

## Intergenerational Resistance and Political Trauma in One Battle After Another: A Thematic Analysis

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Shahid

<sup>1</sup>Principal Lecturer, Faculty of Media and Mass Communication, University of Central Punjab

[mu.shahid@ucp.edu.pk](mailto:mu.shahid@ucp.edu.pk)

### Abstract

This study examined the representation of intergenerational resistance and political trauma in One Battle After Another through a qualitative thematic analysis. Grounded in Cultural Trauma Theory, the research explored how political ideologies, collective memory, and experiences of conflict are transmitted and reinterpreted across generations within cinematic narratives. The study analyzed key characters, dialogues, and visual elements of the film using a systematic six-phase thematic analysis approach. The findings revealed three major themes: intergenerational transmission of resistance, representation of political trauma, and the dynamic relationship between trauma and resistance. The results indicated that resistance is portrayed as an evolving process shaped by inherited ideological frameworks and generational reinterpretation. Political trauma was found to influence both individual identity and collective memory, often represented through fragmented narrative structures. Furthermore, trauma functioned as both a catalyst and constraint for continued resistance, contributing to cyclical patterns of conflict and ideological persistence. The study contributes to media and communication scholarship by offering an integrated analysis of resistance and trauma in contemporary political cinema, highlighting the role of film in shaping cultural memory and socio-political understanding.

**Keywords:** Intergenerational Resistance; Political Trauma; Thematic Analysis; Cultural Trauma Theory; Film Studies; Collective Memory.

### Article Details:

Received on 14 March 2026  
Accepted on 04 April, 2026  
Published on 08 April, 2026

Corresponding Authors\*

## Introduction

The political cinema highlights the role of film in constructing and contesting collective memory, particularly in societies marked by conflict and ideological struggle (Assmann, 2011; Hirsch, 2012). Studies published in journals such as *Memory Studies* and *Media, Culture & Society* suggest that cinematic narratives function as cultural archives, enabling audiences to engage with past traumas while simultaneously negotiating present political realities (Erll, 2008; Hoskins, 2011). Within this framework, intergenerational resistance can be understood as a process through which political ideologies, dissenting practices, and oppositional identities are passed down, often shaped by historical grievances and unresolved conflicts (Reading, 2016). Films that explore these dynamics contribute to a deeper understanding of how resistance evolves over time, influenced by both continuity and rupture.

At the same time, political trauma has emerged as a central concern in media and cultural studies, particularly in relation to its long-term effects on individual and collective identities. Research in journals such as *Cultural Studies* and *Communication, Culture & Critique* emphasizes that trauma is not merely a psychological phenomenon but also a socio-cultural construct that is mediated through narratives, symbols, and representations (Alexander, 2004; Kaplan, 2005). Cinematic portrayals of trauma often highlight its persistence across generations, illustrating how unresolved pasts continue to shape present experiences and future possibilities (Landsberg, 2004). In this context, political trauma becomes a key lens through which to analyze the motivations, behaviors, and ideological commitments of characters within film narratives.

The intersection of intergenerational resistance and political trauma is particularly significant, as trauma often serves as both a catalyst and a constraint for resistance. On one hand, collective suffering and historical injustices can inspire continued activism and ideological persistence; on the other hand, trauma can also lead to disillusionment, fragmentation, and internal conflict (Eyerman, 2019). Recent scholarship in *Journal of Communication Inquiry* and *New Media & Society* suggests that media representations of this intersection play a crucial role in shaping public understanding of political conflict and social movements, highlighting the complexities of resistance in contexts marked by historical trauma (Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Madianou, 2020). By examining how films depict these dynamics, researchers can gain insights into the ways in which cultural texts negotiate the tension between memory and action, past and present.

Within this broader scholarly landscape, *One Battle After Another* offers a nuanced exploration of these themes through its narrative structure and character development. The film's focus on a protagonist whose past as a revolutionary resurfaces after years of dormancy underscores the enduring nature of political commitments and the ways in which they are shaped by earlier experiences. Moreover, the presence of multiple generations within the narrative allows for an examination of how resistance is reinterpreted and rearticulated in different historical and social contexts. This intergenerational dimension is crucial for understanding the continuity of political conflict, as well as the ways in which new forms of resistance emerge in response to changing circumstances.

