Local Colour in German and Danish Television Drama: *Tatort* and *Bron//Broen*[1]

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Abstract: The impact of place and locality in narrative media can be regarded as seminal for the medium's function of communicating culture and negotiating societal discourses. As a result of the growing attention in globalisation theory and transnational considerations, space and place have become key issues to understanding the circulation of cultural commodities within an increasingly global and supra-national context. Taking the case of two popular contemporary European crime series, the German series *Tatort* and the Danish/Swedish series *Bron//Broen,* our aim is to focus on and carve out *local colour* as an aesthetic textual strategy, as well as relate it to a production context and to a broader discussion of the region/nation and the transnational/global. We argue that local colour can be located at three different levels: Firstly, on the level of representation as part of an overall narrative and aesthetic strategy that produces structures of appeal for the audiences. Secondly, within the frame of production, public broadcasting service, and policy that stage the general preconditions of cultural products. Thirdly, we regard locality as commodity and cultural consumption (e.g. branding, tourism, investments). Local colour and the representation of places evoke different concepts of *imagined communities* related to the regional and the national, but also the global and transnational.

Keywords: Television drama, crime series, local colour, places, public broadcasting, regionalism, transnational, global

Introduction

The impact of place and locality in narrative media can be regarded as seminal for the medium's function of communicating culture and negotiating societal discourses. As a result of the "spatial turn", we have witnessed a growing international interest within television and film studies in the meaning and significance of space and place in contemporary media. The phenomenon has been

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[1] This article is part of a FKK-funded research project called "What makes Danish television series travel?" at Aarhus University, Denmark. The aim of the project is to study the relationship between respectively national and transnational production systems and media cultures (http://danishtvdrama.au.dk).

highlighted from various angles, for example in terms of "symbolic space" (Agger, 2013, p. 238), as "drama of emplacement" (Wedel 2009, p. 143), as "production value" (Waade, 2011, p. 21), or within the perspective of transnationalism as "double occupancy" (Elsaesser, 2006, p. 647). As a result of growing attention from globalisation theory and transnational considerations, space and place have become key issues in understanding the circulation of cultural commodities within an increasingly global and supra-national context.

Taking the case of two popular contemporary European crime series, the German series *Tatort* and the Danish/Swedish series *Bron//Broen,* our aim is to focus on and carve out *local colour* (German/Danish: *Lokalkolorit*) as an aesthetic textual strategy and relate it to a production context, as well as to a broader discussion of the region/nation and the transnational/global[2]. We will argue that local colour can be located at three different levels: Firstly, on the level of representation as part of an overall narrative and aesthetic strategy that produces structures of appeal for the audiences. We assume that local colour is a particularly important aspect of the regional, national and transnational appeal of the series in question. Secondly, local colour can be located within the frame of production, regulation and policy that stages the general precondition of cultural products. For example, as part of the public broadcasting service philosophy and commitment, both cases are produced within a specific frame that caters to the demands of regional representations and democratisation. Thirdly, we regard locality as commodity and cultural consumption (e.g. branding, tourism, investments). We will conclude that local colour and the representation of places evoke different concepts of *imagined communities* related to the regional and the national, but also the global and transnational.

We consider two media texts that are produced and to some extent consumed in two different countries, but we do not aim to conduct a traditional cultural comparison. Our concern lies more on the interplay of contextual aspects within an increasingly complex environment of production, distribution and reception. We want to assess "cultural and communicative flows in a global system" (Schlesinger, 2000, p. 21). In doing so, we follow Athique's concern for "shifting our attention towards the mobility of the media content itself" (ibid., p. 10). While media products are usually produced within a national system of media production and regulation, they are sold and localised in other global regions and nations within an economic structure that is increasingly characterised by supra-national, global cross-ownership and interrelations. Globalisation and transnational theories have

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[2] Our use of terminology is important to our line of argument: "region" in this case refers to a sub-national resp. supra-national area that is constituted by means of e.g. geography, traditions, language/vernaculars, shared values and the culture-political system; "nation" refers to a cultural-political community organised as a state, the nation-state. The "global" refers to the interplay of cultural production and consumption between individuals, societies, institutions and states. With the term "transnational" we denote "social experience as a complex and dynamic product of multiple regional, ethnic, and institutional identities. Far from being static or bounded by national borders, social, political, and economic forces operate on supra-national, trans-regional, and trans-local scales and scopes." (*Transnational Studies Reader*, 2008).

discussed the interplay of media systems, industries and audiences in some depth in recent years[3]. The specific textual strategies at work have been subject to Moran's (2000) analysis of German television fiction during reunification, to Castelló's (2004) analysis of Basques television, to Dhoest's (2011) account of Flemish television and national identity, or to Straubhaar's (1991) notion of "cultural proximity" and drama series. But the question remains: what is the significance of the interplay between the double function of textual strategies that emphasise space and place in terms of cultural proximity, as opposed to strategies emphasising a global, universal appeal and the aesthetics of exoticism?

