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*The Representation of North African and Sub-Saharan African Immigrants in French and Spanish Cinema*

Abstract:

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze French and Spanish migration films, *Poniente*, *Retorno a Hansala*, *Las Cartas de Alou*, *Bwana*, *La Haine*, *L’esquive*, *Ma 6-T Va Crack-er* and *Girlhood*, which show the struggles of North African and Sub-Saharan African immigrants as they navigate their new lives. This genre of cinema depicts important economic, social and political issues through the lives of their characters, humanizing them and making them more accessible to the audience. These films were chosen not only because of the diversity of the situations they illustrate, from the border crossing and self-exploration of Martin and Leila in *Retorno a Hansala* to the violence and revolutionary protests of the youth in *Ma 6-T Va Crack-er*, but also because of their focus on different parts of the immigrant experience and journey. The Spanish films focus on first-generation immigrants’ experiences with displacement and undocumented status, while French banlieue cinema shows the perspectives of second and third generation immigrants when they are citizens of the country but continuously reminded by society of their origins. The common themes and messages, including border crossings, changes in identity, growing up and integration into new communities, are depicted through the nuanced and complex perspectives of bold and brave immigrants advocating for their places in their adopted countries.