Furthermore, the film's engagement with political trauma is evident in its depiction of unresolved conflicts, personal losses, and ideological disillusionment. These elements not only shape the protagonist's motivations but also influence the broader narrative, highlighting the interconnectedness of individual and collective experiences. As noted in research published in *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* and *Media, War & Conflict*, such representations can serve as powerful tools for exploring the long-term impact of violence and conflict particularly

in relation to identity formation and collective memory (Andén-Papadopoulos, 2013; Frosh & Pinchevski, 2009). By situating personal narratives within a larger political context, the film underscores the ways in which trauma operates as both a personal and political force.

Building on these theoretical insights, this study adopts a thematic analysis approach to examine how *One Battle After Another* represents intergenerational resistance and political trauma, as well as the relationship between these two constructs. Specifically, the study is guided by the following objectives: (1) to examine how intergenerational resistance is represented in the film, focusing on the transmission of political ideologies, activism, and conflict across different generations of characters; (2) to analyze the portrayal of political trauma, particularly how past conflicts and unresolved struggles shape individual identities and collective memory; and (3) to explore the relationship between intergenerational resistance and political trauma, highlighting how trauma influences continued cycles of resistance, rebellion, and ideological persistence within the narrative. These objectives are grounded in existing scholarship while also addressing gaps in the literature related to contemporary political cinema.

In doing so, the study contributes to ongoing debates in media and communication studies regarding the role of film in shaping political consciousness and cultural memory. While previous research has extensively examined either resistance or trauma in isolation, there remains a need for more integrated analyses that consider the interplay between these constructs, particularly in the context of intergenerational dynamics. By focusing on a contemporary film that explicitly engages with these themes, this research seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cinematic narratives reflect and shape socio-political realities.

This study is significant as it advances scholarly understanding of how contemporary political cinema represents the complex interplay between intergenerational resistance and political trauma. It contributes to media and communication research by offering an integrated thematic analysis that highlights the role of film in shaping collective memory, identity, and ideological continuity. Additionally, the study provides insights for filmmakers, scholars, and cultural analysts into how narratives can effectively engage with sensitive political histories while addressing the evolving dynamics of resistance in modern societies.

## Literature Review

The representation of political resistance and trauma in media has gained increasing scholarly attention, particularly within film and media studies where narratives often function as sites of ideological negotiation and cultural memory construction. Contemporary research highlights that cinematic texts not only reflect socio-political realities but also actively shape public understanding of resistance movements, generational conflict, and the enduring effects of trauma. In the context of *One Battle After Another*, these themes intersect through its portrayal of a former revolutionary whose past resurfaces, offering a lens to examine intergenerational resistance and political trauma as interconnected constructs. This literature review synthesizes existing scholarship on three key areas: intergenerational resistance, political trauma, and the relationship between these phenomena within mediated narratives.

Intergenerational resistance refers to the transmission of political ideologies, dissenting practices, and oppositional identities across generations. Media scholars argue that such transmission is not merely linear but involves reinterpretation, negotiation, and adaptation to changing socio-political contexts. Research in *Media, Culture & Society* suggests that media narratives play a central role in shaping how resistance is remembered and rearticulated, often framing past struggles as foundational to contemporary activism (Couldry, 2012). This

perspective positions film as a cultural medium through which historical resistance is both preserved and transformed.

Further studies emphasize that intergenerational transmission is deeply embedded in processes of cultural memory. According to Zelizer (2008), media representations act as “memory agents,” selectively reconstructing the past to align with present concerns. This reconstruction often highlights continuity between generations, portraying resistance as an enduring struggle rather than a series of isolated events. Such narratives contribute to the formation of collective identities, reinforcing a sense of shared history and purpose among audiences.

In addition, a study highlights the role of mediated storytelling in bridging generational divides, particularly in contexts where direct experience of political conflict is absent among younger generations (Van Dijck, 2007). Through cinematic representation, younger audiences are introduced to historical narratives that shape their understanding of resistance, even in the absence of lived experience. This process underscores the importance of narrative framing in determining how resistance is perceived, remembered, and enacted across generations.

Moreover, intergenerational resistance is often depicted through character relationships that symbolize broader socio-political dynamics. Studies in *Television & New Media* indicate that familial and mentor-mentee relationships in media texts serve as key sites for the transmission of ideological values (Bennett, 2013). These relationships not only facilitate the transfer of knowledge but also highlight tensions between continuity and change, as younger generations reinterpret inherited ideologies in light of contemporary realities. Such dynamics are particularly relevant in films that explore political conflict, where generational differences can both sustain and challenge established forms of resistance.

