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The impact of the *Jamel Comedy Club* on stand-up comedy in France

This paper will examine the ways in which the launch of the *Jamel Comedy Club* on Canal Plus in 2006 had an impact on stand-up comedy in France. It will argue that the television series – largely through its association with Jamel Debbouze – played a significant role in boosting the visibility of stand-up comedy in France and rejuvenating the French comedy scene.

The launch of the *Jamel Comedy Club* owed much to the desire of French television channels to address the lack of members of visible minorities on screen in the aftermath of the suburban unrest of autumn. However, it will be argued that this context led many in the French media to use a somewhat reductive lens through which to view the performers. This at times ignored significant differences between the performers, both in terms of their comedy material and their biographies. Indeed, many reviewers largely ignored the fact that many of the leading comedians in the initial series were not from France's *banlieues* and that several mocked – rather than celebrated – (sub)urban culture in France.

In addition to exploring the aforementioned issues, this paper will also consider to what extent the *Jamel Comedy Club* provided elements of continuity or innovation within the context of Canal Plus's youth-focused comedy output.