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Ice hockey in North American Film

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1. Introduction
2. Development and overview of sports in movies
3. Interpretation of underdog victory in movies *Miracle and Mystery, Alaska*
4. Violence in ice hockey movies *Slapshot and Goon*
5. Conclusion

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Briley, Ron, Michael K. Schoenecke, and Deborah A. Carmichael. *All-stars and Movie Stars: Sports in Film and History*. Lexington, Ky: UP of Kentucky, 2008. Print.

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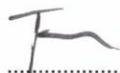
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Děkuji Mgr. Jiřímu Flajšarovi, Ph.D., za odborné vedení práce, poskytování rad a materiálových podkladů k práci.

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# 1. Introduction

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyse the perception of underdog victory and violent behaviour on give ice hockey movies. I will consider several aspects according to their importance and contribution to the given themes. I chose this sport, because I have close relationship to it and its representation in movies, which I consider to be the best among other sport movies. This topic and the methods of comparison of chosen movies are not so well processed and so this should help to bring the light and show some new views on this phenomena. Theme of underdog victory is an inherent part of sport in movies, especially in the North American cinematography. Theme of violent behaviour is also important and highly discussed topic nowadays and in some sports create the necessary part of them. In the first chapter, I would like to focus on the beginning of movie industry and development of first sport movies up to the presence, focusing on the most popular sports on the North American continent, because it is necessary to know some basic facts and important events during the history of sport movies. For each sport I will mention some important facts and I will also mention the best movies from each category. In the next part I will focus on ice hockey movies and two chosen themes themselves. I will analyse and demonstrate on relevant aspects, how are these themes processed there. I chose two movies for each category, which are representing given themes and on their comparison I will show differences and similarities between them. In case of underdog victory, I chose this theme, because it is an important part of the majority of sport movies and is interesting to see how this sense of victory over stronger players or teams is presented in movies. In case of violence, it is the vital part of many sports and especially of ice hockey. Nowadays, violence is highly discuss topic among people, and it has a large base of opponents. Lot of movies are based on this element and show that ice hockey is a quick, contact sport for rough people and simply that this sport cannot be played without some sort of violence. For the underdog victory I chose movies *Miracle (2004)* and *Mystery, Alaska (1999)*, because both movies are very popular and tell us something about the life on the North American continent and its perception of sport in movies and how is for people important to believe in something and stay together and strong. In the next chapter, I chose movies *Slap Shot (1977)* and *Goon (2011)* representing violence

in ice hockey. Both movies are very popular and *Slap Shot* is sometimes considered to be the one of the best ice hockey movie ever made. Both movies have lot of similar things, but both focus on some different sort of violence and its perception. I will also take under consideration necessity and possible ways of avoiding the violent behaviour in both movies.

## **2. Development and overview of sports in movies**

Sport activities in a general sense were highly popular from the beginning. With the development of radio and television its popularity increased noticeably, because sport became available for hundreds of million people around the world. People were not reliant only on watching the game alive, reading newspaper or just simply speaking about it, but they were given a chance to actually live with it and be part of it through these modern technologies. Sport statistics, watching of favourite players, all of these things became available, especially with development of television and film and its subsequent massive popularization. In movies were represented the most favourite sport achievements, important sport moments through the history or simply sport movies with entertaining purposes.

### **2.1 The popularization of movies**

To understand the sport in movies and way it is nowadays still so popular, we have to briefly look at its development in the past. If we want to look at the beginning of cinematography, it is necessary to first observe the beginning of movies and with it connected medialisisation. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was connected with the birth of modernist era in filming. Loosing and changing of social convections caused that people were becoming more able to enjoy and be part of modern society with all of its advantages. This era is also connected with lot of new inventions and massive development of industrialization. We can consider invention of motion pictures as one of the most important inventions at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The important break point in the history of movies as a way to attract people, was in 1890s when Lumieres brothers and Thomas Alva Edison presented their first machines for recording motion. As Parkinson stated in his work: ‘The age of inventions culminated in the event that traditionally signals the birth of the cinema - the first demonstration to a paying audience of the Lumieres' Cinematographe in the Salon Indien ( ... )’ (Parkinson 16). Not only invention of recording motion, but also development of mass media such as radio, television and with it connected live broadcasting and nowadays of course internet, which is the main and the biggest source of information and entertainment. All these things helped to ordinary

people become part of something bigger and to be more connected with their favourite sports all around the world. People could not only rely on books, newspapers, magazines and others, but they could actually listen and watch their favourite sports and players from their living rooms.

Expansion of movies on the North American continent and their fast integration, was mainly caused by the First World War, which devastated the most of Europe and consequently, North America was becoming a 'paradise' for actors, directors, scenarios and other people, who are necessary in a movie industry. In the 1910s actors even became valued as real artists and they became real movie stars with high wages. We can say that the main and the biggest player in the field of movie industry was filming area Hollywood in California. In the 1920s controlled the most of the movies production. However, it was not so until the 1910s, because of Edison's monopole and patents. 'Ever the creative inventor and wily entrepreneur, Edison believed that he could dominate motion pictures in the United States by controlling the technology, film stock, and equipment for making and showing movies' (Monaco 4).

However, the flow of money and attraction of California caused that it became very popular area and the biggest movies with big budgets were filming there. Later on, profits from movies, allowed the expansion of movie industry and with the development of big studios, movies became worldwide phenomena. Later there appeared so-called vertical integration which means that big companies were buying small studios and also some cinema chains. So called 'big five' studios in the charge of movie industry were - MGM, Warner Brothers, 20th Century Fox, Paramount Pictures, and RKO. 'They made movies; then they rented the movies they made—as well as others that they acquired—to movie theatres nationwide, including their own chains of movie theatres where they showcased the movies they produced' (Monaco 16). These companies were in the charge of movie production and they could effectively control the cinematographic world. With respect to technologies, development of new technics and filming procedures e.g. in the late 1920s sound, allowed producers to make movies across the whole genres and with more difficult compositions. This progress has continued across the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century, and even today new technologies and scene compositions are still under development. Historical development of the movie industry has

gone a long journey, and shows that it is a big money-making business. Worldwide popularity and the promise of invention of new technologies will guarantee us that there will always be something to watch.

## **2.2 Sport in the North American movies**

Sport in movies is a very sensitive topic especially in the North American culture, where exist various sports and they are widespread across the whole community. As Crosson stated in his work:

The development of both sport and film also reflected the substantial changes that the western world in particular was undergoing in the late nineteenth century. As the industrialisation and modernisation process developed apace and western countries became increasingly urbanised, the need to provide structured leisure for such rapidly changing societies became evermore pressing. (3)

People around the whole world have always been attracted to some sport activities, which could improve their lives, between those activities is included sport as a cultural phenomenon, which became massively popular and people have feelings of being united and that they can together be fans and creating communities. Thanks to movies, people are allowed to watch their favourite sport events and players, who made a significant success in the history of sport. Beside thousands of TV shows and live broadcasting, the main focus is on entertainment, which is in movies presented in three main groups. The first group of movies is based on some real events which had a significant influence on society and national feeling. In the North American culture the most popular topics are victories of American or Canadian sportsmen and of course those which are filmed as a remembrance of some important sport events and national achievements. Most of these movies are filmed with more or less exaggeration of the success to highlight it. To this group we can also count movies which are focusing on the dark side of the sport history, concretely, racism and social issues. Rizzo stated about the popularity of racial and social issues in movies that: ‘Sport has the capacity for releasing tension that are constrained in most other social

settings, so we are less likely to be taken aback when a sport hero violates a social conventions' (25). To this group we can add movies which deal with the so-called American dream. This means that if you work hard you can achieve something in your life and become even popular or famous. This types of movies are highly popular, because they reflect to some degree people's desire to be successful in their lives and these movies work as some kind of an inspiration and motivation to fight, but also as the sense of freedom and patriotism. The notion of American dream is nowadays perceived worldwide, and people around the whole world see it as some kind of "dream of satisfaction" which can be lived not only in the USA, because of the more intensive transferring of American culture to the rest of the world. However, for deep tradition and origin in the USA as land of freedom, and because this thesis is concerning with the North American continent, I will be talking about the 'American dream'.

The second group, are movies composed for enjoyment. They are mostly made with fictional story and with fictional characters, however, they can be loosely based on some real events and achievements, again with some notion of American dream. The third group are documents which recapitulate former sport events and the historical achievements of sportsmen, these type of movies are the most accurate and reliable as a source of knowledge. For example, Briley, Schoenecke, and Carmichael divided their book into three sections which are based on three still discussed and controversial topics: 'We have divided the anthology into three sections: sports as cultural production and representation; masculinity, misogyny, and race in sports; and national identity and political confrontation in sports competition' (7). Their divisions and topics they discussed shows us that the movie industry reflects all these topics. It does not matter whether they are entertaining or controversial, they are highly popular among the people in North America.