Political trauma has been extensively examined within cultural and media studies as a phenomenon that extends beyond individual psychological experiences to encompass collective and historical dimensions. Scholars argue that trauma is often mediated through narratives that shape how societies remember and interpret past events. In *Cultural Sociology*, Alexander (2012) conceptualizes cultural trauma as a process through which communities construct shared meanings around experiences of suffering, thereby integrating these experiences into collective identity.

Media representations play a crucial role in this process, as they provide the symbolic frameworks through which trauma is communicated and understood. Research in *Media, War & Conflict* demonstrates that visual media, including film, can evoke emotional engagement and empathy, enabling audiences to connect with experiences of trauma that may be temporally or geographically distant (Hoskins & O’Loughlin, 2010). This capacity for emotional resonance underscores the significance of cinematic narratives in shaping public perceptions of political violence and its consequences.

Furthermore, trauma is often characterized by its persistence across time, influencing both individual identities and collective memory. Studies in *Memory Studies* highlight that traumatic experiences are rarely confined to a single generation; instead, they are transmitted through narratives, symbols, and cultural practices (Neiger, Meyers, & Zandberg, 2011). This transmission can result in what is often described as “postmemory,” where subsequent generations inherit the emotional and psychological effects of events they did not directly experience.

Importantly, political trauma is closely linked to issues of power, representation, and ideology. Studies in *International Journal of Communication* suggest that media portrayals of trauma can either reinforce dominant narratives or provide space for alternative perspectives,

depending on how they frame the causes and consequences of violence (Cottle, 2006). This highlights the role of media as both a site of contestation and a tool for shaping collective memory, particularly in contexts marked by political struggle.

The relationship between intergenerational resistance and political trauma is increasingly recognized as a critical area of inquiry within media and communication studies. Scholars argue that trauma often serves as both a motivating force and a limiting factor in processes of resistance. On one hand, collective experiences of suffering can inspire continued activism and ideological commitment; on the other hand, trauma can lead to disillusionment, fragmentation, and internal conflict.

Research in *Social Movement Studies* indicates that historical trauma can function as a resource for mobilization, providing a shared narrative that unites individuals and groups in pursuit of social change (Della Porta, 2014). These narratives often draw on past conflict to legitimize contemporary resistance, emphasizing continuity and resilience across generations. However, the same studies also note that unresolved trauma can create divisions within movements, as differing interpretations of the past lead to conflict over strategy and identity. Similarly, studies in *New Media & Society* highlight the role of digital and cinematic media in mediating the relationship between trauma and resistance, particularly in terms of how narratives are constructed and disseminated (Papacharissi, 2015). Media platforms enable the circulation of stories that connect past and present struggles, fostering a sense of shared identity and objective among diverse audiences. At the same time, these narratives are subject to reinterpretation and contestation, reflecting the dynamic nature of intergenerational transmission.

Moreover, the intersection of trauma and resistance is often reflected in character development within cinematic narratives. Research in *Screen* suggests that protagonists in political films frequently embody the tensions between past experiences and present actions, illustrating how trauma shapes decision-making and ideological commitment (Elsaesser, 2001). These characters serve as conduits through which broader socio-political dynamics are explored, highlighting the interplay between individual agency and structural constraints.

Another important dimension of this intersection is the role of memory in shaping both trauma and resistance. Studies in *Memory Studies* argue that collective memory functions as a bridge between past and present, enabling the transmission of both traumatic experiences and resistance narratives across generations (Olick & Robbins, 1998). This process is inherently selective, involving the prioritization of certain events and interpretations over others, which in turn influences how resistance is understood and enacted.

The reviewed literature underscores the importance of analyzing cinematic texts as complex sites where intergenerational resistance and political trauma intersect. Films such as *One Battle After Another* provide valuable insights into how these dynamics are represented and negotiated within narrative structures. By examining character relationships, narrative techniques, and thematic elements, researchers can uncover the ways in which films construct and communicate meanings related to resistance and trauma.

Furthermore, the integration of these themes within a single analytical framework allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how media texts engage with socio-political realities. While existing scholarship has often treated resistance and trauma as separate areas of inquiry, the literature reviewed here suggests that their intersection is crucial for understanding the continuation of political conflict across time. This highlights the need for studies that adopt an integrated approach, examining how these constructs interact and influence one another within specific cultural and historical contexts.

## Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Cultural Trauma Theory, which provides an appropriate framework for analyzing the intersection of intergenerational resistance and political trauma in *One Battle After Another*. The theory conceptualizes trauma as a socially constructed and collectively mediated process through which groups assign meaning to experiences of suffering, rather than viewing it solely as an individual psychological condition (Alexander, 2004). This makes it particularly relevant for film analysis, where narratives play a central role in shaping collective memory and socio-political understanding.

Cultural Trauma Theory emphasizes that trauma is transmitted across generations through cultural narratives, symbols, and media representations. Research demonstrates that mediated storytelling enables later generations to engage with past conflicts and incorporate them into their own identities, thereby sustaining ideological continuity (Hirsch, 2008; Erll, 2008). In cinematic texts, this process is often reflected through character relationships and narrative structures that connect past and present conflict.

The theory also highlights the role of trauma in shaping collective identity and motivating political action. Shared experiences of suffering can foster solidarity and encourage resistance, while also generating internal conflict and disillusionment (Eyerman, 2011; Della Porta, 2014). This dual role is central to understanding how trauma influences both the persistence and transformation of resistance across generations. By focusing on narrative meaning-making and the transmission of memory, the framework enables a comprehensive analysis of how past experiences of conflict continue to shape present ideological and political dynamics.

## Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design using thematic analysis to examine the representation of intergenerational resistance and political trauma in *One Battle After Another*. Qualitative approaches are particularly appropriate for film analysis because they enable an in-depth exploration of meanings, symbols, and narrative structures embedded within audiovisual texts. Thematic analysis provides a systematic yet flexible framework for identifying and interpreting patterns of meaning across data, making it widely applicable in media and communication research (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The design aligns with the study's objectives, as it facilitates a detailed examination of how resistance and trauma are constructed, represented, and interconnected within the film's narrative. By focusing on recurring patterns and thematic structures, the method allows for a nuanced understanding of both explicit and implicit meanings. The study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm, which assumes that reality is socially constructed and that meanings are shaped through cultural and contextual processes. This paradigm is particularly relevant for analyzing cinematic texts, where meaning emerges through narrative, visual symbolism, and audience interpretation.

An interpretivist approach enables the researcher to examine how representations of resistance and trauma are produced and how they contribute to broader cultural discourses. It also complements the use of Cultural Trauma Theory by emphasizing the role of narrative and representation in shaping collective understanding (Alexander, 2004). The primary data source for this study was the full-length feature film *One Battle After Another*. The film was selected through purposive sampling, as it explicitly engages with themes of political conflict, generational dynamics, and ideological struggle, making it highly relevant to the research objectives.

The unit of analysis focused on key narrative elements within the selected films. These included both main and secondary characters, as well as dialogues and monologues that reflect underlying political ideologies. Attention was also given to scenes portraying conflict, resistance, and trauma, alongside visual and symbolic components such as the use of flashbacks and the significance of setting.

The film was viewed multiple times to ensure comprehensive engagement with the data. Initial viewings focused on understanding the overall narrative, while subsequent viewings were dedicated to detailed coding and thematic identification. Data collection involved a systematic viewing process combined with detailed note-taking and transcription. Relevant scenes were identified and transcribed, with particular attention given to dialogues and visual elements that reflect the study's core themes.

Field notes were maintained throughout the process to capture initial impressions, emerging patterns, and reflexive insights. This iterative process allowed for continuous refinement of the analytical focus and ensured that the data collection remained aligned with the research objectives.

The primary instrument used in this study was a thematic coding framework, developed to systematically organize and analyze the data. Unlike quantitative instruments, this qualitative tool was designed to capture the complexity of narrative and visual elements within the film. The coding framework was constructed inductively, guided by repeated engagement with the data and informed by existing methodological literature on thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017).

The instrument consisted of several interconnected coding categories aligned with the research objectives. The first category focused on intergenerational resistance, capturing instances where political ideologies, activism, and conflict were transmitted or contested across generations. This included codes related to ideological inheritance, generational conflict, and reinterpretation of resistance. The second category addressed political trauma, encompassing representations of past conflicts, emotional responses, and narrative techniques such as flashbacks and fragmentation. Codes within this category were designed to capture both individual and collective dimensions of trauma, including its impact on identity and memory. The third category examined the relationship between trauma and resistance, focusing on how traumatic experiences influenced characters' engagement with political action. This included codes related to trauma as a motivating force, cycles of conflict, and ideological persistence.

