



AARHUS UNIVERSITY



Coversheet

This is the accepted manuscript (post-print version) of the article.

Contentwise, the accepted manuscript version is identical to the final published version, but there may be differences in typography and layout.

How to cite this publication

Please cite the final published version:

Jensen, P. M., & Jacobsen, U. C. (2017). The 'three-leaf clover': A methodological lens to understand transnational audiences. *Critical Studies in Television*, 12(4), 430-444. DOI: 10.1177/1749602017729312

Publication metadata

Title: The 'three-leaf clover': A methodological lens to understand transnational audiences
Author(s): Pia Majbritt Jensen & Ushma Chauhan Jacobsen
Journal: Critical Studies in Television
DOI/Link: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1749602017729312>
Document version: Accepted manuscript (post-print)

Copyright © [2017] (The Author(s)). Reprinted by permission of SAGE Publications

General Rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

If the document is published under a Creative Commons license, this applies instead of the general rights.

The ‘Three-leaf clover’: A methodological lens to understand transnational audiences

Pia Majbritt Jensen

Aarhus University, Denmark

Ushma Chauhan Jacobsen

Aarhus University, Denmark

Abstract

As the global distribution, broadcast and viewing of Danish TV drama in different parts of the world involves the engagement of heterogeneous players involved in complex interrelationships, this article discusses the methodological lens of the ‘three-leaf clover’ to capture the complexity of these interrelationships. The article explains how the three-leaf clover model helps in embracing transnational interconnectivities, it presents its opportunities and challenges, and tests the capacity of the model by discussing the *differing historical trajectories* of how the series travelled into the world, the *varying intensities* of interest in the series and the *permeability of the audience groupings*.

Keywords

Media audiences, Nordic noir, Danish TV drama, transnational methodologies, transnationalisation

Introduction

This article emerges from the four-year research project, ‘What Makes Danish TV Drama Series Travel?’, in which a consortium of researchers has been investigating the heterogeneous interrelationships between diverse actors and practices involved in the production, circulation and reception of Danish TV drama in domestic and international markets. The project includes an eight-country audience study that covers Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States. This article focuses specifically on the methodological opportunities and challenges involved in investigating the diverse transnational audiences of Danish drama series. Just as recent research conducted in transnational contexts increasingly recognises the need for more

layered and differentiated understandings of the categories we use to describe and explain the messy interconnectivity between peoples (cf. Beck, 2006; Carpentier, Schröder and Hallett, 2014), the distribution, broadcast and viewing of Danish TV drama beyond its borders involves a multitude of different players closely interconnected in complex interrelationships. One of our central concerns has been focused on constructing a methodological lens that captures the complexity of these interrelationships and, at the same time, allows us to remain as methodologically and theoretically explorative as possible in the analysis of emerging data.

This methodological lens constructs transnational audiences in a novel way by visioning ‘audiences’ not only as regular audiences or as statistics extracted from TV ratings, but instead as a ‘three-leaf clover’ of interacting players – all of whom are audiences in different capacities and play key roles in the transnational success of Danish TV drama. The ‘three-leaf clover’ corresponds to: (1) distributors and buyers within the television industry who act as gatekeepers to international markets; (2) other professional actors within the media industry such as journalists, bloggers and TV critics who act as cultural intermediaries; and (3) regular audiences who act by watching the series through national television broadcasting media or diverse online streaming services that have made television contents accessible irrespective of national broadcasting media. By investigating the specific characteristics of each audience grouping and considering their close and complex interrelationships, we aim to understand and explain the global circulation of Danish TV drama as a phenomenon driven by multiple players located in multiple contexts and interacting with multiple reasons. It is our belief that novel convergences of people, technologies and ideas— wrapped up in globalising processes— demand a rethinking of the interconnections that saturate the production, distribution and consumption of television drama today. In this attempt at rethinking, the article contributes to developing existing theories and methods used within the fields of media reception and media distribution in an increasingly transnational world.

We use the metaphor of the three-leaf clover intentionally. First, it conveys to us a certain sensation of a paradoxical sameness and difference. The three leaves allude to all three broad groups as ‘audiences’ that interact with, interpenetrate and influence each other. Yet there are also boundaries among and between them that makes each grouping distinguishable and separable. Second, each leaf is similar to the other, which conveys

that no specific grouping is methodologically privileged over another—they all exert influence in some ways and the nature and extent of that and their interdependence must be empirically established within specific contexts. Third, the metaphor of the clover conveys a fragility of relations and arrangements, which is a distinctive trait of socio-political and economic relations in a globalising age (Knowles, 2015).

