

**A thematic analysis of movies about national resistance of “us”  
(Lithuanians) against “them” (Soviets)**

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## 1. Introduction

Many people think Lithuania is a post-Soviet country that still is impacted by the ex-Communist country's past. Therefore, my surroundings often ask me what Lithuania has in common with Russia, do we speak the same language, and how many Russians live in Lithuania. The years of 1990 and 1991 were very crucial for Lithuania for defining its identity. This has not been shown much in the creative industries. Therefore, I have decided to research how national perspectives and in particular the Lithuanian resistance against the rule of Soviets is seen in the cultural industry and which patterns are used to portray those aspects of national representations.

This research will contribute to the existing literature because studies on the representation of group leaders (McCullough & Conway, 2018), political events from Latin America (Messmer, 2012), as well as 9/11 (Abderrazag & Serir, 2019), World Wars (Diligenti-Gavrilina, 1993) and other significant events were already investigated in the media. However, less known, and more niche events from the small countries in the Eastern Europe about the difference between the representation of political events were not found to have been researched. More specifically, the event taken up for the research is the national resistance of Lithuanians against Soviet Union in the week of January 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> in 1991. When Lithuania declared its independence from the USSR on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1990, being the first one to do that from the Soviet bloc member states, Soviet politicians did not accept the loss of one of the member states of the USSR fearing that it could have started the collapse of a long-lived empire (Miniotaite, 1996). From the declaration of independence in March 1990 until the week of January 1991, the Soviets threatened Lithuania with economic blockade, reclaiming threats of the territory and other tools of pressure on the country in order to prevent the Baltic country from starting allying with the Western world (Miniotaite, 1996).

At that time, the rest of the world focused on the Persian Gulf war, a crisis centre for many years; therefore, little attention was paid to the USSR's aggression on the Baltic countries (Robinson & Dixon, 2010). However, the Americans persisted that the world was aware of the situation of the Baltic countries of the USSR's aggression (Saja, 1991). So, in the week of January 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, the Soviet army intensified the aggressive actions, threatened with blockades, performed physical attacks with barricades, along with tanks marching in the capital of Lithuania and tried to occupy the most important sites of communication and political buildings, namely the House of Press, national TV and Radio broadcaster, TV tower,

and Supreme Council (as it was called the Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania. As a result, the night from 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> was named “Bloody Sunday” because 14 persons died and thousands injured while fighting for their country unarmed against heavily armed Soviets (Miniotaite, 1996).

The creative industries have many forms of storytelling, from literature, music, and art to visual expressionism. Real life events have been a popular topic in the movie industry. When representing different cultures, there is the representation of “us” versus “them” (Zelizer, 2018). A conflict arises when the opposing groups cannot solve an issue diplomatically, including social, cultural, and religious matters. Therefore, a side is taken, and in-group and out-group positions are created. Moreover, a third side can be chosen as the “other”, which takes the neutral position. The standpoint of these sides depends on the shared values and beliefs (Hirshberg, 1993). In this case, Lithuania will be presented as “us” and the Soviets as “them” while the rest of the world is the “other”. Hirshberg (1993) argues that the self-representation of the in-group, in other words, presented as “us”, can be portrayed in a biased way due to the representation to foreign audiences as the victims and the aim to receive empathy. On the contrary, the exaggeration of the out-group, named “them”, can also be biased due to the representation of the enemy, and perceived more negatively. While conflicting sides can portray different aspects, the “others” might already have a perception about the nations from stereotypes. Widely spread images and perceptions about nations are a way of diminishing and mocking a side (Jameson, 2009). Many stereotypes have come from historical narratives and are still believed to this day. For example, it is widely recognized in the West countries that the Eastern European countries are still related to the Soviet regime (Katchanovski, 2007). While those countries gained independence over 30 years ago, the stereotypes are difficult to break.

This research will mainly focus on the visual form of expression, specifically movies. So, this study will add knowledge to the media studies about the representation of historical events in three movies about political events in Lithuania. The societal relevance of this study is to provide a distinction to the audience of which tendencies of visual representation the creators take. It will be checked if the stereotypes about Lithuanians and Soviets are aligned in the representation of movies with the stereotypical viewpoints found in the literature. This study will be tackled with personal knowledge due to the analysed sources, which are in the Lithuanian language and provide more understanding about this topic. Thus, the language comprehension and in-depth studies of the historical events in previous years give the

advantage of having deep knowledge. This advantage can be related to the perceptions of distinguishing two nations which are often related to each other by stereotyping. Therefore, the research will be:

***Research question:** How are “us” (Lithuanians) versus “them” (Soviets) portrayed in fictional and non-fictional movies which represent the same historical event of the national resistance?*

This research will be analysed by gathering data from fictional and non-fictional movies to research the representation of patterns of “us” and “them”. Non-fictional movies are a transparent reality representation of events, people, and place because it takes upon the real-life footage from the scenes along with storytelling of people from experience (Eitzen, 1995). As cited in John Grierson's quote in Eitzen's article (1995), documentaries are "the creative treatment of actuality" (p. 82). While fictional movies' plots tend to be made up by film creators, although they can also be based on the actual events. It is necessary to be careful when assessing documentary movies because a propagandistic approach can be taken by the creators.

The research consists of the theoretical framework where a detailed description of media's impact on people's perception, the distinction between “us” versus “them”, and stereotypes. Furthermore, the research's methodological part is described, including the tools, sample, and operationalization of the used concepts. Moreover, the analysis of three movies about the events of Lithuania in 1991 is presented using the tools from the methods section, which tackle the violence, peace, happiness, and sadness categories. Finally, the results are described in the last part of the study.

## **2. Theoretical background**

To introduce the topic of this research about “us” versus “them” an overall importance of media will be viewed to see what convincing power it has. In addition, the danger of false information relating to the national representation will be investigated. The risk of propaganda and censorship, self-representation of showing reality of the nations, and finally, group favouritism will be looked into. Furthermore, stereotypes of Lithuanians, Soviets and the rest of the world that were found in the literature are also discussed. These stereotypes further discuss the theme of “us” versus “them”, which relates to the variables Lithuanians and Soviets taken for this study. Finally, the emotions expressed in the creative work are described, which will be used to investigate the data.

### ***2.1 Media's importance***

#### ***2.1.1 Convincing power***

Media has become a tool which eased the information flow and access to many users of social platforms to a vast population. It has become an assertive communication and information flow instrument with positive and negative sides (Castells, 2010). More specifically, mass media became the most used provider of the relevant news from around the globe to their readers (Jackob, 2010). Therefore, selecting the news portals that provide truthful information and spread awareness about media platforms pretending to be right is crucial. Spurious media outlets target more gullible readers and, in that way, take up more influence over what they want people to believe.

Similarly, just like media influences people's perceptions, cinema is a potent tool for transmitting the ideas and values it wants to communicate to the audience (Miller, 2010). Soviets used cinema to transmit their ideological ideas to the audience (Buciunas, 2021). Similarly, the cinema influences the people's behaviour. For example, on-screen smoking became popular with actors. The audience, more specifically adolescents, considered movie stars as their idols and, by following this harmful example, started to smoke themselves (Mekemson & Glantz, 2002). Because it was appealing on-screen, the imagination of themselves being as intriguing and attractive can influence people's perception. This shows how the entertainment business can have a very influential effect on the audience. Mass self-communication helps people get acquainted with reality and the events happening close to or

on the other side of the world (Castells, 2010). Therefore, media and cinema are influential tools for creating people's viewpoints.

### *2.1.2 False information*

Since it is easy to communicate with others, the spreading false information is also easy and, therefore, gullible (Khan, Michalas & Akhunzada, 2021). Additionally, fake news<sup>1</sup> can take a political position, which can be seen as propaganda. This false news spread can harm and have serious consequences (Khan, Michalas & Akhunzada, 2021). Social media has the power to portray politics in a way that would appeal to the audience and, in that way, attract more supporters. This can be done with propagandistic features, which can result in an issue in the political world's truthful communication towards society. Propaganda is a type of persuasion that tries to change the targeted audience's perspective toward self-advantageous beliefs (Markova, 2008). The aim to influence a broader crowd than separate individuals rise from a political perspective which can be linked to the mass media spread of ideology different from the rest of the world (Markova, 2008). Mediatization has allowed people to share their opinion along with the spread of information between each other (Shehata & Strömbäck, 2014). Therefore, an opinion about others, for example, "them", can be implanted easily into people's viewpoint with the right persuasion tools.

Moreover, the media has become a mediator between politics and society. Although propaganda started spreading in the twentieth century through the paper press, mainly in Eastern and Central Europe, it can be felt in the modern world (Miller, Robinson & Bakir, 2016). The possibility of spreading propaganda is mainly done by the political side of the country when many websites, news portals or social media platforms are banned (Luehrmann, 2011). This way, the country's influential parties have control of people's visibility and exposure to the actual events and information flow. Therefore, the enemy's disseminated information will be considered falsified. That way, propaganda will be banned to eliminate the risk of being spread to their society (Miller, Robinson & Bakir, 2016). This applies to both conflicting sides, which shows that "us" will be trying to obtain absolute control of people's views while "them" will be targeting the people to ensure provision of the information to be more influenced by "them".

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<sup>1</sup> A narrated or illustrated message which communicates misleading and mostly scandalous stories to influence the audience with a certain viewpoint (Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016).



## ***2.2 National representations***

### *2.2.1 Propaganda and censorship*

As introduced previously, propaganda is one of the persuasion forms. It has a negative connotation because it has been mainly linked to the Soviets and Nazis, which idealized their culture and regarded their nation as superior to the rest of the world's population (Markova, 2008). This indicates how those nations' superiors are trying to communicate false perceptions about their ideology and restraint their people to differentiate their mindset to a more popular viewpoint of the rest of the world. It is known that Soviet propaganda was influenced by political authorities (Lasswell, 1951). Therefore, the internal reality was not shown to the rest of the world, primarily due to a lack of information transmission resources. The restrictions and censorship were used until the collapse of the USSR (Luehrmann, 2011). The Soviet propaganda strategy used peaceful persuasion to portray the potential truth to the Soviet society and beyond, but some parts were kept silent (Lasswell, 1951). Propaganda is still a massive issue in today's society, evident in China (Creemers, 2017). China's leaders ban foreign media application, creating a monopolistic market of their own goods which are produced inside the country. Moreover, many information channels are also banned to limit the information flow from outside the country. The same pattern was seen to be used in the Soviet Union in the twentieth century.