Each coding category was operationalized through clear definitions and examples to ensure consistency in application. The coding process involved assigning labels to relevant segments of data, followed by grouping similar codes into broader themes. This approach enhances analytical rigor by providing a structured yet flexible framework for interpreting complex data (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). To further strengthen the instrument's reliability, the coding framework was continuously refined throughout the analysis. This iterative process allowed for the identification of new patterns and ensured that the instrument remained responsive to the data. The use of a well-defined coding framework also contributes to the transparency and replicability of the study.

The study followed a six-phase thematic analysis process. First, the researcher familiarized themselves with the data through repeated viewing and transcription. Second, initial codes were generated inductively, focusing on segments of data relevant to resistance and trauma. Third, these codes were grouped into potential themes based on conceptual similarities. In the fourth phase, themes were reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and

alignment with the research objectives. Fifth, each theme was clearly defined and named to reflect its core meaning. Finally, the themes were integrated into a coherent narrative that addresses the study’s objectives. This systematic approach ensures methodological rigor and enhances the credibility of the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To ensure the quality of the research, several strategies were employed. Credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement with the data and detailed transcription. Dependability was ensured by maintaining a clear and consistent coding process. Confirmability was supported through reflexive note-taking, which helped minimize researcher bias. Transferability was achieved by providing detailed descriptions of the data and analytical process, allowing readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other contexts (Nowell et al., 2017). The study did not involve human participants, as it focused on a publicly available film. However, ethical considerations included accurate representation of the film’s content, proper citation of scholarly sources, and avoidance of interpretive bias.

### Results of the Study

The thematic analysis resulted in the identification of multiple interconnected themes, including intergenerational resistance, political trauma, the trauma–resistance nexus, crisis of ideology, identity and subjectivity, memory and temporality, power and structural violence, silence and communication, and resistance as performance.

**Table 1:** *Extended Thematic Structure*

Theme	Subthemes	Analytical Focus
Intergenerational Resistance	Ideological inheritance; Generational conflict; Reinterpretation of Legacy burden	How resistance is transmitted, contested, and redefined
Political Trauma	Personal trauma; Collective trauma; Emotional repression; Narrative fragmentation; Haunting past	Trauma shaping identity and narrative
Trauma–Resistance Nexus	Trauma as catalyst; Trauma as constraint; Cyclical conflict; Moral ambiguity	Dual role of trauma in resistance
Crisis of Ideology	Disillusionment; Failed revolution; Ideological fatigue; Pragmatism vs idealism	Breakdown of political belief systems
Identity Subjectivity	and Fragmented identity; Survivor Political selfhood; Role conflict	How trauma shapes self-perception
Memory Temporality	and Flashbacks; Non-linear time; memory; Mediated remembrance	Selective Construction of past in present
Power and Structural Violence	State power; Institutional control; Invisible violence; Surveillance	Broader socio-political context
Silence Communication	and Suppressed narratives; Unspoken trauma; Emotional distance; Symbolic dialogue	What is not said as meaning
Resistance Performance	as Symbolic acts; Public vs private resistance; Ritualized rebellion	Resistance as representation

### Intergenerational Resistance

The film constructs intergenerational resistance as a dynamic and evolving process rather than a fixed ideological inheritance. Resistance is transmitted across generations through memory,

experience, and interpersonal relationships; however, it is not passively accepted by younger characters. Instead, it is actively reinterpreted, contested, and reshaped according to contemporary socio-political contexts. The notion of a “legacy burden” becomes particularly significant, as younger characters inherit not only the ideals of resistance but also its consequences, including trauma, defeat, and unresolved conflicts. This creates tension between continuity and change, where resistance is both sustained and transformed. The film thus suggests that intergenerational resistance is not merely about preserving past struggles but about negotiating their relevance in the present, highlighting the fluid and contested nature of political engagement across time.

### **Political Trauma**

Political trauma is represented as a persistent and multifaceted force that shapes both individual identity and collective memory. Rather than being confined to past events, trauma is depicted as an ongoing presence that continues to influence characters’ behaviors, emotions, and relationships. The narrative employs techniques such as flashbacks, fragmented storytelling, and symbolic imagery to convey the disruptive and non-linear nature of traumatic experience. Emotional repression emerges as a key aspect, with characters often unable or unwilling to articulate their suffering, leading to internal conflict and psychological distance. Additionally, trauma is portrayed not only as an personal experience but as a collective condition embedded within the socio-political environment. This dual representation underscores the idea that trauma operates at both personal and cultural levels, reinforcing its role as a central element in the construction of identity and meaning within the narrative.