If we now look closely on the most popular sports in North America, in Canada it is ice hockey and in the USA it is an American football and baseball. This popularity is also reflected in cinematography. However, in this section I would like to discuss some basic facts about the most filmed sports. I will briefly mention their historical appearance in movies and also some of the most famous movies about each sport. The most popular sports, which are represented in the

movies are then ice hockey, American football, boxing, baseball, basketball and golf. All these movies fall into the categories I mentioned above, with mainly focusing on representing real events or so-called American dream, which is a common theme for the most of the sport movies. The main focus is put on the movies, which are popular in the contemporary North American culture.

### **2.2.1 American football**

This sport is one of the most popular in the USA, and it is highly represented in the movies. The first movies were produced in 1930s. Lot of movies have come to light since 1980s, which is seen as a turning point when football become in TV more popular than existing number one baseball. Barra in his article mentioned about the popularity of American football that:

It comes down to this: Baseball's appeal is largely regional, while football's is national. Baseball is followed locally, generally by fans who go to games. Football is followed on TV by fans who seldom, if ever, go to the stadium to see the games in person. ('Sorry, NFL: Baseball Is Still America's Pastime')

Nowadays Super bowl is seen in the USA almost as a nation holiday, regarding TV broadcasting. Firstly, I would like to mention movies which are presented as movies with a mainly entertaining purposes with comedy features. Among this type of movies belong *The Horse Feather* filmed in 1932 with Marx brothers as protagonists. 'Its objects of ridicule are still with us—academic pretentiousness and inanity, and the hypocrisy and foolishness of institutions of higher education chasing gridiron glory' (Briley et al., 40). It is one of the oldest movies and is considered to be 'the classic movie comedy'. What is important to say is that most of the movies (even those with purely entertaining purposes) are showing us so-called underdog victory or victory of weaker person over the traditions and prejudice. For example movies like *Any Given Sunday* (1999), *Brian's Song* (1971), *The Express* (2008) or *The Invincible* (2006) show us people that struggle during their lives, but they are able to come back and achieve some victory and recognition. Even if these movies are only seen as fictional, they show us the

perception of American dream which is important for people. These movies give to ordinary audience feeling and motivation to do something with their lives and to achieve something which is important for the North American culture (especially for the USA). This is also connected with movies which are based on real events with added entertaining and catchy elements. The best known of those movies are *We are Marshalls* (2008), *Remember the Titans* (2006), *Radio* (2003) or *Rudy* (1993).

### **2.2.2 Boxing**

This is again more typical sport for the USA rather than Canada, and this is also highlighted in the movie industry. Boxing has a long tradition which is connected with some big names. Lot of movies cover the era of the first half 20th century where boxing was very popular mainly among blacks. However, generally this sport can be seen as the one which gave the opportunity to immigrants to be successful in a new country at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. ‘Whereas Western philosophers emphasize consciousness in their ruminations on the body/mind division, the boxing film foregrounds the body and particularly the male body’ (Grindon 54). Grindon made an interesting point that this sport and its representation is celebration of a body strength and masculinity. Again in this movies we can find some elements of American dream and victory over stronger boxers, who are depicted mostly as bad emotionless characters. One of the most famous movie is *Raging Bull* (1980) with Robert de Niro as a protagonist, which is based on the true story and life of a famous boxer Jake LaMotta in 1940s. Other well-known movies are *Million Dollar Baby* (1997), *Cinderella Man* (2005), *The Hurricanes* (1999) or *When We Were Kings* (1997). However, the most worldwide famous movie and the one, which is the most discussed is the *Rocky* with Sylvester Stallone as a protagonist. Stallone created character of simple boxer with Italian roots, who won famous and glory in the boxing world. ‘Rocky (1978) is one of the few movies that glorifies winning’ (Rizzo 25). This movie is the great example of American dream, where simple man achieved a big victory and changed his life.

### 2.2.3 Baseball

As it was mentioned above, baseball was once the most popular sport in TV, but it was slowly replaced by football. Baseball has a strong roots and deep tradition in the USA and even in Canada. Briley Ro. mentioned that: ‘A number of scholars have suggested that baseball may be perceived as a sort of mirror in which values, power, politics, fashion, class, economics, and race may be viewed in microcosm’ (61). All of these aspects he mentioned can be seen as the reason why is this sport so popular. Majority of baseball movies again discuss the American dream and hunger for success, so I will only mention some of the most popular and well-known ones. If we again take into account this ‘American dream’, one of the most famous movies is *The Natural* (1984) with Robert Redford. Briley et al., stated about the main character Roy in this movie:

The film emphasizes Roy’s choices and how they affect his destiny—how his gift slips away when he makes bad choices. So, in a sense, the film tempers its belief in “the natural” by constructing overt references to our individual power to determine our own destiny—for better or worse. (89)

What we can see in majority of this movies is a big ‘cliché’ which is presented as home run at the end of a match which can be included as the part of American dream. ‘The home-run-that-wins-the-big-game cliché has ruined more than one great baseball tale’ (Barra, ‘Hey, Hollywood: Not Every Great Baseball Movie Needs a ‘Big Game’’). Other popular movies are *Eight Men Out* (1988), *Pride Of the Yankees* (1942), *The Rookie* (2002) or *Mr. 3000* (2004). On movie I would like to mention is *42* (2013) which is based on a true story and is highly popular nowadays. It deals with a black man Jackie Robinson, who joins the professional baseball league in 1940s and has to deal with racism. Again, there is a trend that lot of the movies about baseball deals with racial, ethnic issues and that majority of them contribute to the big package called the American dream.

#### 2.2.4 Basketball

Basketball is a specific sport for the USA and Canada as well, mainly because the most famous sportsmen are blacks and that this sport has grown up on popularity among blacks in their hoods.

It is crucial for students to recognize that our society has made basketball more available to inner-city youths not only through its representation of black basketball heroes but also through its urban basketball courts, which service and reinforce social stratification according to race. (Briley et al.,)

However this sport did not developed among blacks, but it was invented 1890s as some kind of exercise during rainy days. Very soon it spread into the colleges and high schools and in 1920s started on a professional level. In 1950 the first black joined the national basketball league (NBA) and showed that blacks has the skill and ability to surpass even the whites. Jumps and other tricks of blacks, who are masters in that, are highly popular among audience. As in the sports mentioned above, we can see trends of underdog victory and racial issues, which is, however, discussed in this sport and movies more frequently. One of the greatest sport movie of the whole time is considered to be *Hootsie* (1986) which is based on the true story from the events in 1956 in Milan. However, again this movie is more audience-likeable with exaggerated notion of ‘miracle’ and victory. ‘Hollywood placed even more obstacles to the team’s success, providing an even more dramatic Cinderella story than the one experienced by the 1954 Milan basketball squad’ (Briley et al., 156). As it was said, Blacks were playing important role in 1970-80s and this is also presented in movies. Majority of the most well-known movies were being filmed during 80s to presence. Movies like *White Men Can’t Jump* (1992), *He Got Game* (1998), *Glory Road* (2006), *Fast Break* (1979) or *Space Jam* (1996) are popular among people and are considered to be among the best basketball movies. For example *Space Jam* came with the interesting concept of a real actor (which was played by famous basketball player Michael Jordan) together with popular animated characters by Walt Disney.

### **2.2.5 Golf**

This sport is also very important and well-known in the North American culture. USA is for example a country with the most golf courses worldwide. Also, US Open belongs between the four most important tournaments. Stachura in his article stated: ‘Remember when it was baseball, hot dogs and apple pie? Well, move over baseball. Golf seems to have developed an interlocking grip on America's pop culture-- television, movies and even music videos’ (41). He also mentioned that golf is the common theme in TV commercials and that it even shows more often than other sports in them. Golf is typical example of movies, where underestimated man win famous and satisfaction. However, lot of the well-known movies are made more as a ‘family-type comedies’. One of those movies and typical example of this type of comedy is *Caddyshack* (1980) with Bill Murray playing golf assistant manager. This movie is regarded as the best movie about the golf. ‘It's also the golf movie that's never going away because dozens of quotable lines keep getting recycled for generation next’ (Tramel). Another well-known movies which should be mentioned are *Greatest Game Ever Played* (2005), *Happy Gilmore* (1996), *Tin Cup* (1996), *The Caddy* (1953) or *Dead Solid Perfect* (1988). I would like to mention movie *Tin Cup* with Kevin Costner, which is typical example of sentimental family comedy with ‘Hollywood ending cliché’, where he on the last chance hits the hole and win the whole cup.

