

NORSKOV AND THE LOGIC OF PLACE: THE SOFT EFFECT OF LOCAL DANISH TV DRAMA PRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we analyse locality and locations in recent Danish TV crime drama with the series *Norskov* as a representative case. The series' mode of production is rooted in the Danish broadcaster TV 2's regional obligations and it illustrates a broader tendency in

local TV drama production. The article introduces the concepts intertextual consciousness, stories from below and cartographic branding, and refers to the notion of re-imagined communities as a local administrative result of drama production and broadcast. The findings of the article are based on production and location analyses with primary focus on the series' preproduction stage as well as empirical data material such as interviews, documents from the production process and material from the municipality of Frederikshavn (the location of *Norskov*), manuscript versions, and textual and visual material from the cinematographer and the location manager. Finally, the article combines provinciality and the notion of re-imagined communities in order to evaluate the effect of local drama production.

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Scandinavian television crime drama has increasingly become more and more local. Like popular written crime fiction, television drama production has, throughout the last few decades, shown an emergent awareness of recognizable and often peripheral places. In general, this development was incited by the popular Swedish series *Wallander* (2005-2013), but attention to so-called provincial areas is nothing new in Danish or international crime drama. In a Danish context, the province was used as a topos in the television drama *En by i provinsen* (1977-1980), where the title literally means 'a provincial town', *Strisser på Samsø [Island Cop]* (1997-1998), which takes place on a Danish island, *Rejseholdet [Unit One]* (2000-2004), in which a police team travels around Denmark, and *Dicte* (2012-), which takes place in the second largest town in Denmark. In Denmark, 'the province' basically means 'not Copenhagen', and in shows like these the provincial topos is often combined with travel and/or homecoming passages. This is the case in *Strisser på Samsø* and *Rejseholdet*, but has a lot of similarities with travel motifs in crime narratives such as *Lilyhammer* (2012-2014), *100 Code* (2015) or *Jordskott* (2015). In such cases, the province is not a place where you are, but it is rather a set of places that you go to.

This is also the case in the recent Danish television drama *Norskov* (2015-), which will be the representative case in this study of the logic of place in local Danish television crime drama production. The television drama takes place in a fictional port town in North Denmark called Norskov, but the drama was the first Danish television drama to be shot entirely on location, in this case in the northern port town Frederikshavn. The narrative revolves around Tom Noack, who returns to his native town from Copenhagen in order to help the local police solve drug-related issues, but he soon realizes that the local problems have strong ties to his own reunited social circle. From the start, the narrative expresses issues of provinciality and geographical peripheries, while several aspects of the production process encircle issues of locality, periphery and spatial logic, which means that the narrative of the drama as well as its production are heavily embedded in discussions of place. For this reason, *Norskov* is chosen as a compelling case in order to read how place has been articulated during the production, in the drama series itself and in the local political context of the drama series.

In this article, we analyse *Norskov* as both a representative and an original case in Danish television drama production. *Norskov* was broadcast by the commercial Danish public service channel TV 2, which has broadcast previous dramas such as *Strisser på Samsø* and *Dicte*. Part of the so-called public

service remit are specific regional obligations, which have resulted in a comprehensive attention towards the province in TV 2's Danish television drama broadcasts. We focus on locality and location in *Norskov*, and based on theories of place and location we introduce the concepts *intertextual consciousness*, *stories from below* and *cartographic branding*, and finally we refer to the notion of *re-imagined communities* as a local political result of the drama production and broadcast. The *Norskov* series is both representative and original: representative of a tendency within television crime drama production today because of the series' mode of production, with its stress on locations that has roots in TV 2's regional obligations; and original because of its combination of this focus with its character-driven crime plot, its characters being shaped by their place in the local community.

1. THE LOGIC OF PLACE AND LOCATION STUDIES

Results in this article are based on a comprehensive production study of *Norskov*, which include several interviews with people involved with the production (above and below the line), the television broadcaster, the production company, the local administration in Frederikshavn as well as regional commissioners. Furthermore, the article is based on findings in visual material and documents from and communication about the production process, such as access to documents from the municipality of Frederikshavn and The Danish Film Institute, manuscript versions and notes from the scriptwriter, textual and visual material from the cinematographer, photography by the location manager, and published material in media, such as social media content and press coverage. Of course, this means that we have a huge amount of empirical data, and in this article, we will only be able to touch upon a minor sample of it. The aim of this article is then to draw general conclusions from our extensive material.

There are of course many conclusions to draw from such a huge data bank, but the numerous references to place that run through the material – from the very early stages of production, to the latest posts in a Facebook support group for *Norskov* – are striking. The sense of place that we may decipher from such material is what we here refer to as 'the logic of place'. Here, 'logic' does not refer to strict philosophical argumentation, but rather implies a certain way of thinking about a specific matter. The fact that we encounter spatial references throughout our material indicates that place has

been a very important factor to consider for all parties in developing, producing and broadcasting the drama. 'Place' is, then, understood as both a specific locality with what Steven Peacock (2014: 100) refers to as a "fixed geographical denomination", but according to Shaun Moores (2012: 27), places are also "constituted when locations are routinely lived-in", in which way a place becomes "an experiential accomplishment binding people and environments". The logic of place thus consists in a *certain way of thinking about the experience of particular locations*. In other words, encountering such a bulk of material with frequent spatial references, theories of location and location studies as a method come in handy when interpreting the way a production has provoked discussions of the logic of place.¹