Television crime series and local colour

The television crime genre is a popular global genre that attracts viewers and readers, both male and female, of all ages. It is well known for its emphasis on aspects of space – most obviously the scene of the crime itself (e.g. Viehoff, 1999). Moreover, the crime genre in general – especially in Germany – has long been associated with locality and local colour. Hence, the German terms "Schwedenkrimi" or "Münsterkrimi" refer just as much to generic aspects of the crime genre, as to a certain production practice concerning form and content and the use of locality. Aspects of locality have been proposed in relation to *Tatort*, for instance by Buhl (2013) and his account on realism, authenticity, and representation; by Bollhöfer's (2007) "mimetic construction of space", identifying local colour as one of *Tatort's* characteristics; and by Scherer & Stockinger (2010), who identify five types of location that create specific artificial realities: a) realism of the local, b) realism of the global, c) realism of interconnectedness, d) realism of the rural, and e) realism of the mystic.[4] It is important for us in this context that local colour comprises more than locality and the representation of real places. Local colour is a common, but not very precise term. It is commonly used to describe particular conditions that are typical for a geographical area, in other words an actual, physical place. The Oxford Dictionary defines local colour as "the customs, manners of speech, dress, or other typical features of a place or period that contribute to its particular character"; it also refers to the use of the term within art and literature, where "the actual colour of a thing in ordinary daylight" is emphasised.[5] Regarding these understandings of the term, local colour embraces not only locality but also certain cultural manners and traditions as well as colours and light that indicate a specific geographical place. It thus fits Castelló's notion on territorial representations, which includes locations and places, the use of language, and cultural proximities as "shared local values and historical alliances between the original culture of the text and the local culture" (Castelló, 2009, p.313). These shared local values are reflected in traditions, folklore, gastronomy

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[3] See for example Aksoy & Robins, 2003; Appadurai, 1996; Athique, 2014; Castelló, 2009; Chalaby, 2005; Esser, 2010; or Moran & Aveyard, 2014.
[4] For an extensive account of *Tatort* and its topography, see Griem & Scholz, 2010.
[5] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com.

or social issues such as abortion or drug addiction. The geographer Tim Edensor (2002) has listed landscapes, iconic buildings and places, flora, fauna, climate and popular events as entities referring to a medial representation of a nation's place. Stijn Reijnders (2011) adds another element to the idea of local colour. With regard to crime series and related film tourism, his concept of "guilty landscapes" describes how the landscapes are "injected" with narrative meaning. Furthermore, local colour is not limited to representation, but also includes a performative reproduction of the actual places. For instance, tourists can now re-enact and revitalise the guilt and the thrill of crime stories when visiting the locations in which the series are shot (Knudsen & Waade, 2010). Locations in media texts thus become a "brand value" for cities, countries and regions (Hedling, 2010; Roberts, 2012).

In summary, local colour in a film or television drama series includes elements of representing place (landscapes, iconic buildings, flora and fauna, etc.), language (standard language, vernaculars, etc.), cultural practices with a cultural proximity (manners, traditions, cuisine, etc.), social discourses and the "spill-over" of narrative meaning into the real world (e.g. becoming a touristic commodity).

The production of place in television drama series

The discussion of local colour takes us to a more general theoretical and interdisciplinary framework with regard to the complex relationships between media and place. While spatiality and the construction of filmic space has always been a concern of film theory (e.g. Rohmer, 1977; Souriau, 1997), the so-called "spatial turn", a term coined by Soja (1989) and since cited and discussed by many authors within social science and the humanities, has shifted the focus from temporality to spatiality. Within this context media places are seen (for example) as sites of production, representation of places, locative media choreography of spatial behaviour, virtual spaces etc.[6] A second development that highlights aspects of place is the "transnational turn" (Athique, 2014, p. 14). Approaches within globalisation theory and transnational models negotiate and re-define understandings of the regional, the national, the global and the transnational and the role of media in constituting senses of regional or national belongings and identifications.

For our argument three aspects of space and place are of special interest. Firstly, the importance of place as a signifier of belonging and longing in a globalised culture. Secondly, the distinction between *place* (as embodied, experienced, physical place) and *space* (a virtual, imagined location) related to technology and media and how they influence the way we construct, use and experience places in contemporary culture. And thirdly Martin Lefebvre's (2006) distinction between *setting* and *landscape*: *setting* concerns narrative representation and the diegetic world, while *cinematic landscape* concerns aesthetic representation and extra-

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[6] See for example Couldry & McCarthy, 2004; Falkheimer & Jansson, 2006; Urry & Larsen, 2011.

diegetic layers derived from the "landscape gaze". Cinematic landscape can also include cityscape, and is related to the cinematic spectacle and art history and "appears when, rather than following the action, I turn my gaze toward space and contemplate it in and of itself" (Lefebvre, 2006, p. 48). This attraction and contemplation can be caused by different elements: it can be the viewer's recognition of a certain place, it can be a place that the viewer belongs to or relates to, or the fascination can be due to the character of the landscape, an "overwhelmingness" that counters the aggressive and explosive action spectacle.

Finally, the relation between place and media is also associated with the notions of realism and media representations: Film (and with it television) as a continuation of photography was regarded as a genuinely indexically operating medium. Siegfried Krakauer's notion of the "redemption of physical reality" or Charles Sanders Peirce's notion of an "indexical representation" emphasise this (Prince, 1996, p. 28). However, re-considerations of concepts of reality have shown that reality is a relative concept that reifies only in the perception of the audience (e.g. McLean, 2007). Space and place do not only operate within the media text itself and within processes of reception – they also refer to the contextual site of production, politics, institutions and social practices (e.g. Couldry et al., 2004). These aspects have been partially reflected within the new interdisciplinary fields of media, geography and tourist studies, for instance the way in which film and television production are linked to film tourism, city branding and regional development (Hedling, 2010; Roberts, 2012).