Not only propaganda but also censorship has been a problem in the previous century. Many do not understand the power of Soviet censorship, which restricted anti-communist people from expressing their concerns, reaching for help, and speaking up against a robust regime (Bucinas, 2021). Cultural expressionism in cinema, theatre, and literature in the Soviet Union was being monitored, limiting people's creativity in the creative industries (Mitkus & Steiblytė, 2018). Visual communication such as movies and television have been under strict control in many countries in the twentieth century to limit the truthful information spreading within the society (De Baets, 2000). Not only Eastern European countries were under the Soviet Russian regime's limitation but also Germany and the US (Hearon, 1938, as cited in Miller, 2010). For example, until the late twentieth century, German movies were forbidden to show Germans as evil or the others' negative sides, which could harm the political relations (Eksteins, 1980). Therefore, the accurate representation in movies from the last decade is very subjective since a lot was censored and not a lot of actual reality is shown, which becomes a biased and untruthful representation. Which relates to the issue of biased self-representation comparing the outside world as imperfect.

### *2.2.2 Self-representation*

Self-representation is an image that can be created to show the ideal perception of the person or population which should be considered as a biased approach (Hirshberg, 1993). Self-representation is a biased matter because “us” as individuals or groups will not portray themselves negatively in order to attract more positive support and show the evil side of the enemy. Hirshberg (1993) argues that the “in-nation’s” self-image tends to be idealized for a more positive public perception. In contrast, a negative image creates an internal political imbalance that shows a weak nation’s position to the outside world. This idealized perception of own’s country is very biased and depicts in-group’s favouritism (Hirshberg, 1993). The author points out that this is seen in all nations worldwide, aiming to show a patriotic and strong side of the nation. Therefore, own nation has and will always be shown in a positive light and will be excused for the opposing standpoints it must take to protect itself. The phenomenon of self-representation is sensitive due to the impression the others will have (Vivienne & Burgess, 2013). Marković (2015) studies Montenegro’s self-representation in the narrative form. The author supports the statement that a nation’s self-representation has been embodied in a glorious and heroic discourse for many centuries, portraying themselves as heroes or victims but never the evil ones. This brings the group’s favouritism which immediately becomes a biased representation of the nation and is not assessed critically. Moreover, the other nations, such as the Ottomans, are shown as inhuman and demonized antagonists, which can be seen as a stereotypical portrayal of the enemy of Balkan history (Marković, 2015). This shows the representation of “them” as the enemy, and they are portrayed negatively. Therefore, society sees a biased representation of themselves and the other nations. This can be seen as an internal censorship of the nation’s reality because critical representation will never be portrayed, and group favouritism will be created based on untruthful perceptions.

### *2.2.3 Group favouritism*

Naturally, people tend to take a stand for a group representation, either in-group or out-group standpoint, to have a sense of belonging (Cikara et al., 2017). Therefore, it can be sensed in the media where people mostly do not take a neutral position but support a group. Park, Kryston and Eden (2021) researched that people’s sense of identification does not necessarily depend on the image communicated in the media but rather on belonging. It is seen through generations that the in-group is associated with favouritism while the out-group is understated in the media (Weeks, Weeks & Long, 2017). Personal representation is seen as

more idealized compared to the other groups. Therefore, stereotypes about out-groups are made to increase the popularity of the in-group, making the out-group perceived as discriminated. Although, nationalism for both groups can be seen vividly and associated with beliefs and values with a collective party that is trying to “fight” the opposing views (Neiger & Rimmer-Tsory, 2013). The representation of other nations in the news is perceived mainly as less subjective than the portrayal in the creative industries’ filmography, literature, and other narrative forms due to the responsibility of spreading the relevant news (Ameli et al., 2007).

The portrayal of a dominant nation usually is transmitted to one self’s nation, meaning “us”. There are always more preferential standpoints; most of the time, it can be seen from the narrative that the presenters communicate. Although Bignell (2004) has concluded that “...news narrative contributes to the process of constructing a common-sense climate of opinion through which audiences perceive their reality” (p. 93). This implies that fictional media, including movies, are more subjective and could potentially choose a narrating side. Researchers have explained that journalists, during a conflict between their in-group and their enemies in the out-group, have difficulty communicating unbiased information about current events to the foreign press (Neiger and Zandberg, 2004, 2005, as cited in Neiger & Rimmer-Tsory, 2013). This shows that trying to portray close and personally-related side can become biased, inaccurate, and favouring the in-group.

### ***2.3 Stereotypes***

By referencing other researchers, Hirshberg (1993) has described stereotypes as a framework that “provides selective storing, recalling and summarizing, inconsistencies may be selected out of the picture” (p. 88). Moreover, as Hall (1997, p. 258) emphasizes that stereotypes “allow us to ‘present members of a group as being all the same’, exaggerating and simplifying a handful of characteristics and applying them to a whole people without exceptions.” (as cited in Gelado & Sangro, 2016, p. 15). Why stereotypes are considered very biased is due to the availability of information a person knows or what type of perception is communicated by other people (Hirshberg, 1993). Stereotype creations are influenced mainly by mass media, the availability of information flow and the reach of the audience (Ibroscheva, 2002). Opposing groups mostly create stereotypes; for example, stereotypes

about USSR Bloc are created by Western nations and the West by the Eastern Bloc. (Lawless, 2014; Riabov, 2017).

The most common war narrative introduces two opposing sides, which can be seen as the theme of “us” versus “them” and, therefore, their fight for freedom or occupational reasons. In addition, war is seen as a conflict-solving method for religious or political issues (Jameson, 2009). Therefore, the representation of “us” and “them” will depend how the narrative is communicated by using extreme opposing stereotypes to exaggerate the storytelling. Whenever the first impression is made with the available information, the tendency to ignore opposing views is high; nevertheless, a change occurs (Jüri & Realo, 1996). Harsher stereotypes towards another nation arise when both have opposing value perceptions which interfere and cannot be aligned in any way (Ibrošcheva, 2002). These opposing parties that can threaten each other over the competition for world dominance.

To portray the “other” as an enemy, it is crucial to communicate stories which would devalue the other nation (Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016). The representation of own’s nation, meaning “us”, will always be positive and shown as heroes, while “them” will be the villains (Gelado & Sangro, 2016). It can be illustrated by the example from the 2014 war between Russia and Ukraine when Russia’s media tried to portray the image of Ukrainians as dehumanizing and Russians as the heroes who saved the people by welcoming them to their “great” country. The same narrative is used by Russia during the war in Ukraine that started on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Therefore, in this research, “us” will be Lithuanians, and the villains will be considered Soviets as “them”.

### *2.3.1 Lithuanian stereotypes*

The research on Lithuanians is limited, therefore the research about the Baltic states or the Eastern Europe was also considered as a generalized illustration of Lithuanians. The need for harmony was measured from 1988 to 1992 around the world, and it was found that post-Soviet countries such as Estonia and Latvia were rated as one of the highest (Schwartz, 1994, as cited in Jüri & Realo, 1996). Therefore, it can be concluded that the want of peace and justice by the nation is present. However, in the same study, women from the US were seen as more ambitious and with other positive characteristics, while women in Baltics were underestimated. Consequently, based on the found data, it can be concluded that this image can be linked to the Baltic’s history in the USSR, which showed these countries negatively. This indicates that because the Baltic countries are historically related to the USSR, the

perception of ex-Soviet countries is negatively viewed and still associated with its Soviet past even after over 30 years of its independence from the Soviet Bloc.

Another standard view of the ex-Soviet Union's nations is that the authorities were implementing the ideology of the USSR, and it is widely equated to the Soviet's mentality (Luehrmann, 2011). Just like in the Western narratives, in the Soviet movies and other creative forms Lithuanians were portrayed as obeisant to the regime and following the ideology without complaints or resistance (Bucinas, 2021). People not obeying the regime and government's rule were punished and considered as the enemies of the society; however, these people could not have been seen in the West since they were not visible and accessible for the Western representatives and could not tell the actual truth about what was happening in their country. On the other hand, the world had started seeing strong nationalism and independence within the rising new countries, which introduced their national identity to the world and asked to be considered by other nations as separate and autonomous states (Korostelina, 2003). It is considered by Korostelina (2003) that national identity consists of when political, territorial, ethnic, social, and many more values align, which brings the nation together to create a separate and unified identity.

The same issues have been seen in all post-Soviet bloc countries, which had struggled to present their national identity to the world because of the stereotypical perception of those countries due to the history in the Communism regime (Korostelina, 2003). Katchanovski (2007) analysed 100 movies and concluded that in the reference of "them", meaning the Russians, most of the time post-Soviet countries are also included. It can be a potential problem if the West does not recognize the independence of a nation and links to the historical view even though the nation identifies itself as fully independent. Korostelina (2003) concludes that "the formation of a common national and regional identity leads to the developing of positive stereotypes toward members of other groups, who now are involved in new group identity" (p. 158). Therefore, nations who identify themselves strongly enough will be accepted by the other nations as an independent and with unified identity.

The studies mentioned above show that stereotypical perceptions are still valid and is complex to break, making the representation of cultures biased. Lithuanians are perceived as a very determined nation which was brave to resist the USSR and advocate for their nationalism (Jubulis, 2007). So, the Lithuanians are perceived as a harmonious, brave, and

independent nation that could resist against more powerful nation. Nevertheless, the others still see Lithuania as a post-Soviet country that supports the Communist regime.

### *2.3.2 The Soviet stereotypes*

In Soviet stereotypes, the Russian nation is shown as an obeisant, moral, and loyal to traditions, while the West is portrayed as immoral, self-interested, and rebellious (Malinova 2014, as cited in Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016). This perception has been dominant for decades. From the Western perspective, Soviet Russia has always been diminished in the Western world due to the perception of people's psychological deterioration (Jüri & Realo, 1996). Similarly, the authors point out that Soviet authoritarian regime is self-centric and does not consider human decency. Soviet Russians in the West were seen as violent due to the reality of alcoholism and domestic violence which resulted in problematic marriages and family breaks (Jüri & Realo, 1996). Russians were perceived as the out-group due to radically different views which did not align with the democratic world (Korostelina, 2003). People living under the Soviet regime were considered clueless, psychologically damaged, powerless, gullible, and easily influenced. These features apply primarily to the whole ex-Soviet Bloc, including a large part of the Eastern European nations (Jüri & Realo, 1996). The studies confirm this perception of the Eastern countries and form the stereotype about them.

Another Soviet, and these days Russian, stereotype commonly known is the spies and agents who try to gather information about the enemy's secret and confidential governmental proceedings (Rogin, 1984). This stereotype is used by movie creators as a storyline for many action films. Soviets did not accept the representation Americans illustrated the Soviets' spies (Zibzibadze, 2018). Therefore, the USSR's cinema also portrayed Soviets as spies but called them intelligence officers or investigators. This shows how differently the representation of "us" and "them" can be portrayed from different groups' perspectives.

Overall, Soviet Russia in media and cinema is portrayed as a restrictive nation, which is not allowed to express their personal views out loud, therefore using force to silence the protestors. People are being hidden from the actual truth because the country uses propagandistic tools to restrict the outside world.