Still, location studies as a method is new and underdeveloped, while academic work on places in Scandinavian crime fiction is more common (e.g. Peacock 2014, McCorry 2011, Reijnders 2009). Locations are usually thought of as a practical matter for the production or as a reference to a geographical location in film and television (see Honthamer 2010: 323-52), while Les Roberts (2012) and Serra Tinic (2005), both still within the scope of place analysis, and especially Anne Marit Waade (2013), have taken the consideration of locations a significant step further. Waade (2015) points towards three different theoretical positions from which to understand locations: 1) locations may be "settings" that have to do with establishing a diegetic world, 2) locations may be a "cinematic landscape" that in many different ways include local images from places where the production takes place (e.g. iconic places or generally local colour), or 3) locations may be a "site of production", which to a greater extent deals with production prioritizations as well as politico-economic production contexts. In these three understandings of locations there are indications of a parametric transition from fiction into reality, from establishing a story world to a much more practical framework. Elsewhere, and with this in mind, we have introduced 4) the idea of *intertextual locations*, which is a notion of location as particular hinges between locations as settings and locations as sites of production tied to the reception of these by the audience (Christensen and Hansen 2015). In this way, the appropriation of places in television drama and film will not only produce an augmented and intertextual place, but the idea behind intertextual locations emanates from

¹ We are well aware that place theory is a huge field, but we have no room here to develop such theories further. See Christensen and Hansen (2015 and 2016) for a discussion of different place and space theories developed for the analysis of local media production in Denmark.

the fact that the actual choice of location for a production is – consciously or subconsciously – often already intertextual in its spatial orientation. When a director, producer or whatever requests a particular location for a scene, it is not only reality that is swept for inspiration, because a production crew also carries an *intertextual consciousness* based on previous material they have seen and produced, and such material may play a pivotal role when they work on coming up with new material. Below, we clarify how the concept of intertextual consciousness has grown out of our interviews with the creator, producer, location scout and manager and conceptual cinematographer of the series, and out of access to its pre-production material. It should be noted here that our approach is also based on "fully embedded deep texts" from the pre-production process (Caldwell 2008: 347) to the exclusion of textual analysis of a series and its episodes.

David Bordwell (1985: 36) refers to the way that a viewer processes a film based on previous experiences of other films as transtextual motivation, but what we find interesting in working with the logic of place in television drama production is that spatial and narrative choices made during the creation and production are transtextually motivated too. Of course, this makes intuitive sense because all filmmakers are viewers as well, but what we will show in the following analysis is just how conspicuous transtextual motivation is in the planning of locations during production on *Norskov*. For Bordwell, the most commonplace transtextual category for the viewer is genre, and in her framing of a production analysis of Danish satire, Hanne Bruun claims that this goes for producers as well. Genre, she writes, "constitutes product categories as well as production and distribution categories for the producers" (Bruun 2011: 106). What we propose in this article, though, is that the transtextual motivations for a production are not just a genre category, but are rather a productive and creative method. It should be noted that Bordwell's use of the term "transtextual" is based on Gérard Genette, who in his categorisation of transtextual relations includes Julie Kristeva's term intertextuality in a more restricted sense to denote "a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts" (Genette 1982/1997: 5), whereas Umberto Eco uses the term intertextual as a general concept, again dividing it into sub-categories. Eco stresses that in what he calls 'broadened' intertextuality [a]ny difference between knowledge of the world (understood naively as a knowledge derived from an extratextual experience) and intertextual knowledge has practically vanished" (Eco 1997: 23). Similarly, Bordwell combines his transtextual – or inter-

textual – motivation with mimetic theories of narration, and it is striking in our case that the intertextual consciousness never seems to preclude what Bordwell – for the viewer – refers to as realistic motivation (1985: 153-154). Bordwell discusses Aristotelean mimesis, and his translation of the Greek theatron as a “seeing place” (4) indicates that the act of vision is fundamental to mimesis. As we will show, we find a consistent realistic insistence in our data that runs trouble-free alongside the transtextual motivation, which clearly indicates that realism and intertextuality are no adversary to each other. It is rather the opposite case: realism is both contextually and transtextually motivated by the choice of location. The close connection between realism and location that we find in our case is not unique. In film history, the British New Wave, also referred to as Kitchen Sink drama, was epoch-making in its insistence on filming primarily working-class lives not in studios, but on location in Northern industrial cities. An emblematic stylistic trait of the British New Wave – which, as we shall see, is also found in *Norskov* – was “panoramic shots of the industrial city” and “the ‘external’ point of view from outside and above the city, the look of the master-cameraman” (Hutchings 2016/2001: 304-5). Generally, the association of realism and regionality/provinciality in fiction precedes film and television in the notions of “regional realism” in literature (Campbell 2003) as well as “local colour” in visual arts (Hansen and Waade 2017), in both cases closely tied as well to location and locality.

Both Caldwell (2008) and Bruun (2016) indicate a range of methodical problems in conducting qualitative production research. First of all, established media producers above the line may be well-trained in passing on scripted material so as to disclose little of what would be sensitive material in a production culture or on a specific production. Secondly, scholars may tone down the critical aspects of cultural research such as ours because they need to stay on good terms in order to maintain the creative personnel as sources of information. Here, we have no room to discuss these matters in depth, but in our case, we are fundamentally interested in how places and locations actually were scripted, discussed and reflected on up to, during, and after the production period, which means that our position as researchers is, as much as possible, keep an outsider’s glance on pre-prepared material. This does not mean that we are uncritical towards our case material, but the need to appear critical towards our data is somewhat downplayed for the benefit of describing the experience and logic of place among the creative personnel of *Norskov* during the drama’s production.

2. METONYMY AND STORIES FROM BELOW

In the earliest presentation of the *Norskov* project (dated September 2011), creator and scriptwriter Dunja Gry Jensen writes the following (Jensen 2011): “We have a great desire for reality. Real police work. Real crimes. The real Denmark. Real Danes. We believe that others feel the same. That they are actually interested in how police work takes place in reality”². Here, the realistic motivation is quite clear and the following indicates the development method for Jensen: “We believe that research is the best precautionary measure against clichés.” During the spring of 2012, Jensen and researcher Mette Søj travelled around Denmark in order to explore three things: “the challenges and everyday life of the provincial police; the challenges and themes of peripheral Denmark; and sensational criminal cases from provincial Denmark”. At this early development stage, the Southern Danish port Svendborg is mentioned as a possible location for the drama, and to a great extent this town has both cultural and visual similarities with Frederikshavn: a similar population, the masculine and robust harbour area, and the peripheral geographical seaside location with another country (Germany) only a voyage away. These early references indicate that the development of the drama is marked by a spatial mentality, and the development research seems in many ways to adopt an ethnographic gaze in the open-minded registration of local stories from all around Denmark. Jensen and Søj collected provincial stories as inspiration for the development of the drama, which is what we in this article refer to as *stories from below*: stories that come from the ‘real Danes’. According to Søj, this research method is not in itself unusual in Danish television drama production; for instance, she used similar methods for the first season of the DR drama *Arvingerne [The Legacy]* (2014), but the accentuation of realism permeates our material alongside the spatial discourses.