Thus, the idea of local colour is not limited to the literary spaces and representation of places in fiction. Instead, the complexity and significance of the concept appears when we include actual places and investigate the relationships between *the physical place* (the actual place), *the mediated place* (setting, cinematic landscapes, literary space) and *the imagined place* (the viewer's/reader's imaginations of the place), including a complex circulation of images, meanings and different levels of mediation.[7]

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[7] The model is based on the theories of Henry Lefebvre (1974/1991) on "the production of place" in combination with theories on mediatisation and the relation between geographical places and media. For further elaborations, see e.g. Falkheimer & Jansson, 2006; Jensen & Waade, 2009; and Roberts, 2012.

Figure 1: Place and media, and the circulation of meaning
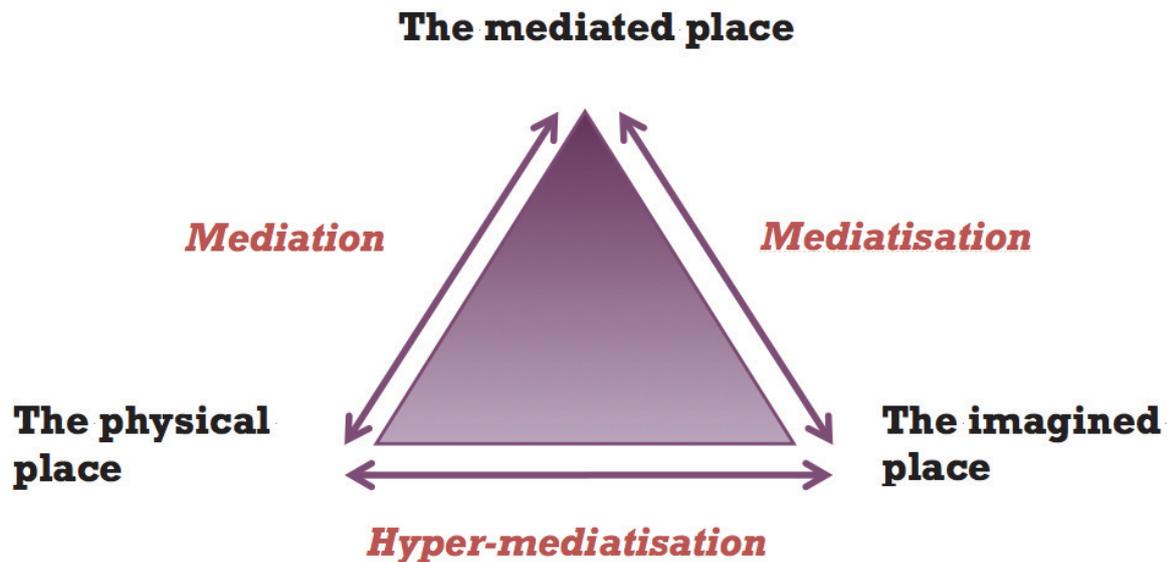
The model illustrates the circulation of meaning between the physical place, the imagined place and the mediated place. *Mediation* illustrates the plain representation of a specific place, for example a photo of the crime scene in a news article or images of Oxford's streets in the Inspector Morse crime series. *The mediatisation process* depicts places that the audience primarily knows from media, e.g. the skyline of Manhattan or a typical symbol of a specific place, for example the Eiffel Tower representing Paris and France. Finally, *hypermediatisation* is a far more complex process comprising how people act, behave, perform and navigate in places because of spatial mediatisation. In other words, knowledge and imaginations of places through media influence the way in which people experience and act in certain places. For example, when the *Nordic Noir* brand influences the way producers and broadcasters develop a new series and the way they choose and use the locations, or when film tourists visit film locations and walk in the footsteps of their favourite characters. Local colour is reflected in all parts of this process. We can take Oxford and the Inspector Morse series as an example: The city of Oxford is a geographical, physical place, and the Inspector Morse series mediates the way in which the city is used and interpreted as a place in the series. Oxford has become a place that many people recognise and know because of the series, and when we think of the city, places, images and buildings from the series, as well as other media texts (for example Harry Potter), might come to mind (even though we may never have been to Oxford ourselves). Finally, hypermediation takes place when Morse tourists visit the city and drink beer at his favourite pub or take pictures of significant locations from the series, or when the city is branded based on the characters, the places and the plots from the Morse crime series. This circulation of signs, images and meanings constitutes and reinforces the ideas and the imaginations that we – as global audiences – have of Oxford as a place. Looking at this circulation, we can study how the specific local colour of Oxford is displayed.

Presentation of the two cases: *Tatort* and *Bron//Broen*

The following two cases are used to show the multiple ways in which local colour is constructed, reproduced and re-circulated in relation to television drama series.