### **2.2.6 Ice Hockey**

The last sport I would like to mention is ice hockey. Ice hockey is undoubtedly one of the most popular sports on the planet. Especially in North America, where ice hockey has the biggest base. Ice hockey is a sport with a long tradition and as such it has gone through a long period of self-improvement and stabilization. Sport which was invented in Canada and is the number one in Canadian commercial sphere, but not so much in the USA. From the very beginning in the ice hockey city number one on the world Montreal in Canada, it was very popular, which is also connected with improvement of mass media and other kinds of communication systems as it was stated above. Also, lot of movies is made in Canadian production. First movies about ice hockey were filmed in 1930s and their popularity was slowly increasing. Ice hockey is definitely

technically more difficult and challenging than other sports, which is typical for it. We can divide the most of ice hockey movies into two specific categories according to the theme, which are shown in them. The first category are movies, which are mainly focused on the notion of aggression which is an essential part of ice hockey. The second group is more focused on underdog victory and celebration of victories achieved against stronger teams. One of this victories, which is seen probably as the biggest one, was achieved on Winter Olympic Games in 1980, where the team of American amateurs beat the professional team from Soviet Union. Johnson in his article talked about the American movie industry and stated: 'Movies still treat hockey as a farcical blood sport, or a fantastic fairy tale in the Disney mould of *The Mighty Ducks*. The Americans didn't just steal our game; they created its mythology' ('Will Hockey Movies Ever Grow Up?'). This is partially truth, as far as we can see the significant of Hollywood and desire of Americans for sentimental and violent movies. To the first group we can add movies like *Slap Shot* (1977), *Youngblood* (1986), *Score: The Hockey Musical* (2010) or *Goon* (2011). Considering second group, the most famous movies are *Mystery Alaska* (1999), *Miracle* (2004), *Maurice Richards* (1995) *Mighty Ducks* (1992) or *Les Boys* (1997). In both groups we can see the presence of American dream in the form as it was stated above. In the next chapter I would like to take two movies from both groups and make a comparison and examination of the two themes. Considering the violence as an essential part of ice hockey, I chose *Slap Shot* as the one of the most violent ice hockey movie and *Goon* where the main character use violence mainly for protection and it shows us something about the role of enforcers in ice hockey. From the next group I chose two movies which are typical movies about underdog victory. *Miracle* celebrates the victory of amateur team on Olympic Games in 1980 and *Mystery Alaska* about the team which plays hockey on a pond and by a stroke of luck will get it to the mind of every people in the USA.

### **3. Interpretation of underdog victory in movies *Miracle* and *Mystery, Alaska***

In this chapter I will be working with one of the most popular theme, which appear in majority of sport movies. I chose two movies *Miracle* (2004) and *Mystery, Alaska* (1999), which will represent given phenomena of underdog victory. I will focus on interpretation of this theme and especially on comparison of these movies with each other and with reality. The main focus will be on home environment, politics, role of media and symbols of freedom and patriotism as the part of American dream. All these factors play an important role in shaping these movies and in representation of underdog victory as the part of American dream, which is nowadays perceive and applied worldwide.

#### **3.1 Basic facts**

Movie *Miracle* was in production of Walt Disney Pictures and directed by Gavin O'Connor and was released in 2004. The leading figure and the most well-known actor is Kurt Russell as a head coach Herb Brooks.

'Miracle' is a sports movie that's more about the coach than about the team, and that's a miracle, too. At a time when movies are shamelessly aimed at the young male demographic, here's a film with a whole team of hockey players in their teens and early 20s, and the screenplay hardly bothers to tell one from another. (Ebert)

This movie is one of the many which was made to commemorate the tremendous ice hockey success in winter Olympic Games in 1980 in Lake Placid, New York. Team made mostly from university ice hockey players won the winter Olympic Games and beat the dreaded soviet team, which had been winning gold medals several years in a row. All characters which appeared in the movie are based on real people. The main focus of movie is on match between American and Soviet ice hockey players, though American team won gold medal after beating Finland at the very last game of tournament. This movie achieved great success and

become one of the most popular beside many other movies, which were filmed on this topic. Mitchell in his review stated that:

The movie efficiently delivers the story points, though nonsports fans should be warned: the climax features an almost 20-minute re-creation of the penultimate 1980 game between the Americans and the Soviets. (Team U.S.A. won the gold in the next game, against Finland, which the movie glides over). ('FILM REVIEW; A Hollywood Ending From Real Life')

I partially agree with him, however, this movie has more important significance than pure ice hockey comedy which will be discussed later. The second movie *Mystery, Alaska* was in production of Buena Vista Pictures, directed by Jay Roach and released in 1999. The most famous actor and one of the main characters in movie is Russell Crowe as a local sheriff John Biebe. This movie focus on a small town Mystery in Alaska and shows its life inside the small community, where everyone is crazy to ice hockey. Local ice hockey team of the town should play against team of New York Rangers and shows to the rest of the world that on their ice and in their home town they cannot be beaten. Real New York Rangers team was played by actors and not by real players, who declined to take a part in the movie. This movie close to us partially the life in the fictional town Mystery, and how important is for them to keep the pace, protect their traditions and to be proud on their town. 'Watch the game with an absorption that requires no matching devotion to the sport, any more than we have to be a winter-wonderland devotee to be caught by the film's setting' (Ulanov 90). This sense of patriotism and freedom is presented in many sport movies as well. Both movies show us something from lives of Americans and generally importance of sport on the North American continent. "Mystery, Alaska" never questions the community's values. Without fawning over the players, the movie presents them as rugged, earthy embodiments of a healthy pioneer spirit that enables communities like Mystery to stay closely knit and proud' (Holden).

### 3.2 The advantage of home environment

Both movies are set in different and specific place, which plays a key role in this event and in perception of underdog victory. In both movies play important role home environment with help of local people, who come to support their teams. In case of *Miracle*, the advantage of home environment is connected with the worldwide politics. In the 1980s raged Cold War and this carried some important aspects which were presented in the reality and even mentioned in the movie. Therefore, arrival of soviet players to the USA and their loss in front of their biggest enemy was seen as horrific humiliation. Advantage of home environment was also both in reality and movie shown on immense support of ice hockey fans and other people. In the movie is shown how even ordinary people, who are not fans of hockey are swept by the victory line of their players and how they are bond together and supportive, which consequently helps them to build self-confidence (O'Connor, *Miracle*). However, in the movie we could see from the first match with Sweden that stadium is almost full, but in the reality there was not so many people on the first match, but rather after the beating of Czechoslovakia, who were supposed to be the second best team on the world.

In the late afternoon on 22 February 1980, the Americans walked briskly from their locker room and stepped onto ice. But unlike at their first game in the Olympic Field House against Sweden, there were no empty seats. Over 8,500 people had jammed into the arena to cheer on their new-found heroes. As the players tried to loosen up before the game, they could feel the excitement and electricity in the air. (Abelson 78)

On the other hand, in *Mystery, Alaska*, there stand people from one country against each other. The biggest advantage of local Alaska townspeople is of course their knowledge of a town and local environment and belief that they cannot be beaten on their pond. Though this movie is purely fictional, it seems to show how important is for people to protect their land and home both physically and at intellectual sense. We can see that both movies show us some kind of enemy, which is determined to come to the foreign land and achieve victory. In case of *Miracle* there are soviet players and on the side of *Mystery, Alaska* there

are players from New York Rangers. In *Mystery, Alaska* important role plays weather of a place. Temperature below zero creates the best advantage and protection against New York Rangers team. In the movie is even said that environment is what makes them stronger and they cannot be beaten on local pond, where they all have played ice hockey since childhood (Roach, *Mystery, Alaska*). In *Miracle* there is particularly focus on great support of ice hockey players who represented American ideals on ice. If we compare enemy teams to the place and their acclimatization, we can clearly see that in *Miracle*, Soviet players are coming with one goal and that is to continue in their line of victories and to humiliate other teams and especially strike a blow to the policy of the west. Therefore, there is no evidence of fear of losing on their side. American players even lost the pre-Olympic game with soviets 7:3 and nobody believed that this team of amateurs could win or at least achieve some significant success and stay on some tolerable place. On that game was shown that advantage of local environment seems not to be working. This moment is clearly captured in the movie to give us the sense that underdog team cannot win against professional ice hockey players, who had dominated ice hockey world for several years in a row (O'Connor, *Miracle*). Similar situation is in *Mystery, Alaska*, where the team of New York Rangers is confident that it can win. They are presented as team, for whom to play ice hockey is in some small town in Alaska under their standards. However, temperature below zero hit them significantly, and real ice made their skating tougher than artificial one. Even if they were not able to win, in the movie is shown that local environment helps them a lot. This is shown on the scene where all New York Rangers' players stay on ice and shaking with cold (Roach, *Mystery, Alaska*).