### *2.3.3 The West stereotypes*

The Western Block is taken as the "otherness" in this research which takes the neutral position and does not include itself in the conflict (Neiger & Rimmer-Tsory, 2013). This

Bloc, especially in the late twentieth century, was presented as a dramatic and perceived as the powerful side (Jüri & Realo, 1996). Some nations are seen as more elite than others (Jüri & Realo, 1996). Gulens (Jüri & Realo, 1996) criticize this because the Western world is mostly seen as the superior due to the democratic regimes and less propagandistic standpoints. Other nations that have recently gained independence are considered less relevant and historically underestimated. The US, which is a big part of the Western world, was seen as a moral nation that never purposively conflicted with other nations, only by defence (Frau-Meigs, 2008). During the mid-twentieth century, Hollywood was influenced by the American government to be presented in a more positive perspective, which not necessarily was a truthful presentation. However, due to technology nowadays and the ability to gather a wider spectrum of information, the media cannot easily hide the truth that the government could be possibly hiding. Therefore, transparency became an essential practicality to send a message to the society. A country's position in the world, along with its economic and political power, can communicate how independent and unified it is (Frau-Meigs, 2008). Therefore, other nations will accept the nation as a separate identity and have a different perception of being under another country's influence. Hirshberg (1993) has proven that the media perception of Americans in their own country is being idealized in any way. The historical bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War was still shown as a forced move which should not be related to the overall nation because it was the right decision to make. Therefore, it can be concluded from the literature found that Western countries are portrayed with heroic behaviour and always having the right decision.

#### ***2.4 “Us” versus “Them”***

Subjectivity is a concern in documentary movies since the creators take a standpoint which can be seen in representations of “us” versus “them”. This is visible in Hollywood movies about Muslims and Islam as the portrayal of “them” tends to be negative by showing them as terrorists and villains (Abderrazag & Serir, 2019; Bhat, 2019). Similarly, the representation of “them” tends to be negative when American cinema portrays the USSR (Lawless, 2014), as well as the USSR cinema shows Americans as the villains (Riabov, 2017). This can be understood as conflicting sides which interfere with different perspectives. On contrary, the side shows “us”, both in the case of the Americans as well as the Soviets, the positive nation is always their own. Moreover, the Soviets will be shown as villains in

Western movies, just as Muslims in American movies are portrayed mainly as terrorists. In those representations, there is a minimal chance that the in-group nation will be portrayed from an evil side and, therefore, most likely be biased (Hirshberg, 1993). Therefore, it is crucial to assess the self-representation bias critically.

Hirshberg (1993) points out the opposition of hero and villain in solid American patriotism. By elaborating on the nation's self-representation, he distinguishes the force of mostly socio-political, military, and economic superiority in contrast to the Soviet Union, which is shown as weak due to the collapsed regime. America's representation also tackles the allies, shown positively due to the same shared values and acts performed (Hirshberg, 1993). The distinction between "us" and "them" are visible when telling a story from either perspective, which shows who are the good guys and who are the villains: "we" are virtuous, compassionate, tolerant, fair; "they" are extremist, brutal, primitive, despotic (Zelizer, 2018). This research will try to distinguish "us" – the Lithuanian people – and "them" – the Soviets. These perceptions were created based on the literature about both nations and their stereotypes.

Many scholars have given much attention to the "West and Russia" narrative over the years (Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016). From the perspective of the Soviets, Zibzibadze (2018) points out that "It was the filmmaker's duty to portray the USSR as a promoter of peace, and the US as an aggressive power, ever ready for war" (p. 17). At the same time, Americans would illustrate these two nations from an opposite side. Moreover, in Soviet cinema, Soviet women were dehumanized by showing their lack of empathy or mercy. This relates to the stereotype of Soviets portrayed in American movies as psychologically damaged by the regime (Jüri & Realo, 1996). While men were demasculinized to portray Soviet men's superiority to the Western males as well as not being able to control their women and any critical situation (Zibzibadze, 2018).

Rogin (1984) studied Cold war movies and the representation of Communism and motherhood from the American perspective. Rogin's (1984) view on Communism is that "Cold war films depict the Communist threat as an invasive, invisible, deceptive, enslaving conspiracy." (p. 9). This portrays that the regime, associated with Soviet Union, is the enemy and seen only through a negative lens. Additionally, the Soviet regime is depicted in many movies as a dangerous threat to other governments' security, restriction of human rights freedom, expression of free word, and political position in the society.



Furthermore, propaganda aims to spread ideological views on a particular issue, hopefully influencing the public's perception of the positive side (Chapman, 2000). This is why the limitations for minority groups during Soviet times were detrimental and not fully understood because the Soviet Union was portrayed as an ideal country with no flaws. Many ex-Soviet countries in the Eastern Europe have been seen as communism-supportive nations due to the lack of expressionism of resistance towards the regime (Korostelina, 2003). Russification was a serious dilemma that occupied nations tried to overcome after the independence was restored. Before that, the influence of the USSR culture was very strong and implied in the Lithuanian culture (Svenborn Johansson, 2022). This way, Lithuania was aimed to be Russified and unable to communicate their needs and wishes to the outside world. Therefore, Lithuanians' perception is made and directly related to the Soviet regime. Moreover, there is no distinction between "us" and "them" as Lithuanians and Soviets found in current literature. In this research, Lithuania as a representative of "us" can be related to Korostelina's (2003) research due to historical events in which the country was part of the Soviet Bloc. The Lithuanian cultural identity was perceived in the West in this stereotypical view.

Although there are two sides, notably "us" and "them", in a conflicting situation, "otherness" is seen as the neutral side (Neiger & Rimmer-Tsory, 2013). However, the researchers believe that a neutral position is often rarely taken and eventually a side is being chosen whether for the in-group or out-group. Especially in politics, where there is no right or wrong side, parties which are not in direct conflict choose to support a side. For example, despite Switzerland has been known for being neutral in any political conflict since the beginning of the nineteenth century, it has officially abandoned this status during the recent conflict between Russia and Ukraine and stood along with the Western position (Noack & Westfall, 2022).

## ***2.5 Reality's representation***

### *2.5.1 Representation in cinematography*

Real-life events represented in movies have a compassionate feeling for people who have experienced them. The remembrance of those days is very emotional, and movie producers aim to receive those emotions from people (Goldstein, 2009). Similar events as in Vilnius in January 1991 happened in Ukraine at the end of 2013. People peacefully protested

in Kiev against the at-the-time political internal regime, but the authorities used force against them to weaken the protests (Nakashydzė & Radkevich, 2021). These events were reflected in the movie *Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom* (2015), directed by Evgeny Afineevsky. The aim of the American cinematography was to acquaint people from other countries with the reality of the Eastern world in the twenty-first century by showing a representation of the modern world's aggression against people and the fight for freedom (Nakashydzė & Radkevich, 2021). This non-fictional movie vividly represents the emotions that were felt during those events (Nakashydzė & Radkevich, 2021). Cinematography, like news reports, can exaggerate or become biased due to its position. "Us" will always be shown more positively than "them". Moreover, the negative side of the in-group might not be shown due to self-representation biases.

### *2.5.2 Portray of violence*

The violence can be described in many forms, such as physical and psychological harm to people, demolition of surroundings. In cinematography, war is shown in different ways. Zelizer (2018) discusses the terror events which happened in the past and shows how violence was represented in the media. It forcefully impacts people and makes them more fearful. One of the main reasons for war is a political conflict. This way, psychological violence and disagreement between two parties can be shown (Atakav & Tasker, 2010). While there are diplomatic conflicts and attempts to negotiate during a war to prevent physical attacks, there is the other side where people are being killed, and physical violence is used. While direct physical violence can be seen focused on people; physical destruction is done during more severe attacks. However, physical destruction can also be seen from the in-group in the form of defence and property protection.

### *2.5.3 Portray of peace*

Ziv's (2019) research focuses on the expression of emotions of resistance in protest songs. It has been noted that people in war take the in-group or out-group stand since opposing parties disagree, and people choose which party they prefer to support. However, peaceful protests often turn into aggressive opposition and provoked situations when innocent people are being injured or killed. Coulthard (2017) analysed the *Winter on Fire* (2015) movie, where the directors chose to show how the out-group was handling people who came unarmed to protest against the unacceptable political situation in the country. People's will for freedom and peaceful protests turned the aggressors and regime fighters ("them") into

enemies, which can be seen from their representation. In movies, empathy tends to be presented in a way it favours the in-group (Coulthard, 2017). Screen violence can be reduced by portraying empathetic images representing love and positive emotions (Coulthard, 2017). Keen (2016) studied the empathy representation in fictional and non-fictional written narratives. It showed that the portrayal of this feeling comes from a more profound understanding which communicates to the reader the peace-giving and remembrance of the past. In addition, non-fictional characters make the readers believe more in the emotions because of the historical truthfulness it may communicate (Keen, 2016).

#### *2.5.4 Portray of happiness*

Due to the topic of resistance, a significant amount of attention is given to the presentation of the liberation, which can be seen by success and freedom (Scott, 2015). Remembering old times gives the perspective of comparison and further development. Happiness tends to dominate in movies representing cultures that were previously repressed by the dominant nations, just like Afro-Americans getting freedom from the slave regime (Scott, 2015). Similarly, post-USSR countries have got their freedom back. Therefore, the feeling of success is associated. When freedom is expressed in movies, it can be perceived as the liberation of a nation and praise of a new independent identity (Aty, 2020). In the representation of Algerian independence fights, it is perceived that happiness is achieved by fighting and making sacrifices (Aty, 2020). Lastly, nostalgia has been a topic in political movies where dictatorship is shown (Kornetis, 2014), in which remembrance is related to the political regimes and comparisons are made. Movies about the deterioration of Hitler's Germany present the unified nation in the form of nostalgia and remembrance of togetherness with the same heritage as Germany was divided into two parts (Kapczynski, 2007). The happiness emotion communicates the emotion of success and liberation for a nation from a suppressed regime or opposition.

#### *2.5.5 Portray of sadness*

One of the emotions portrayed in movies is sadness. Many examples were seen of how the events of 1991 in Lithuania were compared to the nation's exile to Siberia during the 1940s and the remembrance of life under the Soviet regime. Following these motives, literature was found to make this research credible and more literature-based. Grobal (2007) points out that "the emotion evoked by melodramas and tragedies is sadness" (p. 78, as cited in Hanich et al., 2017). Melodramas can relate to this research because the movies chosen

have an emotion-gripping production due to the narrated topic. Therefore, this category fits best with the nostalgia theme expected in the movies about real-life and tragic events. It creates the comparison between the past and the present. Finally, just like the analysed movie from Hanich et al.'s (2017) research about a family tragedy, the movies for the representation of "us" and "them" for this research arouse the devastation emotion when dreadful events occur. Therefore, this category will portray negative emotions to compare the positivity and negativity of the representations of both nations.

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter will introduce the methodology of this research. Firstly, the difference between fictional and non-fictional movies is presented, followed by the sample, which includes three movies used to research the themes of the study. Furthermore, the data collection procedure with the data analysis method and its advantage is presented in the chapter's fourth section. The operationalization of the part of the research is presented in the fifth part. Finally, the reliability and validity are described in the last part of the chapter.