For Jensen, as well as others, it is important to stress that *Norskov* is not the equivalent of Frederikshavn, which is the main reason that the real town is re-named in the series; instead *Norskov* seems to be a spatial metonymy for issues we may locate in many different geographical areas in Denmark: “it is not a film about Frederikshavn, and actually I just use Frederikshavn as a place to tell something about people. Not about peripheries in reality” (Jensen 2015). The narrative in

² The spoken language of the quotations has been modified into more reader-friendly written language, and all translated quotations in the article have been approved by the interviewees.

Norskov is, then, first and foremost meant to be a relational drama about human interconnectedness, but the locality of Frederikshavn brought these aspects into a discussion of peripheral Denmark. “After all, there is in fact nothing especially peripheral about visiting Northern Jutland”, said Jensen. “I was actually pleasantly surprised by the sense of towns or parts of the country that in fact very much turn towards the rest of the world too: Norway, Sweden, England”, she continued. One of the first lines spoken in *Norskov* is: “There are some people who say that Norskov is situated in peripheral Denmark. I say, they just haven’t grasped that the Earth is round” (1.01). This is the very first line spoken in the *Norskov* show-reel made for international sales, which stresses that *Norskov* – from a broadcaster’s and from a distributor’s point of view – does not only represent peripheral areas in Denmark metonymically, but provincial regions in general. So to speak, the highly localised narrative, shot on location and based on intense research with a great deal of human interest, may basically be a very global narrative.

In Jensen’s concept presentation (dated April 2012), she writes the following: “Norskov is an old industrial port town one hour’s drive north of Aalborg. Historically, the town has been centred around the large shipyard Norskov Yard, and it has frequently been visited by workers, seamen and traders from home and abroad. Today, the shipyard is closed down [...] and even though the town still has a relatively thriving business and pub life everything is in decline. Workplaces move out, so does youth, and hospitals and institutions are now further away after the municipal reform. Lately, the local paper has begun announcing every time a new family moves to town. Still, Norskov maintains some optimism” (Jensen 2012). One of the storylines in the final drama is a political narrative about such optimism, and the line quoted above from the first scene of the drama is spoken by the mayor of Norskov. In our interview with the municipal chief consultant of cultural affairs (who worked very closely with the production team), she referred to Frederikshavn as a tumbling doll: “You should not feel sorry for us, because we’re one of those dolls that always gets on its feet again” (Iversen 2015). Such stories from actual people, stories from below, have been collected all around Denmark, but according to Jensen the particular “entrepreneurial and American” mentality was a decisive experience that made her suggest Frederikshavn as the location for the drama. According to her, the drama is about “masculine solicitude” (Jensen 2015).

Concluding the conceptual text, Jensen stresses that “it is a prerequisite that we take our point of departure in a con-

temporary Danish reality instead of existing artistic sources. Therefore, our conceptual work has started with extensive research. This material is our key reference and source of inspiration” (Jensen 2012). Nevertheless, she prioritizes a “list of references” to film and television that should supply the production with what she terms “a common language”. In her earliest presentation, Jensen primarily refers to the television dramas *Mad Men* (2007-2015), *Deadwood* (2004-2006) and *Friday Night Lights* (2006-2011) in order to frame “strong, central male main characters”, whereas in her later conceptual presentation the only one left is *Friday Night Lights* – and this drama’s intense focus on a peripheral American small-town mentality and the communal importance of football have obvious similarities with the prominence of ice hockey in *Norskov* (and in Frederikshavn). In both narrative and style, *Friday Night Lights* is a realistic account of a local town in decline, so besides the fact that it too takes its point of departure from ‘real’ peripheral problems, in many ways the hand-held style of the drama appears as both realistic and transtextual motivation for developing *Norskov*.

3. INTERTEXTUAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN PRE-PRODUCTION

At root, photography carries traces of reality, an indexical sense of something “having been there” (Barthes 1964: 47), as result of “photochemical imprints of real objects” (Schwarzer 2004: 165). In essence, the visibility of television drama production starts with planning and finding places for the diegetic world to take place. In fact, the phrase ‘take place’ implies an interesting metaphor for the way that localisation of drama by way of particular locations is creating new meaning for a place: it is a matter of grasping, adopting and augmenting something that in some ways is partly already there. As we have seen, the planning of *Norskov* involved an excursion into local narratives, but what is interesting is the fact that, during their research, both the drama’s screenwriter and researcher initially fell for the masculine visual characteristics of town areas. Together with collected stories from provincial places in Denmark, these areas made their way into the imagery of the show. The masculinity and potency of a port are not only highlighted in images included in Jensen’s conceptual presentation of *Norskov*; they run through photographic images by both location manager Martin Bagger and cinematographer Adam Wallensten, and of course finally in the broadcast series. According to Jensen, the final