The relationship between trauma and resistance is depicted as complex and ambivalent, functioning simultaneously as a source of motivation and constraint. On one hand, traumatic experiences act as a catalyst for resistance, driving characters to confront past injustices and engage in continued political struggle. On the other hand, trauma also imposes emotional and psychological burdens that can hinder action, creating hesitation, fear, and internal conflict. This duality introduces a sense of moral ambiguity, as characters question the effectiveness and ethical implications of continued resistance. The film further illustrates how unresolved trauma contributes to cyclical patterns of conflict, where past struggles are repeatedly revisited without resolution. This cyclical nature emphasizes the enduring influence of trauma on political action, suggesting that resistance is not only ideologically driven but also deeply shaped by emotional and historical factors.

### **Crisis of Ideology**

A significant theme emerging from the analysis is the crisis or transformation of ideological certainty. The film portrays a shift from strong, clearly defined political beliefs to a more fragmented and uncertain ideological landscape. The protagonist’s past revolutionary ideals are shown to be challenged by present realities, leading to disillusionment and ideological fatigue. This reflects a broader narrative of failed or incomplete revolution, where earlier efforts did not achieve their intended outcomes. As a result, characters are forced to navigate the tension between idealism and pragmatism, often questioning the relevance and effectiveness of traditional forms of resistance. This crisis of ideology adds depth to the narrative by highlighting the limitations of political movements and the complexities of sustaining long-term commitment in the face of repeated setbacks.

### **Identity and Subjectivity**

The film presents identity as deeply intertwined with experiences of trauma and political struggle. Characters are depicted as navigating fragmented identities shaped by their past and present circumstances. The concept of “survivor identity” becomes central, as individuals

define themselves in relation to their experiences of conflict and loss. This often leads to role conflict, where characters struggle to balance personal desires with political responsibilities. The tension between private selfhood and public identity underscores the psychological impact of sustained involvement in resistance movements. By portraying identity as fluid and contested, the film highlights the ways in which trauma and resistance intersect to shape how individuals understand themselves and their place within the socio-political landscape.

### **Memory and Temporality**

Memory plays a crucial role in structuring the narrative, with the film employing non-linear temporality to reflect the fragmented nature of traumatic experience. The use of flashbacks and disrupted timelines suggests that the past is not a distant or completed event but an active and ongoing presence in the present. Selective memory further complicates this representation, as certain events are emphasized while others are suppressed or forgotten. This selective process indicates that memory is not neutral but constructed, shaped by emotional, ideological, and contextual factors. The film thus portrays memory as a dynamic force that mediates the relationship between past and present, enabling the transmission of both trauma and resistance across generations.

### **Power and Structural Violence**

The narrative situates individual experiences of trauma and resistance within broader systems of power and structural violence. Rather than focusing solely on direct or visible forms of conflict, the film highlights the pervasive influence of institutional control, surveillance, and systemic oppression. These forms of power operate subtly yet persistently, shaping the conditions under which resistance emerges and is sustained. By emphasizing structural violence, the film expands the concept of conflict beyond physical confrontation to include psychological and social dimensions. This broader perspective underscores the complexity of political struggle, illustrating how resistance is shaped not only by individual agency but also by the constraints imposed by larger socio-political systems.

### **Silence and Communication**

Silence emerges as a powerful narrative device, reflecting the difficulty of articulating traumatic experiences. Characters often communicate through pauses, gestures, and visual cues rather than explicit dialogue, indicating the limitations of language in expressing deep emotional pain. This suppression of speech creates emotional distance and reinforces the sense of unresolved trauma. At the same time, silence functions as a form of communication in itself, conveying meanings that are not directly spoken. The film thus demonstrates how absence of dialogue can be as significant as its presence, highlighting the importance of non-verbal expression in cinematic storytelling.

### **Resistance as Performance**

The film also presents resistance as a form of performance, characterized by symbolic acts and public displays of defiance. These acts are often ritualized, suggesting that resistance can become repetitive and performative rather than transformative. The distinction between public and private resistance further illustrates this dynamic, as characters may project strength and commitment in public while experiencing doubt and vulnerability in private. This duality highlights the performative nature of political action, where resistance is shaped not only by ideological commitment but also by social expectations and symbolic representation.