#### ***3.1 Fictional and non-fictional representation***

Precision, consistency, and exhaustiveness are key when analysing fictional movies for research (Nowell et al., 2017). So, for this research, a thematic analysis approach will be used to study the patterns of representation in fictional and non-fictional movies. In addition, audit trails are the most important for this research of all traits of thematic analysis. It indicates the analysis of a detailed step-by-step continuous description. It is crucial for a movie analysis since it will ease the readers' understanding when a detailed description of the scenes is described with argumentative statements (Nowell et al., 2017). As non-fictional productions are more factual than fictional movies, the storyline in most cases differs since the documentaries' timelines are usually broader and more explicit. While in fictional movies, rather a small part of the event is taken and focused on it or the characters (Bernard, 2016). The main difference is presented by Eitzen (1995): "Fiction can make assertions of similarity, but documentaries make assertions of truth" (p. 86). Therefore, the distinction between fictional and non-fictional movies' production and delivery process matters concerning the storytelling tools and narratives. This is because the tools used to portray a group of people produce the perception of them creating stereotypes about them.

Messmer (2012) studies the event of Juárez femicides with four different approaches – journal article, documentary, feature film, and novel. Different representations of the same event by different creators/authors are studied. In the documentary "Señorita Extraviada" (2001), it is explained that the representation of events is very straightforward as the goal is to reveal the truth to the public and try to expose the reality and the truth behind the political negotiations and the lives it has affected (Messmer, 2012). The movie shows the reality of struggling families without neglecting the actual truth. On the other hand, the fictional movie "Bordertown" (2006), about the same event, is shown from the perspective of the detective who investigates the murders of the women. However, the movie does not show the horrible

effects it had on the families but rather the political side of Mexico and the US (Messmer, 2012). Overall, the documentary wanted to translate to the audience the “ugly truth” of the consequences the femicides had. So, different approaches to the same event can differ in the selected representations. As it was pointed out in Zelizer’s research (2018), media is a crucial tool for lasting value and remembrance. Therefore, for this research, it is interesting to investigate how differently the same story is presented in fictional and non-fictional movies, just like the research of Messer (2012), who researched the crime events in Mexico in the late 1990s. This study showed that specific creative tools could be used to narrate the same story from different perspectives. Fictional movies portray a made-up storyline, while non-fictional movies show the actual reality of the events.

Finally, emotions in movies are primarily exaggerated and often wanted to evoke the audience’s feelings that would associate them with personal experiences (Hanich et al., 2017). Therefore, it is interesting to observe the tendencies of chosen emotions to be represented in the movies and distinguish between fictional and non-fictional movies. These themes of *violence*, *peace*, *happiness*, and *sadness* will be analysed in detail using these categories and more in-depth sub-categories, which will be described below.

### ***3.2 Sample***

This research will be done by analysing one fictional and two non-fictional movies, which represent the events of resistance of Lithuanians against the Soviets during the week of January 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> in 1991. This research is done using purposive sampling due to the limited availability of movies about this topic. Therefore, to tackle the fictional movie aspect, the only one created about this event, was chosen called “Mes dainuosim”. Furthermore, two non-fictional movies were taken, with a broader production time gap – “Okupuoti, bet nenutildyti” was created a few months after the events and “Mr. Landsbergis. Sugriauti blogio imperija”, the most recent movie, released in early 2022. Although there were more documentary movies created on this topic, the ones chosen for this research were the most relevant to the research because they were the only feature films, while others were short-length films of 15 to 30 minutes. Moreover, as the foreigners created two movies, this representation will be more reliable because of the avoidance of the self-representation bias, as was mentioned in the theoretical framework by Hirshberg (1993). On the other hand, even if the most realistic and accurate representation of “us” and “them” are depicted by

foreigners, it is still done from the Western viewpoint since the Soviets are represented as the evil group. While the other group would be portraying the storyline from the opposing side, which in this case would be presenting their self-image, meaning the self-representation (Vivienne & Burgess, 2013).

Firstly, for the fictional movie released in 2015, “We will sing” (original name “Mes dainuosim”) will be analysed. British director Robert Mullan, the lead director, and other Lithuanian directors for the first time created a fictional movie about the events around January 13<sup>th</sup> of 1991 in Lithuania. This movie does not focus on the heroes who died during the events but takes the position of a few participants and tells the story of their lives and experiences at the events (LRT.lt, 2015). This movie was made more realistic compared to the war scenes showed in Hollywood movies that are usually filled with blood, and therefore many scenes are exaggerated. On contrary, here, in the movie analysed it shows people’s emotional pain without blood running in the streets, making it more unique and relatable (LRT.lt, 2015). Since the movie is in Lithuanian with no English translation, the analysis will provide a better understanding of the concepts and meanings when analysing in the original language.

Secondly, one of the documentaries about the events that was chosen for this research is the movie “Occupied, but not silenced” (original name “Okupuoti, bet nenutildyti”) that was created not long after the actual event in 1991 by the national Lithuanian Television and Radio broadcaster *LRT*. This two-part movie was created and directed by Bronius Talačka who gathered the footage of Lithuanian and foreign journalists and correspondents. Lithuania’s national broadcaster and other producers have created many documentaries about these events. However, this two-part movie was chosen since the length of the others were not suitable for the study as they were short-length episodes of 20 minutes or were focusing not particularly on the events but on the political leaders at that time. Moreover, there was the need to find a similar movie to “We will sing” to perform a successful analysis because it is the only fictional movie created about these events.

Finally, for the second non-fictional movie “Mr. Landsbergis. Tearing the evil empire” (original name “Mr. Landsbergis. Sugriauti blogio imperija”), directed by Sergei Loznitsa was chosen, which was released on January 13<sup>th</sup> of 2022. Vytautas Landsbergis, the leader of the Supreme Council and the factual Head of the State at the time, is telling the story about those events. This brings additional information and personal insights from a direct

participant of the events. While this movie overall is about the events of Lithuania trying to regain independence from 1988 until 1991, only a part of the movie, more specifically showing the events in the week of 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> of January in 1991, will be analysed, in accordance with this aim of this research.

The titles of all three movies are very symbolic since “We will sing” illustrates how Lithuanians were fighting for their freedom – unarmed, peacefully with goodwill to be free without having to deal with tragic consequences. “Occupied, but not silenced” also shows how Lithuanians were unwilling to remain calm under a regime that did not fit them. Therefore, they had to speak up to obtain what the nation wanted: regaining freedom and resisting the enemies. Finally, “Mr Landsbergis. Tearing the evil empire” presents the distinction of two opposing sides of “us”, who is eager to fight the negativity in the world and spread positivity, and “them”, who come from the evil side and is major and powerful in its size and the impact it can do.

### ***3.3 Data collection***

The data collection will be done by first watching the movies to understand the storyline and the concepts and main points they want to show to the audience. The second time it will be watched to understand the main themes and categories the movies can be distinguished by and how they can be linked between the fictional and non-fictional approaches. Thirdly, it will be watched to gather the data for a more detailed thematic analysis. The data corpus will be the entire movie lengths which are 1.31h, 2.20h (two-part movie of 1.10h each, where only the first 40min of the second part will be analysed), and 4.09h (from which 1.01h will be analysed) for each movie respectively as presented above.

### ***3.4 Data analysis***

This study will intake the qualitative approach to explore the research question and it will tackle the thematic analysis of the collected data. As the creative industries are a more subjective matter to study (Mäe, 2015), it requires qualitative analysis to make it the most understandable and transparent for the readers. This method was chosen because of the data analysis flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is also possible to identify and learn in detail the data’s patterns and the themes it encounters. Since this research tackles four distinct



themes, the analysis method is advantageous for categorizing the collected data in a structured way. Other advantages include the possibility to work with extensive data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which will be summarized in categories and sub-categories, as well as the ability to distinguish differences and similarities between the data sets, in this case, the three movies that will be analysed.

The thematic analysis includes three steps of data collection and analysis to answer the research question. Based on Boeije (2010), these are open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Strauss and Corbin (2007) describe open coding as “the process of ‘breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data’ ” (p. 96, as cited in Boeije, 2010), it was based on the literature found about the topic and matched to the sample for this research to be the most accurate. This way, the main themes were created, following the axial coding, which describes the observed acts in a detailed summary of the data to categorize later and distinguish the main categories and sub-categories. These categories and sub-categories are described later in this chapter. It was important to create distinct categories to match the data collection and create the most accurate research (Boeije, 2010). Finally, selective coding identifies the possible vital concepts and core themes of the research, which later is used for the conclusion of the analysed data in relation to the literature found (Boeije, 2010).

The analysis will be the representation translated through the visualizations of the themes chosen to be analysed, which include violence (Zelizer, 2018), peace (Ziv, 2019), happiness (Fitzpatrick, 2004), and sadness (Hanich et al., 2017). These representations will be seen through the characters – the leaders, people, the Soviets, and the rest of the world. The representation forms were created based on the empirical literature. The main themes and subthemes of representation are summarized in Table 1 and later presented below.

*Table 1. Fictional and non-fictional movie representation*

<b>Movie category</b>	<b>Type of representation</b>	<b>Representation form</b>
Fictional/ Non-fictional	Violence	Physical harm to people
		Psychological harm to people
		Demolition of the surroundings

	Peace	Unarmed battle
		Empathy
	Happiness	Freedom
		Success
	Sadness	Devastation
		Nostalgia

### ***3.5 Operationalization***

#### *3.5.1 Violence*

From media history, it is studied that the Soviets were represented as the enemy who always used power, therefore, harmed people, whether it was the mafia or the government's army (Rawlinson, 1998). For this reason, it is important to investigate the case of Lithuanian history, whether the Soviets were presented in the movies using violence and in which form. Sunarto (2006, as cited in Rosita, & Prathisara, 2021) describes physical violence as “the form of hitting, slapping, choking, kicking, throwing objects on the body, stepping on, injuring with bare hands or with tools, assaulting, torturing, killing, and others”. Therefore, these physical harm patterns will be looked into in the data. Furthermore, psychological violence was indicated as “form of yelling, swearing, threatening, humiliating, harassing, cursing, and spying, or other actions that create fear.” (Rosita & Prathisara, 2021). As it was pointed out in Zelizer's (2018) research, war is not necessarily active through the years as it was during the Cold War between the US and the USSR in the twentieth century. Therefore, psychologically harm can be done by actions that would scare them by threatening linguistically or aggressively threatening to abuse. Finally, the demolition of the surroundings is portrayed as breaking the external environment as buildings, cars, road structures, and the indoor environment.

#### *3.5.2 Peace*

This theme will be more related to the representation of “us” rather than “them”. Ziv's (2019) research focuses on the peaceful resentment of people to fight against “them”. From this study, the analysis of empathy will be taken. Empathy can be portrayed as physical help to an injured or emotional aid for the mental support to any person who needs help which

shows a humanitarian quality. Ziv's (2019) research also focuses on the tendency of peaceful resistance, which will also be investigated as one of the forms of peace. The form of unarmed battle can be illustrated in many forms, such as resisting an opposing group without using violent tools and actions, which will be looked into when analysing the data.

