



## **Scandinavian television fiction and immigration: Key developments**

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Immigration has characterized the developments in all the Scandinavian countries, of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, from approximately the 1960s to date. From being *relatively* homogeneous countries and cultures up until the 1960s, the increased immigration has made its mark on the countries' culture in many ways. Simultaneously, television was on the rise as a new cultural medium, having the opportunity to influence the way immigrants were represented and 'embodied' in each country. This paper will introduce the main tendencies on how immigration and immigrants have been dealt with in the Scandinavian television fiction from 1980 to 2019. Apparent tendencies regarding developments in thematic and the portrayal of immigrants over the time period in question will be explored. The paper will conclusively present comparative perspectives on the developments and main tendencies in each of the Scandinavian countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Linguistic check to be done

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## **Introduction**

Immigration has characterized the developments in all the Scandinavian countries, of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, from approximately the 1960s to date. From being *relatively* homogeneous countries and cultures up until the 1960s, the increased immigration has made its mark on the countries' culture in many ways. Simultaneously, television was on the rise as a new cultural medium, having the opportunity to influence the way immigrants were represented and 'embodied' in each country. This paper will introduce the main tendencies on how immigration and immigrants have been dealt with in the Scandinavian television fiction from 1980 to 2019. Apparent tendencies regarding developments in thematic and the portrayal of immigrants over the time period in question will be explored. The paper will conclusively present comparative perspectives on the developments and main tendencies in each of the Scandinavian countries.

## **Method**

This work consists of an exploration of Scandinavian television fiction. The data collection method consisted of finding Scandinavian-produced series by using search bars on Google, IMDB, Wikipedia and the TV-channels own archives and websites<sup>2</sup>. The inclusion criteria for the series was that the series either included topics related to immigration and/or portrayals of immigrants. As the range of Scandinavian television fiction produced prior to the 1980s, portraying immigration as a topic, let alone include actors with an ethnic background in the cast, proved to be very limited, this paper will concentrate the main exploration to television fiction series produced from 1980s until 2019. The rendition is based on having seen either the entire series, or selected episodes, as well as reading episode descriptions and reviews.

## **Scandinavian profiles: Overview of topics and contents**

This section will present key developments and the main tendencies in each country's presentation of television fiction presenting themes related to immigration or immigrants<sup>3</sup>. The following review is presented decade by decade, starting with the Norwegian profile and following with the Swedish and Danish profiles.

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<sup>2</sup> The TV-archives were used to find descriptions of series and episodes, and to independently search through old television broadcasts. The findings must therefore include a possibility of a lack in the full picture of series being broadcasted.

<sup>3</sup> See excel-files and the overview word-file for the full overview and a more in debt presentation of the relevant series from all three countries

## **Norway: Key developments**

Immigration and immigrants have been thematized rather sporadically in Norwegian television fiction from the 1980s to 2019, however, the Norwegian profile is conspicuously consisting of a slow and steady growth throughout the four decades. The overall inclusion of immigration-related topics has become more prominent over time, and thus more varied and current in a range of genres.

### ***The 1980s – 1990s: Addressing the Norwegian xenophobia and prejudicial patterns***

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Norwegian television fiction slowly started with the inclusion of immigrants in the productions. One of the very first fiction series to address immigration in a tangible way were the TV success *Helmer & Sigurdson* (1975-1981), broadcasted on the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK). The series consisted in total of five episodes and three TV-films, whereas one of the TV-films called *Spøkelsesbussen* (Ghost bus) from 1981, portrayed immigrants and addressed related issues. The storyline was centered around the murder of the Pakistani immigrant, Ali Reza, and the following police investigation of the incident. The central aspect of the episode was seemingly to address the Norwegian xenophobia and prejudicial patterns living within the Norwegian majority. In the extension of this, some issues regarding how poorly labor immigrants were treated was addressed in *Spøkelsesbussen*, such as their experience with being treated as second-class citizens, being met with discriminating and hostile attitudes and the exploitation of their work force. The average Norwegian characters in the series seemed to always expect the Pakistani to get involved in trouble, and the series is then perhaps capturing the strong prejudices of that time against the Pakistani immigrants and their attraction towards trouble.

The inherent Norwegian prejudicial pattern follows throughout the episode, and it may seem as if the creators tried to ridicule some of the common prejudices of the time. This is brought forth by having Helmer and Sigurdson expressing disgust and mockery towards the people's prejudices against the immigrants. In the end of the episode, it is also revealed that an ethnic Norwegian was the one who killed Reza, and he had tried to blame the other Pakistanis for the murder he had committed.