In this subchapter we saw that local environment played important role in both movies, and in the case of *Miracle* sense of place was even more important mainly caused by the fact that it was filmed according to the real event. This fact contributes to our theory of popularity of underdog victory, because people could find similarities and they identify their lives with movie versions.

### 3.3 The importance of politics

As it was partially said, political situation in *Miracle* is one of the key elements, because it is projected to the sport and influence it very deeply. This era was called as 'Cold War' and it was the notional fight between the capital west and socialistic east. This situation is reflected in the movie which exaggerate the underdog victory over Soviet players. Some of the political aspects and events are also briefly mentioned in the movie to give to youngsters or people, who are not familiar with the 80s situation some basic background. This is shown at the beginning of the movie, where we can watch images from the important events in the history, which is connected to the USA (O'Connor, *Miracle*). On the other hand, there is a small town in the movie *Mystery, Alaska* in which stands local government and local laws, which create atmosphere of independence. This is even prolonged by the fact that all people know each other and they form small community with own rules. This is shown in several occasions in the movie and it seems to present us how powerful can people in small town with friendly and familiar manners could be. For example, at the meeting where should be decided whether to response to the challenge or not (Roach, *Mystery, Alaska*). The enemy is represented by the New York Rangers team, which plays the role of aggressors and those, who are assured that they cannot be beaten by the team of non-professional players. The main difference between these two movies on a political level is that in *Mystery, Alaska* there stand two cities against each other and in *Miracle* enemy is represented by the ice hockey players from different country. However, even in movie version we can see how important was for Americans to beat Soviets. Butterworth stated:

That the 1980 Olympic hockey team could symbolize a profound triumph over moments of crisis found renewed rhetorical significance in the wake of 9/11. As a metaphor for American resolve and virtue during the Cold War, the team symbolized the superiority of democracy and freedom over communism and totalitarianism. (134)

We can see that Butterworth compared 1980s situation to the attack of terrorist in 11/9 2001 and with it connected raise of nationalism and sense of freedom,

which was in some way according to his opinion presented in movie *Miracle*, because the victory in Lake Placid certainly creates this kind of atmosphere. Back in 80s we can say that the notional battle between west and east took place on the ice. Important role also plays the head coach Herb Brooks, who is chosen for his skills and his new experimental technique, which combines Canadian and Soviet style of a game. We can observe on his election how much was important to beat soviet players and the new technique of training could have been the key point. This election is even mentioned in the movie and on this we can see the devotion of the head coach Brooks to represent USA team (O'Connor, *Miracle*). Also, in the movie is clearly shown that they want to beat Soviets and proof that Americans can face its biggest enemy even on the ice, which supports the perception of underdog victory. In the movie *Mystery, Alaska* as it was said, it is crucial the fact that they are small community and that everybody knows each other and everything happens at the familiar and friendly local policy level. This movie presents us conflict, which we can divide on the two sides. On the one hand, this match will help to the town to be more visible and, consequently, make profit out of tourism and on the other hand, that if they lost the match, they would embarrass themselves. This situation shows how important is to keep its reputation and at the same time to show to the world that they can win and make its town famous. This particular issue in this movie shows us how is in the sport movies highly presented the element of possible victory under unsecured circumstances and achieving famous and recognition is motivation for people to raise against authorities, local laws and to enforce their interests. Gaul stated in his criticism of *Mystery, Alaska*: 'When to opportunity arrives, however, they all start wondering if they have the right stuff and whether a devastating loss will destroy the one thing they're most proud of: their skills at hockey' ('Here's a Hockey Story That Skates on Thin Ice'). However, they decided to take their chance and show to the Americans that they can at least fight with honour. This is the crucial part of the movie, because this allows them to start their journey towards success in apparently hopeless fight. In *Miracle*, however, we also see the contrast between what people and government wants and what team and coach wants. Movie is again accurate according to the real story, and we can observe that the head coach does not take this battle or the whole Olympic Games as a

political fight. This is shown on the meeting where Brooks does not want to tell any information about the situation in the team (O'Connor, *Miracle*). But, as Americans and the rest of the world feel threaten by the Soviet Union, they also feel full of hatred and want to beat them at least on the ice. 'The US Hockey Team demonstrated over the course of two weeks that they could compete with the best in the world. Yet, at some point in the tournament, their success on the ice had less to do with scoring goals than scoring political points' (Abelson 77). Abelson made a point about the most important battle which is mainly fight between two political superpowers.

### **3.4 The power of media**

In the both movies media influence and spread the importance of the events to the rest of the world. In *Mystery, Alaska* we can see that thanks to the TV broadcasting town Mystery has become very popular and attracts the attention of the rest the USA. Small town in Alaska, which is suddenly in the centre of attention, even more prolongs the feeling of proudness and effort to win against stronger and well-known team of professional ice hockey players. As a result, we can see they even started with building and improving their pond (Roach, *Mystery, Alaska*). This unexpected attention, seems to firm the notion of importance between people and that small team from nowhere can possibly keep the pace and maybe win against such a strong and experienced enemy. In *Miracle* of course the significance is more important. In the event of worldwide range and in the specific era of Cold War, media are very important in understanding of the situation. The fact the Olympic Games takes place in the USA creates a pressure on local ice hockey team and the head coach as well as on the whole ice hockey leadership and other sportsmen. This pressure created by the media plays important role in the reality and in *Miracle* is not otherwise.

After all, in the eyes of the media, politics-makers, and the public, the twenty Soviet players proudly displaying CCCP across their chests were more than competitors—they represented a country that had invaded Afghanistan, supplied nuclear weapons to Cuba, and tried to spread

communism throughout Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. (Abelson 64)

Live TV broadcasting together with nosy journalists from other media, made a nervous atmosphere at the team. Medially underestimated team is in the movie in fact presented as an underdog team which surprise everyone with the unexpected victories over stronger players and is celebrated over the whole country. Also in *Mystery, Alaska* media exaggerate the notion of underdog team made by locals, but similarly to *Miracle* they are highly celebrated for they success at last. This is also typical the aspect of many underdog movies. It does not matter whether the enemy is good or bad, but is almost always humiliated and stands at the background eventually.

### **3.5 Freedom and patriotism**

The role of the American dream is shown in both movies on the importance of freedom and patriotism. In *Miracle* it is in the form of fight against communism and to keep its own national sovereignty and freedom against totalitarianism. *Miracle* sees its ice hockey players as real heroes and the one, who fight for their freedom, which is even more prolong then in reality in 1980s. This is one of the movies which is filmed not just to remember the victory, but also to wake up in the people the feelings for nationality and to be aware of their freedom and what they have. As Butterworth stated in his work: ‘The action in *Miracle* centres on the sport of hockey, but it is not really a story about hockey. Rather, it is a story about the American Dream and the enduring victory of democracy over totalitarianism’ (139). He made a statement about the notion of the movie towards the American Dream and almost impossible chances on victory. Fight for democracy plays an important role, and definitely in the period of making the movie, which was after the 11/9 2001 and after the start of battle against terrorism. Next, it is important to take a look at the team itself. It symbolises American familiarity and that people, who do not know each other can create team which is like family and perfectly coordinated over the period of six months. This sense of family is for example shown in the middle of the movie, when new player should be taken to the team, but players oppose decision of the head coach,

because they see themselves as complete team (O'Connor, *Miracle*). As in the most of sport movies there is presented the element of motivation speech. In our case, the head coach plays the element which glues together players and can motivate them to better performance and to show their skills even beyond their limits. This is shown in several occasions in the movie. On the other hand, for people of Mystery in Alaska is important to keep their face and to sustain the arrival of New York Rangers team and not to embrace their town. Proudness and patriotism toward their town seems to be the element, which drives them forward. Moreover, this movie beside ice hockey, exaggerate the ordinary live in small town and present us typical American countryside from the movie point of view. As in *Miracle*, there is also present the element of motivation speech. This is done in the small dress room which can be seen as tactical and motivational background and headquarter for players.

The players warm themselves around a crackling woodstove while they drink beer and gear up for their games, which are played outside. Of course this is Hollywood's goofy version of Alaska, so New York comparisons between such nonsense and how we really play hockey in Alaska would be equally nonsensical. (Rearden & David)

Rearden and David in their article made a point about the movie and reality, which contributes to our exaggeration of nationalistic, patriotic and amusing elements in the sport movies.

In this chapter we compared different and similar elements presented in both movies. *Miracle* based on real event has more important significant in live of Americans and it should be seen more seriously. On the other hand, there was typical fictional movie about small ice hockey town Mystery, which presents us small town live and their love for this game. In the next chapter I will focus on presence of violence in ice hockey and its necessity in two movies *Slap Shot* and *Goon*.