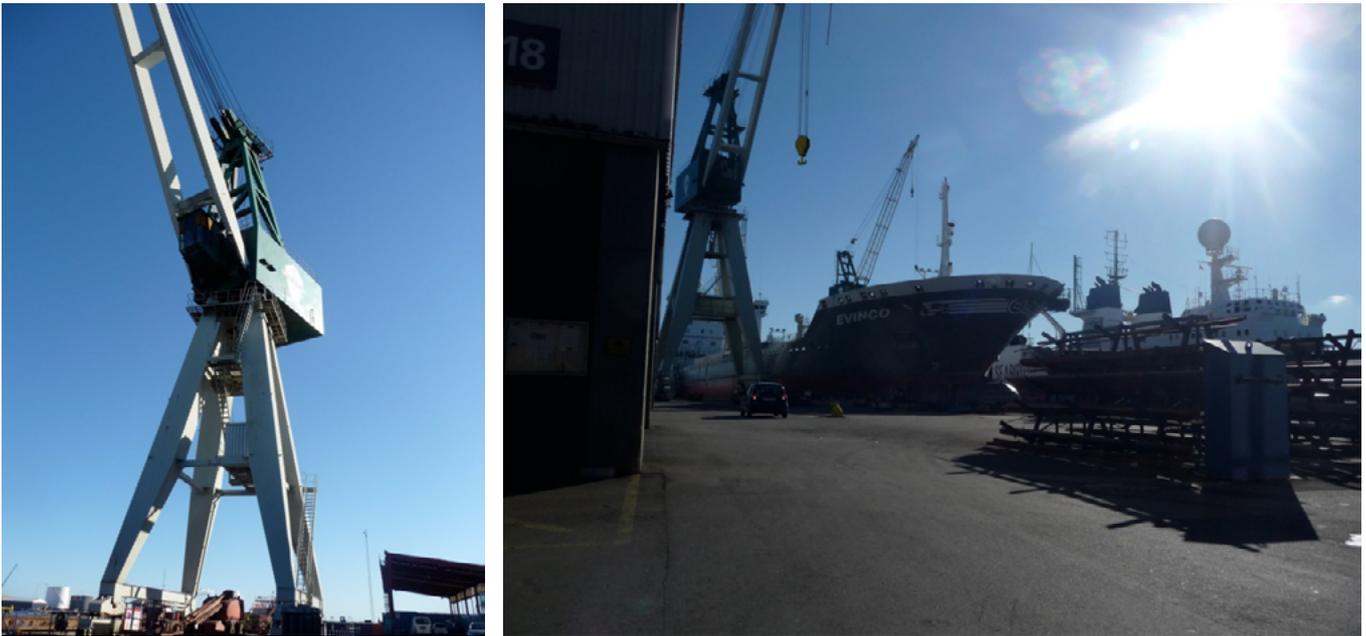


FIGURE 1: THE MALE POTENCY OF THE CRANES LOCATED ON THE PORT OF FREDERIKSHAVN DOMINATES THE PHOTOGRAPHIC HARBOUR IMAGES BY LOCATION MANAGER MARTIN BAGGER (PHOTO CREDITS: MARTIN BAGGER).

choice of Frederikshavn as location is not so much a rational choice, but is rather an artistic decision based on what she terms “desire”: “we fell in love with the town.” Jensen and Sø were searching for what they call a “model police station”, and in order to talk to a head of investigations they went to Frederikshavn and instinctively became “crazy about” the location (Jensen 2016).

In fact, the port plays only a minor role in the final narrative, but several aspects during the ten episodes keep referring to the harbour as a focal point: parts of the plot are about placing a new and ambitious secondary school on the harbour, one of the three main male characters has his company on the harbour, water as a transportation method plays an important role throughout, and images of the port and water appear often as backdrops or as panoramic images. Such imagery is very common in Nordic and international television crime fiction, e.g. *Forbrydelsen* [*The Killing*] (2007-2012), *The Wire* (2002-2008) and *Wallander* (2005-2013), which indicates that the generic transtextuality of such drama may have influenced the visual characteristics of the drama and perhaps even the choice of location. Conceivably, this may not exactly be *intertextual consciousness*; it may even be unconscious influences based on generic affinities and general use of port imagery in crime fiction. In her work on port cities,

Alice Mah illustrates the dramatic attraction of port cities in popular culture in the following way:

Port cities lie at the edge between black and blue. For centuries, writers have described port cities as exotic places of cosmopolitanism and vibrant cultural exchange, connected to the ‘blue’ of sea, sky, and dreams. Port cities are surrounded by blue, the blue of water lapping at shores, extending out into distant horizons. They are filled with the blue of longing, of imagining possibilities out at sea and in different lands. But port cities are also represented as ‘black’ places of crime, violence, poverty, and social exclusion, classic settings for gritty *noir* literature and film (Mah 2014: 27).

Mah mentions the second season of *The Wire* (2003) as a principal example, and throughout our empirical data on *Norskov* this particular American drama is mentioned numerous times, including letters of application for the municipality of Frederikshavn. *The Wire* has been credited as a series where Baltimore as a location may be characterised as “city as character” (Sodano 2015: 22), and this spatial notion of a character is repeated several times in our material on

Norskov, for instance in Jensen's letter to the municipality of Frederikshavn entitled "Dear Frederikshavn": "You may say that we have chosen Frederikshavn to play the role as *Norskov* in the same way that we choose an actor to play a role as a character" (Jensen n.d.). With *The Wire* playing an important role as "common language" for the production crew it seems safe to say that the port imagery of *The Wire* (among other crime dramas taking place in ports) may have influenced the location manager, location scouts and cinematographers, etc.

Nevertheless, the "common language" referred to in our material on *Norskov* is not merely generically oriented, and with place theory and location studies in mind, the inspirational references seem remarkably spatially oriented. However, there is a very clear development throughout the pre-production too. In the earliest writings from 2011 the references are, as noted above, primarily character-based, but in Jensen's conceptual presentation the list of references has grown and spatial explanations accompany most of the titles: *Friday Night Lights* depicts "a provincial town" and "the structure of a small town"; *Brotherhood* (2006-2008) is set in "the Boston-part of town" (even though it was shot on location in Providence!); *Underbelly* (2008-2013) is about "organized crime in Melbourne"; *Matador* (1978-1982) provides "a sense of meeting a whole provincial town"; *Winter's Bone* (2010) shows us a "white trash environment in peripheral America" (Jensen 2012). Based on the list of references, it is perhaps rather the combination of strong, realistic characters and an evident sense of a real place that appear encouraging for the scriptwriter, but that does not make the transtextual motivations any less obvious. Many of the titles mentioned have affinities with crime fiction in one way or another, but it is striking that the intertextual consciousness seems to focus much more on transgeneric dramatic elements such as character and place.