Following the thematic portrayal of xenophobic Norwegians, we also find the series *Fedrelandet* (1991), *Familiesagaen de syv søstre* (1996-2000) and *Nini* (1998). *Fedrelandet*

and *Nini* were broadcasted on NRK, whereas the soap series *Familiesagaen de syv søstre* were broadcasted on TV2, the commercial public broadcaster in Norway. The three series all addresses the xenophobic Norwegians and the discrimination that immigrants experience as a consequence, leading this to be the main tendency and main issue that were addressed in the Norwegian television fiction of the 1980s and 1990s. The “average” Norwegian were commonly presented as inherently xenophobic and were as such ridiculed and despised by the main characters. As such one could argue that the series largely communicated an anti-racism attitude. However, immigrants were mainly portrayed as *merely* immigrants and “supposed villains”, and where hardly ever casted to play “average parts”, perhaps reinforcing a contemporary view of their position as second-class citizens.

Another similarity of these early Norwegian series is that they all portray Pakistani as the dominant picture of an immigrant, and rarely pictured immigrants with different ethnic backgrounds. Adding to this, the overall tendencies seem to be to give an insight into some of the early encounters between Norwegians and (mainly) the Pakistani immigrants. Towards the end of the decade however, there seems to be a slight rotation towards portraying the Pakistani culture as well, in addition to slowly increase the diversity among the immigrants presented.

### ***The 2000s: Stereotyping criminals and directing immigrants in the comedy-genre***

Throughout the 2000s there were a slow turn towards a more versatile portrayal of immigrants, and new topics and issues were explored. One relevant change is the turn towards picturing the multiculturalism of Norway, and particularly Oslo, and the issues that might follow. The crime series *Fox Grønland* (2001-2003) aired on TV2 and was about the life on Grønland’s police station and the investigation of crimes in Oslo’s most multicultural and immigrant dense district at the time. In *Fox Grønland*, two of the essential police officers had a Pakistani background, and as such the series casted immigrants to play roles beyond merely as “an immigrant”. Similar to the series from the 1990s, there is a considerable focus on xenophobia and discrimination in *Fox Grønland*. The creators were however careful not to portray immigrants and non-immigrants as solely “good” or “bad”, and the series rather showed a balanced picture where various people were criminals independent of their skin color. Still, in numerous of the episodes the criminals were played by immigrants, and the *main* villain in the show were the drug lord Iqbal, played by Pakistani Toni Usman. As such,

it could be argued that the series *also* maintained a stereotypical image of immigrants as generally dangerous and criminals.

The rising of immigrants appearing within the comedy genre also characterized the development in the 2000s. Up until the early 2000s, Norwegian television fiction had mainly been playing jokes on behalf of the Norwegians and their attitudes towards immigration and immigrants. In the mid-2000s however there seem to be a wave of upcoming comedy series, playing jokes on the Norwegian minority and their cultures. A handful of examples are the comedy series *Borettslaget* (NRK, 2002), *Skolen* (NRK, 2004), *Jul i Tøyengata* (TVNorge, 2006) and *Ali Reza and the Rezas* (TV2, 2009), and all played jokes on immigrants, as well as the Norwegians prejudices towards them. This growing field of humorous and satirical shows also provoked public reactions. The series *Skolen* portrayed Somali men in an unflattering way, as Kath-chewing and unemployed, which made the Somali community react and complain about NRK who broadcasted the series. They did not care for the way that their group was presented and asked the government to remove the series from the screen due to what they experienced as racism, as they felt they were being portrayed as “intoxicated, irresponsible and rapists” (Henmo, 2004). *Skolen* also picture sympathetic Somalis who wished to help the children of the Somali men previously pictured, and hence the series does not give an entirely unilaterally portrayal of the Somalis. The series *Ali Reza and the Rezas*, picturing a young Iranian dreaming of becoming a celebrity, also received some accusations on it being racist. The director however said that they *do* joke about stereotypes and racism in the series, which was relatively uncommon at the time, but he argued that the *show* is not racist for that reason (Røyseland, 2009).

Thus, the main development from the 2000s is the varied thematic and topics presented, as well as a larger diversity in immigrants’ nationalities. Some humorous portrayals on the behalf of the immigrants and stereotypes emerged in this decade, and the multiculturalism of Norway started to become present on television to a greater degree. However, a somewhat reoccurring theme seems to be the portrayal of immigrants as criminals.