## **4. Violence in ice hockey movies *Slap Shot* and *Goon***

Violence in ice hockey has always been highly discussed topic, which is the reason, why so many sport movies are based on it. In this topic, I will focus on two famous movies about violence in ice hockey and on some relevant examples I will show how it is presented. Again, as in previous topic about underdog victory I will compare both movies with each other and with reality, and made a conclusion at the end of this chapter. Firstly, I will be talking about basic facts, then approach to the perception of violence, next whether the violence is necessary in the movies and the possible options of avoidance of it and at the end specific notion of the American dream.

### **4.1 Basic facts**

*Slap Shot* was released in 1977, directed by George Roy Hill in production of Universal Pictures and it is considered to be the one of the most classic movies about ice hockey. The two most well-known actors, who appeared in the main roles are Paul Newman as the head coach Reggie Dunlop and Michael Ontkean as Ned Braden. Plot is set in Charlestown, where local mill is about to be closed and people fired. The local team of Charlestown Chiefs in fictional federal league is composed of the workers from the factory. However, the owner of the team does not want them, and the head coach is trying to find a way how to keep them playing. Firstly, he wants to provoke other teams with violent behaviour and later this is becoming a main key for amusing of audience and being popular. Important role also have Hanson brothers, who are taken to the team for their violent behaviour and later are praised for their fighting skills. Stricker in his review stated:

There is plenty of violence in professional hockey, but in *SLAP SHOT* the violence bears little relationship to winning; often it is totally arbitrary, erupting even before the game is underway. And there is a great deal of it. So little time is left for scoring goals that it is hard to know how the Chiefs get their win-streak going. ('*Slap Shot Foul Talk and Foul Deeds*')

This movie is filmed as a comedy, which exaggerate the notion of violence and ridicule the sport fair play and rules. ‘With Paul Newman punching below his intellectual weight as a brawling bozo, this profane 1977 comedy set the template by portraying hockey as a boneheaded spectacle of fists on ice’ (Johnson). The second movie *Goon* was released in 2011, directed by Michael Dowse and distributed by No Trace Camping Caramel Film Don Carmody Productions Inferno Pictures Inc. Several famous actors appeared in this movie. The most prominent is Sean William Scott as Doug Glatt and Liev Schreiber as Ross Rhea in the role of enforces from two hostile teams. This movie is based on a true story. Artwork for this movie was book written by one of the most violent player called ‘the hammer’, whose only concern was to protect his teammates and fight with enemy players. The main character is based loosely according to him. Despite the fact that this movie is presented as comedy it shows us a lot of violence and that ice hockey is a really tough sport with no mercy. The main focus is on the life of the main character and his art of fighting. ‘Balancing violence with humour and sweetness would be enough of a coup, but Dowse goes further. *Goon* is a flurrying riposte to Canada’s toothless tradition of hockey films with titles like *Breakaway* and *Score: A Hockey Musical*’ (Semley). However, character of Doug is presented as a simple and very polite man and on the first look he does not seem to be so rough and violent. Also on his character is presented the notion of American dream – he became ‘star’ out of nothing and he is praised as a hero in the team and by audience.

## **4.2 The perception of violence**

In this section I would like to discuss how is violence presented in both movies and in the reality. We have to focus on two sides, one of them is how ordinary people and ice hockey fans react to the violence and on the other side reaction among players. Firstly, if we take into account the perception of violence among fans, who come to watch the match there is clearly evident their immense support for their local teams. However, in *Slap Shot* is more evident the spirit of small town community and that for people it is more than just a game. This is shown in their match between Charlestown Chiefs and Peterborough Patriots, where Chiefs provoked the fight and were greatly supported by their fans (Hill, *Slap Shot*).

Moreover, team is made up of people, who know each other and the most of the people among audience. This of course resemble with the reality and local fights between the towns, where the atmosphere and prone to violence is more visible and understandable, mostly because of the greater rivalry between the towns. In both movies we can see that fans react positively to the violent behaviour and they are not ashamed at all. The positive perception of violence is shown in *Goon* even on small kid, who wants from Doug to finish the enemy player in the fight (Dowse, *Goon*). Violence seems to be presented here as some kind of amusing element for fans and it is what makes the low hockey league more popular. This evidently works in *Slap Shot*, where team is about to be disbanded and the head coach decided to make the game more aggressive which leads eventually to a greater popularity and amusement of fans (Hill, *Slap Shot*). Fans in *Goon* are presented similarly and in this case is clearly evident that violence plays important role in amusing of them. This aggressive behaviour and violence is also presented in the reality as well. We can say that both movies reflect the hunger for aggression and that this is one aspect which makes it so popular. There has been done several studies which focus on perception of 'enforcers' and whether they are what people want to see. Jewell in his works suggests that people are given only what they want and ice hockey responses to their requests (Jewell 14). This could be one of the factors, but also the fact which I mentioned above, which is rivalry between the teams in minor ice hockey leagues and that people seem to take it more personally. Moreover, the looser obey of rules and tense atmosphere makes ice hockey in low leagues more violent. However, there is also presented the element of losing, which goes hand in hand with the winning, so in both movies we can see that fans want for their players to win and they are not willing to admit defeat. This element is shown in *Slap Shot* at the very beginning, when team is still losing and people make inappropriate remarks about players (Hill, *Slap Shot*). We can see that audience does not go far for verbal abuse, violent behaviour and heckling. Both movies show us how important is for audience to keep their status and no to embarrass their town. *Goon* is more centred on the main character Doug and his social status - unknown man from nowhere, who is suddenly becoming a famous player. Audience seems to play an important supportive role for him, but mainly praise his violent behaviour. During several

scenes they are even chanting his name 'Doug' (Dowse, *Goon*), which gives to this movie more raw atmosphere.

The next thing, which I would like to discuss is perception of violence from the game point of view. This includes everything which is connected with the game, but mainly focusing on the players on the ice. In case of *Slap Shot* it is eventually the part of a tactic to make the game more attractive and probably more enjoyable for players itself, because they have nothing to lose. In both movies is violence presented in two ways. We have to look at it as an instrument of both protective and aggressive behaviour. In a *Goon* is more explicitly stated the first kind of violence which is protective, whereas in *Slap Shot* it is the second one, because of the constant evoke of conflicts. Protective form of violence is shown on the Doug in *Goon*, because his role is to protect other players but mainly the former star of the team Xavier LaFlamme, who was hit hardly during one fight and since then his behaviour is marked by fear (Dowse, *Goon*). On the behaviour of the head coaches in both movies we can observe the second kind which is aggression and encouragement to violence on the ice. As it was stated, both movies present us ice hockey from lower ice hockey leagues, which go hand in hand with more or less disobeying the rules and bad attitude of players. Compared to the reality, they are also play the main role of 'ice hockey players' mainly the less professional players or even people, who play ice hockey for fun and amusement. Violence is today highly discussed topic and it has divided people on the two sides. Those, who are familiar with it and those, who are strongly against it. The law is nowadays brought to this sport and in some cases during the history of ice hockey some players ended up in the courtyard for their violent behaviour. Otherwise, in some less serious issues players would get stop for several games. Fogel compared resemblance of some fights in the movie with the historical events and gave example:

In one scene Rhea is shown swinging his stick and connecting with an opposing player's head, which bears a strong resemblance to an NHL incident in 2000. In *R. v. McSorley* (2000), professional hockey player Marty McSorley violently struck his stick against the head of an opposing player

named Donald Brashear, and was convicted of assault with a deadly weapon.  
(65)

He made a point about the above mentioned seriousness of the movie, in spite of his presentation as a comedy. More similar situations, which have resemblance with the reality appeared in the movie. This contributes to the fact the movie works through these hints. In *Slap Shot* we can see that violence is mainly presented by audience and players as amusing element, in *Goon* it is taken more seriously and show us the world of enforcers and their bullying behaviour as it is also presented in reality. However, movie is done in comedy fashion way and violence is used mainly to show how ice hockey can be tough and how does it work on the ice. The so-called enforcers or people, who are generally supposed to get to the ice and beat enemy players, is not a Hollywood invention, but it reflects the reality and real people. Doug in *Goon* cannot even skate properly and his only care is knocked down enemy players, who are chosen by the head coach (Dowse, *Goon*).