The first part of the article presents the background of the recent interest in Danish TV drama, initially produced for the domestic market, in other regions of the world. The second part discusses existing theories on global media reception and distribution that have privileged understandings of the movement and reception of television content when broadcasting was still considered a national affair (cf. Athique, 2014). It continues by explaining the need to explicitly embrace a concern for the transnational interconnectivities that abound in the circulation of Danish TV drama. The third part proposes the need for an expansion in the notion of audience when investigating precisely these transnational interconnectivities and describes the three-leaf clover as a methodological lens that meets this need. The fourth part of the article presents the opportunities and challenges of using the three-leaf clover, whereas the fifth, and concluding part, tests the capacity of the tree-leaf clover model by discussing three overarching and emerging themes in our preliminary findings: namely the *differing historical trajectories* of how the series travelled into the world, the *varying intensities* of interest in the series and the *permeability of the audience groupings*.

The global circulation of Danish TV drama

Denmark, with its demographically small language, its historically strong national public broadcasting tradition, and its relatively minor colonial or warmongering exploits that create bonds of affinity between different peoples in the world, should hypothetically remain an insignificant player in the worldwide exchange of audio-visual content. However, recent television drama series produced by Danmarks Radio (DR) from 2007 onwards such as *Forbrydelsen (The Killing, 2007-12)*, *Borgen (2010-13)*, *Bron/Broen (The Bridge, 2011-present, co-produced with Swedish public broadcaster SVT and two independent production companies)*, *Arvingerne (The Legacy, 2014-present)*, and *Bedrag (Follow the Money, 2016-17)* have been globally exported to as many as 120 territories. This has benefitted the income and status of Danish broadcasters, producers and actors

internationally, it has contributed to a consolidation of a Nordic noir literary and audio-visual genre, and it has spread images of Denmark's geographic, cultural, political and social landscapes to peoples beyond the borders of the Danish nation state.

Much scholarship describes the intrinsic textual and aesthetic qualities of Danish TV drama (e.g. Agger, 2016; Jensen and Waade, 2013; Dunleavy, 2016), and its participation in the emergence of the Nordic noir phenomenon, to offer reasons for its global circulation. By taking his analytical point of departure in the narrative and aesthetic techniques used in *Forbrydelsen* and *Bron/Broen* among others, which were designed to explore moral, social and philosophical concerns pertinent today, Glen Creeber states that 'Nordic Noir's global influence is now helping to reinvent a new breed of miniseries [...] that is uniquely suited to the requirements of the new broadcasting age' (2015: 21). This reinvention may very well be partly responsible for the positive reception of Danish TV drama, but it does not necessarily explain their worldwide movement. Likewise, the supposedly universal appeal of specific genres, such as the police procedural or melodrama that characterise many of the Danish series could be considered a vital factor in their global circulation. However, the opposite could also play a significant role: that TV drama produced in Denmark may have become popular not because of its universal appeal, but rather because it is experienced as 'Other' by transnational audiences.

In our case, the recent surprising export of Danish TV drama shows that greater attention must be paid to the intermingling of business activity, aesthetics, specific cultural conventions, new digital technologies that reconfigure viewing patterns and national television broadcasting architectures that currently co-exist with transnational television content access. There is a pressing need to address the transnational trade in TV content today by also focusing on factors other than the intrinsic qualities of exported television programmes, such as for example powerful storylines and sophisticated production techniques, which may or may not appeal to regular audiences around the world. Furthermore, the exponential growth in channels, platforms and other services providing audio-visual content to increasingly niche-oriented audiences point to a demand for good stories no matter where they come from.

The transnational imperative

Theories of the global exchange of television content have rested on understandings of media reception from an era when broadcasting was still by and large considered a national affair (cf. Athique, 2014). For this reason, explanations accounting for why audio-visual content is distributed, bought or watched in places away from their origin of production have commonly focused on notions of national, cultural and ethnic proximities or difference.

The proximity argument has been convincing to understand the movement of non-Anglophone audio-visual content to specific geo-linguistic regions that share similar cultural and/or linguistic features (Sinclair, Jacka and Cunningham, 1996; Rinnawi, 2006; Curtin, 2007; Sinclair, 2009). Joseph Straubhaar's notion of '*cultural proximity*' describes the 'seemingly common attraction that audiences feel for cultural products [...] close in cultural content and style to the audiences' own culture(s)' (2007: 26). Straubhaar's theory of proximities (2007) also include other proximities such as genre, value and thematic proximities: 'genre proximity' refers to a shared familiarity with certain genres and their structure of storytelling, like the police procedural or melodrama; 'value proximity' refers to shared values, such as work ethics or moral codes; and 'thematic proximity' relates to issues, for example, gender inequality or immigration. This sentiment of sameness echoes in the work of other media scholars (e.g. Frau-Meigs, 2006; Bielby and Harrington, 2008; Oba, 2009) who privilege the idea of *human universals* (Brown, 2004) which presupposes that there are a number of elements, patterns, traits or institutions common to all humanity. This idea is also popular among TV professionals who often refer to the universal of a story when, for example, acquiring foreign series or formats (Jensen, 2007; Lippert, 2011). In contrast to the appeal of the universal, other scholars writing within the field of film studies have argued that the global circulation of audio-visual content appeal lies precisely in *difference*, or in the *aesthetics of the exotic*. This appeal has been seen as a critical experience for the 'crossover audiences' of world cinema, i.e. Western audiences watching feature films from non-Western countries (Khorana, 2013) or when foreign films gain cult status in another country (Rajadhyaksha, 2003).

