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Mediterranean Politics

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Lack of Education, Immigration, Violence, Hatred, and Police Brutality

Lack of education, immigration, poor economic condition, violence, hatred, and police brutality are the main keys to this movie. Visually seeing the film, I have discovered that the characters are not well educated and that hatred has been their best friend. I think hatred has impacted their life because instead of going to school, they spent most of their time fighting on the streets, smoking, drinking, making bets, and losing money. They get no respect from the people outside the project, and are treated unfairly with racist attitude due to their public disturbances. This generates their hate towards government authorities. They consider violence as the best solution to gain respect. They cannot gain any respect or to change their marginal identities, but lead to their self destruction. Lastly, they probably didn't have the same opportunities as a standard French person, because their parents are immigrants from another country, and therefore don't have the same opportunities. Considering the fact that they struggle so much in reality, they end up running into police scrutiny.

- *In school I was taught that hatred breeds hatred.*
- *I didn't go to school. I belong to the streets and on the streets if you are weak, you are screwed.*

These quotes prove that the three main characters *Vinz, Hubert, & Said* practice the education on the streets. So, I am sure that either they did not go to school, or they didn't last long at school. Lack of education leads to failure, and even less opportunities of employment in life and it is clearly shown in the film. Vinz shares bedroom with his sister, Hubert's mother can only do sewing to make a living. Some do illegal business, like Hubert and Said sell drugs, and Hubert's brother is in prison. In my opinion, without a job or the chance to receive education, large number of young kids and teenagers always wander around in the projects. The more time they spend on the streets, the more violence they attract. It is clearly said that the three protagonists are always looking around for entertainment.

Their economic difficulties make it impossible to support their education. Hubert cannot even assist her younger sister's homework. They can hardly find a job outside the project. I would use Said as an example, because he bargains for a one-dollar hotdog, and goes all the way to Paris to find Snoopy just for a hundred dollars. Most of the time, a high number of teenagers are walking around the streets. They damage cars and public properties. To me, all these representations show the extent of the marginalization, they are trapped inside the streets, they cannot stand the hard life anymore. There is no assistance from the outside, this marginalized life passes on generation after generation. Hubert wants to move out and start a new life, but dies before he succeeds.

Another factor relating to poor access to education is because they are from an immigrant origin. It is entirely true that in many cities around the world generally the outskirts of big cities have a concentration of immigrant population turning those suburbs into marginal communities. This is also the case in Paris with its *banlieu* where these characters live. I believe they are surrounded with a poor and violent environment. One thing to remember is, Said and Hubert are of Jewish, Arab African descents, considering the fact that the French society requires all different races to assimilate into the majority, to replace everything with French majority culture and value. They are incapable to engage normal social occasions like talking to the two women in the gallery and the women say "With your attitude, how can we respect you?" or to negotiate when come to conflict as Said is about to slap the woman as failing to continue the conversation. I believe this scene from the film clearly stresses their living condition, which has great influences on forming their marginal identity.

Since these communities are full of non-satisfaction, it is easy for violence and hatred to root in the communities. I think that their attempt of using violence to gain respect makes them be more marginalized by society. They subjectively think that all other people out there do not respect them. The impression I got when watching the film was that their marginalized identity makes them more conscious about themselves. Almost their every engagement turns to conflict at the end, this shows that they can hardly affiliate into the mainstream society as their marginal identity has been deep-rooted. With that being said, the more experiences they have, the more violence and hatred will grow inside them.

Because they have committed so many crimes, they have gone through a lot of intense processes with the police. The big reason they run into the police almost all the time is they don't know how else to live their lives. Reflecting on one scene from the film, when they were interviewed by a TV reporter, it was very clear for me to understand that they are considered spontaneously as rioters and looters. When they arrive at the destroyed police station, the gaze of the policemen subjectively put them as rioters who made the damage. These judgments actually strengthen their marginal identity and it is so difficult for them to start building a sense of belonging to the society out of nothing. The more encounters they have with the cops, the more hatred they grow inside.

Watching this movie gave me some motivation to consider the challenges of refugees migrating all over the world. By the time these people left their first countries due to violence or poverty, they usually end up attracting violence and living in poor conditions. They probably didn't go to school because their families did not have the mandatory tools for it, so they don't have the knowledge to fight for a successful life. If I were governing a nation, I would work very diligently to make education accessible for everybody so they don't go through the humiliating experiences the three protagonists went through.