing as many heterogeneous images and narratives of multiple subjects as possible. Some scenes serve as

⁵⁹In original dialogue as,

- Ni tú ni yo nunca seremos de este país.

- ¿Por qué?

- Porque no nos aceptaran... Ves esa gente. Yo siento sus miradas clavadas aquí. Las he sentido muchas veces...

the preparatory ground for forging the cultural meanings of hybridity, and address the imagery of cultural transformation as an indispensable part of dealing with transcultural knowledge. In the first half of the documentary there is a scene in which a man of African descent tells a tale of "Uba Opa", which is a 'myth' about a 'black man' who 'became white'⁶⁰. It is a cultural allegory which renders through the mythical story an event of cultural transformation. 'Black' and 'white' stand for cultural markers rather than race categories emphasising the dynamics of culture. Not only practices, but also tastes, opinions and beliefs are understood as subjects for transformation, as the elements that reflect a cultural change that people can go through in the course of their mobility and as they have moved and/or lived between several socio-cultural environments.

This scene illustrates how the immigrant protagonists of Lavapiés start to construct themselves as transcultural subjects by telling and interpreting the stories of their identities' trajectories. They reflect upon their past and current experiences from the cultural positions that they occupy now. But at the same time, they examine their anterior cultural positions, which shows that a cultural transformation in the form of transforming subjectivities and transforming identities has already taken place. The most interesting in this transformation is the specificity of their cultural hybridity, or cultural hybrid positions that have been developed.

The specificity of this cultural hybridity, as the film images and the protagonists' stories further indicate, is a transcultural process of a new form of belonging construction by immigrant subjects. This belonging is articulated through the affiliation with Lavapiés as a locality of living and interacting. And, on the other hand, for the immigrant protagonists Lavapiés is their symbolic environment of their cultural hybrid identity construction; it is a space of reference and belonging to an international community now residing in the area. The identification of the immigrant/immigrant descent subjects with the neighbourhood is built through the links between the residents of the area, regardless of their ethnic origin, and in reference to the physical (public) spaces and spaces of enunciation (circles of interests, working relationships) within which these links are established and developed further. At the same time, the construction of the transcultural identity of a Lavapiés resident goes through

⁶⁰ A tale of Uba Opa as told by a man in the film can be summarised as the following: A 'black man' lived on the one side of the land together with other 'black people'. Then one day he decided to cross the sea to reach the island on the other side of the land where 'white people' lived. On the road, he met different fish which warned him that if he continues swimming it is inevitable that he will become 'white'. A man didn't get scared and continued swimming and when he arrived to the other side of the land, and looked in the mirror (the water mirror), he realised that he 'became white'. Then he thought that if he goes back, that is to say crosses the sea back to where he came from, he will 'become black' again. But when he arrived 'home', his wife told him that she noticed that he had 'become white' (*El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés*, 2002).

the contradictory dynamics of negotiation. On the one hand, their belonging is not accepted as part of a bigger social and national space, and on the other hand, they have developed a strong attachment to the neighbourhood as their homes, and for most of the protagonists Lavapiés is the only home they have.

The multiple circles within which the relationships of the protagonists are built are signs of how their socio-cultural belonging to the place is articulated. These circles all intertwine and are usually constructed across personal interests, from music to sport and other activities discovered in the process of communication. In the course of building transcultural relationships, people do not prioritise the difference or what separates and distinguishes them in supposedly irreconcilable cultural terms. What they do is enjoy the fact that they can make an exploration of what they can learn from each other and build friendships across the common interests: e.g. across music and learning to play different (traditional) musical instruments, across art, dance as an art, as an intercultural learning tool, and a physical activity, and activism - social activism, human rights. All these activities are practised as transcultural connections by *El otro lado...* (2002) protagonists. Furthermore, the film re-affirms that these engaging activities (with 'native' and other migrant locals) arise from a natural human necessity for socialising, making contacts, living your life in an unrestrictive way as a social being.

Critical stance of the filmmaker and transcultural resolution of the film.

What has to be taken into consideration is the fact that B́asel Ramsis is actually the first foreign-born director who has made a film about immigration in Spain. Before him the Spanish films on the transnational immigration have been made and continue to be made by 'native' Spaniards⁶¹. Praising on the film's timely appearance in Spain, the web portal *Parainmigrantes* has observed that "(i)n response to the lack of presence of the immigrant community and its problems, both in films and in other media, it was necessary to address this

⁶¹ To name several titles of the films that address immigration and the increasing cultural diversity in Spain, the list includes *Las cartas de Alou* (1990) by Montxo Armend́ariz, *Flores de otro mundo* (1999) by Iciar Bollain, *Princesas* (2005) by Fernando Le3n de Aranoa, *La Plaga/The Plague* (2013) by Ne3s Ballus. Another film director Imanol Uribe can be considered a special case in this regard, as he was born in San Salvador, and is of Basque ancestry; later he moved to Spain and one of his films addresses the questions of immigration and racism in Spain (*Bwana*, 1996). The major part of his films though focus on the socio-political situation in the Basque country (e.g. *La muerte de Mikel*, 1984, *Días Contados*, 1994).

space (this environment) but through the eyes of the immigrants themselves"⁶² (Azahara Parainmigrantes, 2011).

In comparison with other cinemas that originate in European countries with a long tradition of immigration (such as German-Turkish, British-South Asian and French-Maghrebi filmmaking), in which the immigrant-descent filmmakers have been directed films for decades, in Spain, as a 'new host' this is a very new and recent phenomenon. In this view, Ramsis' film also appears to be a very important event. On the one hand, it poses a question as to the significance of hearing a voice of immigrants, as they are sharing their experiences. And on the other hand, it prepares the foundation and encouragement for other immigrant/immigrant descent filmmakers in Spain to express themselves and tell their stories. After Ramsis few other films by immigrant/immigrant descent subjects themselves have been made. The examples are *Si nos dejan/If they let us* (2004) by Ana Torres from Argentina and *La puerta de no retorno* (2010) by Santiago A. Zannou, a Spanish director of Benin-Spanish mixed origin⁶³. These films remain outside the mainstream cinema circles, while they are also produced and distributed beyond the commercial cinema market. However, their independent position and the freedom of aesthetics and narrative choices can also be regarded as an advantage in terms of delivering authentic stories.

The production of *El otro lado...* (2002) has been entirely independent, that is to say no public funding was attributed to its making at any stages of filmmaking process. The reason why the film is so open, uncensored and, in a certain way, critical of media and public authorities as well as of the persistence of stereotypical constructs in general is related to its production independency. Being independent in this regard allowed the filmmaker to address the immigrant subjects positioning in Lavapiés within a certain free approach without looking for commercially-viable aesthetics and a polished narrative composition.

In one of the interviews, Ramsis also mentions that after the post-production the distribution rights for *El otro lado...*(2002) were sold to the Filmoteca of AECID for 5 years, which helped to exhibit the film in different places of the world. As Ramsis say, it was even screened in India and Guatemala (Romero, 2010). The fact that the film 'travelled' around the

⁶² In original text as, "Ante la falta de presencia del colectivo inmigrante y de sus problemas, tanto en películas, como en el resto de medios artísticos y de comunicación, era necesario afrontar el espacio pero a través de los ojos de los propios inmigrantes (...)"

⁶³ *Si nos dejan* (2004) depicts the cultural diversity fabrics in Barcelona through the testimonies of the city's immigrant residents that come from fifteen different countries, and *La puerta de no retorno* (2010) is a documentary which centers on a journey, in which the director accompanies his father, to his homeland Benin, and in which he discovers his roots as his father seeks reconciliation with his family there.

world is proof of the globally- and glocally⁶⁴- viable cultural and social meanings that it carries within itself. It also points out to the film's transcultural character as an exploration of a complex reality around the phenomenon of immigration as well as the accommodation/'integration'/incorporation of cultural difference.

Ramsis only arrived in Spain two years before he started to film his documentary project, a fact which allowed him to look at the situation in the neighbourhood and its cultural dynamics through several 'lenses'. On the one hand, it is his perspective of a transnational immigrant himself which makes the film an authentic and complex in-depth work. And on the other hand, he manages to look at Lavapiés and its cultural dynamics with the eyes of curiosity and the ability to produce a non-judgmental representation of the testimonies as they are. This 'eye of curiosity' has been extended to the audience, which helps both to develop a critical perspective throughout the film and at the same time hints at the necessity to keep this kind of perspective in relation to all that is said on culturally enclosed and marginal.

Basél Ramsis does not go deeply into the lives and trajectories of each of his characters, he does not make a profound research of all the background and contextual factors that influenced each character's current situation or have been influencing their current everyday experiences. But by compiling as many varied perspectives from immigrant subjects living in Lavapiés as possible, he delivers an extensive picture of a heterogeneous fabrics of cultural diversity in the area. And this helps him to create an important counteractive point against the popularly- (and media) constructed stereotypical and generalised representation of an immigrant subject in Spain. The narrative and compositional choice to work with and juxtapose against one another the multiplicity of perspectives creates an insight into how and why of the analysis of cultural diversity and of transcultural understanding. This multiplicity of perspectives with the inclusion of the perceptions and opinions of 'the native' Spaniards all together stands out as a critical force which functions against any reductive representation based on cultural essentialism, or any discourse which reinforces monocultural conventions.

In this view, the film opens new paths to multiple perspective angles from which the questions of cultural diversity, multiculturalism and transculturality in Europe are to be (re-)addressed; while the approach of (re-)addressing is to be critically-engaged and aimed at drawing a bigger and heterogeneous picture of the cultural complexity and the role of its contextual specificity. Furthermore, Ramsis appropriates the position of the insider in the

⁶⁴ 'Glocal' is a portmanteau word of globalisation and localization, which, in more broad terms, means reflecting or characterised by both local and global considerations. The term was popularised in the 1990s by sociologists Manfred Lange, Roland Robertson, Keith Hampton, Barry Wellman and Zygmunt Bauman.

process of exploration of Lavapiés through the act of filming. He intends to present it the way it is, without polishing the images or dividing the narratives into the categories of 'good' and 'bad'. And this approach, also projected through dynamic editing, grants Ramsis the role of a collaborator, of an artist who acts as a mediator, as a connector himself between his protagonists on one side of the screen and the spectators on the other. While many Spanish films on immigration⁶⁵ look at their protagonist immigrant subjects from the somehow patronising position of a privileged 'native' Spaniard specifically focusing on the integration-success - integration-failure dichotomy, *El otro lado...* (2002) breaks this unbalanced relationship by getting into the 'fieldwork' of what the specificities of cultural dynamics and increasingly multicultural Spanish society are. Thus, the exploration of the lives of transcultural subjects is approached through a transcultural perspective. This means that the examination of the immigrants' cultural identities is conducted within non-essentialist frameworks of inquiry, without preset or pre-constructed cultural positions, prejudices or expected actions or behaviours. The director invites a (Spanish/'native') spectator to get to know the immigrant subjects beyond the binary differentiation between 'the self' and 'the other' and through distancing from a pre-supposed general awareness of the latter.

Owing significantly to this approach, the produced cultural meanings say a lot about transcultural possibilities. The specifics about the relationship between what can be and what is perceived as a transcultural contact, namely a contact between the representatives of different cultures, can be concluded from putting all the fragments of the film together. *El otro lado...*(2002) poses the question of what is the future of the current and increasing cultural diversity in Spain. Taking the Madrid's central neighbourhood of Lavapiés, it asks the question on the implications of the increasing cultural melding in Spanish society and what can be changed about the attitude and perceptions in this regard. A decade after the film was shot, a study conducted in 2011 has illustrated that the cultural diversity in Lavapiés has increased even further, with now more than 31 % of transnational people among the total population of the district (Schmidt, 2012, p. 3). In other words, the cultural diversity has proliferated (while some people left, others arrived), and the process of current and further transcultural developments is irreversible. What is needed is the recognition of the complexity of these developments, their personal and contextual specifications, as well as the necessity to de-construct and prove harmful the generalised judgments and stereotypes of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects. Thus, there is a necessity for more open and re-

⁶⁵E.g., *Las Cartas de Alou* (1990) by Montxo Armendáriz or *Princesas* (2005) by Fernando León de Aranoa.

considered multicultural policies which would take into consideration transcultural implications that derive from this diversity.

The film reveals discursive 'othering' and stereotypes as the most essential factors that play a determining role in transcultural dynamics and as result in the 'integration' processes, while the latter are to be reconsidered within non-assimilationist frameworks. What has to be taken into account in the approaches towards transcultural developments is the role of entrenched constructs of cultural essentialism and marginalisation of 'non-Western cultures'. As illustrated via *El otro lado...* (2002), there are disparities between what is imagined or perceived and what is actually practised (what goes against the imagined and the perceived). For instance, the static nature and irreconcilable borders between cultures that define cultural practices vs. flexible cultural borders and interaction between and combination of different cultural practices and interpretations are worth mentioning. We can see that cultural labelling by discursive (media) work is so entrenched and powerful that it makes immigrant subjects believe in these constructs themselves. It becomes inevitable that immigrants too fall into the stereotyped and essentialist cultural frames; for instance, by perceiving other groups as closed and reluctant to interact (reluctant for transcultural communication). When we see that the representatives of the group that was 'stigmatised' is actually interacting with people from other groups and thus actively participate in transcultural communication.

In this view, the produced cultural meanings provide the insights on (the necessity of) re-considering the obsolescence of cultural essentialism as well as the discriminative nature of marginalised images-creation of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe. While taking into consideration the persistence and the power of essentialist constructs, *El otro lado...*(2002) reveals the instances that de-construct cultural borders by showing interaction and cultural transformation in process. The film thus indirectly asks the question as to the ways, paths and possibilities of re-configuring the restrictive and closed-minded European (urban) spaces to open-minded and transculturality-friendly; and points out to the crucial role of applying a transcultural perspective on institutional, individual and collective levels for the purpose of this re-configuration.

3.2.2 Self-construction across 'Third Spaces' by immigrant descent subjects: *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011) and *Divines* (2016).

3.2.2.1 *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011) by German-Turkish Yasemin Şamdereli.

Almanya-Welcome to Germany (2011)
Fiction.
Directed by Yasemin Şamdereli.
Production: Germany
Languages: German, Turkish.

Transcultural cinematic analysis of *Almanya - Welcome to Germany*⁶⁶ (2011) will be preceded by a short introduction of German-Turkish cinema and its discursive imagining of German-Turkish subjects and their cultural identities.