We can see that in both movies players work as a team and they support each other. Presence of familiarity and sense of holding together plays an important role and works as an instrument for fighting against the violence of enemy teams. Interesting facts presented Colburn in his work, where he talked about how players perceive violence on the ice: 'Fist-fights, unlike stick-assaults, are viewed by players as a legitimate, if formally proscribed, form of assault; they are generally not considered by players to be violent acts' (156). However, we have to distinguish violence, which appears on the ice, in the cabin and between team members. The violence on the ice was discussed above and is mainly presented through fights and heckling between two enemy teams, which is also important in the teams itself. This works as a friendly and unintentionally joking between friends, but also as some kind of defensive pose or intention to motivate, depending on how the affected person takes it. For example, in *Slap Shot* it is shown on Hanson brothers, who are firstly seen as enemies, but later, because of their talent and bullying behaviour are able to get to the team and be part of it (Hill, *Slap Shot*). This situation is similar in *Goon*. This inner team violence is presented as motivational and protective at the same time, and show us that even

that kind of verbal aggression is important for good and healthy sport results on the ice and in team sports generally.

In this subchapter was shown how was perceived violence in movies compared to reality and that exist several kind of behaviour and attitude towards the game, either from audience point of view or players on the ice.

### **4.3 The Avoidance and prevention of violence**

In both movies we can find elements, which stand against violence and calling into question the necessity of it. This elements can be seen as inner marks, which are implemented to remind us that violence is to some degree restricted or presented as avoidable. In both movies these elements are in first line referees, who stand here as those, who are supposed to eliminate or at least reduce the violent behaviour. However, we can see that they are not working as we would expected and that referees are more or less presented as powerless and play only the role of almost unimportant characters. They seem to have authority to some degree, because they can admonish players or take them to penalty box. Unfortunately, both movies are presented as loosely following the rules and that players play the dominant role on the ice. We can see this through the whole movies. For example, in *Slap Shot* players are attacking enemy team whenever they want and when all players from both teams are on the ice they cannot do anything (Hill, *Slap Shot*). In the very last part of the movie *Goon* Rhea knocks out the Doug, but he does not want referee to end the fight and he is allowed to continue (Dowse, *Goon*). Though they give penalty minutes and send players to box, this does not prevent the next fights and violence. However, we can say that referees control the game at least to some small degree and that ice hockey in both movies is not presented as pure chaos. At the end of *Slap Shot*, referee ends the match after the protesting of enemy team player on inappropriate behaviour of Ned Braden and, consequently, Charlestown Chiefs are able to win the match and get the trophy (Hill, *Slap Shot*). Another thing, which we can observe in both movies is that violence can be specified as some kind of escape strategy from the reality and everyday life. *Slap Shot* presents us bunch of guys, who are about to be fired and for whom the hockey is their passion. *Goon* on the other hand, presents us the team and their out-hockey activities as form of amusement and the form of

escape is shown on the life of the main character. For example in the restaurant we can see that his family is disappointed with his job and that they are embarrassed by his life (Dowse, *Goon*). Violence in *Slap Shot*, beside to make the game more attractive, can be seen as a strategy of how to enjoy the game and as a form of saying farewell to ice hockey. One element, which is presented to oppose the violence is one of the players (Ned Braden), who refuses to do it because he thinks that they can play clear game without fights (Hill, *Slap Shot*). Ned seems to work here as a marker and showing us that violence should not be part of ice hockey in such a violent way. The influence of his character is important at the end of the movie, where the head coach decides to play clear ice hockey, but this obviously does not work and even audience is disappointed and heckling on their team (Hill, *Slap Shot*). On this example, we can see that avoidance of violence in *Slap Shot* is not possible and that team have to play roughly mainly to protect themselves and to satisfy audience. Even if they want to play clear game their enemies are prepared to fight with them, because they know their former violent style. In *Goon* there is more focus on the main character, whose life is shown to us as big disappointment and, therefore, we can look to his violent behaviour as the form of protective and escape strategy, as it was stated above. Avoidance of the violence in this movie should be seen from different perspective, as we have to focus toward the activity of one person. As I stated, he is presented as a man, who is simple, but he knows how to fight, which helps him to play ice hockey and protect other people. We can even speculate whether he is interested in violence or not. In the whole movie he uses his skills to protect the others and he is not looking-for-trouble man (with the exception of the last fight) as the whole team in *Slap Shot*, where violence is their main weapon to success and amusement, so there is almost impossible to play standard fair play ice hockey. *Goon* and the main character in the role of enforce rather presents us the necessity mainly from the protective aspect. Boyle in his work perceive him vs. Rhea as:

This is to say that while La Flamme exists to display the effects of Rhea's "unjust" violence, we never see the effects of Glatt's violence on others. Instead, the film goes to great lengths to depict Glatt as a gentle giant who is apologetic to his victims or who is invoked into an upperbrainstem-

bypassing-rage only because of some 'wrong doing' (i.e., slighting of his gay brother, a dirty hit on a team mate, protection of his girlfriend). (338)

Moreover, trails of main character seem to show us that we should feel sorry for his violent behaviour, because he is presented as some kind of a victim. Also on his life is shown that violence serve in ice hockey as an instrument of getting the job. This is similar in the reality as well. Players, who even do not know how to skate properly are drafted, just to protect other players or to make a chaos in the enemy team. Also both movies start with the team, which lost several games in a row, which is also cataclysm to change. In *Slap Shot* with the help of violent behaviour and in the *Goon* with the enforcer, who protects other team players.

Next, in both movies as well in the reality is important aspect the rivalry and that players want to retain their honour and fight for their repute. This is also one of the crucial factors in perception of violence. This condition obviously makes it harder to avoid aggression, because the honour code and the moral integrity is important thing for players. For example in *Goon*, this is shown at the very beginning, when Rhea provokes enemy player to fight, and he responds positively to the challenge to protect his repute (Dowse, *Goon*) and in *Slap Shot* the head coach Dunlop provokes enemy goalkeeper to distract him and he is eventually trying to beat him down (Hill, *Slap Shot*). These two examples show us how accurately aiming words can make a chaos in enemy team. However, we have to distinguish the cases, when there it goes only for honour and not to simply acting in passion or other factors which were discussed above. To this category of honour and morality we can include fights for protecting of own repute or protecting of players as well as the whole team. On the other hand, there is very thin line between the fighting for your repute and the repute of the team and violence for passion, for amusement or because of the duty. In this kind of violent behaviour depends on the players in which form they would react, whether heckling, verbal abuse or fighting. With the problem of honour dealt Colburn, he stated in his work:

The fist-fight, like the duel, stands outside the legal norms of the game of ice-hockey: officially, the sport recognizes no qualitative difference between fist-fights and other prohibited assaults. Yet it is clear that players

claim the right, whether officially sanctioned or not, to personally settle disputes concerning treatment of each other. (165)

This settling of the score is shown many times in both movies. For example in *Goon* at the end, where the fight between the two enforcers is expected by media and players (Dowse, *Goon*). In *Slap Shot* this is shown, beside fights on the ice, on the conflict between the head coach and the Ned, who punched Ned to the face while he was verbally abusing him on the bench, because he is refusing violence (Hill, *Slap Shot*). If we look at the avoidance of the violence from the honour point of view, it is in both movies shown that they chose violence as the answer and that it depends only on the character of players, how they would respond to the challenge. However, we can say that this form of violence can be excused to some degree, as all people want to protect themselves and their repute.

In this subchapter we saw from different perspective form of violence and their possible options of avoidance. In some cases we saw that violent was necessary for the purposes given in both movies. On the other hand, both movies present us some elements in form of certain people, who stand against violence and work as a counterpart to it.

#### **4.4 Freedom and Success**

Similar to the previous chapter, also in these movies is presented the notion of American dream. This is the natural thing, which goes hand in hand with the majority of sport movies and even our two movies about violence in ice hockey are not exception. Freedom plays one of the important role in both movies. We can divide notion of freedom into two categories according to which are presented in both movies. One of them is option to express themselves to a degree which is allowed by law, rules and also social conventions and the second one is the freedom, which is beyond all these aspects. We can look at violent behaviour and verbal abuse in both movies as the part of American identity, where freedom to express themselves has very deep roots. However, all people have to respect the law and rules, which limits their freedom. Players are punished if they made an offense against rules, which seems to work only very limitedly in both movies as we saw above. However, basic and crucial rules are sustained. Moreover, violent

behaviour and fights on the ice can be perceived as rebellion against the rules and social conventions. For example, in both movies are presented team fights, where one conflict between two players evokes big fights. In case of audience, there is freedom of speech more noticeable. In both movies audience does not break the rules or law, however, they break the social conventions by heckling and verbally abusing players from enemy team or even from their own team, when they are not satisfied with their performance. Freedom is a very general and specific idea and works as a springboard on which are based other factors and aspects, which were discussed in previous subchapters. The second important thing which is the part of American dream and plays important role in both movies is sense of working themselves to the top. 'Competitiveness is a major component of the American Dream, suggesting that it is every person's duty to strive and ultimately to win' (Briley et al., 25). This element is presented in majority of sport movies, and notion of winning works as a power machine. In *Slap Shot*, team which was losing several games in a row is getting to the top with help of violence and it is able to win the trophy and satisfy its fans. Similar thing is in *Goon*, however, there is more focus on one person and his journey to the top. Thanks to his talent the whole team is able to win and find its lost confidence again.