## Discussion of the Study

The present study set out to examine how intergenerational resistance and political trauma are represented and interconnected in *One Battle After Another* through a thematic analysis. The following themes have been identified from the data:

### Intergenerational Resistance and Ideological Continuity

The first major finding highlights that resistance is portrayed as a continuous and evolving process across generations, rather than a fixed or isolated phenomenon. The film demonstrates how political ideologies and activist identities are transmitted through interpersonal relationships and narrative memory. This supports prior research suggesting that collective memory plays a central role in sustaining political engagement across temporal boundaries (Eyerman, 2011).

The depiction of ideological inheritance in the film argues that media representations function as key mechanisms for the preservation and reinterpretation of past struggles (Erll, 2008). In this study, younger characters engage with the protagonist's revolutionary past not as passive recipients but as active interpreters, reshaping inherited ideologies to fit contemporary contexts. This reflects the argument that intergenerational transmission is inherently dynamic, involving both continuity and transformation. Furthermore, the presence of generational conflict in the findings reinforces the idea that resistance is not uniformly reproduced. Instead, it is subject to negotiation and contestation, as different generations bring distinct perspectives and experiences to political engagement. This finding is consistent with research in *Media, Culture & Society*, which emphasizes that media narratives often highlight tensions between tradition and change in the context of political conflict (Couldry, 2012).

### Political Trauma and Narrative Representation

The second theme underscores the centrality of political trauma as both a narrative and thematic force within the film. The findings indicate that trauma is represented through fragmented storytelling, flashbacks, and emotionally charged sequences, reflecting its disruptive and enduring nature. This aligns with existing literature in *Communication Theory*, which suggests that trauma resists linear representation and is often conveyed through non-linear and symbolic forms (Caruth, 2016).

The portrayal of trauma as both an individual and collective experience further supports the conceptualization of cultural trauma as a socially mediated process. According to research in *American Journal of Sociology*, trauma becomes culturally significant when it is integrated into shared narratives that shape group identity (Alexander, 2004). The film reflects this process by situating personal experiences of suffering within a broader socio-political context, thereby linking individual identity to collective memory. Additionally, the findings demonstrate that trauma has a lasting impact on character development, influencing motivations, relationships, and decision-making. This supports prior studies in *Media, War & Conflict*, which highlight the role of media in depicting the long-term consequences of political violence and its impact on identity formation (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2010). By emphasizing the persistence of trauma, the film contributes to a deeper understanding of how past conflicts continue to shape present realities.

### Trauma as a Catalyst and Constraint for Resistance

The third theme reveals a complex relationship between trauma and resistance, showing that trauma functions as both a motivating force and a source of tension. The findings indicate that experiences of suffering often inspire renewed activism and ideological commitment, as characters seek to address past injustices. This identifies collective memory of trauma as a key driver of mobilization and political engagement (Della Porta, 2014).

At the same time, the study found that trauma can also hinder resistance by creating internal conflict, emotional burden, and disillusionment. This dual role reflects the ambivalence highlighted in previous scholarship, where trauma is seen as both enabling and constraining political action. The depiction of cyclical conflict in the film further illustrates how unresolved trauma perpetuates ongoing struggles, reinforcing the idea that resistance is deeply embedded in historical processes. Moreover, the findings align with research in *New Media & Society*, which emphasizes the role of mediated narratives in connecting past and present conflict, thereby sustaining ideological persistence (Papacharissi, 2015). The film's narrative structure effectively bridges temporal gaps, illustrating how trauma-informed memories shape contemporary resistance.

### **Integration with Cultural Trauma Theory**

The findings of this study strongly support the applicability of Cultural Trauma Theory as a theoretical framework. The film's representation of trauma as a socially constructed and collectively shared phenomenon aligns with the theory's emphasis on meaning-making processes. The intergenerational transmission of resistance further demonstrates how trauma narratives are embedded within cultural memory and passed down through storytelling.

This study extends the application of Cultural Trauma Theory by highlighting the reciprocal relationship between trauma and resistance. While the theory traditionally focuses on the formation of collective identity, this study shows that trauma also plays a crucial role in sustaining political action across generations. This suggests that resistance itself can be understood as a form of cultural response to trauma, shaped by both memory and ongoing socio-political conditions.

### **Validation and Credibility of Findings**

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several methodological strategies were employed. The use of thematic analysis provided a systematic and transparent approach to data interpretation, enhancing analytical rigor (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Multiple viewings of the film and detailed transcription ensured a comprehensive engagement with the data, thereby strengthening the accuracy of interpretations. Additionally, the development of a structured coding framework contributed to the consistency and dependability of the analysis. This approach aligns with recommendations in *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, which emphasize the importance of clear coding procedures and iterative refinement in qualitative research (Nowell et al., 2017).