German-Turkish cinema is well known because of its widely-acclaimed representative and most outstanding German-born film director of Turkish origin Fatih Akın. While the main theme of almost all of his films is the depiction of the lives of German Turks, his work is diverse and multifaceted in terms of approaches towards these depictions. Starting with the tragic melodrama *Short Sharp Shock/Kurz und schmerzlos* (1998) and up to the light comedy *Soul Kitchen* (2009), both set in multi-ethnic Hamburg - director's place of birth, the exploration of identity crises has become both an experiment and a part of genre search in his films. It even seems like Akın has been developing German-Turkish cinema into a certain movement with specific traits at the crossroads of diasporic, transnational and world cinema. What Akın has managed to develop on a personal level is his own filmic language which has taken inspiration from both German and Turkish cinema, as well as from the popular genre of melodrama, whose possibilities have been masterly examined via his narratives⁶⁷. In this view, his cinematic style is transcultural in itself drawing from and combining the elements from the conceptualised national cinemas and appropriating and refurbishing genre cinema.

To look a few decades back, German-Turkish cinema, or at least in its early form as a cinema about Turkish migrants in Germany, emerged in late 1980s, with *40 qm Deutschland/40 Square Meters of Germany* (1986) and *Abschied vom falschen*

⁶⁶ Original title in Turkish and German as, *Almanya - Willkommen in Deutschland*. 'Almanya' is Turkish means Germany.

⁶⁷ See more on this specific subject in "The Subjects of Fatih Akın's Melodramas: A Genealogical Reading Through the Films of RW Fassbinder, Yılmaz Güney and Atif Yılmaz" by Emir Benli (2016).

Paradies/Farewell to False Paradise (1989) by Tevfik Başer. And these were actually and literally the first German-Turkish films to have been made⁶⁸. German-Turkish cinematic representations of the 1980s were coined the "films of victimization" (Burns, 2007, p. 358), the characteristic feature of which were German-Turkish women as protagonists, illustrated as the subordinated and oppressed by their Turkish traditions, thus constructed as victims of their own culture who could have been rescued only by "free and liberated" German culture. The preservation of the protagonists' Turkishness serves as an obstacle on the way to their integration within German society⁶⁹. These films thus generate and/or reinforce the pre-constructed labels of the contradictions between German and Turkish 'cultures' as well as the stereotypical image construction of a German Turk as a culturally dislocated victim.

However, it wasn't until the late 1990s-early 2000s that the new generation of German-Turkish filmmakers started to reshape the discourse of victimisation that was pertinent to the early films. This reconstruction has become possible as second generation directors were bringing their personal agency and their experiences as bilingual and transcultural subjects to the fore. As a response to the stereotypical images in earlier German-Turkish films, particularly the depiction of the dichotomy and confrontation between the German culture vs. Turkish culture, in which the latter is explicitly marginalised, new generations of German-Turkish directors have intended to refute this division by dealing with cultural hybridity in their films. One of the prominent examples is Berlin-Kreuzberg-born Neco Çelik with his *Alltag* (2003). The film's story is framed within the negotiation between multiple cultural

⁶⁸ Although made by German 'native', Hark Bohm's *Yasemin* (1988) can also be related to German-Turkish cinema as its main protagonist is a Turkish descent young woman, and the story evolves around her identity crisis negotiation in German society.

⁶⁹ Both of films represent Turkish women who preserve their Turkish identities, "refusing" to integrate into German society. In *40 Square Meters of Germany*, preserving happens because of the lack of communication with the outer world and, as a result, lack of communication and interaction with Germans: the female protagonist Turna is locked alone in her room by her husband for months. In *Farewell to False Paradise*, identity invariability is shown by Turkish immigrant Elif's nostalgic feelings for home when she attempts to reproduce an "imaginary homeland" in prison. Additionally, these films depict Turkish women as victims of their Turkish traditions: they are confined to closed spaces by the fault of their husbands (confinement in a room in the first case and being sentenced to prison after killing the husband in the second case). Elif's passage from life with her husband to her life in prison is depicted as crossing the symbolic border between humiliation, where she is abused, raped and terrified by her husband, and liberation, which she finds in prison through communication and interaction with German prisoners. Prison is framed as a protection zone for her personal development in contrast to the rigid Turkish values, with which she grew up. The reason for the domestic imprisonment of Turna by her husband Dursun explicitly arises from the patriarchy of rural Turkish culture and from Dursun's belief that by locking his wife in the room he is protecting her from the immorality of German society, in which he himself is unable to adapt. Although the most part of the film illustrates the suffering of Turna, Dursun can also be referred to as victim (as depicted in a film), as prisoner in the society that is foreign and even alien for him where he cannot integrate because the values of German society come into contradiction with the values of his Turkish culture.

traits and practices from Turkish, German mainstream and African-American hip-hop culture in Germany, and thus draws upon the exemplification of hybrid cultural lifestyles.

Fatih Akin is the one who has responded to the dichotomy of earlier films by countering the representation of Turkish immigrants as cultural outsiders. *Kebab Connection* (2005) and *Head-On* (2004), in particular, are considered expressions of transcultural practice that challenges the stereotypical meanings of German-Turkish cultural identities. As Petra Fachinger writes, "[Akin] playfully undermines persisting stereotypes of Turks (...) by reversing character roles" and "undercutting audience expectations and genre conventions" (2007, p. 243). Akin's *The Edge of Heaven* (2007) and *Soul Kitchen* (2009) provide interesting insights into the lives of the representatives of German-Turkish community too. While addressing the issues of lost home nostalgia and crisis of identity, they also project the atmosphere of the celebrations vs. uncertainties of multicultural societies and position the protagonists at the centre of the quest for their place in these societies. *The Edge of Heaven* (2007), in particular, operates with multiple transcultural spaces, their construction and functioning beyond the symbolic and actual national borders, while taking the process of German-Turkish 'Third Space' construction to Turkey.

Rich in cinematography and in their diverse narratives, Akin's films can be regarded as important deriving points in cinematic research on the contemporary German-Turkish diaspora in its transformative cultural and social context(s). As Esen writes in her dissertation on contemporary Turkish-German literature and film, "Akin's character portrayals not only extend the concept of Germanness [and Turkishness⁷⁰] but also destabilize a presumably authentic Turkish-German identity" (2009, p.10), a point which indicates to the ongoing transcultural negotiation in his films. What is meant here by the destabilising of Turkish-German identity is the refusal of the director to make a final closure in an identity negotiation of his protagonists. That is to say, his protagonists do not reach a certain point in which their Turkish-German hybridity is celebrated as a final resolved crisis of identity. Instead, Turkish-Germanness or German-Turkishness of his protagonists is an unresolved continuing project. And German-Turkish subjects constantly contextualise their identities across multiple social situations that reveal both affinities and contradictions in their lives and cultural practices. This destabilization is a manifestation of the dynamic process of identities construction and

⁷⁰ While quoting Esen, Benli adds in his dissertation 'and Turkishness' (2016, p.1), which enlarges the functioning impact that the portrayals of Akin's characters have. They do re-negotiate Germanness, Turkishness and German-Turkishness through their visual and discursive work.

re-negotiation and points out to the complexity of the lives of transcultural subjects, in this case German-Turkish subjects.

Positioning of transculturality.

Introducing Şamdereli's *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011): the film's transcultural novelty and contextual positioning of its transcultural meanings.

Yasemin Şamdereli is a representative of a newer generation of German-Turkish directors and her work *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011) deserves special attention in continuing the discussion of the aforementioned questions. First of all, the reason is the film's semi-biographical nature and the reference to the narrative's actual historical background. It is a warm-hearted comedy that tells the story of Turkish guest worker Hüseyin Yılmaz and the experiences of his extended family in Germany. The film follows the experiences of three generations of German-Turks and, although remaining a fiction, is based on the history of Turkish immigration to Germany in the 1960's and on the life story of two sisters, film director and screenwriter Yasemin and Nesrin Şamdereli. Moreover, the film is especially interesting for transcultural analysis because the director intends to discover new, more optimistic, implications of transculturality in her cinematic self-representation and because her work results in an alternative to Akın's melodramatic and open-ending style. By applying more mainstream filmic conventions with a resolved ending, *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011) formulates its proper style of narration in which the main storytelling role is played by humour, (self-)irony and positive resolutions of complex identity questions.

German-Turkish diasporic cinema plays a major role in contributing to and defending the cultural positioning of German-Turkish subjects. Cinematic self-representations can be important platforms for diasporic identities negotiation and for understanding the contextual socio-cultural frameworks of this negotiation. In regard to this, *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011) (thereinafter *Almanya*) is a significant contribution not only to imagining the lives of German-Turkish hybrids in contemporary Germany, but also in referring to the historical background of Turkish immigration and the visualisation of transforming cultural identities of Turkish immigrants throughout time.

The film's transcultural meanings are positioned within the contextual influence of multiple discursive and socio-political frameworks. Previous cinematic representations of German Turks (an overview of which is discussed above), German national media, political and literature discourses on German-Turkish subjects, as well as political discourse on

immigration and integration in general are among these positioning frameworks. In reference to the image and identities construction in German-Turkish diasporic self-representations, Şamdereli's work occupies a clear transcultural position. It creates the characters that are actively engaged in a transcultural quest on the one hand, and counteract the positions of victimization and those of cultural uncertainty, on the other. The film manages to resist both the binary cultural oppositions and stereotypical stigmatisation that are pertinent to the German-Turkish cinema of late 1980s and the irresolvable crisis of identities that can be found in most of Fatih Akın's films. *Almanya* is confident enough to communicate and negotiate cultural identities as hyphenated in their own right, showing transculturality as feasible and cultural hybridity as recognised and thus 'confident'. In this view, its transcultural narrative and discussion are positioned beyond the pre-constructed cultural and national (heritage) points of being Turkish vs. being German. The film introduces the 'conflict' only to show it as a perceptive pre-construction of being allowed/expected to be only one or another and immediately reveals this pre-construction as exclusionary and limiting. For instance, this is exemplified via one of the first scenes in which a 6-years-old Cenk, a grandson of Hüseyin, is asked by his school teacher to show on the European map the town where he is 'originally' from, as she goes marking the towns of each student with a pin. When he wants to show a town in Anatolia, Eastern Turkey, it turns out it is not included in the geographical map of Europe. His pin is thus positioned outside of the map. Cenk becomes saddened but also confused by the teacher's question in reference to his heritage. His confusion is even bigger later on when one of his classmates tells him that he can't play for the 'Turkish' football team because he looks 'German'. As the story develops, the answers are provided to how the perceptions can change as well as how the German and the Turkish selves of the Cenk's family members have been combined and re-combined.

Furthermore, *Almanya* indirectly criticises and subverts the anti-immigrant discourses that form its current socio-political context. As it premiered at Berlinale in 2011, its appearance came some half a year after the heated debate in Germany on immigration and the speech of German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the failure of multiculturalism where she urged for the necessity of the better integration of new (emerging) minorities. By defying the political declarations on the reluctant integration of Turkish immigrants/immigrant descendants in Germany, the film manages to persuade its audience about the great efforts made by German-Turks to accommodate themselves in German society. At the same time, an emphasis is placed on the fact that the accommodation has been accompanied by incorporating the elements of their original cultures within daily practices and lifestyles. This

point is important on an overall basis as the film has brought more attention to and curiosity in the lives of hybrid subjects in contemporary Europe. Moreover, by the means of a comedy genre and a lighter style of a 'living in-between' immigrant story, it has been possible to engage wider audiences. But in spite of its rounded script and maybe not that deeply developed characters as in case of Akın's films, we equally find the transcultural elements that are meaningful and powerful. The approach is different, but the natural urge to delve into the fluidity of identities is shared.

In this view, the contextual discursive influence on *Almanya's* transculturality includes essentialist-guided narratives that are projected through both earlier cinematic representations on German-Turks and contemporary media and political discourses. These essentialist elements are pre-constructed cultural points of German and Turkish 'national cultures' as delimited and opposing, and the stereotypes of German-Turkish subjects as reluctant or even unable to integrate (because of irreconcilable cultural differences). However, the director uses these constructs by appropriating and redrawing them to finally subvert them. In the case of cultural binary, this appropriation and re-construction will be expressed through the character of Cenk whose question of whether he, and the whole family, is German or Turkish initiates the main story development of the film. And it develops towards (re-)negotiating the family's cultural hybridity. In response to the stigmatizing media and political discourse on immigration, the film plot includes an element that reverses the anti-immigrant discourse to pro-immigrant. For instance, there is an event incorporated into the storyline which is called "Germany Says Thank You" Day. It is presented as a celebration organised by the German Ministry with the objective to express the gratitude to Turkish immigrants for their contribution in rebuilding the economy of Germany. Hüseyin receives an official letter signed by Angela Merkel in which he, as the one million and first guest worker to arrive in Germany, is invited to this event to deliver a speech. SistersŞamdereli thus intend to suggest an alternative scenario to the one of stigmatisation, a scenario which for them is desirable and fair.

Transcultural developments in the film significantly rely on the individual agency of the protagonists. On the one hand, this interdependency is expressed through some protagonists' active engagement with the difference and their desire to get accommodated in their host society. As it will be shown through the analysis of the filmic images of the experiences of the second generation of German Turks (Veli, Muhamed, Leyla), they are illustrated as open and eager to the appropriation of the cultural practices that they learn in their host society. And, on the other hand, the character's individual choices and changing perceptions configure their

close environment as inclusive, as a space in which cultural hybridity is recognised and transculturality is further negotiated and developed.

What is also important for framing and examining the context of the film story is its visual overall composition. The film narrative is structured into two interwoven time frames, two separate but interconnected actions taking place in Turkey and Germany. The visual moving between both strands that proceed till the end of the film implies the interconnection between the past and the present, making the present incomprehensible and incomplete without its past. This application of editing technique that breaks the temporal linear narrative and combines two temporalities - present and the past, assists with analysing the cultural points that have participated in marking the transformation of identity and transforming subjectivities of the protagonists. In this view, the long flashbacks into the past provide a temporal contextual framework within which anterior cultural positions are reflected upon, interrogated and compared to current positions.