### *3.5.3 Happiness*

In the Fitzpatrick (2004) article, happiness has been conveyed in many forms of expression from the inhabitants' perspective. For this research, the aspects of happiness will be seen from the freedom and success elements. Firstly, comments about the old times and comparisons, freedom as being personal or collective freedom from the Soviet regime, and success, which here will be tackled from opposing perspectives. First, from the local/Lithuanian viewpoint of the resistance, and second, from the Soviet perspective in which the damage was being performed. This will be assessed through the narrated tool of the data. Furthermore, the success factor will be viewed from the point of achievement of personal or collective goals. Finally, from the Lithuanian point of view, it is the resistance against "them" as these are themes common in war or other nation-related topics (Jameson, 2009).

### *3.5.4 Sadness*

Finally, the last representation theme was added after starting to analyse the data. The sadness motive was found in two forms: devastation due to the tragic events and their outcomes. As well as nostalgic feeling from a negative side. Hanich et al.'s (2017) research coordinated the emotions presented in the movies about tragic events. Therefore, the devastation was chosen as one of the sub-categories, portrayed mainly by people crying or grieving. Finally, as nostalgia is the motive for remembering the past (Fitzpatrick, 2004), this sub-category was included in this section because many patterns were found in comparing the past and the present of the Soviet regime. Moreover, those memories were more negative than positive; therefore, nostalgia was included in this section, together with the devastation motive.

## ***3.6 Reliability and validity***

To have credible, trustworthy, and high-quality research, it is crucial to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. Qualitative research can be more biased than quantitative

due to the researcher's perspective on the analysis methodology (Silverman, 2011). There is the possibility of having the research data evaluated by the researcher more subjectively because of the point of view. Reliability ensures the reproduction of the study for future studies (Silverman, 2011). Usually, reliability refers to "the degree to which the findings of a study are independent of accidental circumstances of their production" (Kirk & Miller, in Silverman, 2011, p. 360). Therefore, it is important to write each step of the analysis process in detail to ensure the replicability of the research. Ultimately, this should lead to the same results and the ease of the process (Silverman, 2011). It can be done by ensuring the transparency of the data and theory. For this research, all data observations were recorded during the axial coding, including the scene's character, the sub-category and the detailed description of the observation.

Moreover, the validity ensures the accuracy of the data and "[...] the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers" (Hammersley, 1990, in Silverman, 2011, p. 367). Therefore, using already theory-approved tools would ensure the validity of the research. The tools include analytic induction, constant comparison, deviant-case analysis, comprehensive data treatment, and appropriate tabulation (Silverman, 2011). Therefore, the data was gathered concerning the theory to answer the research question based on the created sub-categories for the thematic analysis and comparing the data from the movies to the literature. Moreover, since two of the movies were in the Lithuanian language, this provided more understandability due to the native language advantages. Furthermore, the interview in "Mr. Landsbergis. Tearing the evil empire" was conducted in Russian, but subtitles were presented in Lithuanian, so it also was advantageous due to the clarity of understanding.

## 4. Analysis

This section will cover the analysis of the three movies selected to research differences in fictional and non-fictional movies about the thematic representation of “us” (Lithuanians) versus “them” (Soviets) in historical political events that took place in January 1991 in Vilnius, Lithuania in the battle for the retainment of freedom and independence of Lithuania. The difference between “us” versus “them” was analysed based on previous literature (Fitzpatrick, 2004; Hanich et al., 2017; Zelizer, 2018; Ziv, 2019), with the main themes distinguished for *Violence*, *Peace*, *Happiness*, and *Sadness* to answer the research question of this study about the representation in movies. These categories discuss each sub-category with provided examples which will be linked to the previously found literature to compare the topics if similar patterns are seen.

### 4.1 Violence

#### 4.1.1 Physical

##### 4.1.1.1 Direct

Throughout all three movies, in the encounters of Lithuanians with Soviets, the brutality of the Soviets is shown using direct violent scenes which show beating the unarmed civilians with the guns. Most of the scenes accentuate the direct violence of the Soviets to Lithuanians. The physical violence is shown in the movies in two different ways. The first and the most obvious is the direct violence including scenes of Lithuanian people being harmed by the Soviets by beating them up, pushing around, or wounding them with firearms.

The fictional movie “We will sing” immediately starts with militia<sup>2</sup> men using force and guns to capture civilian men into captivity. At the same time, the woman runs crying for her men while the head policeman smokes in the corner. Later in the movie, it is shown in what poor conditions these men are being put in and treated inhumanely – pushed around, using force, and not communicating with innocent people. By beginning the movie with violent acts of the enemies “them”, the creators already set how the group will be portrayed. This scene also shows how the influential decision-makers give orders to the lower-rank officers, which shows authority and hierarchical relations in the Soviet regime. The soldiers who are

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<sup>2</sup> A military force whose members are trained soldiers but who often have other jobs (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.1)

harming Lithuanians can be seen as lower rank due to the identifiable uniforms, while the higher-rank Soviets are commanding the tasks.

Furthermore, the footage in “Occupied, but not silenced” is seen harming people working in the national TV and Radio broadcaster in order to prevent the broadcasting of the information to the rest of the nation and the world. These workers are shown being brutal by pushing people to lay on the ground and threatening them with their guns abused after the army enters the rooms. Similarly, in the documentaries, people recording videos from the centre of the events are seen abused by being pushed to the ground and cameras being crushed.

Moreover, in the fictional movie, a group of people who are not in the Soviet army but support this regime are shown wearing a distinct red band on their arms and, with solid power and force, are beating Lithuanians with bats or sticks. Lithuanians do not back off and resist the attacks. Chaos is in the scene because the two distinct forces of Soviets are coming against Lithuanians who still try to hold up the offense. Soviets are being called bandits by the interviewed people, which shows the perception of Soviets by the outside world that is confirmed by the real examples. In addition, in one of the non-fictional movies, a group of socialist regime supporters are shown to be beating Lithuanian civilians. This indicates that people who support this mindset have a pattern of violence within themselves, which demonstrates that not only military people, but also other representatives of the regime could brutally harm innocent civilians.

While beating people without firearms still gave the parity of forces, the Soviets used guns to threaten and abuse Lithuanians. Shooting from their guns shows how the military does not have any mercy or sympathy for humans of other nations. The use of tanks shows that military-wise USSR is stronger than Lithuania. These examples align with the found that Soviets are seen as immoral, self-interested, and rebellious (Malinova 2014, as cited in Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016).

#### 4.1.1.2 Indirect

Another form of violence can be shown indirectly in the three analysed movies. This portrayal does not directly show the harm done to people but rather the outcomes that of the actions that were not shown previously. As previously mentioned, this section relates the harm to Lithuanians done by the Soviets. The indirect violence can be interpreted without a

narrated description of the events, or a person can verbally tell about the brutal acts of the Soviets.

One of the scenes in “We will sing” is shown when a wife finds her husband after three days of not seeing him. He is seen beaten up – face puffy with many bruises. To the question about what they have done to him, he answers that everyone has experienced the brutality of the Soviets abusing people without any serious reason. Many people’s faces are covered in blood, meaning they have been previously beaten up. Moreover, not much footage is shown from the action scenes defending the important sites in the capital in the movie “Mr. Landsbergis. Tearing the evil empire”. However, many Lithuanian victims are shown in the hospitals and outside of it. Demonstration of the blood is aimed to expose the brutality Soviets have done to the nation. The non-fictional movies show more indirect violence acts.

#### 4.1.1.3 Defensive

While most attention talking about violence was given to the Soviets, Lithuanians as well had to use force for their defence. The resistance to the Soviets, which can be interpreted as a defensive violence, is happening outside the buildings that are being protected by the civilians. However, despite the efforts of the people, the Soviets do manage to come inside some buildings, such as the Lithuanian National radio and television broadcaster.

The Lithuanians has to use violence to defend themselves in particular, stressing the importance to protect the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania and other important political and communication sites. In this case, the representation of Lithuanians is for violent self-defence, which shows the use of force unwillingly to protect the nation and freedom as the will for freedom is highest value. Furthermore, the defensiveness and violence of Lithuanians are shown as not being the ones who were attacking but as the ones who were defending.

The violence aspect is shown mostly from the perspective of the Soviets. From the documentaries’ stories, many ways of force have been described illustrating to the watcher the reality they have experienced. However, no identical stories were presented in the documentaries. While the act of violence from the Soviets was emphasised in all three movies, they followed the same pattern of showing armed Soviets beating and harming people. In contrast, Lithuanians were defending themselves unarmed and peacefully by trying to stop the invaders from entering the critical target sites of communication and statehood. These footages could be interpreted this way because Lithuanians were trying to stop tanks

with bare hands, block entrances to the buildings, stand in a crowd and sing to stop the invaders. Moreover, if there was the necessity to use violence toward the invaders, they used it to protect themselves. Moreover, a clear example of Lithuanians defending their country is shown in the Supreme Council where the men were preparing to fight – bringing the essentials such as gas masks, bags of sand, guns, or making Molotov cocktails, a self-made explosive. These were the actions and tools Lithuanians had to take to defend themselves from the enemies.

#### *4.1.2 Psychological*

Psychological violence has a few forms of illustration. Firstly, it can be seen from the superiors showing power through their speeches, so verbally threatening to use violence if collaboration is not done. This can be seen as indirect psychological violence directed towards the nation. Secondly, a direct attack can be considered when undertaking some actions that lead to the disturbances, such as the use of economic blockade towards Lithuania from the USSR. Finally, the threat to use violence on the attack scenes with firearms or tanks.

The footage of the Soviet army and tanks marching in streets and footage of at the time General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, giving a threatening speech to scare Lithuanians of using force if the Soviet constitution is not restored shows psychological harm towards Lithuanians. Threatening is one of the tools to psychologically harm people to weaken them in front of the aggressors.

The documentaries show how the Soviets were threatening the civilians psychologically by targeting their houses with a bright flashlight of tanks. People were trapped inside the television station building and were held hostage. The traumatic stories the witnesses told show how traumatizing the events were on people, what negative and impactful experiences they had. Moreover, in the movie “Occupied, but not silenced” a woman described how Soviets showed dead and injured bodies lying in the hallways to scare her and warn about the consequences she would have if she would not obey. Therefore, it shows that people could not resist the invaders while being unarmed, otherwise would be brutally killed. Another man refused to leave the national broadcaster building through secret exits due to the outcome he could face of being beaten up by the invaders. Another scene shows people peacefully singing for their freedom while guarding the TV tower and the Soviets blind the darkness



with flashing and sudden white lights of the tanks to scare off them. This makes the crowd angry, and the shouting begins.