Tatort is Germany's longest running series, with more than 900 episodes produced so far (until 2015).[8] From its beginning, regionality, realism and the focus on the detectives has been at the heart of the series' formalised appearance. At present, the nine regional networks of the *ARD* and the Swiss public broadcasting network *SRF*, as well as the Austrian public broadcasting network *ORF*, contribute up to 39 ninety minute episodes each year which are screened in the Sunday prime time slot between the nationwide newscast *Tagesschau* and a subsequent, often thematically attuned, talk show. Currently 23 *Tatort* teams, from the far north in Kiel (D) down to Luzern (CH), investigate a capital crime within the 90 minutes framework of the episode, thereby depicting issues of social relevance and a regional focus. The *Tatort* series has always been a successful format in terms of audience ratings. However, in recent years its ratings have significantly increased, hauling the series from an average of seven million viewers in the 1990s up to nearly nine million viewers (25.4% market share) in 2013 (*ARD* Basisdaten). Indeed, in 2013 the episode *Summ Summ Summ* (episode 867, WDR) and the episode *Willkommen in Hamburg* (episode 865, NDR) ranked among the top ten television programmes with almost 13 million viewers (34.1% and 33.6% market share). The only programmes that were more popular were three *Champions League* games and the television debate between the chancellor candidates Angela Merkel and Peer Steinbrück (Zubayr & Gerhard, 2014, p. 152).

Bron//Broen is a Swedish/Danish co-production produced by *Filmlance* (S) and *Nimbus* (DK) for the national public broadcasters in Sweden (*SVT*) and Denmark (*DR*). Furthermore, the production includes collaborations with *ZDF*, *ZDF-Enterprise*, *Lumiére* and *Øresund Film Commission*, and is supported by the regional Swedish film funds called *Film i Skåne* and *Ystad/Østerlen Film Fund*. So far the series has run for two seasons (2012, 2014), with a third season currently in production. The main characters are the two antithetic investigators, the Swedish Saga Norén and the Danish Martin Rohde. In the first season they investigate a spectacularly choreographed murder: a woman's body placed on the line marking the border between Denmark and Sweden on Øresund Bridge. Each season consists of 20 sixty minutes episodes, circling around one case that delves into the abyss of human nature, deeply embroiling the protagonists in a cat-and-mouse game. The audience share in Denmark was about 50%. It has been sold to more than 50 countries[9] all over the world and has also been remade in a British/French version (*The Tunnel*, *Sky Atlantic/Canal+,* Britain/France, 2013, 2015) and an American/Mexican version (*The Bridge, FX*, USA, 2013-14).

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[8] For an extensive account on *Tatort*, see for example Hißnauer, Scherer & Stockinger, 2014; Griem & Scholz, 2010; Bollhöfer, 2007.
[9] See *Film i Skåne's* website, http://www.skane.com/en/film-i-skane.

Local colour as narrative and aesthetic strategy in Tatort and Bron//Broen

As outlined earlier, the iconography of local colour in narrative film and television includes elements of places, language, cultural practices and social discourses that indicate a specific geographical place on the inner-textual level. There are some genre-specific places (settings) related to crime series and the diegetic world, for example the investigators' workplaces or homes, the crime scenes and places related to the victim(s) or his/her home or workplace. Such series also include cinematic landscapes and "guilty landscapes", showing the places and the surroundings where the story takes place. The genre-specific establishing shot is another example in this context: Each new scene opens with an establishing shot, indicating where the action takes place, often appearing in the title sequence as well. It typically shows the place from a high angle or panorama view. The setting depicted entails an explicit dramaturgic function which helps the viewer to orientate and navigate in the story, but also functions as a cinematic landscape to evoke specific emotions and recognition.

In *Bron//Broen*, the frequent images of the Øresund Bridge, the City of Copenhagen from above, the Turning Torso in Malmö and, more closely depicted, the Copenhagen police station transform the places into significant locations, indicating the regions, the nations and the cities. There are several national and stereotypical indicators at play: the languages, the Danish design interior in Rohde's home, the Volvo, the strict Swede and the soft Dane. The plot itself – including the series' title – reflects the actual place (the bridge) and the two countries. On the level of dialogue many jokes and comments referring to the two languages and cultural habits are included. The national differences are also reflected in the cultural practices, for example the use of stereotypes and typical forms of work and family cultures or the stronger hierarchy at the Swedish work place and Rohde's complicated family relations.

The colours are kept in bleak shades with grey, blue and brown dominating. Many scenes are dark, depicting a typical and recognisable *Nordic Noir* style. The actual Øresund Bridge is the crime scene in the first season, and essential aspects of the story take place here. The climax scene in season two is also located on the bridge and the viewers follow the investigators crossing the border and the bridge several times during a single episode. For an indigenous audience cultural proximity is provided by the actual and recognisable places, the jokes, the language and the characters. The social discourses that the series stages (and deconstructs) are mainly related to gender relations at work and at home (for example Saga's relation to her sexual partner). In general, the series includes a metanarrative and ironic elements that transform the story into "a story about stories about the Nordic region" (Jensen & Waade, 2013). The crime scene in the first episode illustrates this in significant ways: a body on the bridge placed on the exact border between the two nations, and with it a plot that illustrates the production conditions of the series (a Swedish-Danish co-production) aiming for an

international market.

Figure 2: *Bron//Broen* and local colour[10]

In the 931st episode of the *Tatort* series, *Hydra* (WDR, premiered on 11.01.2015), the setting of the former industrial centre of Germany, Dortmund, depicts a similar significant location. In the crime case that is portrayed in regards to a new neo-Nazi movement, a leading figure of the group is found dead on the site of the Phoenix West, a former furnace of the Hoesch AG and now a protected monument of the city of Dortmund. Several visual strategies evoke associations with Dortmund and the Ruhr area as Germany's formerly flourishing industrial region, which now has one of the highest regional unemployment rates in reunited Germany: the recurring image of the furnace – the scene of the crime, a poster in the office of one of the detectives of the old ironworks of Dortmund, which were finally closed down in 1996, or the car rides through the dull suburban parts of Dortmund-Dorstfeld.