The transgeneric features become much more obvious in cinematographer Adam Wallensten's conceptual material for *Norskov* (Wallensten n.d. a). Instead of directing his attention towards particular logics of place as such, his notes on style deal with methods for developing a sense of presence, life and dynamics for the viewer, which he finds in films such as *Call Girl* (2012) and *The Place Beyond the Pines* (2012). He includes several references to realism in his different working papers on *Norskov* such as 'raised realism' or 'stylized realism'. Relatedly, one thing is particularly interesting (also because it made its way to the series) as expressed by Wallensten: "We will not work with 'breakers' where we show different

places in the town and its citizens. Instead, as far as possible we will place scenes where we are able to include the city and people." (Wallensten n.d. a). Still, this insistence on realism of imagery in his material is combined with visual, unnamed references to other examples, which include images from *Out of the Furnace* (2013) and *True Detective* (2014-2015). His notes on cinematography are, nevertheless, heavily embedded in a discussion of place presentation and representation. *Norskov* is shot in scope widescreen format (2.35:1), and according to Wallensten this particular format suits the location well: "Like few places in Denmark, Frederikshavn has nature and a format suitable for scope." (Wallensten n.d. a). Views of hilltops, wide shots of the town through windowpanes and open fields and forests seem to create specific widescreen imagery for Wallensten.

4. PANORAMA SHOTS AND CARTOGRAPHIC BRANDING

Discussions of scope and wide angles of townscapes lead us to the panoramic shots of Frederikshavn included in both the preproductional material from Bagger and Wallensten as well as the final series. A particular intention behind the series, frequently appearing in our data, was that "everything is connected", which is the headline for Wallensten's conceptual text for the drama (Wallensten n.d. a). This means that the drama is constantly focalized, every location is carefully chosen in order to get a sense of town and surrounding landscapes, and there are no establishing shots for specific locations and no so-called "city symphonies" that use "buildings, streets, bridges, and vehicles, showing us how cities rattle and rush, stream and plod, awake and settle down" (Schwarzer 2004: 243). Everything (almost) in *Norskov* is, then, connected by way of visual methods and character focalization.

However, our parenthesis above (almost) accentuates other features of the drama. Even though the series never makes use of establishing shots, it very explicitly establishes the city space for the viewer. The first shot of the first episode is a panoramic view of town after nightfall with the local bay carving a scenic arc picturesquely curving in the background. Similar shots are frequent in TV drama in general as well as in television crime in particular. *Forbrydelsen* was trendsetting with the many panoramic views of Copenhagen often employed as establishing shots, but such imagery in Scandinavian television crime drama also goes back, for instance, to the first season of *Beck* (1998). A logic of place is here established by

way of traditional cartographic images in bird's eye perspective. The images are very local because they draw attention to landscapes and localities, but the images are very translocal, too: they appear in drama across production cultures and have by now become symptomatic of what has been branded as Nordic noir with its "exoticism of settings, light, climate, language and everyday life" (Jensen and Waade 2013: 189).

Nevertheless, this way of portraying a town has an interesting precursor in what has been called *panoramic maps*, *pictorial maps* or *bird's eye view maps*. Panoramic maps from around the 17th to the 19th century are decorative maps of cities that, by now, have become attractive wall decoration in

homes. Historically, such maps and images have been closely connected to commercial interests. John R. Hébert and Patrick E. Dempsey write that panoramic images usually "depict the vibrant city" where harbours "are shown choked with ships", even though, normally, harbours were not. Panoramic maps were often, then, used "to promote sales" and as a "descriptive geographical tool" rather than for sheer navigational representation (Hébert and Dempsey 1984). As Melinda Kashuba writes, panoramic maps "not only show what some of these communities look like but what our ancestors wanted them to look like" (Kashuba 2005: 185) – cities were, here, presented at their best. This particular bird's eye view that we see so often

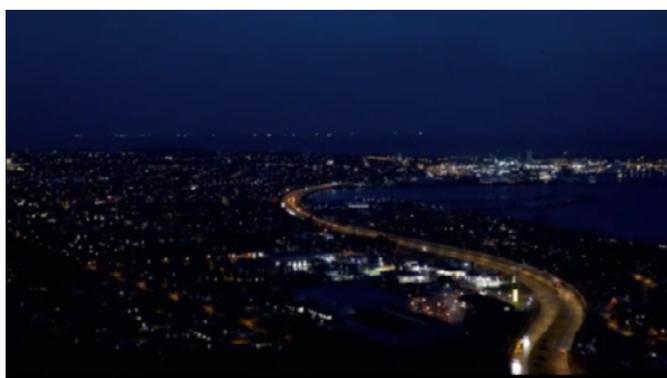


FIGURE 2: THE FIRST IMAGE AND THE TITLE SCREEN IN *NORSKOV* (AT THE TOP). THE PANORAMIC IMAGERY OF THE BAY AREA IS USED AS THE FIRST GENERAL INDICATION OF PLACE AND AS A SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO PRECISELY NORSKOV AS A TOWN (PHOTO CREDITS: SF FILM). THE SAME MOTIF IS USED IN TOURIST MATERIAL FROM FREDERIKSHAVN (AT THE BOTTOM) (PHOTO CREDITS: PETER JØRGENSEN, JERUP / BY KIND PERMISSION FROM TURISTHUS NORD).