### ***The 2010s: Individualizing the immigrant***

The Norwegian series produced in the 2010s are varied in thematic and genre in relation to immigration and immigrants. However, there are *one* striking similarity in the way immigrants now were presented; and that is as individuals with the story being presented from

*their* point of view. Further, there seems to be a greater focus on portraying the minority environments from “the inside”, and to focus on their own struggles and issues related to being a refugee, second generation immigrant etc.

The satirical and humorous series that emerged in the 2000s continue in the 2010s with for instance *Hellfjord* (NRK, 2012), *NAV* (TVNorge, 2012), *Lillyhammer* (NRK, 2012-2014) and *Kampen for tilværelsen* (NRK, 2014-2015), all of which play jokes on immigrants, as well as Norwegian attitudes and culture. NRK is seemingly the main driving force when it comes to producing television fiction portraying immigrants in this decade. In 2011, the two NRK-series *Brødre* and *Taxi* both portrays immigrants as the series’ main characters. *Brødre* is about the individual portrayal of two illegal refugees, and their integration in the Norwegian society. The two brothers, Mano and Sharan, experience Norway in different ways. Mano are being dragged into criminal activities by his Norwegian acquaintance, whom he met in prison. However, Mano does not *want* to be criminal, but sees no other opportunities as he is being denied a permit residence while Sharan gets to stay. Mano does not want to leave Sharan alone in Norway. Sharan, on the other hand, are experiencing several things for the first time after arriving in Norway, such as loaning books at the library, learning to swim and having his own place. The director, Janic Heen, says that we tend to speak so generally about immigrants, and *Brødre* is finally give the statistics a face (Fagerheim, 2011).

*Taxi* is a drama thriller directed by Ulrik Imtiaz Rølsén. The series is centered around Javar, a 26-year-old second generation Norwegian-Pakistani. Javar is a successful lawyer who lives with his Norwegian girlfriend, Anna, in an expensive neighborhood, and he thus represent the “perfect” example of a well-integrated immigrant in the Norwegian society. Nevertheless, he is drawn between his own desire of being “fully Norwegian” and his parents’ expectations of him regarding respecting the Pakistani culture. *Taxi* is packed with the actualization of issues and taboos from the Pakistani culture, such as homosexuality, arranged marriage and honor killings. The taboo of homosexuality and honor killings is portrayed through Fariba, Javars sister, whom we later learn has a Norwegian girlfriend. Once Faribas orientation is revealed, Javars family immediately feel as if their honor is shattered. When Farbia later is murdered, nearly everyone seems to suspect it to be an honor killing, committed by either Javar or his brother. Other central topics in *Taxi* are corruption, fraud, surveillance and racism. Racism and xenophobia are presented in different ways, for instance, Anne's mother implies that you can never *really* know what goes on in the head on a person from a different culture, and

hence Anne accuse her of being a racist. The corrupt Norwegian men also use racism as a “shield” to cover their frauds in the Tax administrations. If someone ever were to question or suspect whether something illegal was going on in the taxi business, the corrupt men would call them out as racists.

*Taxi* brought enormous debate in the Norwegian media, and the director, Ulrik Imtiaz Rolfsen, was particularly central in the debates. Rolfsen is a Norwegian-Pakistani and is active in the public debate concerning immigration and integration. Rolfsen met Aslak Nore to debate in NRKs *Dagsnytt 18* to discuss the relevance of the issues that *Taxi* presented. The background for the debate was Nore's article “Ekte pakistanernordmenn kjører ikke taxi” (“Real Pakistani-Norwegians does not drive taxi”) in the Norwegian newspaper *Verdens gang*. In the article, Nore argue that the picture Rolfsen drew of the Norwegian-Pakistani were outdated and old-fashioned (Nore, 2011). Rolfsen states that the issues presented in *Taxi* are still taboos for many young Pakistani:

Jeg reagerer på å bli kalt utdatert når det trekkes frem at det er ikke troverdig at en pakistansk ung advokat ikke kan presentere sin norske samboer hjemme, fordi *det* er nemlig et *kjempestort* tabu og et stort problem for *veldig* mange pakistanske unge mennesker. Og når det blir presentert over to sider i VG at dette er et utdatert problem, så er det et stort slag i trynet for disse ungdommene som lever under dette og har det helt jævlig (Dagsnytt 18, 2011).