The action set in the present introduces Hüseyin Yılmaz, already the grandfather, who gathers his big family at his home in Germany, where he has been living for 45 years, to announce a surprise. Hüseyin is happy to tell that he has bought a house in Turkey and insists that his wife Fatma, their children Veli, Muhamed, Leyla and Ali and grandchildren, 22-year-old Canan and 6-year-old Cenk, accompany him for a holiday, as he says, to their *Heimat*. At the same time, German-born Cenk, the son of Ali and German native Gabi, finds himself in the middle of an identity crisis, straddled between his Turkish background and his life in Germany. As it was mentioned before, Cenk comes to terms with this uncertainty during his school time when he is asked to choose the football team he wants to play for, Turkey or Germany; and later fights with his classmate after the latter tells him that Cenk is not Turkish. During the dinner at his grandfather's place, Cenk finds himself in a confused state with the discussions at the table about where the family belongs, which adds up to his previous experience of questioning his cultural identity at school. At that very moment he poses a question which is the nucleus of the whole film, "So, what am I, Turkish or German?"⁷¹ (*Almanya - Welcome to Germany*, 2011, 12:55-12:58). His cousin Canan takes the initiative to recount the story of their grandparents' life in Turkey and their immigration to Germany. Listening to Canan's story, Cenk embarks on an imaginary journey throughout the past of his family in search for his roots and the answer to his question.

⁷¹ In original version, in German, as, "Weroder was bin icheigentlich – Deutscher oder Türke?".

The action set in the past illustrates young Hüseyin in the remote South-eastern Anatolia, his falling in love and subsequent marriage with Fatma and her giving birth to three children. The flashback goes on as Canan continues to explain the financial hardships that Hüseyin had to face in Turkey which eventually led him to immigrate to Germany in 1964 as a guest worker; and later he brings Fatma and their children to live with him in Germany.

The development of the story in the past frame, and especially its historical background, is supported with mixing in archive news footage which cover the post-war mass migration of Turkish workers to Germany and shows how this migration was celebrated by German government. The insertion of this footage not only reminds of these events as important part of the country's recent history; it also points out to the 'roots' of contemporary diverse multicultural Germany and the role of institutional frameworks in facilitating such developments.

One of the most interesting scenes from the past that connects the film's narrative with its historical context is a scene of Hüseyin's arrival in Germany as *Gastarbeiter*⁷². The attention is brought to a personal experience of Hüseyin in his first contact with his host society, hinting at the significance of this experience in the analysis of his hybrid identity construction. As Hüseyin's comes to Germany, everything looks optimistic but unknown. In the middle of the post-war economic boom in Germany, the atmosphere is friendly and welcoming. But the welcoming speech with which the workers, who arrived from Turkey, are met sounds gibberish to them, and is only understood and applauded when translated by a Turkish interpreter. A point that has to be underlined here is the reversed use of language for telling a story that develops in the past. As Cenk does not speak Turkish and the story from the past is told for him, all the Turkish characters speak German and all the German characters speak an invented language which sounds like gibberish. This formal narrative technique thus communicates through the perception of Cenk the degree of the misunderstanding and alienation that his grandfather, and later after the family reunification grandmother and their children, have experienced at the beginning of their new life in Germany. Back to the time frame set in the present, Hüseyin and Fatma speak both German and Turkish confidently, whereas we see that sometimes when Fatma speaks Turkish Hüseyin replies in German, and vice versa. Their use of both languages on an everyday level is a natural part of their lives and their choices to speak in one language or another do not follow any specific organised pattern. But confident switching between languages signifies the

⁷² In translation from German it means "guest worker" (literal translation).

normality of this practice in characters' lives and emphasises how what was unfamiliar and strange in the past, has become part of their selves in the present.

Transcultural spatiality.

Contradictory dynamics and negotiation of the cultural elements constructed as opposing.

The third generation of Hüseyin's grandchildren Canan and Cenk are two central characters who initiate a quest for understanding their and their family's hyphenated hybrid identity. As they start to negotiate their cultural identities, this negotiation is addressed through the prism of questioning the self across two dimensions. On the one hand, they act as social beings who construct their social lives within multiple and different spaces of reference (family and school for Cenk and family and her romantic relationship for Canan). And on the other hand, in the process of identities' construction they are faced with their experiences as members of a society in which national and ethnic categorisations promote singular identities based on the place of birth and/or heritage. After Cenk's question and Canan's intention to answer his question, they both collaborate in a self-reflective and dialogical discovering of their cultural hybridity and its specificity.

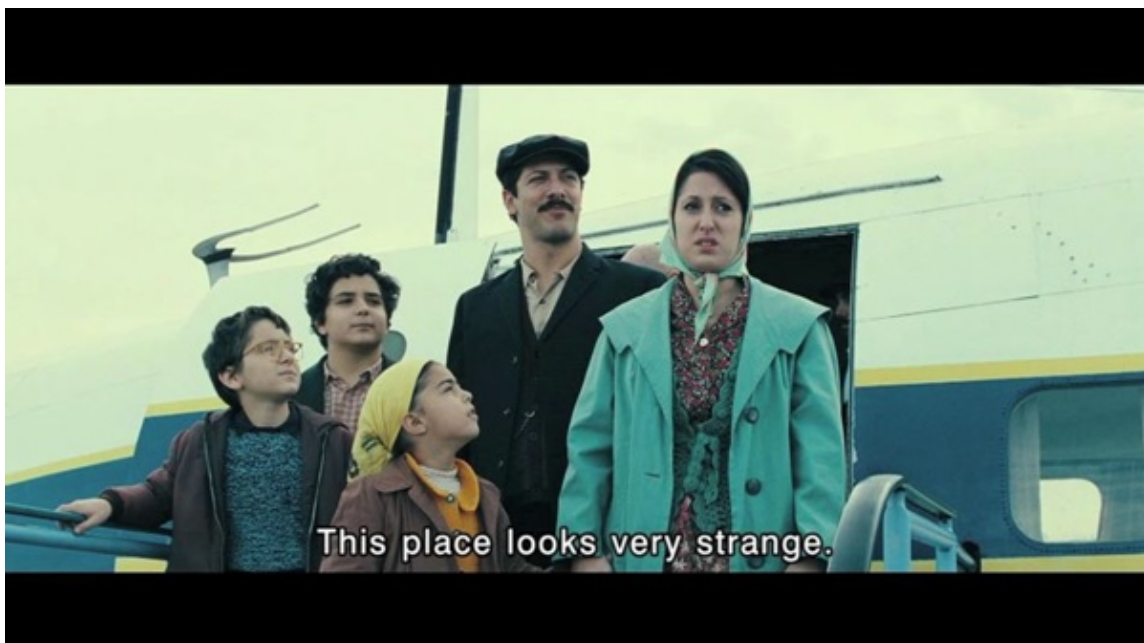


Figure 5. Hüseyin, Fatma and their children arrive in Germany. Still from *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011).

In the first part of the film they accommodate the symbolic space of uncertainty and confusion about their identity and sense of belonging as they are confronted with the questions about who they are, where they belong to and what is proper or improper for them to do. When Canan finds out that she became pregnant from her English boyfriend, she hesitates whether she should tell her family. She fears a very negative reaction because, as she later tells her grandfather, her prospective future now contradicts Turkish tradition according to which a Turkish woman should marry a Turkish man and to the Islamic tradition of "saving face" or "family honour", that is, in particular, not to get pregnant before marriage. Being exposed to living in-between German and Turkish cultural worlds, Canan realises that she does not know what is right and what is wrong under such critical circumstances. Her identity crisis involves the negotiation of contradictory cultural elements with which she identifies herself. But these contradictions are present in the film in order to communicate the production of a transcultural meaning which focuses on the role of the individual agency in transcultural developments. As Hüseyin finds out about the pregnancy, he doesn't seem to be very happy at first but he accepts it and explains to Canan that it is her personal choice which he respects. Thus, the crisis of identity leads to illustrating the possibility of applying individual agency to reposition these cultural elements within (e.g. discard the necessity of adhering to the 'family honour' tradition).

In this view, Canan's framing spaces that evoke the initiation of her identity crisis are her individual spaces of reference: her affiliation with her extended German-Turkish family and her life and co-habitation with her English boyfriend (they all reside in Munich). These are the main circles of enunciation of her cultural identity, specifically the spheres of reference across which her social life is constructed. Whereas Canan has chosen to keep these spaces separated from one another (she lives with her boyfriend for two years already and her family does not know about it), her unexpected pregnancy defines the moment when she is confronted with the question of how to combine these spaces. At first, Canan refers to them as mutually exclusive cultural worlds and keeps telling her boyfriend how scared she is of the reaction of her family. As Canan, in her perspective, identifies contradictions between one space and another, the negotiation of her identity is thus initiated within the contradictory dynamics and the crisis of identity develops. This crisis of identity thus functions as an indicator of a 'Third Space' creation within which Canan intends to negotiate the configuration of her German-Turkishness and to find out whether she can combine her affiliations with two separated framing spaces or not.

The creation of a 'Third Space' thus points out to the activation of the flexibility of the rigid pre-constructed cultural borders, and the negotiation of cultural identities evolves towards subverting these borders. As Canan's 'Third Space' is located on the constructed borderline between German (European progressive and individualist) and Turkish (close-knit and collectivist) cultures, her close environment - her family and her boyfriend - both participate in facilitating the flexibility of this borderline. After the conversation with her granddad and his death, Canan reveals her secret to her mother and grandma. Both react negatively at first, but then quickly reconcile as they recognise their cultural hybridity and their ability to make their own cultural choices. In this view, the negotiation of identity in a 'Third Space' has led to revealing of already existing overlaps, the cultural hybridity that has been already present but needed to be verified and recognised.

As it is shown with the case of Canan and is also going to resonate with the trajectories of other protagonists of *Almanya* (2011), transcending the discursively constructed borderline becomes a natural way to build and enter a 'Third Space', where transcultural identities can flourish. *Almanya*, as a representative of contemporary German-Turkish films, forges the meanings that cannot be restricted to a single cultural environment, the meanings that transcend the imaginary constructed borderline between discursively separated Germans and German Turks. The cultural identity of the filmic German-Turkish heroes and heroines is negotiated and questioned when they go beyond their conventional cultural habitats; namely, when they start to practice or associate themselves with particular lifestyles, norms or traditions that are unusual for the cultural environment in which they are discursively positioned. The imaginary borderlines that separate one habitat from another thus acquire new role and now perform a double function. They do not separate and exclude, but now they function as crossings and thus unite and include the inhabitants from different cultural locations that are constructed as such within the discursive practice. Thus, the discursively constructed borders also perform as the points of cultural encounters, the places where the alien becomes familiar, the improper becomes proper, and the coexistence of heterogeneous cultural environments becomes possible. Crossing the border stands not only as an act of "violation", namely the transgression of the norms and customs set as intrinsic to the particular culture, but is also an act of creation of new practices, fusion of cultural traditions, habits, lifestyles. The course of development of these new hybrid cultural practices and transforming identities and subjectivities are to be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Indicators of transformation.

Transforming identities and subjectivities of *Almanya's* protagonists.

Within the temporal line of the present, the *Almanya's* protagonists are shown as transcultural characters who have elaborated their cultural identities through both individual and shared with other family members' cultural practices, yet in different cultural configurations of 'Germanness' and 'Turkishness'. Their lifestyles are based on a combination of what they have been practicing in Germany with the experiences that they brought with themselves from Turkey or what they learned from their parents and grandparents. Here, thus follows an examination of cultural hybrid identities of Hüseyin and his extended family as they are illustrated and negotiated in the film.

Grandfather Hüseyin is shown as the most conservative character having successfully reproduced a part of his Turkish culture in his German home by promoting collectivist traditions, hierarchy, and the maintenance of strong bonds between the family members across several generations. An illustration of this is the episode of the clan gathering for dinner at Hüseyin's house. The family members are struck with the news that Hüseyin has bought a house in Turkey and with his insistence that they all accompany him to see it. As the patriarch, Hüseyin anticipates unquestioned loyalty and refers to his word as the word of law. He becomes irritated when his family reacts reluctantly to the idea of going to Turkey and as they start a discussion in protest.

Hüseyin's identity seems to function within a double although divided allegiance (to his new home and his previous home) as he is positioned as torn between his children's better association with their German society and his longing for Turkish *Heimat*. After living in Germany for 45 years, Hüseyin still does not have a feeling of complete belongingness to his new homeland. In contrast to his wife Fatma who feels well-integrated in Germany and excited about them being recently granted a German citizenship, Hüseyin frequently feels nostalgic for Turkey and for the life with his family there. This nostalgia comes across very clearly and expressively in one of the scenes when Hüseyin sits in the kitchen on the eve before his family's trip to Turkey and gazes at the old photograph of him and Fatma standing young and happy under the tree near their house in Turkey.

Apparently, Hüseyin's mixed feelings can be partly referred to the fact that he came to Germany with the purpose of a temporary work and was expecting to go back to his homeland one day. As David Morley argues, the identities of labour migrants usually exist in a state of interstitial space in which they do not feel the same when going backwards, namely back to

their old homeland, but at the same time doubt about going forward, that is the full recognition of being part of the host country as their new homeland (Morley, 2000, p. 227). Hüseyin indeed finds himself lost and uprooted on the visit back to Turkey. Nothing is the same anymore there and many things that seemed to be normal before, now are considered strange and even bizarre. At the same time, he does not fully embrace German lifestyles and does not identify himself fully with his new homeland and tries to retain to his Turkish cultural roots. His reproduction of a Turkish world in Germany can be interpreted as a reproduction of an 'imaginary homeland' aimed at compensating the spatial dislocation with the memory perpetuation (e.g. using the photograph of him and Fatma of more than 45 years old as a material object which connects him to his 'imaginary homeland').

On the one hand, if we consider the concept of belonging and its projection through cultural (and national) identity as something complete, closed and uniformly loyal to one single 'national' or cultural space, in these terms the meaning created would be that Hüseyin belongs neither to his new home nor to the home that he left (because the 'home' as it was when he left it does not exist anymore and Hüseyin has changed too). However, if we look at Hüseyin's identity as encompassing multiple allegiances expressed through the languages (speaking both German and Turkish and switching between them), names, practices, memories, this 'belonging' is re-distributed complexly between these cultural expressions. This combination of allegiances is further projected through refurnishing national cultural spaces with 'foreign' cultural elements (e.g. recreation of the tradition of a close-knit extended family and a bigger focus on the communitarian rather than the individual) but at the same time letting loose the frameworks of cultural traditions and practices (e.g. his granddaughter's pregnancy before marriage is not taken as a family honour violation). In this view, we can suggest that the character of Hüseyin is not that much a subject of the process of transforming identities but a subject of transforming subjectivities, as his cultural practices, visions and mentality are transcultural.

The second and third generation of Hüseyin's family are shown more as German individualists for whom the interest of the group are of less priority. Ali, Hüseyin's fourth child born in Germany, is the one who complains the most about the necessity to go to Turkey alluding to other plans that he had made with his wife. Ali is an interesting example of a cultural hybrid. His German mentality and German behaviour intersects with the strong affiliation to his Turkish heritage. Ali tends to behave in a characteristic German manner being straightforward and strongly independent, but when his son Cenk asks whether they are

German or Turkish, Ali hurries up to say they are Turkish (while his German wife replies simultaneously that they are German).