Figure 3: *Hydra* (*Tatort* Nr. 931) and local colour[11]

These dominant motifs are presented throughout the episode on the visual level (e.g. direct depiction, posters, television inserts), on the level of dialogue, as well as on the level of character interaction with the younger brother of detective, Daniel Kossik, participating in the neo-Nazi movement and detective Nora Dalay, a young woman of Turkish origin, being severely attacked by a gang of neo-Nazis. *Hydra*

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[10] Still from Broen//Bron (2011-): Saga Norén (Sofia Helin) and Martin Rodhe (Kim Bodnia) with the icon Øresund bridge between Sweden and Denmark in the background. Photo Ola Kjelbye, Filmlance Int./Nimbus Film.
[11] Screenshot *Hydra*, WDR, Colonia Media; script: Jürgen Werner; director: Nicole Weegmann; with Jörg Hartmann, Anna Schudt, Aylin Tezel, Stefan Konarske, and others; release date: 11.01.2015.

thus fits neatly into the type of "realism of the local" as described by Scherer and Stockinger (2010). However, the authors do not further specify the function and appeal of the "realism of the local": We argue that the "realism of the local" produces landmarks that create a concrete place with its own specificities. According to the authors, these local details are of no significance as far as the progress of the action is concerned. Reijnders (2011), however, argues that recognisable places create credibility: "the plots may be fictional, but the events could also actually have occurred – they could literally have *taken place*" (ibid., p. 29). It can indeed be argued that the aspects of local colour as carved out until now – the representation of places and concrete socio-relevant problems – create authenticity, which again creates credibility (see also Buhl, 2013, p. 34), thus allowing moments of transgression beyond the realistic, indexical level of representation. Another marker of local colour is the recurring representation of the practices of Borussia Dortmund football fans (for example collectively watching a game in a local bar), which are portrayed as being inscrutably intertwined with right-wing extremism referring to a grave and actual problem in Dortmund.

Local colour is also added in the *Tatort* series, periodically, by means of language. The region-specific vernaculars in *Tatort* do not only position the course of action within a specific region, but are also used to describe or contrast characters: For instance, when investigator Dorn is staged as a domestic servant from Weimar and her colleague Lessing represents the "outsider" from Hamburg in the "Weimar" *Tatort*. Or when a whole set of stereotypical images (for example rural culture, the Oktoberfest, or Bavarian "stubbornness") are evoked by the heavy Bavarian dialect in the "Munich" *Tatort*. Or in *Bron//Broen*, where languages constitute a more dominant aspect, with the protagonists and the criminal case being set in two countries. The characters reflect national and regional stereotypes, they speak their own language, and they reflect and make jokes concerning cultural and social conditions in the two countries.

Cultural conditions for PBS television drama productions

As already argued, local colour and locality in television drama series are not only a matter of representation, but are also embedded in the cultural-political conditions, the public service traditions, the production cultures, the funding systems and the dynamics between different television markets. Esser (2010) states that the local cannot be reduced to the national (ibid., p. 289). But Athique (2014) reminds us that "we should never underestimate the national in the transnational" (ibid., p. 6). Studying two television formats that are produced within the context of concrete national boundaries and consumed worldwide involves considering the regulating frame of aesthetic production. How does the production economy including regulation, institutions and market peculiarity contribute to the construction of place and space in television? While the answer without doubt lies within a holistic consideration of the entire assemblage of the

production ecology, we want to zoom in on a specific, but nonetheless crucial aspect, namely the role and strategy of public broadcasting services within the specific national borders.[12] Public broadcasting has – amongst other aspects – an impact on the shaping and implementation of local colour in fictional television due to its structuring and ideational principles. The different particularities at play, in the respective public broadcasting systems in which the two examples were produced, influence their alignment towards a regional, national or trans-regional/national orientation. Of special importance for our examples are the logics of centralism vs. decentralisation, which have an impact on the production output.

Tatort is produced within a system that is genuinely federal and regional. The federal principle can be considered as constitutive for German public broadcasting. Implemented by the Allies after WWII on the basis of the British BBC model to prevent centralised governmental influence, the nine different regional networks that are organised by the *ARD*[13] have managed to maintain their sovereignty ever since. The general mandate of the German public broadcasting service to "function as medium and factor of the process of free individual and public opinion, and thereby fulfil the democratic, social and cultural needs of society", and furthermore, to "provide a comprehensive overview of the international, European, national and regional events in all major areas of life", is formulated in §11 (1) of the *Staatsvertrag für Rundfunk und Telemedien* (2013). The regional networks have self-governance rights, so they can implement this mandate themselves. However, catering to aspects of regionalism is regarded as one of their main tasks, as highlighted by a working paper from the *ARD* commission. Regional networks, according to the agreement, appeal to the "worries, needs, delights, conditions of living, characteristics, traditions and historically grown peculiarities". Thus they account as "identification with 'Heimat'" (resolution of the *ARD* board, 27.11.2001).[14] Regionalism within the German broadcasting system is thus effective in two directions: Firstly, it is regarded as a crucial aspect of the regional networks to produce and broadcast programmes that are attuned to the specific region in question. And secondly, the television contract between *ARD* and the regional networks, which regulates the proportion that each network contributes to the common nationwide *ARD* broadcasting, guarantees that regional aspects flow back into the nationwide system of broadcasting and reception.[15] *Tatort* is the most popular and perhaps most significant outcome of the federal specificities of

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[12] While not aiming to analyse the specific production conditions of our examples, but aiming to exemplify the impact of PBS on local colour, the following section will focus on the German and Danish frame of public broadcasting conditions only. We thoroughly acknowledge the specificities of Swedish PBS, but with regard to our main argument the Danish PBS will serve as exemplary case in the analysis.