Some of the actors in *Taxi* also argued that these issues are highly relevant, and that the series probably will be an eye-opener for many of the parents (Schau Knatten, 2011). Rolfsen and Kahn, the actor playing Javar, hopes that *Taxi* will be a wake-up call for politically correct Norwegians who have minimal insight in the immigrant environments. Rolfsen also states that the Norwegian-Pakistani are thought from a very young age that there is a difference between “us” and “them”, and that you must not ruin the family honor (Lundgaard, 2011). As such, Rolfsen claims that *Taxi* involve a harsh criticism against the Pakistani honor culture.

From the mid-2010s, NRK had a significant increased number of drama series where young second-generation immigrants were playing the main characters, and where aspects of living within two cultures and certain issues within their parents' culture, were in focus. One of these series were the word-view success *Skam* (2015-2017). The series was about a group of Norwegian teenagers, and their everyday life – struggles, conflicts, friendship, shame, betrayals, relationships etc. In the series forth season, we follow the Muslim girl, Sana. The



series reflects, questions and informs about many central parts of the life of Sana, living as a minority in secularized Norway. Religion is, as such, one of the most central topics in *Skam*. Throughout the first seasons, Sana is portrayed as a strict and determined girl, with a solid faith in her religion and culture. Through the seasons however, she is faced with several questions about her religion from the other characters, such as if she really needs to wear the hijab, and how Islam views homosexuality. When Sana falls in love with Yousef, a non-Muslim boy, her faith is put to the test, which leads her to question certain aspects of her religion. Sana is growing tired of having to answer for her religion all the time, and she has a talk with her friend Isak, one of the other main characters about racism and ‘stupid’ questions about Islam. Isak tells Sana that she *must* answer people's ‘stupid questions’ about Islam over and over. If she does not, people will start to come up with their own answers to the questions and *that* could be very dangerous, Isak says.

Other topics that occur are that Sana is “different” from her Norwegian friends and in the Norwegian society. Sana’s mother thinks that it would be easier for her if she had friends that were more like her, and some of the Norwegian girls at her school are uttering that Sana’s attitude and actions seemingly opposes her beliefs and values. However, the main emphasis in the series is that despite these differences, Sana can still be best friends with her group of “Norwegian girls”, homosexual boys and other people with completely different beliefs and values than her.

Being a worldwide success, *Skam* generated debate in several countries. In Denmark, *Politiken* wrote an editorial called “Skam portrays Danish TV-fictions betrayal to New Danes”. Another chronicle argues along the same lines and utter that it is sad that a Muslim girl representation like Sana, are not to be found in Danish television:

[...]I de danske medier er den muslimske pige og kvinde oftest en forsimplet og overfladisk stereotyp, som hverken mine veninder eller jeg selv kan genkende. Der er masser af Sana’er derude, men vi ser dem ikke [...] På mange måder viser Vildes reaktion over for Sana de stereotype forestillinger om muslimske piger, som mine veninder og jeg også har oplevet [...] [Danske serier viser ikke] et sandfærdigt billede af en hel generation af muslimske piger. Vores identitet bliver frarøvet på denne måde (Cakir, 2016).

Cakir argues that her generation of Muslim girls in Denmark are being deprived of their identity because Danish series have never showed a Muslim girl like *Skam* does.

Several NRK-series follow in *Skams* footprints, such as *17* (2018-2019), *Semester* (2018), *Skitten snø* (2019) and the second season of *Blank* (2019). In both *Blank* and *Semester*, the feeling of being different, and the feeling of “otherness”, among young second-generation immigrants is thematized. *Blank* also has a certain focus on portraying the growing differences between the “eastside” and “westside” in Oslo. The two communities have a lot of prejudices towards one another, and the main character Zehra hence does not have a lot of “ethnic Norwegian” friends. In the lines of this, another series that portray an immigrant suburb and minority environment, with little contact with the Norwegian majority, is *17*. The series is located to Groruddalen. The plot of season one in *17* is about Abid and the potential risk of him being sent away to Somalia, by his mother, within seventeen days. The main topic in the series is about how Abid are trying to juggle the two cultures he is a part of. We are witnessing Abid's strong inner conflicts, and he states that he does not want to have *one* personality when he is with friends, and *another* when he is with family, he just wants to be himself. The producer of *17* said that she hoped that the series would contribute to an open discussion between kids and their parents regarding these issues (Solvang, 2018).