The characters of Hüseyin's three children who were born in Turkey and moved to Germany at a very young age also offer an interesting quest. The interwoven strands of past and present trace the change within the self-perception of these protagonists across the time. Veli, Muhamed and Leyla, day by day embrace the German way of life but continue to remain strongly connected to their Turkish roots. As adults, they are confident about their German identity, but at the same time they are proud to have a Turkish background. The Christmas episode illustrates how, despite being Muslim, they want to associate themselves with the German/Western European tradition of Christmas celebrations. They teach their mother the "rules" to be followed, namely decorating the Christmas tree, wrapping the presents, serving special food. Throughout time, their new cultural and social experience occupies an important place in their mentalities. The things and behaviours that seemed so strange and inappropriate earlier now become normal, habitual, and even desirable. The metaphoric illustration of their acclimatization within the German society is found in the scenes about the moustache. On their arrival in Germany they laugh at German men not wearing a moustache while all men in Turkey do. Within a short span of time, Leyla asks her father to shave his moustache off because, in her opinion, Hüseyin's image does not correspond to where he lives. To illustrate this transformation in perceptions, these scenes are edited together to connect two temporalities in the past, one proceeding after another within several years; and the element of moustache stands as a cultural marker to exemplify the process of transforming subjectivities as well as of transformation of identities.

On a visit to Turkey the feeling of alienation and unfamiliarity overwhelm the second-generation protagonists too. They are not the same and Turkey is also different. The Turkish traditions that they have learned from their parents and that they have adhered to seem to have preserved for them the memory of their roots. But at the same time as carriers of Turkish heritage they negotiate the cultural elements that are prescribed/pre-constructed as part of Turkish (rural) culture. For instance, one of the scenes illustrates Leyla's unconscious adherence to the 'saving the face'/family honour' tradition. When she finds out about the pregnancy of her daughter Canan, she feels ashamed and an angry outburst follows wherein she refers to the fact that Canan should have married first. But while articulating their Turkish selves in the German socio-cultural environment, they do not manage to maintain their Turkish identity in the same way as that of a Turkish person living in Turkey. By having developed their life trajectories within German and German-Turkish cultural spaces inside the

German national environment, the second-generation German-Turkish protagonists do not seem to be "possessing the skills to navigate their [originary] society" (Elsaesser, 2005, p.118)⁷³. In other words, the lack of these 'skills' is directly interconnected with their feeling of uprootedness and detachment from their 'home' Turkish society which is now, within time, is a changed national, social and cultural space, while they are also changed cultural and social subjects. Their 'Turkishness' instead persists in a different way, disengaged from its originary cultural space and sutured with the cultural elements of its receiving cultural space.

Further, it is important to examine how the crisis of identity is resolved in the process of identities' transformation. Different factors contribute to the (re-)construction of the cultural identity of *Almanya*'s protagonists. The influence of immigration, cultural shock and acclimatization within the German society, multi-layered and complex cultural practices, crisis of identity and subsequent feeling of belonging to German and Turkish culture and at the same time not belonging to any of these cultures in the same way as the 'natives'- are among the important factors. All these factors form part of individual agency (individual experiences), and the crisis of identity is invoked by the pre-constructed cultural aspects as pertinent to Turkish culture. Operating with symbolic meanings of shifting perceptions prepares the grounds for going beyond the margins of uniformity. For instance, the scenes that are related to the news on Canan's pregnancy symbolize that the limited properties of what is common or uncommon in particular cultural habitat are going to be dissolved and the mixture of appropriate and inappropriate is to be welcomed.

Negotiation of protagonists' identities, especially those of the third generation Canan and Cenk, is achieved through their constant positioning between two cultures and the resultant confusion that derives from this positioning. *Almanya* makes this confusion, the crisis of identity, to be understood as a positive process through which it is possible to eventually realize who you are and where you belong to. As Ayhan Kaya writes about the reality of displacement and the condition of uprootedness, "Turkish migrants and their descendants experience a permanent tension between homelessness and home in a way that leads to the construction of more complex and multiple identities" (2007, p. 490), and this is exactly what *Almanya* discloses. In other words, the crisis of identity which is invoked by living in-between serves as a way, a bridge to enter a 'Third Space', where the hybrid cultural

⁷³ In his quote, Elsaesser refers to the 'skills' of the second and third generation of immigrants meaning by 'their society' the host society, that is to say the society where they grew up after immigration at a young age or where they were born and to which their parents or one of their parents immigrated. I use this phrase of 'possessing the skills to navigate their society' to talk about a reversed context, when the second generation of immigrants go back to the place where they were born and feel alienated and 'foreign' there.

positions are negotiated and renegotiated, and where cultural hybridity is realised and/or constructed. For Canan, the tension and confusion lead to the realization of her hyphenated identity and the advantages that she can extract from this identification. After grappling for a while with contradictory emotions about her unexpected pregnancy, Canan is relieved by her grandfather's positive reaction to this news. This is the point when Canan realizes the hybridity of her family and herself, in particular through the fact that the family accepts the marriage to a non-Turkish, non-Muslim man. Such cultural disposition or re-position which accommodates the space neither of "pure Turkish culture" nor "pure German culture" emerges as the resistance to the cultural purity and to the cultural exclusion that follows from this purity. In this view, Canan's transculturality does not only surpass cultural borders between German and Turkish 'cultural worlds' but also expresses her personal configuration of German-Turkish cultural hybridity.

Cenk also receives an answer to his question. In the pre-final episode each member of Cenk's family is visualized in Cenk's imagination as standing by his/her self of 30-40 years ago. This scene renders the message of a complex coexistence of their Turkish beginnings with their German experiences. The summary voiced at the end of this scene validates this message:

A wise man answered the question 'what are we?' We are the sum of everything that has happened before us, everything that is happening right before our eyes or seems fitting for us. We are the people or the things which affect our existence and in return are affected by our existence. We are everything that came after us and everything that could not exist without us (Şamdereli 2011, 94:48-95:19).

The visual technique of interwoven time frames has communicated the integrity of the past and present. The experiences that followed the displacement and the reproduction of the Turkish cultural world in Germany made the identities viewed in terms of continuous modification. Turkish culture no longer exists in the protagonists' identities, at least in its original nature. It is present in particular practices of their everyday life. Their Turkish selves are modified and re-discovered in a new light, sutured with the attachment of 'Germanness' and the re-attachment of 'Turkishness', as its dynamics continues. The German-Turkish cultural synthesis reigns first and foremost in a hybrid combination of two languages that are used for communication and in their hybrid lifestyles and mentalities. This synthesis persists as they surpass the restrictions of cultural uniformity by compounding their old and new experiences embracing the heritage, the tradition and the modernity in a new scope.

Furthermore, the film emphasises the role of multiple identities in defying political discourses on integration. In response to media and political discourse in Germany on the 'failure of multiculturalism' and the reluctance of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects to

integrate, *Almanya* (2011) transmits a message that multiple cultural attachments (including the retention of 'originary' identities) actually facilitate the process of integration. The second and even to a larger extent the third generations tend to communicate with each other more in German than in Turkish and actively embrace German mainstream lifestyles. At the same time, they also identify themselves with their Turkish heritage and preserve certain Turkish cultural traditions passed on them from their ancestors. The multiple cultural attachments of the protagonists thus question the idea promoted by German-Turkish films of the 1980s that the preservation of the protagonists' 'Turkishness' serves as an obstacle on the way to their integration within German society (as it was the case of Tevfik Baser films). Furthermore, they challenge contemporary political discourses that maintain this idea. In *Almanya* this preservation (of 'originary' identities) by no means impedes their integration, but rather makes the process of adaptation less tensed because the protagonists are able to complement the elements of two cultures with one another without the necessity to make a choice in favour of a particular set of cultural values.

It is also important to consider the role of nostalgia in *Almanya* (2011) as an indicator of transformed subjectivities, which is an unusual function of this emotional element in cinema on immigration. In its conventional terms, nostalgia for authentic homelands can be referred to as a rather negative state pointing to (cultural) dislocation, alienation and will usually carry a dramatic connotation. For instance, this was its role in earlier cinema of Turkish immigrants in Germany such as Tevfik Başer's films which employed nostalgia to indicate the Turkish immigrants' opposition to the German culture and lifestyles and thus hinting at the impossibility of integration if retaining their Turkish 'culture'. In *Almanya* this emotional element is articulated by the protagonists in a different manner. Nostalgia is rather used in positive terms, to illustrate the desire of its protagonist Hüseyin to reconnect with his Turkish *Heimat*. Longing for Motherland is not regarded as the inability of immigrants to integrate, but is evoked by the feeling of de-rootedness and of losing affinity to Turkish *Heimat* after the decades of living happily in Germany. Hüseyin understands his cultural 'loss' as a spatial/territorial/material loss, as he does not have any property or land in Turkey anymore and all his 'material' life and his family is in Germany. His announcement of buying a house in Turkey thus functions as a pretext to persuade all his extended family members to go with him to his *Heimat* for a short visit to see the house. But when already in Turkey Hüseyin suddenly dies during the trip and his family decides to bury him in his native village, his real reason of coming here is revealed: he wanted to die in his *Heimat*. Thus, on the one hand, nostalgia indicates to transformed subjectivity of Hüseyin as a Turkish immigrant in Germany

who has lost material connection with his geographical homeland. And, on the other hand, as a reaction to the transformed subjectivity, nostalgia justifies the human choice and necessity to re-connect with their roots in a tangible way. And this way is articulated through being buried on a Turkish land.

Critical stance of the filmmaker and transcultural resolution of the film.

Mockery of stereotypes, German national identity and re-drawing a map of 'Europe'.

Produced in Germany by an independent production company Roxy Film, *Almanya* (2011) is a small budget cinematic work which was worked on for several years, and became a surprise success at box office. At Berlinale it was presented at out of competition section, and afterwards was exhibited in multiple European cinemas gaining a growing popularity at home and abroad. According to Goethe Institut's publication on a short overview of German cinema of 2011, *Almanya* (2011) was considered the most favourite debut film in Germany with an audience of more than 1.4 million (Baumgarten, 2012).

The film delivers an insightful and creative engagement with the country's current socio-cultural reality referring to the historical background of this reality. It further contributes to internal cultural dynamics of German national cinema by developing a German-Turkish theme beyond outsiders/victims-perspective, instead portraying German-Turks as rightful and organic part of German society. Moreover, *Almanya* (2011) can be considered one of the first German-Turkish cinematic representations to address the different experiences and trajectories of several generations of German Turks (three different generations). Its special characteristic in comparison with other films made by German filmmakers of Turkish descent is its light tone of a family comedy with the elements of satire, which indirectly serve as critical interrogators of the (political and media) discourse around immigration, integration and nationhood in Germany.

The director chooses to reflect upon cultural shocks, dislocation and the role of national and cultural stereotypes within comic, sometimes even containing fantasy, exaggerations as projected through people's imaginary. In response to the stereotyping of the image of the Turkish minority in Germany, sisters Şamdereli use reversed stereotypes. The latter are mainly related to the imaging of German culture and German society via how it is perceived by Turkish protagonists before and upon a transcultural encounter. However, all the use of stereotypes in the film appears to be intentional and the whole idea of stereotyping is mocked upon. As the exaggerations reach a non-sensual meaning, the purpose of applying them is to

accentuate the narrow-mindedness and absurdity that stands behind stereotypes. In one of the scenes from the past frame, Fatma is preparing for her family reunification as she sits in front of her female friends in her house in Turkey. Everyone is sat in sadness and even grief assuming to expect negative experiences from Fatma's new life. She is thus given blankets(while her friends saying they heard it is very cold in Germany), towels (saying Germans are dirty) and different types of legumes (saying there is only potato to eat in Germany).

In another comic scene, the night before receiving their German passports with Fatma, Hüseyin has a dream about the bureaucracy at the German citizenship office. As their passports are handed out, the office clerk tells them that since they are Germans now they have to agree that German culture is the superior one and that they should from now on behave as Germans and follow this culture. Their obligations as communicated to them are the following: joining the shooting club, eating pork twice per week, watching CSI series every Sunday, wearing *lederhosen*⁷⁴, and spending their summer holidays in Mallorca... As these elements can be regarded to as national clichés rather than cultural practices and characteristics, the message goes beyond a simple entertaining purpose. With this dream interlude, Şamdereli poses the question of what constitutes national identity on a whole, and what the German culture is that Turkish immigrants are asked to integrate into. In the light of the political discourse on the 'failure of multiculturalism' and the emphasis in the national narrative rhetoric on German culture as the only legitimate culture this question is more than topical. *Almanya* (2011) thus also alludes to the role and place of the country's largest Turkish minority in the (construction of) German culture and Germany national identity.

Sisters Şamdereli partially answer this question themselves. The way they approach and deliver their story is based on a transcultural perspective, as they manage to use their hybrid selves to operate with cultural codes across both German and Turkish cultural worlds. Their ability to speak from two/hybrid positions (across the manipulation with the languages, reversed stereotypes) permits them to use these positions and their transcultural knowledge in order to play jokes on the closed-mindedness and insensibilities from both sides. At the same time, they bring the cultural elements together and illustrate how hybrid cultural identities are in constant re-negotiation, and how they are functioning within both the conflict (eating pork in Muslim culture) and the collaboration (convergence between individualistic and collectivist identities).

⁷⁴ The reference is to German Bavarian folk costume, as the action of the film takes place in Munich.

If eating pork stands for 'Germanness' then this 'cultural practice' excludes those German Turks who are practicing Muslims. This is a banal example but sisters Şamdereli seem to make a good use of this kind of examples in their film and use them to question the construction of national cultural borders along religious, ethnic and territorial origin affiliations. In this way, they also refer to the exclusion of Islam from the entire cultural narrative of Europe/Europeanness. In response to these exclusionary visions, sistersŞamdereli show with their hybrid German-Turkish protagonists that the rigid construction of nationhood has convincing reasons to be flexible. As cultural identities of *Almanya's* protagonists are constructed within individually configured trajectories, they also indicate to the heterogeneity of culture, to multiple expressions of Turkishness and German-Turkishness and defy the restrictiveness of imposed and pre-constructed cultural positions.

In this view, the transcultural character of the film is a combination of the transcultural perspectives of its creators with the produced transcultural meanings on screen that become possible because of these perspectives. By depicting different ways of behavior and different self-perceptions of the representatives of Turkish community in Germany, *Almanya* (2011) is well equipped with the counter-essentialist material, whereas it symbolically contributes to drawing a new, more hybrid cultural map for Europe.