[13] *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten Deutschland.*

[14] Online: http://www.wdr.de/unternehmen/gremien/rundfunkrat/pdf/resolution/ Funktionsauftrag_Papier_2001.pdf.

[15] However, since the implementation of digital broadcasting, the regional networks are no longer locally restricted. The consequences for viewing habits and production will have to be considered in the future.

the public broadcasting service in Germany. Not only are the regional networks responsible for production, but from the very outset regionalism was regarded as one of the main concerns of the project and part of the initial agreement of all participating players. Gunther Witte, creator of the *Tatort* series, recalls the initial agreement: 1) "Every station establishes their stories within their individual region. The diversity of regions creates a specific charm for the series", and 2) "The stories have to be plausible in reality. This does not mean naturalistic representation of police work and does indeed offer the possibility to move away from reality within some boundaries" (in Göbel-Stolz, 2011). *Tatort* is thus the result of a public broadcasting system that is based on regionalism both in terms of economy and in terms of its remit. However, in terms of distribution, the very same system that allows this unique form of production may hinder its international circulation since distribution rights and regulations within the rather complicated German PBS are almost inscrutable.

Although the federal principle in PBS can be regarded as genuinely German, the general mandate of the public broadcasting services in Germany and Denmark are comparable. The *Danish Broadcasting Act* of 2009 regulates the public broadcasting service mandate to cater to "quality, diversity, and plurality". Decentralisation and cultural democracy have been crucial for the public service broadcasters in the Nordic countries, and this ambition has included regional production infrastructures, representation and funding policies (Syvertsen et al., 2014). But drama production is expensive, so the public broadcasting production units have typically been located in the capitals, for example *DR Fiction* in Copenhagen. Even so, the ambition to represent the regions has been crucial (Agger, 2005). There is undoubted focus on and support for a national Danish culture and language, as laid down in the *Danish Broadcasting Act*: "Particular emphasis shall be placed on Danish language and culture. Programming shall cover all genres in the production of art and culture and provide programmes that reflect the diversity of cultural interests in Danish society" (*Danish Broadcasting Act* of 2009 Part 3/10).

Whilst diversity of opinions and the strengthening of Danish national culture has always been the public broadcasting service mandate in Denmark, it was not until the implementation of *TV2* in the late 1980s that regionalism became an issue in television. According to Jensen (2007, p. 153), one of the political objectives of *TV2* was to counter what was perceived as *DR*'s centralistic Copenhagen bias[16]. Accordingly, *TV2* set up eight regional stations around the country to implement the stated mandate, which was to "emphasise regional affiliation" (*Danish Broadcasting Act*, 2009, Part 6/31/3). However, regionalism in Denmark must also be considered in the light of concepts such as the Nordic countries and Scandinavia. Perceiving Denmark as part of a geo-linguistic, as well as geo-cultural, region with a long tradition of shared history, it becomes obvious that regionalism does not only operate within national borders, but also crosses and

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[16] For a thorough account of Danish PBS, see for example Nielsen, 2010.

transverses them. The concept of the Nordic region within media is concretised by the implementation of *Nordvision* in 1959, an organisation that aims to "strengthen Public Service Television in the Nordic region"[17] by co-producing and exchanging programmes and expertise; by the *Nordvision Fund* (1988), which finances Nordic productions; and by the *Nordic Film and TV Fund* (1990), which promotes film and TV production in the Nordic countries. While the concept of a natural Scandinavian identity has been contested (e.g. Bondebjerg & Redvall, 2011), *Bron//Broen* can be regarded as a product of a "Nordic" self-concept of the Danish and Swedish public broadcasting service.

In conclusion both national systems support the idea of regionalism, but one can state that the structuring principle of the German public broadcasting service is federalism, rooted in the national identity of Germany as constituted by the regional[18]; while the structuring principle in Denmark has primarily been one of national identity in combination with a "Nordic" self-concept. *Tatort*, with its specific regional-oriented format principles, clearly caters to a national/regional orientation in Germany; whereas *Bron//Broen* is a product of the aspiration towards a Nordic appeal within the Scandinavian region. The concrete modes of appeal operate through the aesthetic and narrative staging of local colour that is used in a similar way in some respects and in a different way in others; but the differing orientation principles are structurally embedded in and favoured by the respective public broadcasting systems.