In this chapter we have been looking on two movies about violence in ice hockey *Slap Shot* and *Goon*. We saw that we can perceive violence from many perspectives and that it depends, whether we focus on the audience or players and team itself. Also we looked at some reasons for violent behaviour and its possible avoidance and its necessity in both movies.

## 5. Conclusion

In this thesis I analysed and discussed two themes on four ice hockey movies. These themes were underdog victory and violent behaviour. Firstly, I shortly mentioned the history of the movies and perception of the cinematography on the North American continent, with main focus on ice hockey and other popular sport movies. The main purpose of this thesis was to discuss and analyse above mentioned themes on given aspects, which appeared in the chosen ice hockey movies.

In the first chapter, I introduced some basic facts about the beginning of movie industry and the development of big production companies. This is connected with the filming of sports, which has a long tradition and goes hand in hand with the beginning of cinematography and change of the 19<sup>th</sup> century era toward the modernist style of living and perception of the world. I also mentioned the most important sports on the North American continent, which are boxing, football, baseball, basketball, golf and ice hockey according to the popularity.

In the second chapter, I analysed and discussed two movies *Miracle* and *Mystery, Alaska* and tried to compare them with the reality. On several aspects, which concerned advantage of local environment, politics, media and freedom and patriotism as the part of American dream. I show that all of these aspects played an important role in shaping of movies and that in case of *Miracle*, fact that this movie was based on a true story gave it a power to have bigger influence. I demonstrated that both movies shown us something from lives of Americans and their deep appreciation of their traditional values and feeling for patriotism. I also demonstrated that in both movies played the most important role the advantage of home environment as the form of protection against outer enemy and that politics and media had an immense power in perception and spreading of the given events throughout the world. In *Miracle* played important role the fact that this event was taking part in the middle of Cold War conflict, which had deeper influence on people, who take it more personally, and as some notional fight between capital west and socialistic east. On the other hand, *Mystery, Alaska* was presented as small town with knit community, for which decision whether to play the match was question of dignity and protection of their traditional life.

In the third chapter I analysed and discussed violence in ice hockey on the two movies *Slap Shot* and *Goon*. Aspects which I was dealing with were perception of violence, avoidance and necessity of it and again notion of freedom and success as the part of American dream. In both movies I analysed violent behaviour from two perspectives, which were audience and game itself. In the next subchapter I demonstrated that violence is necessary part of both movies and that similar occasions also appear in reality and that this sport cannot be played without some sort of violence, mainly because it plays important role in the notion of American dream and the freedom of speech and choice. It was shown that in both movies played important role freedom, amusement, popularity, famous and also weakened role of referees. However, both movies presented different kind of violence. *Slap Shot* presented violent behaviour which was from major part motivated by notion of being popular and to amuse audience. Also violence worked as some kind of sustain element, which kept the players together and that without it their game would be probably without attention. *Goon* was focusing more on one player and the role of enforcers in the team as protectors of players. On this movie was demonstrated how one player can influence the whole team and make it famous. This was achieve by violent behaviour, which also contributes to the necessity and avoidance of violence, where we can see that violence was necessary for the team and for its sustainability.

To sum up, we saw that both themes are highly complex and that we needed to split these themes according to several aspects, which shown us how these movies are complex and that each of them can be analysed from many points of view. Moreover, the role of American dream was presented in both themes and it was highly influential in all movies and in a sport generally.

## 6. Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo analyzovat téma vítězství outsiderů a téma násilí na vybraných filmech o ledním hokeji z prostředí severoamerického filmu. Hlavní cílem bylo na dvou zvolených filmech pro každé téma ukázat a rozebrat jak jsou tyto témata prezentována a v první kapitole uvést základní informace o filmu a jeho vývoji napříč severoamerickým kontinentem a poté základní informace o jednotlivých sportech ve filmu podle popularity.

V první kapitole jsem stručně zmínil základní fakta z historie kinematografie od konce 19. století, které je spojeno s přechodem na modernismus a velkým množstvím nových vynálezů a novým způsobem vnímání života. Uvedl jsem základní fakta o vývoji filmu od konce 19. století, což je spojeno s dvěma důležitými vynálezy bratří Lumierů a Edisona. Severní Amerika se kvůli první světové válce, která zdevastovala většinu Evropy, stala hlavním distributorem a filmařským rájem, v pozdější fázi pak zejména role Kalifornie a filmové oblasti Hollywood a rozvoj velkých společností hrály důležitou roli - tzv. vertikální integrace, kde velká studia vlastnila řetězce kin a ovlivňovala tvorbu. Taktéž jsem zmínil, že od 10-tých let 20. století se herci stávali hvězdami a byli za svoje hraní řádně placeni. V další části jsem se zabýval počátkem sportu ve filmu, a jakou roli hrál sport a film mezi lidmi. Uvedl jsem, že díky novým vynálezům, zejména pak televize, rádia a filmu, si lidé mohli vychutnat svoje oblíbené sporty ve velkém formátu a stávali se tak součástí hry. V této části jsem též uvedl jednotlivé a nejvýznamnější sporty na severoamerickém kontinentě a nejznámější filmy reprezentující uvedené sporty. Jako číslo jedna je pro USA fotbal, který postupně vytlačil předcházející číslo jedna baseball. V Kanadě je to pak ledního hokej. Další sporty, které jsem zmínil, byly box, golf a basketball a baseball. Taktéž jsem uvedl významnou roli amerického snu, který je součástí většiny sportovních filmů a je prezentován v podobě svobody, příležitosti na úspěch a vlastenectví. Rozdělil jsem také sportovní filmy podle třech kritérií a to na sporty, které jsou zfilmovány podle skutečné události s určitým přidanými zábavnými a dramatickými prvky. Zde se nejvíce projevuje role již výše zmíněného amerického snu, který je nedílnou součástí atraktivnosti těchto filmů. V druhé části jsou filmy, které jsou zfilmovány se smyšleným příběhem, ale které mohou do určité míry odrážet nebo zmiňovat nějakou událost, která se opravdu stala.

Americký sen je také nedílnou součástí těchto filmů. Do třetí části jsem zařadil sportovní dokumenty jako nejvíce důvěryhodný a spolehlivý zdroj, který zachycuje a popisuje určité události, tak jak se skutečně staly.

V druhé kapitole této práce jsem rozebral téma vítězství outsiderů na dvou filmech Hokejový zázrak (2004) a Mystery, Alaska (1999). Na začátku jsem uvedl základní fakta o obou filmech, která se týkala nejznámějších herců, společnosti a také dějovou linku a některé komentáře udělené filmovými kritiky. Pro srovnání jsem použil aspekty, které se týkaly zejména výhody domácího prostředí, politiky, médií a v konečné fázi prezence amerického snu jako svoboda a vlastenectví.

Pro aspekt domácí prostředí jsem se zabýval výhodou, které plynou z toho, že zimní olympijské hry v roce 1980 se konaly ve státě New York USA a film Hokejový zázrak byl natočen podle skutečné události. Film Mystery, Alaska taktéž přináší určité výhody plynoucí z domácího prostředí, částečně na jiné úrovni. Jako hlavní nepřítel v obou filmech je někdo, kdo přijíždí jako jasný favorit a očekává se od něho vítězství. V případě filmu Hokejový zázrak to jsou hokejisté ze Sovětského svazu a ve filmu Mystery, Alaska to jsou hokejisté týmu New York Rangers. V této kapitole jsme mohli vidět, že prostředí sehrálo důležitou roli, a že našim podceňovaným týmům přineslo jisté důležité výhody.

Dalším důležitým aspektem byla politika, která zejména ve film Hokejový zázrak hrála klíčovou roli, a to z důvodu zuřící studené války a vypjaté situace mezi USA a Sovětským svazem. Tato situace se promítla i do ledního hokeje, kde lídři amerického hokeje byli rozhodnutí porazit Sovětský svaz za každou cenu. Nicméně, tým a zejména kouč stál na druhé straně a neviděl tuto olympiádu jako politický souboj dvou velmocí, který se odehrává na ledě. Ve filmu Mystery, Alaska je politická situace prezentována zejména na rozhodnutí zdali se zúčastnit tohoto souboje proti týmu New York Rangers nebo ne. Hlavní roli v tomto případě mají obyvatelé tohoto města, kteří se musí rozhodnout. Hlavním problémem, který činní jejich rozhodnutí složitější je fakt, že porážka může znamenat velkou potupu pro jejich hrdost a vlastenecké cítění, ale na druhou stranu možnost vítězství a proslavení města. Taktéž jsem uvedl, že v jednotlivých filmech jsou prezentováni dva různí nepřátelé. V Hokejovém zázraku proti sobě stojí dva znepřátelené národy a ve filmu Mystery, Alaska, dvě různá města

z jednoho státu, což hraje důležitou roli, protože proti sobě stojí lidé, kteří nejsou prezentováni jako zarytí nepřátele jako je tomu ve filmu Hokejový zázrak.