However, the notions of proximity and distance have become deeply problematic as broadcasting is no longer primarily a national affair (if it ever was). Many scholars agree that diverse peoples of the world are entangled in the processes of

cosmopolitanisation without necessarily choosing to be so (Beck and Sznaider, 2006). Cosmopolitanisation implies the creation of transnational social spaces that foster interactions among people and institutions between two or more nation-states. Transnational spaces afford the construction of a multitude of identities and hybrids of social practices which involve ‘international calls, faxes, emails, satellite TV broadcasting, simultaneous media access through Internet sources and TV stations, international conferences, the different varieties of international tourism (...) a rich tapestry encompassing a bewildering array of activities’ (Roudemetof, 2005: 19). This means that *all* audiences - irrespective of differing levels of economic and cultural capital - are wrapped in processes of ‘banal cosmopolitanism’ (Beck, 2006), ‘ordinary cosmopolitanism’ (Woodward and Skrbis, 2013) or ‘banal transnationalism’ (Esser, Jensen, Keinonen and Lemor, 2016) that exposes them to countless interconnections through international politics, migrations, technological development, global environmental issues and the media. When it comes specifically to television, in much of the world as Adrian Athique (2014:10) critically points out, transnational viewing practices – i.e. when audiences engage with audio-visual content removed from their own cultural, ethnic or national context as would be the case with non-Nordic audiences engaging with Danish series – are in fact the most common (cf. Esser 2014 for a similar criticism of the focus of ‘nation’ in existing television theories).

Much current work in media reception and media distribution engages with this transnational imperative today to varying degrees. Ulf Hannerz (1996), Marwan Kraidy (2005) and Giseline Kuipers (2012) have all discussed the existence of transnational, highly globalised cosmopolitan elites, who have more in common with each other across cultures than within the local cultures where they live. Transcultural proximities help to explain how people in places culturally removed from one another may nevertheless share similar histories and experiences, which underpin ‘discourses of affinity, familiarity and imagined community’ (Athique, 2014: 13). This, in turn, might enable them to experience a television drama series produced in a distant place in similar ways. However, in most cases when transnational viewing has been theorized (Appadurai, 1996; Cunningham and Sinclair, 2000; Iwabuchi, 2002; Karim, 2006; Bore, 2011; Budarick, 2013), explanations for audience engagement have still been found within the national, ethnic and cultural identities of the audiences; or in the transparency and polysemy of US media texts and

the highly commercialised and competitive structure of US broadcasting (Liebes and Katz, 1990; Olson, 1999; Doyle, 2013).

We find it necessary to explicitly embrace a concern for the transnational interconnectivities between people and pay attention to contemporary transformations in the media industry that are saturated by new technologies, innovative production aesthetics and novel business constellations (e.g. Steemers, 2014; Hepp, 2015). The mechanisms associated with global capitalism, such as financial flows, marketing strategies and changing consumption patterns, are all inextricably intertwined with the global television industry. These mechanisms are activated and driven by a myriad of diverse professionals and regular viewers acting in different capacities. One of the first steps to understand why, how and the extent to which Danish TV drama travels requires constructing a symmetry between these diverse actors who participate in this global exchange of television content.

The three-leaf clover

The notion of audiences—a core concept within established media scholarship - has undergone a series of theoretical and methodological transformations. Established media scholarship has commonly understood the ‘audience’ as comprising *regular* media users, or in the case of television, *regular* viewers (e.g. Jensen and Rosengren, 1990; Schrøder, Drotner, Kline and Murray, 2003; Pertierra and Turner, 2014). Scholars have frequently debated the definition and nature of audiences. For example, audiences have been seen as ‘passive’ recipients of powerful media messages or ‘active’ and more selective users of media content (e.g. Klapper, 1960; Levy and Windahl, 1985). A series of different epistemological positions in researching audiences have emerged (e.g. Morley, 1986), as well as new methods of investigating audience interaction online (e.g. Kozinets, 2010; Baym, 2010). Recently, new conversations have involved, for example, questioning whether contemporary audiences can be characterised as national or transnational (e.g. Athique, 2014), or constructing new frameworks to investigate transnational television (e.g. Chua, 2013). Irrespective of this valuable pool of insights on audiences, there is a continued tendency to firmly associate the notion of audience with the practices of individuals, groups or communities who ‘watch’ television programmes for entertainment, identification, information, inspiration or curiosity.