Location placement, place branding and regional development

Another contextual understanding of the different values of places and local colour in television drama, besides the aesthetic and the cultural political values that we have reflected on so far, is that film locations have also become an asset for local authorities, tourism agents, regional investment and regional branding. The local and regional authorities have realised that film and television production in their region creates jobs, attracts tourists and investors, and has a branding effect for the region. The film commission's work is to attract producers to the region and to establish collaborations across industries (e.g. film and tourism). In continuation of the international success of *Bron//Broen*, the region now attracts film tourists. For instance, you can walk in the footsteps of Saga Norén in both Malmö and Copenhagen, and Region Skåne uses *Bron//Broen* to market their own ambitions and success[19]. The huge national success of *Tatort* and other crime series has fostered similar endeavours by tourist and city managements across the country. Not only are there numerous guided crime tours through the different cities, but tourists interested in the crime genre can even discover a "Crime Special" in the city map of Münster (*City Trip Münster*, Reise Know How) or purchase a

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[17] http://en.nordvision.org/nordvision/.

[18] In order to understand Germany as a nation that is constituted by the regional and the federal principle, historical developments such as the impact of the 1848 revolution have to be considered, leading to concepts of the "delayed" or "incomplete" nation. See for example: Winkler (2000).

[19] http://www.skane.com/en/film-i-skane.

guidebook *With Schimanski through the district – a crime guide to the film locations of the "Ruhrpott"* (Conrad Stein Verlag, 2013).

However, a second glance at *Bron//Broen* illustrates that by contrast with *Tatort*, there is a *particular* local colour at play emphasising internationally acknowledged brands from the region, e.g. Nordic design, Scandinavian crime and *Nordic Noir*. Design and architecture from the region are reflected in the Danish interior design and furniture in Rohde's home, and the Turning Torso of Malmö and the police station as significant Nordic architectures. *Nordic Noir* is reflected in the significant grey and dark colours and the climate conditions (most prominently staged in *The Killing*); and gender stereotypes reflect the Scandinavian crime fiction brand (for example the mandatory emotional policemen messing up his life such as Kurt Wallander and Mikael Blomkvist, and the strong, committed female without emotions such as Sarah Lund and Lisbeth Salander). In other words, local colour has turned into a significant *production value* (Jensen & Waade, 2013; Gamula & Mikos, 2014). The genre, the places, the climate and the gender conditions help the producers to market and sell their products. While the term *Scandinavian Crime Series* marks a specific genre and its origin, the brand *Nordic Noir,* is used in much more pragmatic and open ways, including the political drama series *Borgen,* as well as the family drama series *Arvingerne.* The intra-national regions, the municipalities and the tourist organisations that invest resources in the productions see this as a way to develop and regenerate the region and to attract investors, tourists and inhabitants.[20]

The well-exploited commodity of a *Nordic Noir* brand within Denmark thereby stands in contrast to the German case considered in this article. While the tourist branch tries to transform the cultural value of *Tatort* into a commodity, the general recognition of cultural texts as valuable "post-television" commodities is still lacking. By contrast with *Bron//Broen*, *Tatort* cannot draw on a similar brand image that reaches beyond the actual media text, beyond the genre and even beyond the medium itself. The brand image that *Tatort* refers to is only *Tatort* itself – although this is a success story that goes back to the 1970s.

The tendencies, with regard to the Danish/Swedish example, illustrate a *transformation* of the locality from being an insignificant place for production, primarily related to the story and its diegetic world, to being a significant production value reflected in the series' funding, marketing, narrative and aesthetic concepts and collaborations with other industries (e.g. tourism). Film locations become commodities and are exploited by local authorities, production companies and the tourist industry to transform a region into a destination (Ek & Hultman, 2007; Paulsgaard, 2009; BBC Wales, 2006; Waade, 2013). New collaborations across industries arise, in which international sales and ratings, as well as the media's coverage of the series on the international markets, play a significant role for potential collaborations aiming for funding, location placement, brand value and regional development.

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[20] For example Skåne (*Wallander, Broen*), Jylland (*Dicte*) and Fyn (*Arvingerne, 1864*).

Imagined communities and belongings

The examples show how local colour in television drama series encompasses specific narrative and aesthetic features and also certain production conditions including both democratic and economic aspects. As already mentioned, the production of place in television drama series includes physical places, mediated places and imagined places, respectively. Both our cases include all three spatial aspects: Both series use actual places as their main location and dramaturgical concept; and both series refer, utilise and reinforce the audience's knowledge about these places, for example by displaying stereotypes and well known sites. In our examples the Nordic winter landscapes or the Øresund Bridge and the Phoenix West monument, representing particular regions, have become iconic places that the audiences recognise even though they have never been there, because they know the places from television, films and advertisements. The hypermediatisation of the places becomes tangible when, for example, the *Nordic Noir* brand influences the way producers and broadcasters shoot a new series and how they choose and use the locations; it emerges when tourists walk in Saga Norén's footsteps in Malmö or follow the traces of investigator Thiel and Boerne through Münster. In general, place branding and destination marketing is very much about shaping and designing people's imaginations and dreams about a certain place to make them remember, desire or consume the place. This significant interplay between physical, mediated and imagined places that we have mentioned intervenes in and influences the three other aspects that we have described: the narrative and aesthetic style and features, the cultural/political conditions and the market strategic conditions. It is not only a question of increasing economic and branding interests, both within drama productions and regional policies in which local colour and location placement indicate the presence of new sets of values, but also a question of democratic values of identity and how local colour is linked to cultural belonging.