Jako další aspekt, který hrál důležitou roli, byla média. Díky mediím se město Mystery proslavuje a mluví se o něm po celé Americe, což má za následek příjezd novinářů, televize a tak se město musí vypořádat s touto situací. Na druhou stranu, ve filmu Hokejový zázrak mají média hlubší význam a to zejména z toho důvodu, že nás na začátku filmu informují o situaci v tehdejší době, a také tento souboj dvou velmocí je mediálně více sledovaný, což vytváří nervózní atmosféru v týmu. Nakonec jsou však oba mediálně podceňované týmy oslavovány pro jejich úspěch, který byl za daných okolností téměř nedosažitelný.

V další části jsem se zabýval rolí svobody a patriotismu jako součástí amerického snu. V obou filmech jsme mohli vidět, že svoboda a patriotismus hraje důležitou roli v životech Američanů. Ve filmu Hokejový zázrak zejména svoboda západu a vlastenectví, což se týkalo porážky sovětských hokejistů a tím pádem zasadit ránu Sovětskému svazu. Ve filmu Mystery, Alaska na druhou stranu šlo hlavně o udržení dobrého jména jejich města a také aby lidé mohli být na sebe navzájem hrdí. V obou filmech tyto aspekty hrály důležitou roli, protože motivovaly hráče k lepším výkonům.

Na vzájemném porovnání obou filmů mezi sebou a s realitou jsem zjistil, že všechny tyto aspekty hrály důležitou roli v obou filmech, zejména pak výhoda domácího prostředí. Taktéž jsem zmínil, že film Hokejový zázrak byl natočen podle skutečné události, což mělo za následek větší dopad zejména na americké diváky, kteří tento film brali osobněji. Nicméně oba filmy nám ukázaly něco ze života Američanů. Hokejový zázrak prezentoval konflikt mezi dvěma národy a Mystery, Alaska na druhou stranu konflikt mezi dvěma městy a obhajobu jejich hrdosti.

Ve třetí kapitole jsem zkoumal násilí v hokejových filmech Nakládačka (1977) a Goon (2011). Na začátku jsem zmínil základní fakta o obou filmech na podobném principu jako v předchozí kapitole. Jako hlavní aspekty analýzy jsem zvolil vnímání násilí z pohledu diváků a účastníků hry, dále pak zda je násilí nutnou součástí hokeje a jeho možnosti vypuštění ze hry. Jako poslední část jsem se zabýval svobodou jako část amerického snu a možností vypracovat se na vrchol, což je důležitou součástí hlavní postavy ve filmu Goon.

V první kapitole jsem rozebíral vnímání násilí ze dvou různých pohledů. Jako první byl pohled z prostředí diváků a fanoušků. V této části jsem zmínil, že diváci hrají důležitou část ve vnímání násilí v obou filmech, protože hlavní náplní obou filmů je hokej z nižších lig, kde je větší rivalita mezi městy a mezi fanoušky. Oba filmy nám navíc prezentují násilí jako zábavní prvek, který je fanoušky vnímán pozitivně. Ve filmu *Nakládačka* dokonce násilí jako forma atraktivity a zábavy tvoří podstatnou část filmu. Pro fanoušky z obou filmů je důležité udržet svoji tvář a neztrapnit se před svými rivaly z ostatních měst. Jako další část této kapitoly jsem zvolil násilí z pohledu týmu a celkově z pohledu všech účastníků hry. Toto násilí jsem dále rozdělil podle toho, jak je v jednotlivých filmech prezentováno. Ve filmu *Nakládačka* je násilí spíše zábavného charakteru a jako cesta k pobavení diváků. Na druhou stranu ve filmu *Goon* je spíše zaměřeno na ochranu spoluhráčů. Taktéž jsem zmínil roli koučů, kteří hrají důležitou roli v násilnostech a dají se označit za důležité spouštěče. Navíc, film *Goon* je částečně založen na skutečné události, a rovněž některé osobní souboje jsou natočeny podle skutečných soubojů, což jsem porovnal s realitou. Jako poslední jsem uvedl také násilí ve vlastním týmu a jeho role jako motivace nebo přátelského popichování.

V další kapitole jsem rozebíral, zda je možné vyhnout se násilí nebo jestli tvoří nedílnou součást filmů. Jako první jsem zmínil, že nejdůležitější součástí, která umožňuje násilí je oslabená role rozhodčích, kteří jsou sice přítomni, ale ve většině případů nedokáží konfliktům zabránit a předcházet jim. Na druhou stranu, společně s dalšími elementy, které jsou přítomny ve filmech, tvoří pomyslnou hranici mezi násilím a fair play. Rovněž ve filmu *Nakládačka* hraje násilí, jak již bylo uvedeno, element díky kterému se diváci baví a který je důležitý aby jejich hra držela pohromadě. Film *Goon* se více zaměřuje na život hlavní postavy a jeho život, který je znázorněn jako velké zklamání. Avšak díky roli amerického snu a možnosti dostat se na vrchol, se nakonec stává hvězdou týmu a jeho nedílnou součástí. Také jsem zmínil, že násilí může být ve filmech ve formě ochrany vlastní cti a ochrany spoluhráčů, ale musí se rozlišovat podle jednotlivých případů.

V poslední části jsem se zabýval svobodou a možností se vypracovat na vrchol jako součástí amerického snu. Nejčastěji se v obou filmech projevovala

jako svoboda projevu, jak z pohledu diváku tak z pohledu hráčů. Rovněž jsem uvedl, že násilí je také součástí jakési rebelie proti sociálním konvencím. Poslední důležitý aspekt amerického snu, který jsem zmínil v této části, je vypracování se na vrchol. Toto je znázorněno hlavně ve filmu Goon, kde hlavní hrdina dokáže změnit svůj život a stát se hvězdou týmu.

V obou filmech jsem ukázal, že vypustit násilí není možné, protože v obou filmech dotváří vnímání amerického snu jakožto svobody projevu a volby. V obou filmech bylo možno vidět různé typy násilí. Dva nejvýznamnější byly pro pobavení diváků zejména ve filmu Nakládačka a násilí ochranné prosazované za účelem ochrany důležitých hráčů v týmu a suverenity týmu jako celku.

V druhé a třetí kapitole jsem uvedl, jak jsou daná témata prezentována, a že důležitou roli hrály určité vybrané aspekty, které dotvářely atmosféru a vlastní tvář filmu. Taktéž jsem uvedl, že role amerického snu hraje důležitou roli v obou filmech a ve sportovních filmech obecně, což bylo zmíněno v první kapitole.

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## 8. Abstract

This thesis focuses on representation of ice hockey in the North American movies on two chosen themes, which are underdog victory and violence. This thesis also mentions brief introduction into the beginning of cinematography and representation of the most significant sports and their movie processing in the American production, which is influenced especially by the role of so-called American dream and its representation as the freedom of speech, choice, opportunity to success and patriotism. For the theme of underdog victory was chosen movies *Miracle* (2004) and *Mystery, Alaska* (1999). Theme of violence in ice hockey is represented on movies *Slap Shot* (1977) and *Goon* (2011). The main goal is on two chosen movies for each category examine how these themes are processed and how are these movies different or similar to each other and reality.

Key words: Ice hockey, underdog victory, violence in ice hockey, sport in movies, American dream.

Characters (with spaces): 91 512

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na reprezentaci ledního hokeje v severoamerickém filmu na dvou vybraných tématech, která jsou vítězství outsiderů a násilí. Součástí této práce je také stručný úvod počátků kinematografie a reprezentace nejvýznamnějších sportů a jejich filmové zpracování v severoamerické produkci, která je ovlivněná zejména rolí tzv. amerického snu a jeho reprezentací jako svoboda projevu, volby, příležitosti k úspěchu a vlastenectví. Pro téma vítězství outsiderů jsem zvolil filmy Hokejový zázrak (2004) a *Mystery, Alaska* (1999). Téma násilí v hokeji je prezentováno na filmech *Nakládačka* (1977) a *Goon* (2011). Hlavní cílem je na dvou zvolených filmech pro každou kategorii zjistit, jak jsou tato témata zpracována a jak jsou tyto filmy navzájem odlišné a podobné při srovnání mezi sebou a s realitou.

Klíčová slova: Lední hokej, vítězství outsiderů, násilí v hokeji, sport ve filmu, americký sen.

Znaky (včetně mezer): 91 512