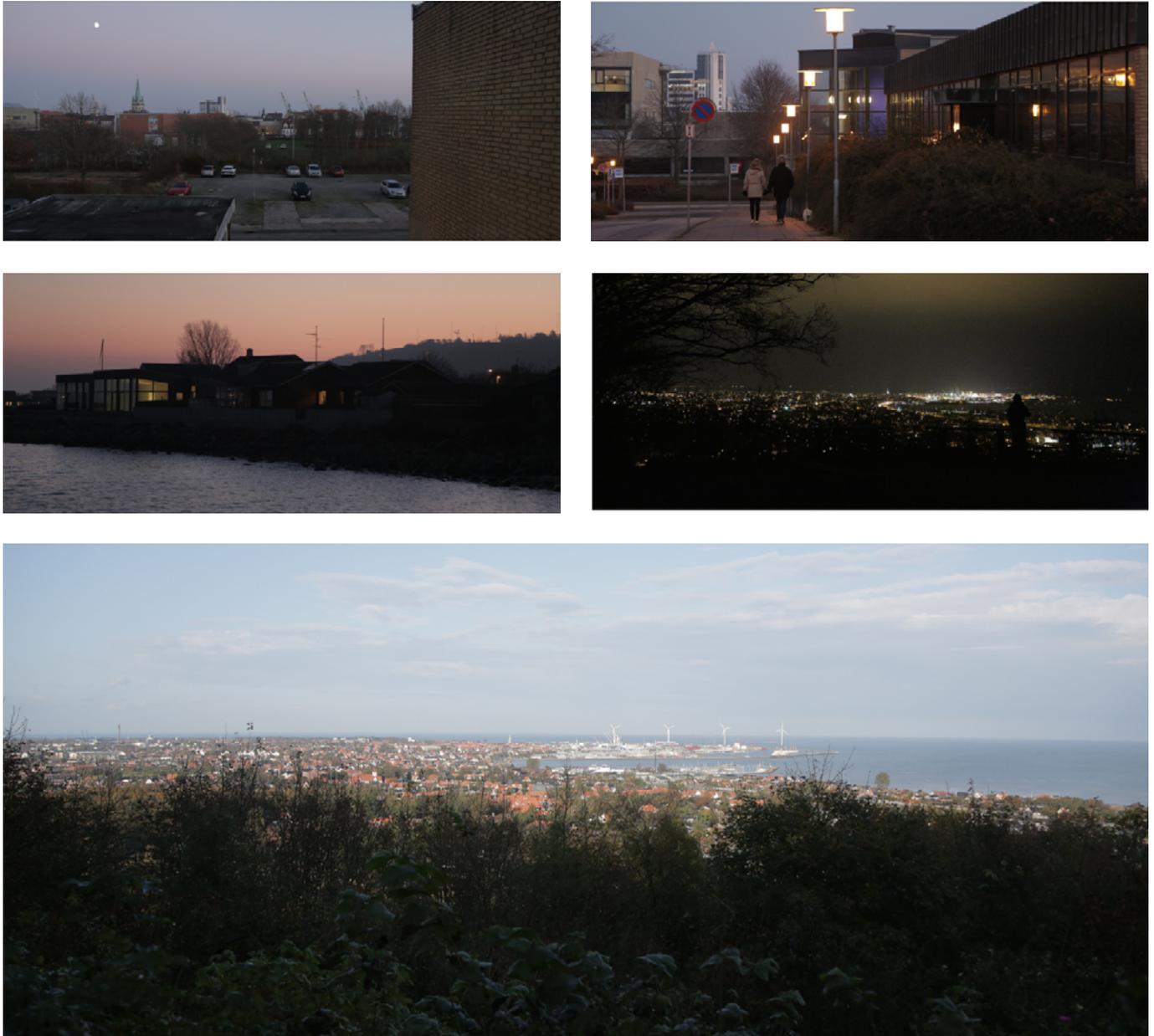


FIGURE 3. VISUAL EXCERPTS FROM CINEMATOGRAPHER ADAM WALLENSTEN'S CONCEPTUAL WRITINGS ON *NORSKOV* (WALLENSTEN N.D. B). IN THIS MATERIAL, IMAGES OF FREDERIKSHAVN WITH A CLEAR SENSE OF THE OPEN SKY APPEAR SIDE BY SIDE WITH SIMILAR IMAGES FROM *TRUE DETECTIVE* (PHOTO CREDITS: ADAM WALLENSTEN).

in Nordic noir – and in TV-drama in general – has a surprising number of similarities with commercial interests and what has later been dubbed “place branding” (Moilanen and Rainisto 2008). It may not come as a surprise, then, that the panoramic view of a city is widely used in three-dimensional tourist maps. While such imagery is not of commercial interest to

the production crew, we have found that such panoramic images in the drama are of interest to the municipality. For the cinematographer, location manager and others, such images are instead, by now, transtextually motivated, and interestingly enough these images appear relatively infrequently in *Norskov*. However, when they do they seem highly significant.

The identity of the diegetic place is especially established by way of cartographic, panoramic images. The motif in Figure 2 is repeated in the title screen where the title “Norskov” is superimposed on the image, which basically forms a classic Barthesian *ancrage* (Barthes 1964: 48): The title anchors the place as specifically Norskov, but with close identification with Frederikshavn because this particular image is very characteristic of the town, and in this way a great deal of town identity is brought into *Norskov* by way of one carefully chosen image. The camera positions for these images are both panoramic drone shots (the bird’s eye view across town) as well as on the hilltop of the so-called Pikkerbakken, which is the site of a significant tourist attraction (a historical military fort). We find such imagery taken from one of the highest points in town in the tourist video “Frederikshavn – toppen af Danmark” (meaning the top/peak of Denmark), which both emphasises the branding perspective of the particular location as well as the close image identification between Norskov and Frederikshavn.

This does not at all mean that producers, script writers, cinematographers, etc. have intended to brand Frederikshavn through drama narrative; actually, quite the opposite has been the intention, which is emphasised by the lack of city symphonies and establishing shots. Again, however, it suggests a certain transtextual frame of mind that comes from both a history of *cartographic branding* as well as a contemporary widespread use of panoramic drone shots and hill-top views in television drama. Nevertheless, the specific hill-top angle from the place called Pikkerbakken appears in Wallensten’s material as well, which gives the impression that this particular picturesque image from Frederikshavn plays a triple role, providing: a) a sense of place in the local real town, b) a point of view historically associated with panoramic cartography, and 3) transtextual connections to very similar images in both Nordic and international crime fiction in particular, and television and film drama in general.