Psychological harm can also be described as the economic blockade from the USSR to pressure Lithuania and its people. People are shown as being angry and weak because of unavailability of the basic products and goods. This shows the torture Soviets chose to use to affect everyone in the nation. While the movies display many ways of physical harm, the stories from the witnesses of the events illustrate the psychological harm the Soviets were using. Documentaries are an adequate tool to tell personal stories. This way, it can be seen that people were traumatized and experienced a lot of negative emotions because of Soviets.

Sunarto (2006, as cited in Rosita, & Prathisara, 2021) described psychological harm as any form of yelling, threatening, harassing, or other actions that create fear to the opposing group (Rosita & Prathisara, 2021). This is directly shown in the movies as “them” in many ways purposively threatening Lithuanians. These different experiences of the people working in the national broadcaster illustrate the same image of Soviets that is also found in the literature. Portraying “them” as the destructors and giving many examples with different but at the same time, similar experiences and stories show that it was not invented. Illustrating the nation only as psychologically or physically harmful to the outsiders shows this nation’s brutality and negativity.

#### *4.1.3 Demolition of the environment*

Just like physical and psychological harm to people were shown in direct and indirect ways in the movies, the exact representation can be seen in the demolition of the environment. A direct way of showing this type of violence is to show the physical acts on the scene, such as demolishing civilian vehicles, residential houses, and nature as meadows and trees. The indirect way of portraying it is by showing the outcomes of actions done by the invaders or stories told by the witnesses from the scenes.

In the last category, physical harm to the surroundings, a scene in “We will sing” which portrays best is the following. A military Soviet vehicle, shown in slow motion, crashes a car delivering stuffed toys. This shows the dramatic part of the lack of empathy from the Soviets. It can be clearly seen that it was not an accident and portrays the brutality of that nation. The stuffed toys are scattered in soiling and dirty in the street; the car was turned over, crashed and left behind, which shows the demolition aspect of the violent acts in the surroundings. While the fictional movie accentuates the harm done to people rather than

the environment, a few scenes of tanks destroying fences and approaching people while damaging everything that comes in their way.

An interview shown in the movie “Occupied, but not silenced” with at the time news reporter describes how the demolition of the environment was done. The reporter tells how it was done by breaking the doors of the national TV and Radio broadcaster, by using of the firearms and shooting in the hallway. In addition, the electricity was cut down which demonstrates the demolition of vital resources by the Soviets. When the soldier entered the room, broke all the windows, and asked why he did it, he answered – “*not your problem*”. The Soviet armed forces were very well equipped, with many on duty to take away the nation’s freedom. The stories of glass shattered inside the buildings to cause as much damage as possible, along with the financial losses of almost 18 million litai (the Lithuanian currency) of technical equipment, show the destructive side of the Soviets who were determined not to leave anything to the newly risen nation.

One of the events' outcomes was actual footage of cars completely crushed by the tanks in the streets of Vilnius, holes in the walls, street signs and lamps ruined. The tank wheels completely ruined the meadow. In fictional and non-fictional movies, this aspect of the outcomes is stressed. While the storylines were different and had other ways to present the events, the ending was the same. The goal of spreading the harm to people and the environment had to be shown.

The Soviet goal was to stop all connections and communications to the rest of the world so that no one would find out about the Soviets’ actions. This would prevent the spread of the information, and only the Soviet propaganda would be considered as the one and only reliable source of information.

In conclusion, the representation of physical violence can be categorized into direct and indirect forms of violence, which mainly result in adverse outcomes (Rosita & Prathisara, 2021). This was seen in all three categories of portraying the violence done by the Soviets against the Lithuanians. The direct way is seen to be more harshly represented, while the indirect can have brutal consequences, but the actual scenes of the events are not seen. Similarly, as Zelizer (2018) points out, the use of violence indicates the aggressor’s desire to incline fear towards the group or person. Therefore, the Soviets wanted to portray the power they had towards Lithuanians to make them weaker and obey.

## **4.2 Peace**

### *4.2.1 Unarmed battle*

Similar events as happened in Lithuania, were researched by Nakashydzė and Radkevich (2021) analysing the Ukrainians' resistance to Russians. The population can see the unarmed battle against invaders as not using guns to protect and resist "them". The tools that are used for resistance can be categorized as anger protection defending with hands and pushing back the invaders, or in any other way standing against the violent people and not letting them to go through. Another way of showing is through peaceful gatherings to sing songs and dance to show the togetherness of the nation. Since the defenders are unarmed and the invaders are, the show of weakness and begging can occur due to the fear of being killed.

Lithuanians are described as courageous people who stand up unarmed to the fully equipped Soviet forces and fight for their freedom without fearing harm. These stories from witnesses illustrate a heroic portrait of the nation. Because it is considered as self-representation due to the witnesses being Lithuanian and describing the people of their own nation, there is a possibility of bias to show a better image of Lithuanians. However, in the documentary "Mr. Landsbergis. Tearing the evil empire," Lithuanians are shown preparing themselves in the Supreme Council with guns and other protective gear to fight for their freedom along with prayers with a priest. While almost all footages highlighted the unarmed fight for freedom, only by singing and protecting with bare hands, this movie also showed the other side of civilian Lithuanian men. The footage shows that these civilians have not been trained before to be in the army. While this reveals the bravery of people; it also demonstrates that Lithuanians were willing to take guns and fight. The battle scenes and the preparation align with Korostelina's (2003) research, where Lithuanians are seen as a strong nation resisting the invaders.

In "We will sing", the fight for freedom is very much seen in the young Lithuanian generation, especially when young men and women are eager to protest for their total freedom in the streets of different cities of Lithuania, showing even a pregnant woman participating. However, mothers are trying to persuade young people not to go remembering their past experiences with militia and the Soviet army. Marius, one of the movie's main characters, is persuading the mother that it is important to fight. This is when the mother cries, remembering the past but also, she is not willing to listen to what her son is saying by

neglecting her words. The reassurance the young man gives to his mother communicates the hope of freedom that can be protected by singing and approaching the problem peacefully.

The Television tower in Vilnius is one of the most important sites for the spread of information to the population and the world. Therefore, the first scene in the fictional movie shows the TV tower. It is portrayed in a way that shows greatness. While the tower is shown, only the voices of many people singing traditional folk songs are heard in the background, along with many Lithuanian flags raised in the air. The first seconds of the scene confirms the statement of the number of people gathered to protect the TV tower and Supreme Council and therefore the freedom. Without seeing the number of people standing in the peaceful defence of their freedom, it is possible to guess from the sound of the number of people singing that it might be many of them. Later, people are seen dancing next to the bonfires close to the TV tower and standing to protect it while people are playing music in the background.

An older woman holding a human-size cross, saying a prayer to protect the country, and kneeling in the middle of the road alone in front of many tanks shows how innocently the nation was fighting without using arms. The “us” versus “them” can be seen and can be differed in these scenes when Lithuanians are peacefully standing, and the Soviets are attacking with tanks and guns. The visualizations of the scenes accentuate cold colours such as blue and green to portray a negative emotion to the watchers and the coolness of the surroundings (Kalmus [1935] 2006, p. 26, as cited in Cowan, 2015). Later, when the Soviets start attacking, a woman is seen going to her knees in front of the army and tanks. She is shouting: "What are you doing?" with fear in her eyes, along with other people shouting "Lithuania" while the Soviets do not stop approaching the crowd. Since the army started to attack the unarmed crowd, Lithuanians stood to resist them. People were desperate to fight for their freedom, blocking tanks and climbing on top of them to block the artillery. This shows the importance of the freedom, bravery, and no fearing of the Soviets, even being unarmed.

In the 1991's documentary, a woman reporter's voice is heard from a news channel that was broadcasted live that night saying, “we are still alive” and “we will not leave until they take us by force”, while the images of Soviets riding in tanks in the city are shown in the movie. The speech about freedom and resistance was going on the radio and the TV with fear in her voice. She and another man reporter's voice were played over the visuals in the

documentary of Soviets trying to occupy the nation. Similarly, the footage from the Supreme Council shows thousands of people outside the area who got barricaded from the expected Soviet army attack. Moreover, people stand with flags determined to protect the important buildings, notably the Supreme Council from the enemies if they come while the politicians at the same time working inside the building and making diplomatic contacts and negotiations with the external world (the US and other countries). Considerable importance is shown how Lithuanian politicians are reaching out to foreign leaders to inform them about the horrific attacks and plea for help. This was specifically done to the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Lithuania, Vytautas Landsbergis, who was the interviewee for the movie “Mr. Landsbergis. Tearing the evil empire”. Similarly, news reporters were trying to reach out to the outside world. Footage of people listening to the radio can hear the reporter talking in Russian and Lithuanian languages asking the outside world to listen and see what is happening and provide help while it is still possible. She communicates that it is not the Lithuanians’ wish to cut the communication with the world while mentioning that unarmed people are fighting for this freedom.

The surroundings of the protestors in the fictional and non-fictional movies are shown peacefully. Bond fires with people getting warm in the cold winter weather, holding each other by the hands, swinging to the sides while singing traditional songs about the Lithuanian flag and independence along with multiple Lithuanian flags sticking above the people and showing the greatness of the nation. Similarly, in the documentary with Mr. Landsbergis, the day after the horrible night of January 13<sup>th</sup> is shown in a very peaceful way – without commentary or music. The silence of the footage of the surroundings communicates the horrible events.

These scenes of peaceful protestors can be aligned with the movie *Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom* (2015) which was analysed by Nakashydzė and Radkevich (2021). Similar representations of “us” are shown at first as being peaceful and hopeful of fighting the battle against Russians as “them”, which changes to a more aggressive tactic. Moreover, the footage in the movies of Lithuanians trying to reach out for help from the external world proves the statement mentioned in the theoretical background that Lithuanians could not get support from the outside world due to lack of communication and reliability from the supporters. This contradicts the literature of Luehrmann (2011) and Bucinas (2021), where Lithuanians are still aligned with the USSR and their ideology. However, these scenes

from all three movies show how Lithuanians were fighting for their freedom and independence by protecting their nation and reaching out for aid from other nations.

#### *4.2.2 Empathy*

The empathy representation in this movie is portrayed from two different sides. Firstly, a more direct way of showing empathy to people is done by Lithuanians who help injured people, grieve for the dead, and feel emotions towards other people. While on the other side, the Soviets are shown as not having empathy and harming any individual, not taking into account their age, gender, or physical state.

In all three movies, Lithuanian civilians are seen as being empathetic to any person who has been injured or killed. Many scenes include people crying and grieving for the people who defended the nation's freedom. It is a loss for the whole population. Therefore, this shows how Lithuanians care about people's lives, whomever it might have affected.

On the other hand, while people are getting shot in the crowd defending their nation's freedom, the Soviets also shoot people running away from the events, giving them no option but to leave the place not injured. This shows the Soviet brutality to any human being and the scene where the tanks start to move and crush people underneath. Woman or man, there is no difference in whom the victim is going to be. The documentaries have footage of Soviets in different places of the city and different times, shown to be aggressive towards any gender or age of people. This part of the Soviets can be seen as a humiliation of a person's life and the fact that they only cared about commands given by the leaders of their regime. This supports the literature of Malinova (2014, as cited in Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016), who describes Soviets as immoral and as people who cannot feel compassion for other people. Consequently, it proves the power of authorities in the Soviet regime had an influential role on their citizens.