In contrast to the protagonists of the "films of victimization", usually female characters, who are confined to closed spaces of their Turkish culture with little or no contact with the outside world, in *Almanya* (2011), the protagonists of Turkish descent actively interact with native Germans. German Turks do not live in a parallel society and interaction enables them to carve out new spaces, open to cultural melding and boundary-crossing lifestyles. Furthermore, the stereotypical hierarchy in family and within gender relations as conventional exemplary of Turkish culture is reinvented with the pro-active and dynamic female characters. The confinements in which the Turkish women are placed by their patriarchal fathers, brothers or husbands are absent. Whereas the family of Yılmazes respect Hüseyin as the head of the clan, his wife Fatma is a powerful and influential character (who also disrupts a cliché of relating wearing a headscarf in Muslim culture to women's victimization).

The film challenges essentialist cultural borders as the hybrid protagonists reveal them as flexible. The notion of culture in its essentialist understanding as a particular static set of norms and behaviour becomes questionable when the combination of 'proper' and 'improper' is celebrated. *Almanya's* protagonists do not set limits to their lifestyles by adhering to particular cultural practices pre-constructed as intrinsic to one culture or another. They make the combination possible which looks natural and unconditioned. As Welsch contends, "in

meeting with other lifeforms there are always not only divergences but opportunities to link up, and these can be developed and extended so that the common lifeform is fashioned which includes even reserves which hadn't earlier seem capable of being linked in" (1999, p. 202).

In the credits part at the end of the film, Cenk brings to school a map of Turkey and asks the teacher to stick it as an addition to the map of Europe. The pin marking his Anatolian origin is now within the 'European' borders (as the 'borders' have been shifted), which also metaphorically signifies that his re-negotiated hybrid German-Turkish identity has symbolically extended his understanding of 'Europeanness'.

3.2.2.2 *Divines* (2016) by French-Moroccan Houda Benyamina.

***Divines* (2016)**
Fiction.
Directed by Houda Benyamina.
Production: France /Qatar.
Languages: French.

Positioning of transculturality.

Divines (2016) is a film in which we can visualise the outcome specificities of post-colonial and global international migration to France. The main protagonists are the French youth of distinctive immigrant descent, in their second-, or even third generation, who live in the *banlieues*, in the suburbs of Paris. The common definition of *banlieues* as understood since the 1970s is an exact interpretation of how these spaces are visualised in *Divines* (2016), as "low-income housing projects, in which mainly foreign immigrants and French of foreign descent reside, often in perceived poverty traps" (Lepoutre, 1997). In the midst of this budget urban planning project there is also a Roma camp with substandard living conditions, scarce even of basic amenities. *Banlieue* can thus be referred to as a framing space that functions as a projection of a socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural environment in which the story of the film develops. The question arises as to what the potential of this urban context is for providing physical and symbolic platforms for transcultural possibilities.

What do we know about *banlieues* and their peripheral 'location', both in physical and cultural terms? What is their background that can assist in understanding their current specificity and conditions? In physical terms, Parisian *banlieues* are separated from the metropolitan heart of the city by the ring road that circles the French capital - *le périphérique*, or the "periphery". But the separation is not only geographical. The spatially drawn 'border' also reflects and reinforces a dramatic socio-economic divide as well as intends to justify a

symbolic delimitation between the French secular culture and 'immigrant cultures' (specifically in reference to Islam,⁷⁵ but also to the construction of an immigrant youth culture of 'wrongdoers' or 'radical youth'). What is important to emphasise in this regard is that the sources and factors of this delimitation are politically- and institutionally-invoked. Having been built in the 1960s as part of a post-war urban planning projects, the *cités* (subsidised buildings) at first brought high expectations to working class French and working class immigrants who lived there. (The immigrant population was predominantly represented at that time by first generation of Arab immigrants). Further urban policy developments have contributed to the marginalisation of the neighbourhoods in which *cités* were built. In 1973 the *périphérique* was inaugurated with its infrastructure purpose to facilitate the car traffic movement around the city. However, at the same time it has literally cut off the suburban area from the central neighbourhoods with a ring of concrete, thus drawing a physical boundary along administrative borders. In the 1980s most of native French residents used the opportunity to move out from the suburbs to the centre which became possible because of home buying programs sponsored by the government. As the immigration started to increase, the *cités* became multicultural with people from different ethnic backgrounds. The lack and subsequently the cancellation of public maintenance programs and public services have led to spatial degradation of the suburban areas and thus to the living conditions in these areas (Zissermann & Nettelbeck, 1999, pp.84-85; Chrisafis, 2015; Tribillon, 2015). The main problem, though, has been the racial and ethnic discrimination, which has resulted in high levels of unemployment and is also projected through the frequent police practice of racial profiling. The social segregation is also maintained by the restrictions in educational choices as the local students are encouraged to discard higher schools or universities "in favour of professional training schemes for subjects such as manual labour or administration" (Chrisafis, 2015). All these factors⁷⁶ have contributed to how the immigrant/immigrant descent subjects living in *banlieue* are positioned within their socio-economic, socio-cultural and political context, whereas this positioning and segregation immensely influences their perceptions of themselves as both socially and culturally marginalised 'others'.

In one of the interviews, the film's director, French-Moroccan Houda Benyamina mentions that she relates this work, which is her debut, to her experiences of the 2005 Paris

⁷⁵ Most of the inhabitants of *banlieues* are of non-European immigrant origin - predominantly from the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, and the majority are Muslims.

⁷⁶ Furthermore, the polemics of the right-wing Marine Le Pen party is part of the discursive segregation of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in France. As anti-immigration and, especially, anti-Muslim statements, are frequently incorporated in Le Pen's political discourse, they also contribute to the marginalisation and 'othering' of the *banlieue* immigrant/immigrant descent residents.

riots (Stevens, 2016). As described in Chapter One, these riots aroused from a protest against racism and discrimination of immigrant-origin youth. In an intention to voice their rights for equal employment and education opportunities, the participants alluded to their attachment and belonging to France and their desire to be acknowledged as such. The socio-economic marginalisation of immigrant descent youth in *banlieues* can thus be directly related to their identity segregation⁷⁷. This contextual framework defines the (back)ground within which transculturality expressed in the film is positioned and thus provides the contextual reference for the examination of framing spaces across which the protagonists act and interact.

Transcultural spatiality.

Whereas the questions of cultural identity are not explicitly interrogated in the film, the settings-locations and routine events incorporated in the film story serve as framework platforms for understanding the identity negotiation. The plot centers on the friendship and a strong bond between two female protagonists, teenage girls - Dounia and Maimouna (played by before unknown Oulaya Amamra and Déborah Lukumuena). Both girls live in one of the *banlieues*, in a housing bloc that is predominantly Muslim, Dounia even at the edge of it at a Romani camp.

The glimpse into a place where the protagonists live helps to shape the picture of the relationship between this place and the protagonists' life trajectories. On the one hand, because of spatial and socio-economic segregation, the world of their social relationships is limited to the environment in which they are spatially (and politically) positioned. The housing projects in the areas far away from the city centre with little opportunities for personal and professional development and cultural life seem to have intentionally 'locked out' the representatives of 'other cultures'. And if we refer to the institutional and political contextual specificity, as discussed above, this segregation appears to be part of unofficial governmental policies. Yet, even though the delimitation of inner physical spaces has been drawn (delimitation between the predominantly 'French native' centre and suburbs with the predominantly immigrant descent French), this does not mean there is no interaction or transcultural negotiation. The protagonists activate the cultural permeability of physical and symbolic spaces that they occupy or that they refer to, and make the 'margins' interact not

⁷⁷ More than 10 years after the riots, the situation has not changed and the social segregation persists. The mistrust between police and young people continues to be the biggest issue because of discriminatory and racist attitude of police to non-white people. For example, the practice of police's ID checks in *banlieues* has been often targeted at black or north African young men stopping them just as they are walking in the street. One of the governmental manifestos after the riots included the creation of the system to monitor this police practice, but then wasn't brought to the actual legal implementation (Chrisafis, 2015).

only with the 'centre' but also, and especially with the advancements in new technologies, with the whole world. And they do so in their own way. While realising the confinements of their *banlieue* framing spaces, Dounia and Maimouna apply their personal agency in order to virtually and imaginatively re-configure the functioning of these spaces from 'closed' to 'open', from 'bad-looking' to 'good-looking'.

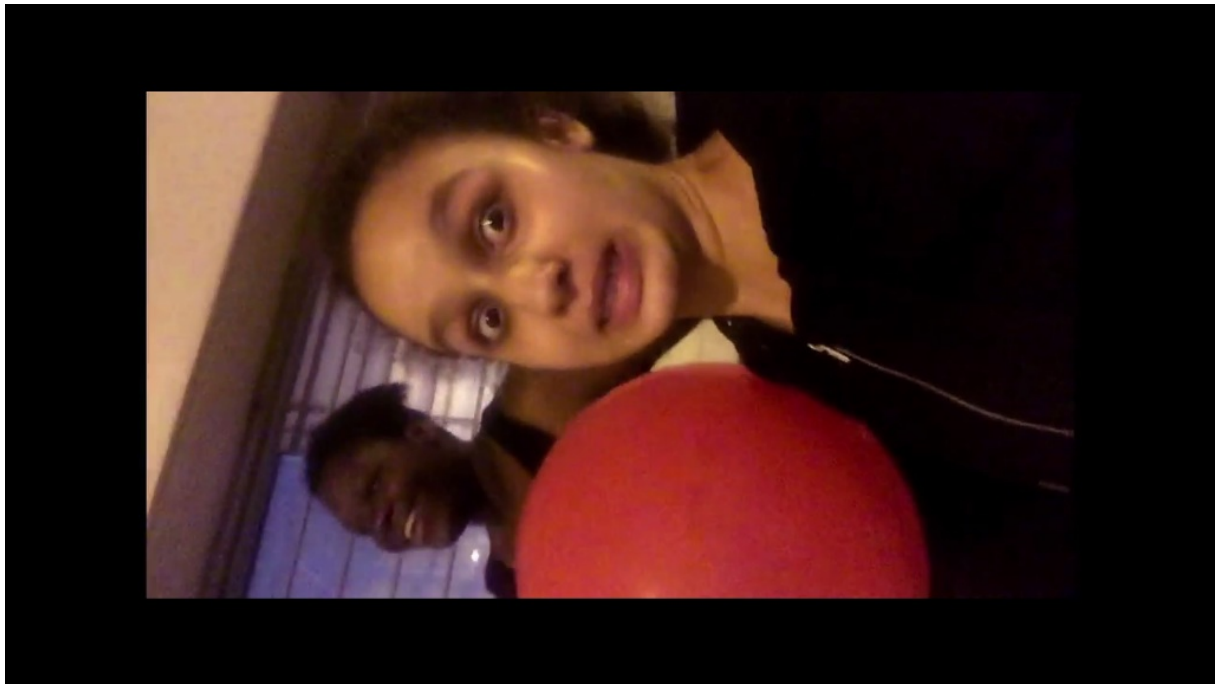


Figure 6. Main characters Dounia and Maimouna walking in the streets of a banlieue, filming a video for a Snapchat. Still from *Divines* (2016).

From the very beginning, we see in the film the role of live-online experiences such as Snapchat videos in equipping the characters' with their self-reflexive communication with the 'world'. "We are in a Roma camp, and where are you?"⁷⁸, Dounia boastly introduces the live video that she is filming on her phone for Snapchat, as they dance with Maimouna and other people in what appears to be a tent in the Roma camp. If we look at this scene through the identity prism, we can say that the 'other' cultures' subjects are in the constant negotiation between this 'otherness' that is prescribed, tagged and spatialised for them (*banlieue* and Roma camp), their 'Frenchness' (they live in and affiliate themselves with France, and they communicate in 'native' non-accented French) and their technologically mediated world in which their socio-cultural and spatial positioning re-appear as a refined 'space of reference' and affiliation (the Roma camp framed in the mobile application as something 'cool' and

⁷⁸ In original lines as, "On est au camp de Roms. Tuesou?" (*Divines*, 2016, 00:03:03-00:03:06).

appealing). Through this scene, we can identify three diverse framing spaces across which the protagonists question their selves, and act as active social subjects who refuse to conform, to remain spatially and socially 'locked-out'. While these spaces can be spatially, virtually and psychologically delimited (e.g. Paris centre-periphery divide), Dounia and Maimouna combine them symbolically to create their own spatiality. This spatiality is their 'Third Space' both defined by the current framing spaces (Parisian *banlieue* as a physical framing space and French macro socio-cultural world as a space of reference), and is also open to new interpretations.

These new interpretations are framed by the imaginary desires, personal re-inventions and aspirations. Hence, the mobile application of Snapchat functions as a visual mediatic tool for the re-configuration of the protagonists' reality. The perceptive re-configuration of living in their *banlieue* spaces takes place as the mobile camera lens presents these spaces as visually attractive and entertaining (in terms of youth digital culture perspective), thus constructing for themselves the mediated reality whose appearance is rather interesting and curious than harsh. This practice of video-making and video-sharing of the daily images from their daily lives (as they walk in the streets of the hood talking and having fun, and as they get together for a dance party in Roma camp) re-converts itself in 'beautifying' these 'spaces' digitally as a reactionary to their downside and disregarded 'nature': the *banlieues* outdoor reality that can be characterised as "impersonal, devoid of community and recreation areas" (Ballesteros, 2015, p.217) and indoors as overcrowded zones short of basic amenities and personal comfort.

In this view, the 'Third Spaces' that the protagonists carve out are constructed and re-constructed as a reaction to their social, spatial and cultural 'othering'. The constant manipulations with 'the imaginary' and 'the virtual' reflect their persistent desire to be emancipated from their current status of 'underdogs' and their spatiality limitations. At the same time, a 'Third Space' acquires an additional function. It acts as a transitory zone of their self-negotiation as active subjects, as self-forming personalities, for whom a quest for their personal identity comes as a prerequisite for their emancipated social and cultural identity. As they are affiliated with their socio-cultural world and at the same time alienated from it, their personal selves rebel against the uncertainty and discrimination which their socio-cultural world has positioned them in. Consequently, their aspirations to become someone who is socially and economically independent are prioritised, which means they see their identity quest as rather a search for one's place in the world, whichever culture or cultures one sticks to and embraces on the way.

Indicators of transformation.