To embrace the diversity of actors involved in all of the above, and to be able to discuss the close, complex and interdependent relationships that make up this richly textured context in which TV drama made in Denmark travels, we, however, would like to propose an expansion of the notion of audience by using the methodological lens of a ‘three-leaf clover’ to guide our investigation. Hence, the audiences in our audience study are not seen as comprising regular viewers who demand Danish content and thus fuel the circulation of Danish TV drama *alone*, but rather as comprising a ‘three-leaf clover’ of interacting actors, all of whom are audiences capable of decision-taking and exerting influence in different capacities.

The three-leaf clover corresponds to three types of actors considered critical in the international success of TV drama produced in Denmark. These are: (1) buyers and distributors, who act as gatekeepers to international markets, (2) journalists, critics and other cultural intermediaries, who act as arbiters of taste and agenda-setters, and (3) regular viewers, who act by watching the series via for example broadcast TV, streaming services and (legal and illegal) downloading services and, hence, making the series viable content internationally.

The first grouping – distributors and buyers – comprises a critical audience for any imported content, as they often act as *gatekeepers* to the importing market (Kraidy, 2005; Kuipers 2012). In performing this gatekeeping function, distributors and buyers are also audiences, as they must watch the content they may or may not distribute or buy. As such, their own tastes and preferences together with preconceived notions of their audiences’ tastes and preferences determine the fate of any content in the international market, and especially content from unknown territories, producers and/or broadcasters, as has been the case with Danish TV drama. Distributors refer to the international distribution companies that decide to buy content from local broadcasters and production companies depending on who holds the rights. In this context, distributors are all actors within a given distribution company, who participate in primary decision-making processes. Examples of international distribution companies that have distributed Danish television content are ZDF-Enterprises, DR Sales, Lumière, America Video Films and Arrow Films. Buyers include actors who take decisions to buy a specific content from an international distributor. Buyers comprise therefore not only the various acquisitions staff based in broadcasting or other content providing companies who frequently travel to

international media markets to scout for (and buy) appropriate content, but buyers also include their superiors – be they heads of channels, commissioning editors or acquisitions directors who sanction and purchase the recommendations made by acquisitions staff. In the Japanese context, these would include acquisitions managers at the Tohokushinsha media company and the Super!Drama pay channel. In the Australian context, these would include acquisitions managers and the relevant heads of programming at the public broadcaster SBS. Despite obvious differences between distributors and buyers, they are both tightly connected to the television-specific media industry. Understanding the practices of these actors are critical in assessing the ways and extents to which industry and business strategies such as brand value, industry trends, risk management and price (see Johnson, 2012; Franssen and Kuipers, 2013) function in the decision to distribute or acquire Danish TV drama.

The second leaf comprises other professional actors often associated with the media industry who act as cultural intermediaries. Bourdieu's (1984) notion of cultural intermediaries has been widely used to understand sociocultural transformations, the close relationship between cultural and economic practices and to capture understandings of professional actors involved in the production and circulation of symbolic products and services. Cultural intermediaries are characterised by their 'claims to professional expertise in taste and value within specific cultural fields' (Maguire and Matthews, 2014: 2), and in their acts of interpretation and transformation, they also contribute to the further corporatization of cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2006).

The motivation behind the second leaf emerged from the deluge of media coverage that accompanied series such as *Forbrydelsen* and *Borgen* following and often even preceding their broadcast, particularly in the United Kingdom but also in Australia, Germany and Turkey. TV critics and journalists located in specific national contexts that report on the Danish TV dramas can be viewed as tastemakers and agenda-setters who define what good taste and cool content comprises in the audio-visual market today (see also Rixon, 2011). Investigating their practices allows us to both consider how they influence perceptions and opinions of Danish TV drama and how their activities impact the decisions of buyers and broadcasters, as well as promote or stop regular audiences from viewing.

Our second leaf also extends to professionals beyond TV critics and journalists to embrace subtitling and dubbing translators, marketing and branding agents, and media researchers, which may or may not be directly related to the television-media industry. For example, in the Japanese context, discussions with subtitling and dubbing translators have offered insights into the manner in which cultural content associated to Denmark is interpreted and transformed into other linguistic-cultural environments. Thus, the second leaf embraces actors who perform a wide range of tasks that transform and recast Danish TV dramas significantly from their place of origin. Cultural intermediaries provide public media coverage; they act as arbiters of taste; they transform the Danish language into other linguistic-cultural codes; and they focus on strategically capturing different easily recognizable and sellable elements of the series to market and brand the television with the strategic intent of boosting sales and ratings.

The third leaf comprises regular viewers who take decisions to watch the series through traditional or new digital platforms. An investigation of this leaf consists of generating data in each of the eight countries that may include quantitative audience ratings and viewer demographics and individual/focus group interviews. The quantitative ratings lend insights to, for example, how regular audiences of Danish TV drama differ from regular audiences of other drama series. The interviews generate valuable data to explore the reception of Danish drama from a wide variety of perspectives. Issues to be explored include whether Danish series are perceived to be different or similar to series originating elsewhere, and how cultural, social, political differences are perceived – if they are – among the audiences. The perceptions and practices of regular audiences continue to be integral to the research inquiry as their decision to watch Danish TV drama impact the decisions on financial viability made by distributors and buyers.