### *4.3 Happiness*

#### *4.3.1 Freedom*

Freedom in the fictional movie was accentuated by the willingness of liberation, especially from the young people's generation. Personal freedom is not as much discussed as collective, national freedom from Communist oppression. Moreover, freedom had a price – the sacrifice people made to bring national liberation. The word for a free Lithuanian was

being spread, and Lithuanian leaders working on getting support from the outside world showed the determination to get complete independence and become free from the USSR.

“We will sing” vividly shows the willingness for freedom. The movie begins with footage of Lithuania’s Supreme Council leader giving a speech about freedom’s worth, and footage from real-life events showing the people preparing to protect and fight for their country. It portrays the willingness of people trying to obtain absolute independence. Furthermore, the movie continues with the storyline about different characters. While the mother of Marius, who was presented previously, almost crying and asking her son why he goes to the protest even if there will already be thousands protesting. His answer is simple – he says that he is doing it for freedom. His anger shows that he tries to explain and persuade his mother, knowing she has experienced the suppression of the regime but still does not support the protest for freedom. A similar position has been taken by the co-worker of Agne, who is pregnant and going to protest in the capital. In this case, the co-worker is very worried and tries to persuade Agne not to go. While Agne is happy and smiling about going to the protest, the enthusiasm does not show on her co-worker’s face. Later in a scene, Agne’s preparation in her apartment is shown as calm, listening to Lithuanian music while she says goodbye to her birds in a cage. This can symbolize how Lithuanians will say goodbye to the regime and be fully liberated from the USSR.

Another argument is shown between a father and a son. The young son, who is in his 20's, is willing to go to the protest to fight for his freedom, while his father refuses to go, gets angry at his son for having the thoughts of going there and does not believe protests will solve the issue which he does not believe that exists. This man is shown as being influenced by the Soviets because he states his perception of the West as having even less freedom than in the USSR. This illustrates the power of Soviet propaganda. While other examples of the youth being determined to fight showed that Lithuanians did not obey the regime and wanted to protest for freedom, this scene lines up with Luehrmann’s (2011) and Bucinas’ (2021) studies, which states that the perception of Lithuanians obeying the Soviet ideology and aligning with the mentality of “them” are perceived. However, on the train his mother, who is going to find her son in the capital, sees a little boy who looks like hers. The remembrance of him always taking care of others and fighting for them shows how the young generation is perceived – determined and willing to fight for their freedom in any case.

The alternative storyline of an old couple living in a village is shown where the husband is preparing to go to Vilnius and fight for freedom. At the same time, his wife is angry at him for going, calling it a trip to death and being idiotic for going there. The couple's tension and tone show they disagree with this decision. The husband also reassures his wife that even if he dies, he would have done it for a cause. Freedom is not said in the conversation but can be interpreted that he will do it for liberty along with other people. He thinks this action will show the young generation how freedom is fought for, so the wife agrees. As later seen in the movie, the husband is portrayed as very ill and taking medicine. However, his physical state does not let him sit back, and he chooses to fight for freedom no matter his physical condition. Towards the end of the movie, while the man is dying and people are offering him help and assistance to go to the hospital, he refuses and says better leave it to the people fighting for the country's freedom. This shows the sacrifice people made for the better future of the nation. Moreover, people are shown to be long-standing next to the Supreme Council and simultaneously suffering from cold but still not giving up on the freedom they want to fight for.

In both documentaries, news reporters are given a great deal of importance. While people are fighting in the streets, news reporters are transmitting the news to the whole country. They are serious and well-put together to report all the news and the reality in the ex-Soviet country, which not many foreign countries are aware of. After the central broadcasting station was occupied, the will and resistance did not disappear; the extended storyline in the documentary "Occupied, but not silenced" introduced the plans made by other television and radio broadcasters on how to communicate and inform people about the events. It shows that the second-largest television station in another city takes over the reporting since Vilnius' station was fully occupied. The will to get freedom is indescribable. Fear is heard in their voices while presenting new information about the events happening in the capital. Additionally, politicians are doing everything they can to communicate the news to the external world and reach out for help. However, at the same time, it is essential to be an adequate leader to the nation and provide emotional support and encouragement. This can be seen in the scene when the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Lithuania, Vytautas Landsbergis, from his office is encouraging people on television with his motivational words to stay strong. He calls the USSR a "rotten empire" that will collapse after Lithuania resists with their strong will and battle for freedom. These footages show how people were willing to do everything in their power to maintain freedom at any cost. Different ways of



communicating the news to the world are shown, which illustrates the effort it took due to the unavailability of the Soviets interfering.

“Occupied, but not silenced” immediately, from the first scene, creates a sensation of the Soviets “them” being the enemy of Lithuanians “us”. It creates a negative feeling of them being the enemy and simultaneously communicates Lithuanians’ anger. This scene starts with a long queue of Soviet tanks marching into the city at night, while in the background, people’s whistling and booing are heard. This scene can be seen as a representation of freedom due to the people’s emotion to resist “them” and maintain independence based on their willingness to fight against heavily-armed Soviets. This two-part movie includes many stories told by witnesses of the events to make the storyline more insightful with a feeling of the audience experiencing the events. A former director at the national television station called these events an actual war against unarmed people who want only freedom for their nation. Overall, the interviews feel like the events happened a short time ago. People speak of the traumatic events vividly with many detailed explanations, but also with slight humour to ease the actual stories. This portrays the actual emotions that have been experienced during the events.

The behind the scenes of the Supreme Council during the events is shown in “Mr. Landsbergis. Tearing the evil empire” in a very detailed way. It shows the chaos caused by the economic blockade the Soviets were using to press Lithuania and the head leaders of Lithuania spending days and nights in the Supreme Council to decide on the solutions to address the economic situation of Lithuania. The situation was not improving, so Vytautas Landsbergis, as the leader of the Supreme Council, took matters into his own hands and started to lead the country because he did not see the right solutions made. Leadership is shown clearly to ensure preparedness to solve the issues as well as illustrates the need for a strong leader in times of uncertainty and threat. Despite Ms. Kazimiera Prunskiene was appointed a year ago to be the Prime Minister of Lithuania, her role was not shown since it was not impactful to the nation. The movie had to show the leaders who would be able to step up for the nation’s strong will of freedom. This is why only Mr Landsbergis is shown and interviewed for the documentary – he became the nation’s leader and actual Head of States. Moreover, in the footage of the behind-the-scenes of the Supreme Council, the Lithuanians are shown as a strong nation of people, barricading entrances and windows to protect the most important institution.

Finally, the narrator of the “We will sing” movie questions whether it is possible to keep the freedom. He remembers that during times when the nation was occupied, people were scared to speak up for their freedom due to the fear of being killed and put to prison or be exiled to Siberia. This confirms the literature about the Soviets that states that their regime was a threat of invasion, enslaving conspiracy and deteriorating other nations (Rogin, 1984).

#### *4.3.2 Success*

As one of the expression forms of success for Lithuanians is the togetherness, national spirit and belonging to a group of same-minded people that brings up the success of the fighting. While success can be considered as the outcome of the events, the use of humour in storytelling purposively eases the reality of the tragic events. This brings calmness achieving freedom and therefore communicates the togetherness of the whole group.

The scene of the movie “We will sing” of a husband informing his wife that the nation is winning despite the blood sacrificed and with people singing to protect their freedom. Also, people are seen smiling and positive while singing traditional Lithuanian songs. The visualizations of the scenes accentuate warm colours such as orange, red, yellow, showing many fire bonds, creating a sense of togetherness and positivity (Kalmus [1935] 2006, p. 26, as cited in Cowan, 2015).

In the non-fictional movie “Occupied, but not silenced”, difficult and miserable events are changed at the end of the movie with happier ones underlining the achievement they fought for. This can be seen and heard by the narrator of the movie who describe the protest as a win for Lithuanians, showing how the Soviets were diminished and Lithuanians praised while these people were smiling and feeling accomplishment. Soviets are described as weak and unable to conquer an unarmed nation. Finally, the first part of the movie "Occupied, but not silenced" ends with footage of the Soviets beating Lithuanians. The visuals are changed with footage of the aftermath of the events when the honour of killed Lithuanians are shown with strong right-standing Lithuanian soldiers, which again has a feeling of accomplishment and pride that communicates to the viewers with uplifting music. In contrast, in the movie's second part, the nation's success is presented as liberation from the regime and occupiers. After the horrible events, new plans for the television committee to share information with the whole population arose. They start slowly to introduce the national programming. When more programs are introduced, the success of Lithuania spread. While the rest of the movie

shows the nation's revival in the early 1990s, it is not accurate in the topic of this research paper.

The interview for “Mr. Landsbergis. Tearing the evil empire” is done from the perspective of Mr. Landsbergis. He uses humour in describing the situations that were happening in the capital – followed by despair in the stories. However, the use of laughter indicates the success the nation achieved. It would not have been used to tell stories if the outcomes were negative and not the way it was intended to finish, meaning the freedom would not have happened. Therefore, laughter and use of humour only at the end of the narrated stories told about the events in January 1991 show the seriousness of it and the relief of the outcomes that were achieved.

#### ***4.4 Sadness***

##### *4.4.1 Devastation*

The portrayal of devastation is mainly accentuated through crying emotions, which shows personal negativity felt due to the outcomes of the events. Moreover, this feeling was shown by the Lithuanians only. The devastation motive is illustrated in a direct way where emotions are shown with the expression of crying, shouting or other types of grieving. All these emotions are expressed by the population on-site of the events or by watching the news. Therefore, sadness was felt in spirit through the whole nation. The death of 14 people during the events indicated the true victims of the violent attacks on the unarmed people, which shows the vulnerability of “us” and the aggression of “them”.

The music chosen in “We will sing” has a sadness tendency when only Lithuanians are shown, along with intensified heart-beating music when Soviets are shown in the picture. These can be seen as opposing parties, which can be distinguished as the victims when “us” are shown and the aggressors “them”. In another scene, the surroundings are slowed when a young man realizes people are dying and getting hurt in the fictional movie. The scene does not have any sound, just some white noise that blurs out all the visuals that are happening around. While he is completely frozen and does not do anything, people are screaming in the background. The realization of death shows a person has sympathy for any person, even a stranger. Along comes negative emotions of sadness for a lost life. Similar situations were shown where people’s loved ones were dead or very badly injured. For example, a man is

shown crying in a hospital while his wife has been badly injured and entered the surgery room. Alternatively, the man who sacrificed his own life for the ability to leave the free places for people who would need them, while his wife was sitting by his side, heartbroken for the loss of his loved one. These scenes align with Hanich et al.'s (2017) research about the loss of loved ones, where crying is shown as an expression of sadness and grief.