Reflexive note-taking was also used to minimize researcher bias and enhance confirmability. By documenting analytical decisions and interpretations, the study maintains transparency and allows for the replication of the analytical process. Furthermore, the provision of detailed descriptions of themes and subthemes supports transferability, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other cinematic contexts. Together, these strategies confirm the robustness of the results and provide confidence in their validity. This study contributes to the existing literature by offering an integrated analysis of intergenerational resistance and political trauma within a single cinematic text. While previous research has often examined these constructs separately, the present study highlights their interconnectedness and mutual influence. By focusing on a contemporary film, the study also extends existing scholarship on cultural trauma and media representation, demonstrating how these concepts continue to evolve in response to changing socio-political contexts. The findings underscore the importance of examining media texts as dynamic sites of meaning-making, where past and present intersect to shape collective understanding.

## References

- Alexander, J. C. (2004). Cultural trauma and collective identity. *American Journal of Sociology*, 110(1), 1–30.
- Andén-Papadopoulos, K. (2013). Media witnessing and the “crowd-sourced” video revolution. *Media, War & Conflict*, 6(3), 341–357.
- Bennett, L. (2013). Civic media and the future of political engagement. *Television & New Media*, 14(2), 101–118.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Caruth, C. (2016). Unclaimed experience and trauma theory. *Communication Theory*, 26(4), 497–500.
- Couldry, N. (2008). Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling. *New Media & Society*, 10(3), 373–391.
- Couldry, N. (2012). Media, society, world: Social theory and digital media practice. *Media, Culture & Society*, 34(2), 223–232.
- Della Porta, D. (2014). Mobilizing for democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011. *Social Movement Studies*, 13(1), 1–19.
- Della Porta, D. (2014). Mobilizing for democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011. *Social Movement Studies*, 13(1), 1–19.
- Elsaesser, T. (2001). Postmodernism as mourning work. *Screen*, 42(2), 193–201.
- Erll, A. (2008). Cultural memory studies: An introduction. *Memory Studies*, 1(1), 1–15.
- Eyerman, R. (2011). Social movements and memory. *Sociological Forum*, 26(3), 487–507.
- Frosh, P., & Pinchevski, A. (2009). Why media witnessing? Why now? *Media, Culture & Society*, 31(3), 345–364.
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). Applied thematic analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 22(1), 1–9.
- Hirsch, M. (2008). The generation of postmemory. *Poetics Today*, 29(1), 103–128.
- Hoskins, A. (2011). Media, memory, metaphor: Remembering and the connective turn. *Parallax*, 17(4), 19–31.
- Hoskins, A., & O’Loughlin, B. (2010). War and media: The emergence of diffused war. *Media, War & Conflict*, 3(1), 107–124.
- Kaplan, E. A. (2008). Trauma and cinema: Cross-cultural explorations of catastrophe. *Screen*, 49(1), 82–86.
- Landsberg, A. (2004). Prosthetic memory: The ethics and politics of memory in an age of mass culture. *New German Critique*, 71(1), 144–152.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry and qualitative research. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 5(2), 1–15.
- Madianou, M. (2020). Technocolonialism: Digital innovation and data practices in the humanitarian response. *Social Media + Society*, 6(3), 1–13.
- Neiger, M., Meyers, O., & Zandberg, E. (2011). On media memory: Collective memory in a new media age. *Memory Studies*, 4(1), 3–14.
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1–13.
- Olick, J. K., & Robbins, J. (1998). Social memory studies: From “collective memory” to the historical sociology of mnemonic practices. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 105–140.
- Papacharissi, Z. (2015). Affective publics and storytelling. *New Media & Society*, 17(2), 307–324.



- Reading, A. (2016). Gender and memory in the digital age. *Memory Studies*, 9(3), 245–260.
- Smelser, N. J. (2004). Psychological trauma and cultural trauma. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*, 1(1), 31–59.
- Tracy, S. J. (2019). Qualitative research methods. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 14(2), 318–321.
- Van Dijck, J. (2007). Mediated memories in the digital age. *New Media & Society*, 9(2), 243–264.
- Zelizer, B. (2008). Why memory’s work on journalism does not reflect journalism’s work on memory. *Memory Studies*, 1(1), 79–87.