Opportunities and challenges

As contemporary media reception and media distribution is characterised by shifting and dynamic constellations of partnerships and novel bonds of interconnections, the three-leaf clover methodology offers access to proposing multi-layered forms of explanations for why Danish TV drama series travel by bringing different actors, who all become implicated in different capacities, within proximity to one another. We now turn to the specific opportunities and challenges involved when doing this.

The first opportunity or advantage of our design is that we take an extensive global view of the TV drama series as we follow their journey into the world by retrospectively piecing together their movement through different sites and hubs. This following entails our engagement with diverse territories and regions and allows us to come to a much more detailed understanding of the transnational distribution of non-Anglophone audiovisual drama. At the same time, we are able to understand the influence exerted by each grouping in the three-leaf clover and the points where their decisions influence and impact each other.

The second opportunity or advantage of our design is that we generate rich and diverse forms of data from eight countries from five continents with different language and cultural fabrics, and which all have their own media regulations, systems and practices. We see the production of an asymmetric empirical aggregate – thick in some places and thin in others – as valuable in providing critical explanatory material to assess ‘what makes Danish TV drama travel’. For example, work conducted in Australia, Germany and the United Kingdom has generated interviews with relevant industry people, which has also made it possible to chart key defining moments that led to their wider circulation; media coverage collection; audience ratings of Danish series; and extensive focus group interview data. Work conducted in smaller and peripheral markets, such as Japan and Brazil, where the identification of regular viewers has been difficult and where no accessible ratings exist, data gathering has been subject to bricolage in the sense that Claude Lévi-Strauss (2004: 7) described as ‘making do’ with ‘whatever is at hand’. The ‘whatever’ in these cases includes recorded interactions with all three types of audiences, programme brochures, blog posts and sketchy online comments.

When the global view and the rich, local empirical aggregate of data are combined, it makes the investigation of the similarities, dissimilarities, local specificities, overlaps, paradoxes, elements of surprise and interconnections *among* and *within* the groupings and countries possible. However, the opportunities that emerge from the three-leaf clover methodology, also give rise to major challenges. The generation of rich, local empirical aggregate of data also amounts to the generation of data that is irregular, non-uniform, some subject to translation, and many subject to the influence of the different researchers’ disciplinary background and focus. In short, the data generated is ‘voluminous, messy,

unwieldy and discursive' (Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor, 2003). This messiness unavoidably leads to a whole array of challenges posed for comparison.

As the country studies of the three-leaf formation are embedded within country-specific national media regimes, it becomes challenging to avoid methodological nationalism, i.e. the tendency in social sciences to accept the nation-state as the point of departure for any explanation (Beck and Sznaider, 2006) when analysing our data. In fact, our initial idea categorised the actors and groupings into first, second and third audience 'tiers'. However, this assumed an underlying logic of a national context, in which a TV series enters a national market through the distributors and buyers, after which critics and journalists working for media in that national market promote it, and then finally consumed by viewers in that market. However, audiences of any type are no longer bound to watching a TV series in a national context. Ordinary viewers and journalists may bypass broadcasters and buyers by accessing content online, be it legally, semi-legally or illegally. However, we are critically aware that although nation-states can no longer serve as the only orienting reference point in the light of contemporary transnational distribution and reception of audio-visual contents, erasing the importance of national contexts, and subsequently erasing the local rootedness of any practice would be erroneous: nation-states continue to exert some influence on the practices of the different groupings in the three-leaf clover. Thus, when the data gathering methods, the data gatherers and the data itself varies from place to place, then where and how are the parameters for comparison of diverse national contexts to be constructed? Reversely, we could also ask whether a strict country-to-country comparison is even desirable considering our interest in and commitment to the transnational.

Another important challenge is addressing the impacts of how the 'three-leaf-clover' methodology constructs new forms of similarities and differences and what the ascription of new categories entails. For example, specific actors can often be placed in more than one of the groupings/leaves. A journalist, distributor or buyer may also be a regular viewer. A regular viewer may also become a journalist and even a critic when blogging about or commenting on a series online. Consequently, contemporary audiences arguably can be passive as well as active and take on different roles (such as regular viewer-*plus*-critic or buyer-*plus*-regular viewer).

We are also obliged to consider other 'differences in the differences' between and

within the three leaves in the clover. For example, the grouping of distributors and buyers into one category must proceed with attending to the substantial differences of agendas, networks and organizational constraints that influence their practices as actors doing different work such as buying or distributing. Likewise, the differences that exist among types of cultural intermediaries and the effects that emerge from their practices are equally significant and require careful empirical investigation in specific sociocultural contexts (Nixon and du Gay, 2002). Although cultural intermediaries are attached to the media industry in thick and thin ways, some work *within* broadcasting companies (such as marketing and branding professionals) whilst others work externally to the companies (such as TV critics). Their positions, and thus their intentions, practices and mandates would thus differ. At one level, the differences offer very high levels of complexity, which often make it difficult to find patterns of explanation, and yet at another level, this complexity permits that novel explanations and insights may be found perhaps in the plethora of interconnections.