What Benyamina brings through her characters to the fore is the desire of the liberation from a poverty trap, a liberation which is set as the main life goal for her protagonists, and the means to be found are in the hands of circumstances. Even if it takes selling drugs and stolen petrol, or seducing their boss rival drug dealer in order to take money from his apartment's safe. And all this is actually what Dounia, in collaboration with Maimouna, undertakes, under the supervision of their boss Rebecca, a famous local drug dealer. But the film does not simplify these events as merely poverty-invoked crime activities. On the one hand, the central drug dealing story is there to reinforce the critical condition of immigrant descent youth in the suburbs of Paris who, at certain points, seem to be left in the lurch. However, at the same time the immersion within the core story helps to take note of the details, those important background elements (both within the *mise-en-scène* and through the film as a whole) that support the plot and say a lot about the negotiation of transcultural phenomena.

First of all, an important feature of the film story in general is distancing from protagonists' (self-)victimisation. The characters are empowered with pro-activity, courage, initiative and critical thinking. The performances are so powerful, electric and full of energy that you can imagine the character's passion and persistence as means for finding their ways towards realising themselves. And it just happens that the circumstances they find themselves in make available these dubious routes and means for searching. They find a way to survive on the margins and now they need to find a way to go further. Were they in different circumstances, they would be equally dedicated and goal-oriented. In their attitudes and behaviour they are already liberated conceptually; they are fearless women who stick together to multiply their girl power but are equally independent on an individual level. If we think of a conventional image of a Muslim woman as a subordinated or oppressed subject by a patriarchal male (boyfriend, husband or father), this kind of image is not even in the vicinity here. The discursive borders of conventional labels are surpassed from the very beginning; the deriving points of European vs. non-European identity differentiation are non-existent. If 'Frenchness' or let's say 'Europeanness' stands for individualism and liberal thinking, then we cannot deny the characters' attributes of this understanding of Frenchness and Europeanness.

In fact, there is no need to defend their identities or to prove their belonging to the society in which they live. Within its philosophical objectives, *Divines* (2016) does not work towards validating this question. It just shows Dounia and Maimouna as they are - transculturally confident characters who juggle with their secular and religious lifestyles to

the extents and purposes that they choose for themselves on an individual level. This means that the 'Third Spaces' that they have carved for themselves facilitate the combination of their different multiple cultural practices. These practices are expressed both according to their collective affiliations and their individual choices. Maimouna uses full *burqa* when she prays in the mosque but then almost never wears it on other occasions. A comic situation can be found in the scene when the girls are wearing *burqas* on purpose for a more obscure reason. They use them when they go shoplifting at the supermarket just because they find it convenient to hide food and other sundries under the long clothes. The question of whether it makes them less Muslim or less French is not to be risen here. Through this scene we can look at the interconnection between a process of deliberate switching of identities and the social under-status in the society. This is the way in which Benyamina creatively inserts her social critique of French (urban planning) policing and its direct implications for immigrant descent youth posing a question as to whether it is a double under-status that they are assigned with.

However, the problematic with the hybrid cultural identities of the protagonists is that this hybridity is not recognised as a possibility in their society. On the one hand, cultural hybridity is an organic part of their everyday lives, and it helps them to cross the borderlines of the physical and symbolic spaces in which they are positioned. Yet, on the other hand, this cultural hybridity incorporates the negotiation of the self within contradictory dynamics between being French in their perceptive cultural and linguistic allegiances and being rejected by the mainstream culturally-homogenous French society as socially-dislocated racialised and cultural 'others'. In this view, the protagonists enter into a conflict with their French cultural selves, and this conflict is articulated through the constant crisis of identity. Although they have managed to carve out for themselves their 'Third Spaces', in which they base their cultural affiliations on a search for a personal identity, they don't have a feeling of complete belonging to neither of the cultural and social frameworks in which and between which they live. They perform as transcultural subjects with transforming subjectivities, but their (cultural) identities' quest cannot (yet) find the 'spaces' in which the crisis of identity can be resolved. Further negotiation of their transcultural selves seems to depend on how they are re-perceived culturally within a transcultural perspective, and what the implications of their 'liberation' from their current socio-economic and spatial marginalisation in the construction of this perception will be.

The use of magic realism in the film intends to negotiate this question. Yet, in the light of confining circumstances of the protagonists, it results rather in an ambiguous approach to

the possibility-impossibility resolution of the problem. On the one hand, there is an interesting scene when Dounia and Maimouna mime driving an imaginary invisible Ferrari which can be



Figure 7. Dounia and Maimouna driving their imaginary invisible Ferrari. Sequence of stills from *Divines* (2016).

analysed as a surrealist expression of an aspiring imaginary world that will, in the view of the protagonists, grant them the privilege as forever self-sufficient and financially secure individuals. Its surrealistic stylisation (in-edited non-diegetic sound of a car motor) and the application of the special effect of movement (actual riding of an imaginary car) refer to the symbolism of this scene as an improbable development in the protagonists' current circumstances. But at the same time it communicates how powerful the protagonists' desire is to break free from their pre-disposed social and economic alienation, from their position as young people with no future and nowhere to go. The scene constructs the girls' dream as a potential quick escape from marginalisation thus providing their characters with motivation to search for and carve out the paths in their goal's direction. But the tragic ending hints at the dangers involved in this quest of 'breaking free', ultimately bringing into the frame a reminder of the police surveillance in the hood and their prejudicial indifference/brutality attitude to the residents of the area.

Critical stance of the filmmaker and transcultural resolution of the film.

Benyamina's innovative approach to banlieue cinema and a reference to Céline Sciamma's *Girlhood* (2014).

Divines (2016) can be considered a special film to have readdressed the social reality of multicultural youth in French *banlieue*. It brings on new cultural meanings in comparison to the filmic representations that form part of the so-called *beur*⁷⁹ and *banlieue* cinema in France. Ballesteros describes it as the cinema that narrates the experiences, usually confronting with marginalisation and discrimination, of "both second-generation Arabs (beurs) and black immigrants who have been segregated for decades in low income subsidized housing projects (*cités*) in the suburban areas (*banlieues*) of France's major cities" (2014, p.210). Although second generation immigrant artists such as Abdellatif Kechiche, a French-Tunisian filmmaker, as well as French-Algerian Mendi Charef, Rachid Bouchreb and Yamina Benguigui are considered the most representative filmmakers of *beur* and *banlieue* cinema in France, several French 'native' directors such as Mathieu Kassovitz (*La Haine*, 1996) and Laurent Cantet (*Entre les murs*, 2008) have also explored and critically approached the social tensions, exclusion and intolerance in French *banlieues* (Ibid., p.212). *Divines* (2016) somehow breaks from this categorisation of being labelled as a classical or even conventional *banlieue* film, as we can point to the ability of its vibrant images and created cultural meanings to have re-constructed the socio-cultural imagery in contemporary *banlieue* across the negotiations of youth culture in the hood, openness-confinement of *banlieue* 'spaces' and gender conventions.

On the one hand, what *Divines* (2016) shares with previous *banlieue* and *beur* films is what Ballesteros described as the feature of the latter, that is, an illustration of the *cit * as a space "where there is not much to do except hang out with their friends and where interracial harmony and friendly loyalty prevails in the absence of role models of parental authority figures" (2015, p.216), or in what Vincendeau called "the common struggle of mixed-race groups against the police and bourgeois society" (2000, p.321). However, the film breaks with the pre-constructed binaries, both cultural and in reference to the perceptions of masculinity and femininity. In contrast to earlier *banlieue* films' absence, commodification or silence of female characters (Tarr, 2005, p.50), as for instance it was the case with Charef's *Tea in the Harem* (1985) or conventional social schemes divided by gender and still persistent constructs

⁷⁹*Beur* means Arab in a slang and as term is coined by *beurs* themselves.

of male superiority in Kechiche's *L'esquive/Games of Love and Chance* (2003), *Divines* (2016) protagonises self-initiative, pro-active, mobile and individualist female characters who cross the confinements of their *banlieue* 'spaces' by applying personal agency in re-configuring their functioning. In this view, by introducing a new take on the *banlieue* filmmaking, Houda Benyamina also introduces a new look of transcultural characters of immigrant descent. They are active social subjects whose cultural hybridity should not be questioned but recognised.

As for the 'location' of *Divines* (2016) in European production, exhibition and distribution world, Benyamina commented that it was a difficult venture for the film to get through. The biggest challenge at the production stage was that within the French film industry the mainstream film circles found it difficult to find a place for it among the national cinema projects. However, at the stage of promotion, the director persuaded the state-owned France 2 to collaborate in distribution (Rose, 2016). Sight&Sound magazine further mentioned that the film came as a huge surprise, "out of nowhere" (Stevens, 2016). It premiered at Cannes 2016 and was awarded Camera d'Or prize for best debut feature film. Since then, the film has been acquired by Netflix and is now accessible in 130 countries (Rose, 2016).

As a last note I will briefly refer to another French film production which resonates with the *Divines*' (2016) reconstructive strategies and empowers its main female characters as the protagonists of their lives - Celine Sciamma's *Girlhood/ Bande de filles* (2014). *Girlhood* (2014) is very different from *Divines* (2016) in its narrative approach, its stylistic choices and the whole set of performative elements that are engaged in the discussion of identity. Yet, if put together they can be considered as two portraits of French immigrant descent youth that are complementing each other. *Banlieue*-born and raised, a female quartet of immigrant descent youth delivers the story that breaks conventional images of woman (both of French women and of immigrant descent French women) and the constructs of gender-predisposed feminine roles going as far as in the direction of feminist narratives. The film interrogates the universal questions of a woman's freedom to choose and carve out her own life beyond the imposed and socially expected forms of behaviour. In this way, *Girlhood* (2014) positions her female characters not that much as disenfranchised youth living in their *banlieues* and confronting there the world of crime and prejudices upon going to the 'centre', but connects them to the global cause of addressing the position of a disadvantaged women, and as they come up with the possibilities of their self-realisation and liberation. Furthermore, the film poses the implied suggestion of re-writing the mainstream image of *la femme française* which

maintains her profiling as a white thin bourgeois female. As Pfeiffer observantly points out, "(t)hey [Sciamma's four female leads] represent a very real, very modern kind of French femininity, albeit one that is rarely seen on screen" (2015).

In this view, both *Divines* (2016) and *Girlhood* (2014) open the doors in the French filmmaking and film industry to the changing politics in the representation of French youth of immigrant descent, and lay out authentic and critical points from which to start re-approaching the national-cultural narrative of France of what and who can be considered French. Both films provide the cultural insights countering the mainstream media and political discourses constructs that keep on reinforcing the othering of French youth of non-European immigrant descent. As if reacting to this stigmatisation on racialised and cultural terms they define the falling out of the 'norm' of white secular Frenchness. Whether the 'norm' is maintained indirectly by developing further the closed 'traditional' image of a French, or directly by labelling the immigrant descent youth with the markers of 'rioter', 'terrorist', 'delinquent' for males and usually passive subjects for females, *Divines* (2016) and *Girlhood* (2014) prove the 'norm' and the stigmatisation both dangerous and obsolete and call for a critical reflection on extending the conceptual understanding of Frenchness and Europeanness.

3.3 Transcultural implications for multiculturalism as explored via filmic discourses.

As discussed in chapter one, the elaboration of the theory of transculturality can assist in developing the critical insights for re-approaching multiculturalism. Indeed, the transcultural research intends to justify the need for the incorporation of transcultural solutions and implications within the discourse on multiculturalism and multicultural policies in Europe. In this view, by questioning the multiculturalism in its traditionalist understanding and drawing upon the cultural findings within the analysed examples of filmic case studies, this subchapter suggests to address the re-configuration of multiculturalism in its conceptual and institutional projections. It is proposed to refer to transcultural analysis and its generated non-essentialist cultural meanings as the reasoning for re-considering the multiculturalism discourse beyond the essentialist paradigm of culture.

Traditional multicultural policies can be regarded as policies of a 'half-hearted nature' mainly because of their functional non-correspondence with an increasingly complex transcultural reality of contemporary Europe. In many cases, there has been a long standing reluctance of nation-states to recognise the reality and the dynamics of cultural diversity, which has resulted in an overwhelmingly urgent necessity to react to the accommodation and analysis of this diversity in a time when the multicultural complexity was impossible to deny.

While transcultural migration has been increasing and diversifying, the multicultural and integration policies did not seem to be interested in the real life implications of a cultural contact and of the possibilities of transcultural communication, exchange and transformation. The main shortcoming of traditional multiculturalism has been the emphasis on co-existence, an artificially constructed delimitation of people categorised into cultural and ethnic groups that supposedly can live side by side in their enclosed and separated cultural environments. Additionally, the institutional and discursive facilitation of this 'enclosure' (e.g. policies of pillarisation in the Netherlands, segregation of suburban-housing projects neighbourhoods in France) has been considered as a fair concession to emerging national minorities. The problematic of this construct of multiculturalism, which is rather a top-down policy perspective, is not only in its disregard of cultural dynamics and natural crossing of symbolic borders between cultures. It is also a disregard of the complexity of transcultural connections that involve inter-influences, a combination of different cultural elements from 'opposing' cultural worlds, and the negotiation of cultural controversies that lead to revealing the commonalities and producing complementarities. In this view, multiculturalism could not have aimed for a celebration of a peaceful coexistence of different separate cultures in

multicultural societies. To start with the consideration of cultures as 'separate' has already been an unrealistic pre-disposition.

Moreover, the 'enclosure', ghettoisation and spatial and symbolic marginalisation have been implying the delimitation of cultural worlds as an accepted normality, even a norm, and the crisis of identity that derives from living in-between the delineated cultural worlds as problematic - as a complex, an uncertainty, and an inability of a transcultural subject to find their place in the world within the 'neat' categories of cultural, ethnic-cultural and national-cultural groups.

Countering these essentialist visions, the transcultural meanings in the analysed films testify to the flexibility of the cultural identity of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects. As the characters of *Almanya - Welcome to Germany* (2011) and *Divines* (2016) manage to carve for themselves 'Third Spaces' in which they are able to negotiate and express their multiple selves simultaneously, the categorisations are dissolved and the juxtaposition of controversial elements from different cultures and different socio-cultural spaces is initiated. The indispensable role of the phenomenological agency is emphasised as the identities' interrogation of the characters from *Divines* (2016) and *Girlhood* (2014) do not follow the roles pre-disposed for them by their environments (in this case the spatially and socially delimited *banlieues*) and as their identity quest is directly connected to their personal self-exploration and to the aspirations formulated and re-formulated in the process of this exploration. These transcultural meanings further communicate the restrictiveness of the nation-centered perspectives on cultural identities construction and suggest to expand the understanding of the 'nationhood'. This expanded understanding is to include the possibility of combination of multiple cultural identities within one national identity (or more than one) and make transcultural identities negotiation recognised as a dynamic process that re-configures the 'nationhood' from within. The multiculturalism and integration policies are therefore to be addressed beyond the nation-centered perspective in its essentialist understanding and allude instead to the implications that the transcultural research delivers.