On the other hand, real emotions in the documentaries are shown of people crying from the devastation of the events. People outside Kaunas' television station are seen crying while watching footage from the event scenes in Vilnius, especially zooming in on those who are crying to communicate the sad emotions of people who expressed those emotions for those who were fighting for freedom. "Mr. Landsbergis. Tearing the evil empire" is the only movie which shows the funerals of the killed 14 people of the 13<sup>th</sup> of January events in much detail and from all angles – filmed from the sky to show the crowds that gathered to pay respect to those people. These scenes also show the devastation and sadness that people were feeling. The victims are portrayed as heroes of the nation who died for the freedom of others. People grieving and crying for the victims they did not know personally, along with the vast number of flowers put to their graves, show the whole nation's mourning.

#### *4.4.2 Nostalgia*

A big part of the movies is the nostalgic stories people telling to each other or in an interview form. For example, the times of 1940s when Lithuania was occupied by the USSR regime and the events of 1991 were compared and concluded that nothing has changed. This was making people unhappy that in 50 years, there was not much progress of the Soviets recognizing Lithuania as an independent country. However, in those stories, humour is used to ease the emotions.

A pregnant woman is being calmed down by an older man who is telling freedom stories in an uncomfortable situation. Even though the stories include deaths of his brothers who were partisans<sup>3</sup> during the Cold War who were fighting the Soviets for the nation's freedom. The emotions of the people sitting in the medical bus are uplifted with tears in their eyes and laughing, which shows the positivity people have. Using humour gives the environment calmness and reassuring during a stressful time. The man telling stories about food deprivation, armed fighting in the woods and the horrible times he had suffered also

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<sup>3</sup> (in a country that has been defeated) a member of a secret armed force whose aim is to fight against an enemy that is controlling the country (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.2)

portrayed the ease of a better future and seeing everything being progressed. Similarly, his jokes about the death of Stalin shows how people are accepting the past but immediately change the emotion to sadness when remembering being locked in a cellar for openly joking about the “tragedy”. Much humour is used to tell stories about past horrible events to ease the talk. However, the tragic outcomes that are related to the Soviets from 50 years ago still bring negative emotions, which relate to these days of the current events of the movie. Therefore, the nostalgic feeling and remembering the horrible past come back.

Moreover, during the interviews of witnesses of the horrible night, many people remember it with fear and sadness. A director of the national television station has negative memories due to the thoughts of different actions he could have taken. While it was crucial to think fast at those times, some decisions would have been made with more attention. These regretful stories show how all events were happening quickly and unpredictably. Therefore, people might suffer from the thoughts of the decisions they could have made. While many people during the events in January 1991 could have experienced the exile of the 1940s to Siberia, one of the national broadcaster's producers compared the events of 1991 to the exile of her grandparents in 1945. This shows that the USSR did not change their regime and has been seen without any progress since the middle of the twentieth century.

## 5. Conclusions

Many people still believe that Russification in Lithuania is a big part of its identity (Bucinas, 2021; Luehrmann, 2011). Due to the historical past, lack of information and representation in the media and research, people are not aware of the reality of the relations between Lithuanians and Russians, the Soviets in the past. The case for this study is chosen the events of Lithuania's resistance against Soviets in the early January of 1991 (Miniotaite, 1996). Many books have been written, and movies created about this topic. However, no scientific research was done about the representation in movies of these two nations. For the start of the analysis, many representations of major world events have been found, which analysed political events from Latin America (Messmer, 2012), as well as 9/11 (Abderrazag & Serir, 2019), World Wars (Diligenti-Gavrilina, 1993). The representation in movies of "us" and "them" have had a significant share of attention in the research field.

For this research, three movies were analysed to answer the research question: *How are "us" (Lithuanians) versus "them" (Soviets) portrayed in non-fictional and fictional movies which represent the same historical event of the national resistance?* The sample of one fictional and two non-fictional movies was chosen with the purposive sampling method due to the small availability of movies representing the events in Lithuania in January 1991. Furthermore, the narratives of the movies showed the sequences of events and emotions of Lithuania's civilians and leaders, along with the actions of the Soviets army and leaders. Finally, the data gathered was performed and studied using thematic analysis because of data analysis flexibility, identification and learning of the data patterns, ease of working with large data, which later are summarized in categories and sub-categories, and finally, the ability to distinguish differences and similarities between the data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The side of the representation of "us" is chosen to be Lithuanians. Therefore, this research investigated how Lithuanians and Soviets have been represented in the movies. After investigating the data, no pattern of "otherness" was found; therefore, it is impossible to conclude about it. "Mes dainuosim" ("We will sing"), which is the only fictional movie analysed for this research, overall takes the negative emotions the most into consideration to portray the viewpoint of the "us" side since the movie mainly tackles Lithuanians and their perspective. Four categories were created based on the existing literature about representation patterns of Soviets, Lithuanians, and political resistance events in movies, literature, and

music. These include violence (Zelizer, 2018), peace (Ziv, 2019), happiness (Fitzpatrick, 2004), and sadness (Hanich et al., 2017).

For the category of violence, three distinct sub-categories were made, backed up by Zelizer's research (2018) and historical events – physical harm to people, psychological harm to people, and physical harm to the environment. When analysing the violence pattern, it mostly illustrated the representation of Soviets due to the physical harm performed to people. This sub-category was represented in direct and indirect use of violence. Direct violence shows the harm made to people on screen, whereas the indirect violence when the harm can be interpreted as bruises and blood showing the violent actions. They were shown as the ones harming innocent and unarmed people. Although, physical violence is also shown from the side of Lithuanians, the use of harm from Lithuanians is perceived as defensive violence since “us” were not attacking “them”, but instead had to use violence and guns to protect the people and the critical political and communication sites. Moreover, Sunarto's (2006) research described psychological harm as threatening, harassing, or in any other way creating fear (as cited in Rosita & Prathisara, 2021). This could be seen in the movies where the Soviets are threatening people by targeting houses with tank flash or showing what would happen to the civilians if they did not obey their instructions. Finally, the demolition of surroundings is seen in the movies where the Soviets destroyed many buildings, roads, vehicles, and nature to reach their purpose. These examples prove that Soviets are seen as immoral, self-interested, and rebellious (Malinova 2014, as cited in Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016).

An observation was made that no Soviet victims were seen at the event or in hospital footage. This means that either there were no Soviet military men that were physically harmed and therefore would prove a point that only Soviets were the only ones using force to fight against Lithuanians. Alternatively, another scenario would be not to show those victims of the Soviets because the image of Lithuanians would be seen more negatively. Again, this would be because of self-representation when “us” are victimized and portrayed in a way to receive more empathy and “them” as villains and shown in a negative way (Hirshberg, 1993).

Furthermore, category peace was sorted based on Ziv's (2019) and Keen's (2016) studies on unarmed battle and empathy. This category primarily addressed Lithuanians, as Ziv's (2019) analysis showed that peaceful protests for freedom could have a different turn. The representation of these events shows the opposing groups' differences in the battle.

Therefore, in this research, the distinction between Lithuanians and Soviets was seen very clearly since the Soviets were only shown as the evil side. At the same time, all movies accentuated Lithuanians' peaceful protests while singing, offering each other help, and overall being together unarmed, resisting the invaders. This aligns with the literature found about harmony in the early 1990s, when the Baltics were found to be highly harmonious people (Schwartz, 1994, as cited in Jüri & Realo, 1996). Moreover, Jüri and Realo's (1996) research does not align with features of ex-Soviet bloc nations being clueless, powerless, and easily influenced because the nation in the movies showed the battle they would fight even in threatening situations. Also, empathy could have been seen when Lithuanians would provide assistance to any other civilian. In contrast, the Soviets, on the other hand, were shown opposingly – harming any person, not depending on the gender or age. The distinction between “us” and “them” was very well illustrated here. This showed that the in-group would provide aid and show togetherness while “them” would harm in any way possible.

Additionally, happiness included Korostelina's (2003) and Fitzpatrick's (2004) selections of main themes about freedom and success to illustrate the positive emotions of the narrated stories. Fitzpatrick's article (2004) tackled the freedom representation from a collective perspective which was also seen in the movies analysed. Whether it was from a more negative side (people dying or being injured to sacrifice for the freedom of the rest of the nation) or positive (finally getting liberated from the regime and becoming independent), the emotion mainly was not said straightforwardly but rather giving the viewer to implement it as the feeling of freedom. However, this relates to the literature about Lithuanians wanting to achieve complete independence from the Soviet regime, where Lithuanians wanted to distinguish themselves as a separate nation rather than being related to the Communist regime (Jubulis, 2007; Korostelina, 2003). Similarly, success was presented in a more subtle way, which was seen in the aftermath of the events when the nation's revival began just days after. As well as, the feeling of pride for the nation to have fought for the freedom in togetherness.

Finally, the last category, sadness, was added last while analysing the movies due to the recognized and repeated pattern that did not fit any already-created categories. Therefore, existing literature was found based on Hanich et al. (2017), which distinguished devastation and nostalgia in their analysed case. The devastation motive was portrayed when someone was severely injured or even killed. This emotion was shown throughout all movies to accentuate the Lithuanian nation's pain. Moreover, nostalgia was included due to the remembrance of the past events of 1940s, which showed similarities of the regime that did



not change throughout the half of a century. Therefore, many similarities were made in these events.

Overall, the analysed documentaries and fictional movies represent and accentuate how Lithuanians were fighting unarmed for their freedom and the movies do not show or show with limited footage the Lithuanian abusive side. If it did show, it was mostly to demonstrate how the nation would not have resisted the armed enemies and had to use defence mechanisms. While the USSR is accentuated to use only force and physically and psychologically harming people or the surroundings. This nation takes no diplomacy and is portrayed as the only problem-solving method through the violence. The difference between fictional and non-fictional movies can be seen in that the fictional movie uses other visual and audio methods to portray the emotions. For example, during negative periods of the movie, more melancholic music was played, along with slowed down visuals to emphasise the emotions the character was communicating. While both non-fictional movies show emotions through narrated stories, the interviewees were telling to illustrate the overall emotions of the events. Finally, it concludes how the in-group as Lithuanians are portrayed more positively and with more empathy while the Soviets are shown to be more villain and negatively. These patterns are aligned with Hirshberg's (1993) and Zelizer's (2018) studies about the in- and out-groups.

Finally, there were some limitations. Due to the lack of data for the research, it was not possible to choose which data would be analysed. Therefore, the only one available feature films produced about the events had to be chosen to be analysed. Furthermore, a lack of academic research about Lithuanian stereotypes was encountered. Therefore, some stereotypes had to be chosen that describe the Baltic states or the ex-Soviet Bloc in general. Therefore, the precise stereotypes about Lithuanians were not present and could not be researched for the analysis. Moreover, for further research, it is advisable to look into other similar events about the resistance and the representation of "us" and "them", which would narrate the perspectives from Soviet movies to see a distinction of "them" as "us". This will tackle "us" as Soviets and "them" the other nation.

## 6. References

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