Conclusion: Testing the model

The complexity of the model has already proved fruitful in yielding a number of interesting themes in our findings, the first two of which relate to the *different historical trajectories* and the *varying intensities* of how the series have travelled into the world. As such, these findings are based on the extensive global approach we take in tracking the journey of the drama series. We have for example found that Australia in many instances is a special case as Australian public broadcaster SBS successfully imported Danish series long before other non-Nordic and non-Germanic markets (Jensen 2016, McCutcheon and Jensen 2017). This deviates from the general historical trajectory or pattern of how Danish drama series travelled from Denmark's Nordic sister countries and wider geo-linguistic region, via the crucial 'shop window' of the British market, and the relative success on BBC4 of *Forbrydelsen*, and *then* into the global market (Jensen, Nielsen and Waade 2016, Jensen 2016) and countries such as Brazil, Japan, Turkey and the United States. We can describe this through mapping the transnational interrelationships and networks between actors within the first leaf within the country studies.

Thus, the Danish series have been received with varying interest and intensity around the world. In countries such as Australia, Germany and the United Kingdom, the

series can be characterised as relatively successful with regular audiences and, hence, broadcasters. In these countries, the series have also generated a fair amount of press coverage. The interest for Danish TV drama series in Japan offers a sharp variation. The initial broadcasting of *Forbrydelsen* on the pay channel Super!Drama in 2012 was an outcome of following international trends and developments and being inspired by the decisions made by the BBC. Interactions with the three groupings of the three-leaf clover suggest that although the series have been watched by regular viewers, who have the financial capacity to pay for the product, and are especially interested in imported non-Japanese television content, their popularity in Japan ‘cannot be described as verging on the euphoric but rather as lukewarm... The interest in Danish TV drama did not start notable fan communities or sales of Sarah Lund sweaters’ (Jacobsen, forthcoming). This shows the different intensities with which Danish drama series enter different national markets. In Australia, for example, SBS broadcast Danish TV drama fairly prominently over more than a decade and the series have enjoyed relative fame with Australian viewers as well as with journalists and TV critics. Contrary to this, the intensity of interest in Japan, for example, has happened on a quieter scale. Japanese press coverage of the series is non-existent and the numbers of regular viewers have been small. This is something that also seems to be the case in Brazil.

The fact that the intensities of interest vary is important to maintain a nuanced and critical understanding of the popularity of Danish TV drama globally and to keep us from making sweeping and highly generalised claims generated from single market experiences. The intense focus on and recent success of Nordic noir and Danish TV drama in for example the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia, and the ensuing academic interest in the phenomenon, should not prompt us to hastily conclude that Denmark is on the verge of following in the footsteps of big exporting markets such as the United States and Britain. The story of the global success of Danish TV drama is much more elusive, nuanced, and perhaps serendipitous. Our methodological lens of the three-leaf clover allows us to investigate this elusiveness and these nuances in depth.

A third theme that has emerged from our findings is that of *permeating audience groupings* and is related to our forms of categorization of actors and the need to perhaps include new actors. For example, buyers and journalists often can be categorised as regular viewers, as well. For example, the buyer who originally bought *Rejseholdet/Unit*

One for SBS Australia did so because she herself got ‘hooked’ on it and therefore had to buy it (Roscoe, 2015). Another example is that many of the journalists, who reported on the Danish series in the British press seemed to have been watching the series as regular viewers to begin with before they brought the series into their reporting of for example domestic politics or fashion (also see Sparre and From, 2017). Data from Brazil has begun to show how political and social activists appropriate the storylines of Danish TV drama to critique local practices and policies on blogs. This may be seen as an example of a cultural intermediary external to media organisations yet use the potential of new media technologies to further their own – often individual – causes.

Although the unwieldiness and messiness of the data generated by the three-leaf clover methodology poses substantial challenges for investigating similarities, differences and patterns *among* and *within* the groupings and countries, it also allows us to investigate the transnational where broadcasting is no longer primarily a national affair. The decision-taking capabilities and the interrelationships between the groupings in the three leaves, the emergence of new actors, global industry trends, importing channel identities, festival prizes, acquisition costs, branding, intrinsic textual qualities, and changing viewer and distribution patterns all influence the way TV drama made in Denmark travels globally.

Acknowledgments

The research undertaken for this article was undertaken in the collaborative research project *What Makes Danish TV Drama Series Travel Transnational Production, Cultural Export and the global Reception of Danish Drama Series* (www.danishtvdrama.au.dk) that is funded by the Danish Council for Independent Research.