What has also to be taken into consideration is the role of the contextual elements and factors that actually interfere in the transcultural communication, impede the developments of transcultural connections and do not strive for analysing cultural transformation. There is a strong interdependency between the political element (policies and discourses) as a factor for facilitating and developing a more inclusive and transculturality-friendly society and the actual process and possibilities for accommodation and 'integration' of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects within such societies, as this interconnection is illustrated in *El otro lado...*

Un acercamiento a Lavapiés (2002). The generation of open 'spaces' in which transcultural identities can be negotiated are also significantly relevant for the policies of multiculturalism (e.g. Mercato di Porta Palazzo in *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) as an example of an 'open-minded' platform for intercultural communication).

The multicultural policies guided by transcultural perspectives can incorporate the instruments that will not only facilitate transcultural connections, but will also identify, analyse and react to the factors that create major obstacles or unfavorable conditions for these connections to evolve or which stigmatise a concept of transcultural development itself. Two important factors as have been examined through the film analysis are the spatial (physical segregation and housing policies) and discursive segregation in media and political discourses.

In this view, it is important to consider the role of media and political discourses in the positioning of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects and thus in shaping multicultural policies' strategies and directions. The discrimination, marginalisation and segregation of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in contemporary Europe is as much spatial as discursive. Media and political discourses that generate and reinforce a negative, generalised and marginal image of an immigrant subject are thus forging these 'constructs' that influence the public opinion which makes immigrant subjects to be looked down upon. As a result, this has an impact on the immigrant/immigrant descent subjects' cultural and socio-economic location with their 'adopted' society. In cultural terms, the impossibility of preserving their cultural practices (or when the preservation of the language use is considered an impediment to learning a language of a host society) makes the 'originary' practices and 'host society' cultural practices as mutually exclusive. And this is what leads to a conflict, a pre-supposed rule of the impossibility of combination (which is so promoted by assimilatory integration policies). With their multiple transcultural meanings negotiated on screen, the films give us a hint on how it is important to challenge these enrooted cultural stereotypes. Not through that much concentrating on particular separate stereotypes but contributing to the idea that cultural stereotypes together with stigmatising perceptions are retaining us from a transcultural dialogue and from transcultural connections. And thus 'the us' are retained from the possibility to find out more about the discursively constructed 'others' and vice versa, which in its turn forges further lack of understanding and acceptance of developed transcultural practices, identities and lifestyles.

Hence, how can multiculturalism depart from its integrationist approach in assimilatory terms? Although multiculturalism has been conceptually constructed as a point of departure

from the assimilatory paradigm, it still retains its core essentialist philosophy of cultural identity as a 'pure static self' and a 'pure static other'. Within multicultural policies, the approaches to integration and inclusion are usually understood in assimilatory terms. As a possible modification of multiculturalism in this direction, it should involve an aspect of a two-sided integration in active terms; while at the same time the possibility of retaining the elements of 'originary' cultures has to be considered as a positive development. In any manner, the 'originary' cultures will be reconstructed into their new interpretations and instead of a 'refusal', a transcultural re-combination has to be considered as a complex cultural development with the participation of the contextual environment specificity (socio-cultural world within the 'receiving' society) and the individual agency of the subjects (personal choices, trajectories and circumstances). Furthermore, the creation of hybrid positions through transcultural connections and exchange is to be analysed as enriching rather than threatening.

These transcultural implications that derive from the films analysis - the importance of a facilitated cultural interaction for the development of transcultural identities, the necessity of preserving and developing multiple attachments in the process of adaptation in new homelands, the significance of accommodating a 'Third Space' by transcending and thus challenging the discursively constructed borderlines and nation-centric categorisations, as defining different configurations of transcultural developments -, are important exemplifications of transculturality hinting at the necessity of the concept's incorporation within the discourses on multiculturalism as well as the further exploration of its paradigmatic value for re-considering multiculturalism and integration policies in Europe.

Conclusions

CONCLUSIONS

The ultimate research question for this dissertation is how transcultural research paves the way for challenging and deconstructing cultural essentialism, specifically how it contributes to de-essentialising the construct of European 'cultural other'. This construct and its further reinforcement implies perceiving, portraying and/or referring to immigrant/immigrant descent subjects of non-European descent as intrinsically not European in cultural terms, and as excluded from the national and supranational narratives of identity construction.

With the purpose of answering the research question, the task has been set as to explore the current conceptualisations of the concept of transculturality and to define its paradigmatic value for confronting cultural essentialism. In this view, more specific questions were posed to transculturality as a developing notion. Can we say that transcultural research has the theoretical tools and analytical frameworks for initiating cultural de-essentialisation? Can transculturality become an analytical instrument for the analysis of the complexity of multicultural reality and for a better understanding of how the increasing cultural diversity in a modern world functions?

Transcultural research has thus been defined as research that examines, tests and elaborates further the theoretical framework of the concept of transculturality, a theory which approaches cultures as non-essential, as open and dynamic formations in continuous change and transformation. The theoretical discussion of the concept has been developed in reference to the transculturality conceptualisations by such authors as Bhabha (1994), Welsch (1999), Delanoy (2006/2012), Flüchter and Schöttli (2014), Rings (2016). In the process of this discussion, the hypothetical-theoretical framework of transculturality was built. This framework has combined different theoretical points of the aforementioned authors while also referring to the relevant theoretical ideas of other theorists who have addressed transcultural implications in their research (Jones & Krzyżanowski, 2008; Robins, 2014; Bhambra, 2014; Sieber, 2015; Schriewer & Cayuela, 2016).

Furthermore, it has elaborated the basis structure of the concept of transculturality illustrating the theory's capability to suggest a dynamic conceptual body for explaining all the non-essentialist cultural developments (e.g. the negotiation and combination of multiple identities, crisis of identity, the creation and practice of transcultural lifestyles), as well as developed positioning elements of transculturality for examining the process of transcultural meanings-creation. The proposed hypothetical-theoretical framework has included seven

topics that emphasise both the elements of conceptual constitution of transculturality (transforming identities, transforming subjectivities in the process of identities construction, 'Third Spaces', dynamic cultural borders, cultural hybridity as a continuous project) as well as contextual interdependencies that influence transcultural developments and different configurations of transculturality as a process and as a result (socio-cultural and discursive environment, the role of the concept of the 'nation' and of the process of its construction in transcultural developments, interference of monocultural/essentialist perspectives).

At the same time, it was proposed to extend transculturality's theoretical constitution by incorporating several new points to be considered in an empirical analysis. These new suggestions can be summarised as follows:

1. to relate the dynamics of cultural hybridity to whether it is accepted or not within its contextual environment. In other words, it is suggested that cultural hybridity (its configurations and performativity) depends on its recognition, which is framed and influenced by the cultural hybridity's contextual factors. Thus, the negotiation and manifestation of cultural hybridity becomes closely interrelated with the contextual conditions in which it develops, and that define its recognition and re-invention.

2. to extend the conceptualisation of a 'Third Space' to its expression within two modalities (pre-hybridity projection and Bhabha's 'Third Space'). The functioning and configuration of 'Third Spaces' also depends on the influence of contextual factors.

3. to address contextual interdependency of transcultural developments through three interrelated variables. Apart from specific (1) socio-cultural, socio-political and discursive environment, contextual factors that influence the configuration and dynamics of transculturality also include (2) the influence of the individual agency (e.g. transcultural perspectives such as readiness for intercultural communication and exchange) and (3) the role and influence of the relationship/interplay between cultural elements involved in transcultural negotiation.

Furthermore, the theoretical-hypothetical framework developed in Chapter One has served as a basis of reference, as a guide, for building the methodological model for empirical transcultural analysis in Chapter Two. For the purpose of empirical application of the concept of transculturality and the verification of the de-essentialising value of transcultural research, it was decided to refer to European artistic cultural representations, cinema in particular, which address and engage into the re-imagining of the European 'cultural other'. In this view, the methodological model was designed specifically for the transcultural analysis of films, taking into consideration the common themes that the selected case studies deal with: the

experience of immigration and diaspora and cultural identities construction in a certain national (and transnational) context. The selection of the filmic case studies have thus included the films that offer transcultural implications following a transcultural encounter. Cinematic works that closely focus on the lives of the constructed 'cultural others' (and that are in most of the cases directed by the constructed 'others' themselves) have been selected as possible 'visualisations' of such implications. The methodological model has thus been elaborated to conceptually and methodologically identify, contextualise and explore the non-essentialist elements in these films.

To begin with **the summary of the findings**, it has to be noted that in the course of the cinematic analysis, transcultural research has proven itself a valuable tool for de-essentialisation, specifically by opening the critical inquiry routes for this objective. In the process of exploration and analysis of transcultural meanings in selected filmic case studies the first main transcultural perspective to be guided by has been viewing cultural positions from the very beginning as dynamic. That is to say, cultural identities of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects have been approached as encompassing the multiplicity of cultural elements (including possibly contradictory elements or discursively constructed as contradictory), self-references and the potential for the identities' further reconstruction. Within this initial approach of the flexibility of identities, the complexity of cultural encounters has been recognised as containing the potential of transformation *per se*.

Moreover, as the first reading of the films has been completed, the significance of a film medium for transcultural research has been re-affirmed alluding to its ability to provide the spectator and the researcher with the "inside view". This re-affirmation was inspired by the aesthetics and cinematography of Maite Vitoria Daneris' documentary *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) which allowed a closer observation of the protagonists' lives, a 'view of curiosity' applied in *El otro lado...*(2002) by Básel Ramsis, as well as the projections of personal cultural quest and research in reference to multiple cultural selves by such immigrant descent filmmakers as Houda Benyamina (*Divines* 2016) and Yasemin Şamdereli (*Almanya - Welcome to Germany* 2011). It has thus been concluded that the transcultural perspective requires a 'view of curiosity', of a focused interest, whereas the guidance of first hand narratives and self-representations assists in accessing this "inside view" within which to see, analyse and better understand transcultural connections (relationships) and transculturality at work. Furthermore, the analysis of cultural difference becomes transcultural when this difference is examined as a potential connection rather than a/(an opposing) differentiation, an

approach which becomes defining for a transcultural exchange in *El lugar de las fresas* (2013).

The choice of referring to films, regarded as valuable and interesting empirical platforms for conducting transcultural analysis, has further proven itself as having equipped the research with enriching sociological, cultural, artistic and political material. The films have thus been approached as sites that illustrate the process of identities negotiation, but also as tools through which it is possible to elaborate transcultural research further. The examination of the films via transcultural analysis has not only resulted in cultural findings that resonate with and extend the theoretical-hypothetical framework of transculturality. The findings have also pointed out the de-constructive potential of the artistic medium which closely focuses on the lives and stories of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects in Europe. On the one hand, the paradigmatic shift from an essential to a transcultural conceptualisation of culture has re-affirmed itself as topical and even vital. And on the other hand, the produced non-essentialist cultural meanings in the films reveal the restrictiveness and even invalidity of the construct of the European 'cultural other' and thus testify to the necessity of the essentialist cultural paradigm shift.

In this regard, the two major findings from the transcultural analysis of the films can be summarised as the following:

- (1) The topicality and vitality of the paradigmatic shift.
- (2) The restrictiveness of the construct of the European 'cultural other'.

Let us discuss these two main points in more detail referring to the corresponding elements of transcultural analysis of the films.

As to **the topicality and vitality of the paradigmatic shift** from an essential to a transcultural conceptualisation of culture, this shift becomes important for several reasons. First of all, the need to challenge and deconstruct the essentialist cultural paradigm does not only lie in its obsolete theoretical points but also in the damaging projection of these points into contemporary politics of identity and difference. The essentialist narratives, whether they are put across through political, media, public or even artistic discourses, that reinforce and manipulate with the constructs of identity as structures of uniformity and cultural homogeneity, provide fruitful grounds and theoretical justifications both for right-wing nationalism and discursive segregation of ethnic (emerging) national minorities. The latter can involve either a direct marginalisation around the discourses' production of stereotypical negative images under the generalised reference to ethnicity, e.g. 'delinquent', 'terrorist', 'illegal', 'female oppressor', etc., or an essentialist delimitation of cultural otherness, in which

the 'immigrant culture' stands in opposition to the 'native culture' ('European' progressive vs. 'non-European' conservative values, religious incompatibility etc.).

Ramsis' *El otro lado...* (2002) and Benyamina's *Divines* (2016), in particular, illustrate that as the stereotypical labelling and essentialist 'othering' of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects influence their positioning in the host society, this interferes in the construction of their (trans)cultural identities. The labelling and 'othering' further impede transcultural communication and exchange between the immigrants/immigrant descendants and the 'natives', or even across the immigrant communities themselves (*El otro lado...*, 2002), as well as instigate the rejection of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects by their mainstream host/home society (*Divines*, 2016).

Through the application of the critically-elaborated narrative composition and diverse cinematographic strategies, the selected filmic case studies have demonstrated how it is possible to challenge the stereotypes, generalisations or entrenched notions of cultural 'otherness' and to question the schemes of power relations. Ramsis, for instance, manages to produce a non-judgmental representation of Lavapiés' residents. The protagonists are approached within the non-essentialist frameworks of inquiry, without preset or pre-constructed cultural positions, prejudices or expected actions or behaviours. By compiling as many varied perspectives from immigrant subjects living in Lavapiés as possible, the director delivers an extensive picture of the heterogeneous fabric of cultural diversity in the area. While taking into consideration the persistence and the power of essentialist constructs (the entrenched constructs of cultural essentialism and marginalisation of 'non-Western cultures'), *El otro lado...*(2002) specifically emphasises that there are disparities between what is imagined or perceived and what is actually practised (which goes against the imagined and the perceived), as it reveals the instances that de-construct cultural borders by showing interaction and cultural transformation in process.

El lugar de las fresas (2013), too, critically engages with the discourses of immigrant stigmatisation. As the film underscores the discursive and institutional restrictions that influence the situation and positioning of immigrant subjects in European nation states, it provides a counterbalance to these restrictions. More specifically, the film emphasises the power of an individual perspective (Lina's unprejudiced attitude and openness towards an intercultural relationship) in countering any confinements that are constructed within cultural or political borders.