5. PROVINCIALITY AND REIMAGINED COMMUNITIES

The above considerations have provided a range of views on the logic of place during the preproduction planning of *Norskov*. These analyses show a careful and detailed reflection on choices of locations as well as the visual logic of place in the drama. Now, we would like to flip the perspective in order to discuss the interest from and the role of the local

community in a production like this. Why does a municipality go to great lengths to raise capital, attract and welcome a television production? What does a region like Northern Jutland, a peripheral region in Denmark, gain from attracting such a production? To do so, we re-invoke Kevin Robins’s notion of *reimagined communities*, which is a concept he used to frame British developments in media industries in the late 1980s (Robins 1989). Later, he reintroduced the concept together with David Morley as a highly appropriate discussion of culture, identity and media in a European context in the middle of the 1990s (Morley and Robins 1995). In a present view of local and global media environments across Europe, their vision of the relationship between the local and the global may appear slightly prophetic, but it rather shows how far back these developments of localised media industries reach. As a particular context around their perspective they refer to specific legislative transformations and recommendations in the mid-1980s, which do have a number of similarities with Danish transformations in the late 1980s. In 1988, the commercial public service broadcaster TV 2 was launched with explicit and mandatory regional obligations (Bruun et al. 2000: 17), which were based on political intentions to widen the local and national perspective in Danish public service television. Initially, however, television drama was given low priority, but in the middle of the 1990s a political agreement boosted collaboration between the television and film industry, which led to an increased attention towards television drama for TV 2. With noticeable relevance for *Norskov*, the result was the provincial crime drama *Strisser på Samsø*, which took place on a regional Danish island, and the teen series *Spillets regler* (1997-1998) about a football team in a Jutland provincial town (Nielsen 2000). The provincial focus, the interest in crime drama and the attention towards sports point clearly, though without direct relations, towards *Norskov* and the interest in local crime drama and the local community around ice hockey. So when Morley and Robins (1995: 35-36) write that “there is a growing sub-national agenda focused around local and urban cultural identities” in British audio-visual industries, there is a great deal of similarity in the development of the Danish media production industry during the 1990s and especially around TV 2 as a broadcaster. Morley and Robins (1995: 36) continue with reference to Patrick Vittet-Philippe and Philip Crookes’ work on local radio and regional development: “Local media are seen as ‘regional building tools not only in traditional cultural terms (regional awareness, cultural identity, linguistic crystallisation), but also in terms of economy (provision of jobs, sensitisation of the

public to communication technologies, dynamisation of local markets, etc.)” (Crookes and Vittet-Philippe 1986: 4). The forms of local effects are usually referred to as soft and hard effect, respectively, and one particular soft effect that Robins at first, then Morley and Robins, refer to is *reimagined communities*. In their title, they cautiously leave a question-mark after the concept, because they are, at first, very hesitant towards the status of the nation-state. They do, after all, pick up a specific inspiration for the concept from Benedict Anderson’s classic phrase *imagined communities* (Anderson 1983) in a way that indicates various shifts of attention towards other factors than the nation as a community: “the dual tendency towards globalisation and localisation of image spaces” (Morley and Robins 1995: 37). Image spaces are, for Robins (1989: 150-156), a representational space that symbolically encircles specific geographical places, which makes them comparable to our notion of an intertextual consciousness: the circulation of media images creates a particular interceded spatial and visual vocabulary that affects the perception of places. According to Morley and Robins (1995: 37), the focus on the creation of such imagery has a downside because of “the increased pressure on cities and localities to adopt an entrepreneurial stance in order to attract mobile global capital”, which is a pressure that we see now in contemporary Danish media industry and local administration: there are relatively few film and television productions in Denmark, and so only a few municipalities can share in a piece of the pie.

However, what we find in our data on *Norskov* is the presentation of a successful local production story. The idea of local representation and the hope of creating or contributing to an imagined, not-national, but regional or local community imbue our interview material and administration documents from Frederikshavn. Iversen’s image of the town as a tumbling doll, and references by the series’ creator Jensen to the tough, but solicitous, masculine atmosphere of the town, are highly significant in this regard, because both cultural identities make the transition into television fiction, and may in this way contribute to maintaining, creating and describing the identity of a local community. According to the mayor of Frederikshavn, Birgit S. Hansen (Hansen 2015), the municipality had to rediscover a sense of community after a structural reform of local, municipal administration in Denmark during which three municipalities were fused into one under the administration of Frederikshavn. She tells us that Frederikshavn has not made a hard data assessment of the local production, but they have made a soft data assessment, and she maintains that a specific result of attracting

the drama to the town was “community cohesion and pride”. Morley and Robins (1995: 41) point out that a local administration may have to learn “how to use the mass media and new communication technologies to create ‘a new forum for public discourse’” in order to “open up some new possibilities for reimagined solidarities”. In the material available to us it is very clear that the municipal administration had to *learn* how to solicit and service the large production machinery that moved into town (Christensen and Hansen 2016). In addition, “recent growth in decentralised programme-making opens up at least the possibility of local media spaces”, and public discourses, “grounded in a spatial framework, could be elaborated in a local public sphere” (Morley and Robins: 1995: 41). Morley and Robins’s work speaks mostly in the future tense, with a sense of utopian hope of escaping the “false aura” and the “fabricated and inauthentic identity” that may be the result of pan-European top down models of media images. Instead, a production project like *Norskov* is a result of *stories from below*, of a local sense of place, and of a certain logic of place in the production process that ideally searches for ‘authentic’ material (the discussion of whether or not this process results in authenticity is difficult and, in our case here, unnecessary). A lot has happened for local television drama production in Denmark since the birth of commercial public service television in the late 1980s. Three regional commissioners with a significant impact on the local attraction of media industrial projects have emerged; new national policies on regional drama production have been instigated; and since the turn of the Millennium an increased number of local film and television productions have been commenced, distributed and broadcast. Today, we see an amplified interest from local municipalities and regions in creating new and appealing milieus for creative industries. Morley and Robins (1995: 26) refer to the “political economic restructuring and transformation” leading towards reimagined communities as “a process of spatial restructuring and reconfiguration [that] involves at once a transformation of the spatial matrix of society and of the subjective experience of, and orientation to, space and spatiality”. At a time when we, during the past decades, have seen references to a so-called spatial turn (Warf and Arias 2009) that has affected media studies as well (Falkheimer and Janssen 2006), the restructuring of attention towards provincial areas in Danish television and film production since the mid-1990s is very interesting. Within the spatial matrix of society, the media has in the same period played an increasingly important role as a producer of identity and as a special way of generating attention towards places.