References

- Agger G (2016) Nordic Noir: Location, Identity and Emotion. In García, A (ed) *Emotions in Contemporary TV Series*. Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 134-152.
- Appadurai A (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press.

- Arvingerne I and II [The Legacy]* (2014-2015) DR 1. DR, co-financed with NRK, SVT, RÚV and YLE.
- Athique A (2014) Transnational audiences: Geocultural approaches. *Continuum* 28(1): 4-17.
- Baym NK (2010) *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*. Polity.
- Beck U (2006) *Cosmopolitan vision*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beck U and Sznaider N (2006) Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: A research agenda. *The British Journal of Sociology* 57(1): 1-23.
- Bedrag [Follow the Money]* (2016-17) DR1. DR.
- Bielby D and Harrington CL (2008) *Global TV: Exporting Television and Culture in the World Market*. New York: New York University Press.
- Bore IK (2011) Transnational TV Comedy Audiences. *Television & New Media* 12(4): 347-369.
- Borgen* (2010-2014) DR1. DR.
- Bourdieu P (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Bron/Broen [The Bridge]* (2011-present) SVT1/DR 1. SVT, DR, Nimbus and Filmlance.
- Brown DE (2004) Human Universals, Human Nature and Human Culture. *Dædalus* 2: 47-54.
- Budarick J (2013) Localised audiences and transnational media: Media use by Iranian-Australians. *Media International Australia*, (148), 70-78.
- Carpentier N, Schrøder KC and Hallett L (2014) Audience/Society transformations. In: Carpentier N, Schrøder KC and Hallett L (eds) *Audience Transformations: Shifting audience positions in late modernity*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1-12.
- Chua BH (2013) A Framework for Audience Study of Transnational Television. In: Parameswaran R (ed) *The International Encyclopedia of Media Studies* 4(3:12): 276-299.

- Creeber G (2015) Killing Us Softly: Investigating the aesthetics, philosophy and influence of Nordic Noir television. *Journal of Popular Television* 3(1): 21-35.
- Cunningham S and Sinclair J (2000) *Floating Lives: Media and Asian diasporas*. Saint Lucia: University of Queensland Press.
- Curtin M (2007) *Playing the World's Biggest Audience: The globalization of Chinese film and TV*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Doyle G (2013) *Understanding Media Economics* (Second Edition). London: Sage.
- Dunleavy T (2016) Crossing New Boundaries in Public TV Drama: The Transnational Success of Denmark's *Forbrydelsen*. In: Lowe GF and Yamamoto N (eds) *Crossing Borders and Boundaries in Public Service Media*. Gothenburg: Nordicom, pp. 201-214.
- Esser A, Jensen PM, Keinonen H and Lemor AM (2016) The Duality of Banal Transnationalism and Banal Nationalism: Television Audiences and the Musical Talent Competition Genre. In: Aveyard K, Jensen PM and Moran A (eds) *New Patterns in Global Television Formats*. Exeter: Intellect, pp. 295-309.
- Esser A (2014) European Television Programming: Exemplifying and Theorizing Glocalization in the Media. In Robertson R (ed) *European Glocalization in European Context*. London: Palgrave, pp. 85-101.
- Forbrydelsen I, II, and III [The Killing]* (2007-2012) DR 1. DR in co-production with NRK, SVT and ZDF
- Franssen T and Kuipers G (2013) Coping with Uncertainty, Abundance and Strife: Decision-making processes of Dutch acquisition editors in the global market for translations. *Poetics* 41(1): 48-74.
- Frau-Meigs D (2006) *Big Brother* and Reality TV in Europe: Towards a theory on situated acculturation by the media. *European Journal of Communication* 21(1): 33-56.
- Hannerz U (1996) *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*. London: Routledge.
- Hepp A (2009) Transculturality as a Perspective: Researching Media Cultures Comparatively. *Forum Qualitative Social Research* 10(1): Art. 26.

- Hepp A (2015) *Transcultural Communication*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- Hesmondhalgh D (2006) Bourdieu, the Media and Cultural Production. *Media, Culture & Society* 28(2): 211-31.
- Iwabuchi K (2002) *Recentring globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Jacobsen UC (forthcoming) Does Subtitled Television Brand the Nation? Danish television drama and its language(s) in Japan. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 20(5).
- Jensen PM (2016). Global Impact of Danish Drama Series: A Peripheral, Non-Commercial Creative Counter-Flow. *Kosmorama* 263. <http://www.kosmorama.org/Artikler/Global-Impact-of-Danish-Drama-Series.aspx>. (accessed 21 July 2017)
- Jensen PM, Nielsen JI and Waade AM (2016). When Public Service Drama Travels: The Internationalization of Danish Television Drama and the Associated Production Funding Models. *Journal of Popular Television*, 3(2): 91-108.
- Jensen PM and Waade AM (2013). Nordic Noir Challenging the 'Language of Advantage': Setting, Light and Language as Production Values in Danish Television series. *Journal of Popular Television* (2): 259-265.
- Jensen PM (2007) *TV Format Adaptation in a Trans-National Perspective: An Australian and Danish Case Study*. Aarhus University.
- Jensen KB and Rosengren KE (1990) Five Traditions in Search of the Audience. *European Journal of Communication* 5: 207-235.
- Johnson C (2012) *Branding Television*. London: Routledge.
- Karim K (2006) *The Media of diaspora: Mapping the globe*. London: Routledge.
- Khorana S (ed) (2013) *Crossover Cinema: Cross-cultural film from production to reception*. London: Routledge.
- Klapper J (1960) *The Effects of Mass Communication*. Illinois: The Free Press.
- Knowles C (2015) The flip-flop trail and fragile globalization. *Theory, Culture and Society* 32 (7-8): 231-244.