Benedict Anderson's (2000) concept of imagined communities is often used to describe the way media construct the meaning of a nation and a region. As we have described, the television crime genre is famous for foregrounding aspects of space – most obviously the scene of crime itself. However, does this indicate that television crime appeals most to a local audience? Straubhaar (1991) has argued that aspects of local colour appeal most to people who are part of this specific local cultural context or at least culturally close to it. Consequently, the dense and multi-layered use of local colour in both examples would ensure a national success in the respective country of origin. *Bron*//*Broen*, created distinctively for the geo-linguistic and geo-cultural region of the Nordic countries, was indeed a huge audience success in the Scandinavian countries – thus supporting notions of cultural proximity. As Moran and Aveyard (2014) put it: "audiences are understood to have a preference for programmes that are attuned to their sense of who they are" (ibid., p. 20). However, two aspects contradict this view. First, the international success of *Bron*//*Broen* (and other recent Danish and Scandinavian

series) demonstrates convincingly that here neither the concept of cultural proximity nor the concept of the "language of advantage" (Collins, 1989) applies. Instead, local colour is staged as a brand image, referring to the broader genre of *Nordic Noir* and the compelling and fascinating human abyss, and simultaneously to an ideal social reality of stability, state welfare and gender equality. The local colour that has been identified in *Bron//Broen* could therefore be regarded as creating a sense of proximity and belonging on the one hand, while creating a sense of longing (for an exotic place, for a specific, idealised society, etc.) on the other, as the discussion of locality as commodity and regeneration has shown. Second, the regionality and local colour that is demanded and facilitated by the *ARD* does not result in fragmented regional audiences. Although there is a tendency towards stronger dedication of the closer geo-regional audience to the different versions of *Tatort*[21], the series is more or less successful throughout the regional areas of Germany and throughout the geo-linguistic regions, thereby supporting the concept of a German national identity that is constituted by the regional. But there are specific *Tatort* teams that have proved more successful than others throughout Germany. For example, the "Münsteraner" *Tatort* achieves the highest audience shares across the different regions in Germany. However, due to several reasons, the format of *Tatort* has not yet gained as much international recognition as *Bron//Broen*. While the answer regarding the international "failure" of *Tatort* and the international success of *Bron//Broen* is surely multi-layered and beyond the aim of this paper (e.g. the complex distribution concerns within the peculiar German federal public broadcasting system), at least some responsibility can be ascribed to locality and local colour, although not without relating it to other aesthetic and formal aspects. As explained above, both examples make considerable use of the depiction of iconic places such as the Øresund Bridge or the Phoenix West monument, evoking a sense of recognition, credibility, belonging or longing. Yet the distinct difference here can be detected in the way the two series use time rather than place. *Bron//Broen* is a series that unfolds its narrative over 20 episodes. The repeated staging of the iconic bridge, of the grey landscape, or of the language issues (although these are almost completely lost in the dubbed version) adds symbolic meaning to the places (Povlsen, 2014). The bridge becomes a symbol of mobility; the language tells us more and more about the characters as we, the viewers, follow their path through grey and dreary landscapes. *Tatort*, on the other hand, has – due to its specific format rules – only very little time to communicate its concerns. Even though some continuity and serialisation is warranted by the regular appearance of the different teams (two to three times a year), the depicted places enshrine their cursory relevance. They are trapped in their banality and their blatant function to create a naïve sense of realism. They tell their audience: "Look at me, because I exist in reality, everything you can see is authentic".

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[21] This is indicated by *SWR* editor Melanie Wolber, responsible for the "Lena Odenthal" *Tatort* (Ludwigshafen) in Hißnauer et al. 2014, p. 238 and by head of fiction *SRF*, Urs Fitze (personal interview; Susanne Eichner, from 22.10.2014).

Locality and local colour in our argumentation cannot be regarded as being detached from the narrative. For a location to be "injected" with narrative meaning, as we argued with reference to Reijnders (2011), there has to be a narrative meaning attached to the mediated place. Moreover, while currently Denmark and Scandinavia can fall back on the well-established *Nordic Noir,* as well as on Scandinavia as a brand image, no comparable contemporary marketable televisual image of Germany (putting the special case of Bavaria aside) has yet emerged.

In conclusion, we want to argue that local colour in contemporary television crime series offers multiple points of audience attachment – on the inner-textual level referring to textual and aesthetic strategies and processes of meaning making, and on the extra-textual level referring to a specific form of production value. Obviously, concretising place and local colour in television offers the audiences the chance to relate imaginatively to the fictional text. However, these mechanisms are by no means clearly set in stone, as notions of cultural proximities or notions of a crossover audience indicate. The two examples outlined briefly in this article have demonstrated that local colour, as a strategy of addressing regional, national, trans-regional and transnational or global issues and offering points of identification, is used very similarly in some respects and differently in others. However, the identified similarities and differences do not serve as a satisfactory explanation of the success with which televisual content travels. Clearly, the one format has been sold successfully to many other countries, whilst the other has not. But if we not only remember the national in the transnational, but also the transnational in the national, we can argue that both formats travel – across regions and across borders. Along with Agger (2013) and Athique (2014), we argue that sometimes audiences relate to a text because "cultural proximities across national borders can make media content appealing" (ibid., p. 13), and sometimes they relate to it because they wonder what a location is really like (Agger, 2013, p. 240). In this article we have tried to explain that local colour, understood as a concept that is effective on many layers, percolates media not only on the level of textuality and aesthetics, but also on the level of production ecology and on the level of reception. In contextualising the concept of local colour within the broader discussion of regional, national, transnational and global factors, we want to draw attention to the multifaceted potentials of popular narratives and their role in processes of imagined communities and belongings.

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