In response to the essentialist delimitation of cultural 'otherness', in which the 'immigrant culture' stands in opposition to the 'native culture' because of predominantly

religious or cultural incompatibility, this type of labelling is countered in *Almanya* (2011) and *Divines* (2016). The films emphasise the role of individual agency in carving out a cultural hybridity that combines different cultural elements from multiple social spheres, while different cultural worlds intersect across these spheres. Furthermore, *Divines* (2016) shares a critical agency with *Girlhood* (2014) in their reaction to the racialised and cultural othering and stigmatisation of French youth of non-European immigrant descent. By providing insights into the protagonists' rebellious relationship with their socio-cultural positioning and their hybrid identities, these films prove the closed 'traditional' image of a white secular Frenchness both dangerous and obsolete and call for a critical reflection on extending its conceptual understanding.

As to **the restrictiveness of the construct of the European 'cultural other'**, the film findings respond to the question as to whether transcultural research has the theoretical tools and analytical frameworks for initiating cultural de-essentialisation. More specifically, it is about whether transculturality's theoretical body and elaborated methodological framework provided the instruments of explaining through the films the cultural complexity specificities. The latter are related to the subjects living on 'cultural borders' and to the politics of identity crises that derive from this living (torn between two (or more) cultures, or confidently negotiating their selves across multiple cultural borders).

Certainly, a conceptual body of transculturality allows approaching culture as complex and non-essential and the filmic images have facilitated empirical platforms for addressing and analysing this complexity. The central tool of transculturality that has facilitated explanation of transcultural meanings coming into being has been the analysis of 'Third Spaces' construction, specifically examination of the transpiring of framing spaces into 'Third Spaces' and the subsequent transcultural developments taking place in 'Third Spaces'. This transcultural analysis has further provided links to other central elements and interdependencies of transculturality such as cultural hybridity, transforming identities and transforming subjectivities, flexibility of constructed cultural borders, the crisis of identity as part of the cultural hybridisation process, and contextual influence on the construction of dual/multiple belonging.

As 'Third Spaces' have been theorised as functioning in two modalities (pre-hybridity 'Third Space' construction as a facilitator of transcultural encounters, which is a first modality, and a platform for transculturality in the process of development as a second modality, which is also Bhabha's understanding of a 'Third Space'), this conceptualisation has been applied to the cinematic analysis. This scheme has proven itself a suitable theoretical tool for a more

multidimensional transcultural analysis and has assisted in drawing attention to transcultural processes that do not only involve the actual resultant hybridisation but also the instances and multidirectional negotiations that precede the event of a tangible hybridity or the re-configuring of the process of hybridisation.

The most important basis conclusion that derives from the cinematic analysis is the multiplicity, inter-relation and interaction of framing spaces that are related to the protagonists' identities construction, and which provide the platforms for identities negotiation that can potentially become 'Third Spaces'. By refusing to position their protagonists - the immigrant/immigrant descent subjects - within single enclosed cultural environments, the films open access to following the characters' symbolic mobility across multiple spaces and across pre-constructed cultural borders. At the same time, the emphasis is on the protagonists' personalised re-invention of these borders (the role of individual agency in multiple configurations of transculturality) and the interrelationship of this reinvention with its contextual environment.

Therefore, the question to answer, in this regard, is how this multiplicity and interconnection between different framing spaces and the role of contextual specificity (both individual agency and socio-cultural context) in re-configuring these spaces point to the restrictiveness of the construct of the European 'cultural other'.

Confirming the non-purity but rather flexibility and complex dynamics of cultural identities, the 'European others' challenge the constructed 'otherness' as they negotiate and formulate their selves across multiple spheres of reference and social life which are shared with 'the us'. As the negotiation of cultural identities is inextricably related to the negotiation of the self as a social subject, the negotiation and re-negotiation of belonging and identification takes place across such different 'spaces' of enunciation as cultural heritage, family, immediate environment, friends, urban culture, circles of personal interests/hobbies/affiliations, social institutions of the nation-state or of the local community, as well as 'national narrative' (who and what can be considered as 'native') that plays a role in the construction of the transcultural identities. Furthermore, the negotiation and re-negotiation of belonging and identification takes place across a wide range of social situations, which can relate to and take place within one or multiple 'spaces' of enunciation. On the one hand, these spaces form the specific core basis of the contextual specificity that influences the construction and (re-)negotiation of transcultural identities. And, on the other hand, they indicate that the negotiations of transcultural identities of the European 'others' are both

individualised and performed within collective cultural frameworks 'located' nationally and transnationally.

In reference to the identities negotiation within collective cultural frameworks, the films have emphasised the role of the collaboration (between the constructed 'us' and the constructed 'others') in building 'Third Spaces'. More specifically, the protagonists collaborate by applying their individual agency in reconfiguring common framing spaces into 'Third Spaces' or 'Third Spaces' of the first modality into 'Third Spaces' of the second modality. In this view, 'the others' and 'the us', despite being discursively separated, interact within the shared spaces of reference and social life. For instance, when functioning as a facilitator of transcultural connection, examples of 'Third Spaces' of first modality can be found in *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) and *El otro lado...* (2002). In *El lugar de las fresas* (2013) Mercato di Porta Palazzo performs as a 'Third Space' that facilitates and encourages the development of transcultural relationships, and in *El otro lado...*(2002) the public and urban spaces of Lavapiés function as platforms for transcultural encounter and potential spaces for intercultural communication and exchange. Yet, the functioning of these 'spaces' as 'Third Spaces' of second modality is activated as the individual agency of openness to 'the other' is involved, while at the same time this openness is accompanied by a refusal of the binary or hierarchical relationship between the 'cultural worlds' of the participants of the transcultural connection. For example, this is illustrated by the egalitarian relationship between Lina and Hassan in *El lugar de las fresas* (2013). What comes to the fore in the construction of their transcultural relationship is a back and forth exchange and mutual exploration and inquiry into each other as individuals whose life trajectories, characters, and practices include the references of their cultural identities but are not defined by or limited to their nationalities, ethnicities or religious affiliations. What is more important here is how the protagonists participate collaboratively (through their transcultural perspectives, interaction, exchange and mutual inter-influence) in contributing to Porta Palazzo's performance as a space for transcultural existence.

Furthermore, as the negotiation of cultural identities of immigrant/immigrant descent subjects involves negotiation of contradictory cultural elements, the performativity of hybridity as a combination of these cultural elements will depend on whether this hybridity is recognised or not. More specifically, the fluctuating cultural borders between the spaces of self-negotiation can be activated by multiple factors, among which the most defining ones are the recognition of hybridity on a macro scale (community/society level, e.g. transculturality friendly socio-cultural environment) and the role of the individual agency in reference to this

recognition on a micro scale (transcultural perspectives of an individual subject, e.g. refusal to view 'difference' as 'the other', readiness for intercultural exchange and recognising the transcultural possibilities of dual/multiple belonging).

The findings of hybridity's recognition/non-recognition can be illustrated in reference to the analysis of 'Third Spaces' of second modality in *Almanya* (2011) and *Divines* (2016). A 'Third Space' of the second modality performs as a platform for transculturality in the process of development and is communicated in the films through the experiencing and negotiation of the crisis of identity. Here, the possibilities of the identity crisis resolution will define whether cultural hybridity has been recognised or not. When the negotiation of the protagonists' transcultural identities is supported, that is to say accompanied by approval of transculturality within their immediate environment, the negotiating subjects are more confident in the possibility of combining their multiple selves from different or constructed as different cultures of reference. This was specifically possible to analyse in the case of *Almanya's* (2011) protagonists. As the subjects start to negotiate their relationship with the symbolic borders between 'Germanness' and 'Turkishness' and their lives beyond and across these borders, the crisis of identity emerges in reference to the 'national' society norm of being/being able to be only one or another, and of delimitations of which cultural practices belong to one culture and another. In the process of the quest for their identities, Cenk and Canan are confronted with confusion and uncertainty before they can arrive at the point of 'reconciliation' and entering a 'Third Space' in which they can combine both their re-negotiated selves. Within this re-negotiation, the 'Turkishness' of *Almanya's* protagonists is mixed with their 'Germanness' and re-invented in each characters' own personalised way: their identities re-negotiation is physically contextualised in their German socio-cultural environment but also alludes to their Turkish heritage, even though it exists as a memory/a story of their parents and grandparents, a reproduction of certain cultural traditions at home, or as an 'imaginary homeland' negotiation. Most importantly, the process of entering a 'Third Space' and the further resolution of the identity crisis is facilitated by their family who appear as accepting double consciousness and double belonging. This indicates that the way the cultural identity crisis is resolved depends on the transculturality-friendly individual perspectives that exist within the immediate social environment in which this crisis occurs.

In Canan's case the emphasis is also on the collaboration and interaction between her individual spaces of reference. At first Canan refers to her two major spheres of reference- her affiliation with her extended German-Turkish family and her life and co-habitation with her English boyfriend - as opposing. This 'opposition' implies the construct of a Turkish close-

knit and collectivist cultural world against a German/European progressive and individualist cultural world. In light of this, Canan's unexpected pregnancy provokes a crisis of her cultural identity: she fears a very negative reaction from her family referring to that her prospective future now contradicts Turkish tradition according to which a Turkish woman should marry a Turkish man, and to the Islamic tradition of "saving face" or "family honour", that is, in particular, not to get pregnant before marriage. She is further confronted with the question of how to combine her 'separated' spaces of reference. However, the interaction and interweaving of these spaces becomes apparent when her crisis of identity is resolved and her cultural hybridity, which selectively combines the cultural elements from both cultural worlds, is realised and recognised. Specifically, her family discards certain cultural elements from their cultural heritage (the necessity of adhering to the 'family honour' and tradition of marrying a Turkish man) and maintains the other elements (strong family bonds across several generations and collectivist traditions). In this view, the negotiation of Canan's identity within a 'Third Space' has led to revealing already existing overlaps, the cultural hybridity that was already present but needed to be verified and recognised. At the same time, this also illustrates that transcultural positions are being formed in the context of the combination of references and personally selected points from all the cultural spaces in which immigrant/immigrant descent subjects perform.

On the other hand, transcultural identity negotiation can also be a more destabilising process, in which immigrant/immigrant descent subjects find themselves accommodating a 'space' between 'the West' and 'the Rest', or 'the West' and 'the Other'. This is how it is shown in the case of *Divines* (2016) and also partly in *Almanya* (2011), especially through the character of Hüseyin. The protagonists do not consider themselves as 'the other' by being affiliated with their 'receiving' country (and in the case of the second and third generation their country of birth) and at the same time they feel uprooted (and alienated) from their 'originary' cultures/cultures of their parents. However, they are not fully recognised by the national narrative as non-other, as 'the us', 'the West', 'the European', 'the French/the German...!', a discursive scheme which also alludes to the inability of non-European immigrant/immigrant descent subjects to 'integrate', specifically to accept and acquire Western culture because they are just not intrinsically Western. As a response to this non-recognition (discursive contextual specificity) and the role of individual agency in constructing their personal identities, the process of transcultural identity negotiation is characterised here by building a 'Third Space' in which the crisis of identity is constant. In *Almanya* (2011) this construction implies a process of a more frequent re-negotiation of

cultural identities, in which the cultural elements of different cultures are not merely combined but re-worked, re-positioned, reversed and supplemented with multiple new layers of cultural reference. However, although destabilising, the crisis of identity here is re-configured as a rather inevitable and organic process that forms part of the transcultural development. In *Divines* (2016) a 'Third Space' creation functions as a reactionary rebellious act against the limitations of the protagonists' social and spatial positioning (Parisian *banlieue* as the spatialised social and cultural 'otherness'), and in which technology is applied to virtually and discursively reconfigure the restrictive spaces. The creation of these 'Third Spaces' of re-configuration indicates the problematic aspects of the protagonists' quest for their own identity, and that they don't have a feeling of complete belonging to either of the cultural and social frameworks in which and between which they live. Even though the French macro socio-cultural world acts as their space of reference (and their Frenchness does not need to be proven), cultural hybridity is not a possibility in their society, and thus the crisis of identity cannot (yet) be resolved. In this view, the resolution of the crises of identity of *Divines* (2016)' protagonists and the further negotiation of their transcultural selves depends on how they will be re-perceived culturally within a transcultural perspective, and what the implications of their 'liberation' from their current socio-economic and spatial marginalisation in the construction of this perception will be. These questions thus provoke a discussion on re-approaching the national-cultural narrative of France, of what and who can be considered French, and at the same time extending the critical inquiry to what and who can be considered European.

With the help of the cinematic discursive analysis, we have therefore been able to verify that transculturality indeed opens up the routes for a more holistic approach towards analysing cultural links and leads us to re-considering culture as an 'open formation' that is constantly ready for modification, reformation and re-configuration of its current and new elements. Transcultural perspective recognises the complexity around the construction of cultural identities as influenced by multidimensional factors, emphasising that these identities are also dynamic, flexible and interrelated. The major factors are the contextual specificity of influence onto the cultural identity construction (e.g. actual socio-cultural context, physical environment and discursive contexts), and phenomenological specificity (personal experiences and choices, which can also be conditioned and influenced by the socio-cultural and socio-political contexts).

Furthermore, the conducted transcultural analysis suggests that transculturality allows the possibility of redefining 'nationhood' by extending its conceptualisation, as it can propose

a 'nation' and 'national identity' to be reconstructed in dynamic and flexible terms. The images of transcultural identities negotiation provide grounds for re-approaching national identity as an open denomination that is adaptable to the changing nature of the cultural diversity and transcultural configurations within a nation-state. The exemplification of transcultural reality is a challenge to the essentialist understanding of a national identity (and to the supranational identity too), or as Miller has suggested, "a challenge to the idea that people need to have the kind of map that a national identity [constructed as a static set of cultural traits] provides" (Miller, 1995, p.165). As the different configurations of cultural hybridity in filmic case studies communicate, the role of the phenomenological agency in transcultural identities negotiation is defining in terms of selecting certain cultural elements from one culture and certain elements from the other (e.g. different configurations of German-Turkish selves and of French-Moroccan selves). As a result, the creation is a personalised cultural map that goes beyond one 'national' culture and another, and that combines different cultural specificities within and across these cultures.

Finally, it is important to note that transculturality as a concept has proven itself a dynamic theoretical framework which responds to the complexity of transcultural developments in contemporary European societies. It offers the tools to analyse the complex cultural diversity and thus replies to traditional multiculturalism's unresponsiveness to dynamic cultural developments and hybrid socio-cultural realities. The undertaken transcultural research testifies to the need for the incorporation of transcultural perspectives in the discourse of multiculturalism and multicultural policies.

At the same time, it is of significant importance that the theoretical framework of transculturality maintains its dynamic character and that its multiple implications are continually explored. As further empirical analysis is conducted, transculturality will be open to complementary and re-configurative theorisation, and thus to a thorough understanding of transcultural reality.

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