- Kozinets RV (2010) *Netnography: Doing ethnographic research online*. London: Sage.
- Kraidy MM (2005) *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Kuipers G (2012) The cosmopolitan tribe of television buyers: Professional ethos, personal taste and cosmopolitan capital in transnational cultural mediation. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 15(5): 581-603.
- Lévi-Strauss C (2004) *The Savage Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Levy MR and Windahl S (1985) The Concept of 'Audience Activity'. In Rosengreen KE, Wenner LA and Palmgreen P (eds) *Media Gratifications Research: Current Perspectives*. Sage.
- Liebes T and Katz E (1990) *The export of meaning: Cross-cultural readings of Dallas*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lippert B (2011) *Telenovela formats: Localized versions of universal love*. Göttingen: Sierke Verlag.
- Maguire JS and Matthews J (2014) *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader*. London: Sage.
- Morley D (1986) *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure*. Taylor & Francis.
- Nixon S and du Gay P (2002) Who Needs Cultural Intermediaries? *Cultural Studies* 16(4): 495-500.
- Oba G (2009) Programming strategies of US-originated cable networks in Asian markets. *International Journal of Media Management* 11(1): 18-31.
- Olson SR (1999) *Hollywood planet: Global media and the competitive advantage of narrative transparency*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Pertierra AC and Turner G (2013) *Locating Television: Zones of Consumption*. London: Routledge.
- Rajadhyaksha A (2003) The 'Bollywoodization' of Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 4(1): 25-39.
- Rejseholdet [Unit One]* (2000-2004) DR1. DR.

- Rinnawi K (2006) *Instant Nationalism: McArabism, Al Jazeera and Transnational Media in the Arab World*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Rixon P (2011) The Role of the British Popular Press in re-imagining American Television Celebrities. *Celebrity Studies* 2(1): 44-55.
- Roudometof V (2005) Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization. *Current Sociology* 53(1): 113-35.
- Sinclair J (2009) Latin America's impact on world television markets. In: Turner G and Tay J (eds) *Television studies after TV: Understanding television in the post-broadcast era*. London: Routledge.
- Schrøder K, Drotner K, Kline S and Murray C (2003) *Researching Audiences*. Hodder Arnold.
- Sinclair J, Jacka E and Cunningham S (1996) *New Patterns in Global Television: Peripheral Vision*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spencer L, Ritchie J and O'Connor W (2003) Analysis: Practices, Principles and Processes. In Ritchie J and Lewis J (eds) *Qualitative Research Practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. London: Sage, pp. 219-262
- Stemmers J (2014) Selling Television: Addressing Transformations in the International Distribution of Television Content. *Media Industries Journal* 1(1): 44-49.
- Straubhaar JD (2007) *World Television: From global to local*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Woodward I and Skrbis Z (2013) *Cosmopolitanism: Uses of the idea*. London: Sage.

Pia Majbritt Jensen is Associate Professor at Aarhus University, Denmark. Her research revolves around the role of media in globalization processes, as well as topics including international television formats and genres, local media systemic conditions, and production and industry analyses. Current projects include a comparative study of different national audiences' response to the same television formats, and The Danish Council for Independent Research-funded project "What makes Danish TV drama series travel?" (danishtvdrama.au.dk), in which she is heading an eight-nation reception study. She has published widely in anthologies and international journals and is the co-

editor (with Karina Aveyard and Albert Moran) of *New Patterns in Global Television Formats* (Intellect, 2016). Email: pjamj@cc.au.dk

Ushma Chauhan Jacobsen is Associate Professor at the Department of English, Aarhus University. She has a Ph.D. in Business Communication and has earlier worked as a curator and project manager within museums and INGOs in Tanzania, Denmark and Nepal. Her research areas include professional and intercultural communication, English as an international/global language, cosmopolitanism, media geographies and ethnographic methods. Ushma is currently part of the interdisciplinary project *What Makes Danish TV Drama Travel?* funded by the Danish Council for Independent Research and in a project investigating metrolingual connections between cultural intermediaries in European Capitals of Culture supported by Aarhus University's rethinkIMPACTS 2017 programme. Email: ucj@cc.au.dk