FIGURE 4: NORSKOV MARATHON SHOWS HOW TV DRAMA IS USED DIRECTLY IN LOCAL COMMUNITY ARRANGEMENTS. THE IMAGE ABOVE IS TAKEN FROM THE PROMOTIONAL VIDEO, AND WHAT IS NOTABLE HERE IS THE FACT THEY ALSO USE THE VIEW FROM PIKKERBAKKEN AS A TITLE IMAGE (JUST LIKE BOTH NORSKOV AND THE TOURIST VIDEO) (PHOTO CREDITS: PETER JØRGENSEN / VIDEOGRAPHER). THE IMAGE BELOW IS A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MARATHON MEDAL WITH REFERENCE TO THE ORGANISERS' WEBSITE (PHOTO CREDITS: RICO EIERSTED).

Of course, one thing is the attention that Frederikshavn as a town receives from being the sole location of a ten-episode television drama series with a second season in production. Another thing is how the effect of a drama production like this is measured in the long run, and obviously here there are different methods. Recently, the town cut the first sod to a new exclusive freehold flat area in Frederikshavn called Norskov Parken (The Norskov Park), and recently a so-called Norskov Marathon was arranged in town. According to the organiser Rico Eiersted, the marathon was arranged in order to visit as many possible locations throughout the supposed “arduous race”, which is indicated in the slogan of the marathon: “Where the view is more important than the time” (Eiersted 2016). These are not only limpid illustrations of local

initiatives trying to harness the attention given to a television drama, but they also demonstrate how a local community is literally reimagined through reference to a fictional drama. However, these are only the minor results of the drama, because the actual attention given across Scandinavia (the near and neighbouring countries to the north of Frederikshavn) is intended to attract a workforce for a port expansion in Frederikshavn – an expansion that may need around 2,000 people (Iversen 2015). With the direct and indirect attention towards the port in *Norskov* we again have a common denominator in fact and fiction that resonates underneath the “regional building tools” of a reimagined Frederikshavn. In promotional material about the port expansion, the visualisation of the port shows close similarities with the way that both the location scout and the cinematographer have chosen to frame the port in photography. Of course, this illustrates the importance of the port in local creations of identity, but it also shows how closely different points in the image circulation process are tied together. The same may be said about the inspiration for the name of the series, which according to creator Jensen may have come from the local shipyard on the harbour called Orskov Yard.

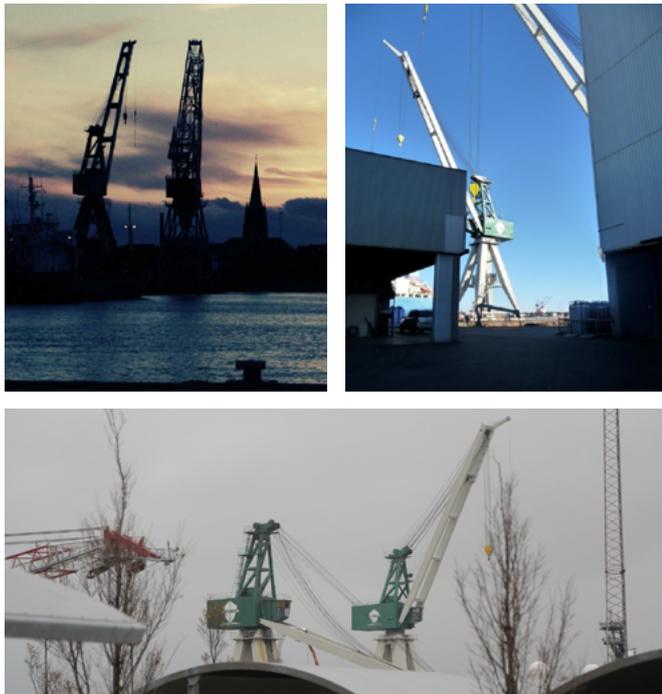


FIGURE 5: AN IMAGE TAKEN FROM A PAMPHLET OF THE PORT EXPANSION *PORT OF OPPORTUNITIES* (TOP, LEFT) (BY KIND PERMISSION FROM THE PORT OF FREDERIKSHAVN), LOCATION SCOUT MARTIN BAGGERS PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE PORT (TOP, RIGHT) (PHOTO CREDITS: MARTIN BAGGER) AND CINEMATOGRAPHER ADAM WALLENSTEN'S PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE PORT AREA (BOTTOM) (PHOTO CREDITS: ADAM WALLENSTEN N.D. B). THE RESEMBLANCE AND THE SENSE OF INDUSTRIAL SPACE CONVEY A SIMILAR LOGIC OF PLACE.

CONCLUSION

Issues of provinciality and geographical peripheries in combination with a recent TV crime drama series production have been the subject of this article. Based on a rich and large data bank, peripherality has been explored in the light of pertinent theories of locations. The discussion of place in the context of media production has rested on the series *Norskov* as a case, and this series has been selected because of its important representativeness as a contemporary TV production by the commercial Danish public service channel TV 2. Also, the relationships between the television broadcaster, the production company as well as the local administration in Frederikshavn have been investigated, and this close inspection is the principal methodological innovation of the article, because we here see new strong ties between local cultural and industrial policies. Here, research into production and location, in particular analysis of the preproduction stages of the series, is better facilitated with careful attention towards thinking and experiencing place during production. The key aim of the article has been to draw general and original conclusions from our extensive material, and the main results have been the introduction of new and necessary concepts into the field of location studies: intertex-

tual consciousness, stories from below and cartographic branding as well as re-introducing the central notion of re-imagined communities as a local political result of the drama production and its broadcast. The most crucial contribution of the article is to demonstrate how, in the image circulation process of a television production, different intertextual and authentic perceptions of locations are closely conflated.

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