The last example from Norway is *Skitten snø* (2019), a psychological drama-thriller, based on the novel with the same name written by Mahmona Khan. *Skitten snø* is about the Norwegian-Pakistani young woman Sumera, from Groruddalen, who works night shifts on the fast-food chain Burger King. She fancies Nicolas, the security guard who works on the same local shopping mall where she works, and one night she is “lured” into his apartment where things escalate quickly, and Nicolas hold her captive before abusing her sexually. From here, the storyline is centered around how Sumera deals with the situation onwards. Hence, the series is first and foremost about abuse, but largely intertwined in the overall story is a story about shame, family honor, loyalty and friendship. The series thus identifies taboos and issues within the Pakistani culture. For instance, Sumera is so ashamed of the abuse that she says that she does not want *anyone* to know what has happened, which underlines her fear of shattering the family honor if anybody were to find out. We learn that one of the families in the community became an outcast after a rumor about their daughter being raped. The fear of being shut out thus may have contributed to Sumera wanting to keep the incident to herself.

Another related issue presented in *Skitten snø* is control. Sumera and her two best friends, Anila and Ambar, are all part of the same Norwegian-Pakistani environment. Sumera seemingly have liberal parents and are allowed to be independent, based on a mutual trust.

The reality is very different for Anila, who are not allowed to dance at a party because her father thinks that she is doing it only to “show off to men”. Anila is also being yelled at by her father, who views Sumera and her independence as an abnormality. However, Anila is the only one of the three girls with controlling parents, and it could therefore be argued that it is not a “cultural phenomenon” but rather an individual issue. It may also be due to a generation gap between Anila and her parents, as they both want very different things for Anilas life. The series ends with Anila being sent away to Pakistan to learn about respect.

Summarizing the 2010s, it can be claimed that the main feature and tendency is the focus on the individual immigrant and their identity. In many of the examples, their identity was “put to the test” as they were torn between their culture and families wishes and demands of them, and their friends and the majority of the Norwegian society’s expectation of them. Hence, the central thematic that blossomed and developed in this decade were the focus on individuality and overall integration in the society.

## **Sweden: Key developments**

Swedish television fiction portrayed individual immigrant-stories early on. There also seem to have been a certain focus on the political aspect of immigration over the decades, certainly the right-wing extremism and the committing of crimes against immigrants. In some of the recent crime-series, immigrants were often portrayed as criminals. The following sections will illustrate some tendencies in the portrayals of immigration and related topics in Swedish television fiction.

### ***The 1990s: Right-wing extremism, and cultural encounters***

In the 1990s, the public broadcaster of Sweden, Sweden's television (SVT), produced the crime series *Den svarta cirkeln* (1990), and it was one of the earliest examples of Swedish television fiction that revolved around the political aspect of immigration, concerning terrorism and national security. In the series we follow Johan, a Swedish journalist, who previously worked with uncovering terrorism. In the course of the two first episodes, two bombing attacks hit Stockholm and Johan tries to figure out who is behind the bombings. Everyone, except Johan, seems to believe that a group of foreign left-wing terrorists are behind the attacks and are mobilizing every force based on this assumption. Because no-one has yet claimed responsibility, as foreign terrorist usually does, Johan wonder if there is a new group performing the attacks. Johan, who follows his own tracks, soon suspect a right-wing book publisher for being involved, because they are lying about their turnover. This leads Johan in the direction of examining whether Swedish right-wing extremists are performing the attacks, with the intention of making people scared of immigrants. Johans colleagues deprecates his theories as conspiracies and "left-paranoia", however, he eventually gets hold of evidence for his claims. *Den svarta cirkeln* thus paints a conspiracy against the far right-wing and the series can be viewed as anti-racism, all the while the attacks came from the "inside" rather than from the "outside", contrary to what the other characters thought.

In the 1990s, Swedish television fiction also focused on multiculturalism and cultural encounters, shown in both *Guldburen* (SVT, 1991), *Tre kronor* (TV4, 1994-1999) and *Hammarkullen eller Vi sees i Kaliningrad* (SVT, 1997). In *Tre kronor*, for instance, aspects such as refugee problematics and illicit work were thematized, whereas *Hammarkullen* were one of the earliest examples of a series with cultural encounters and multiculturalism as the central theme, with immigrants appearing as several of the main characters. *Hammarkullen* was written by Peter Birro and Agneta Fagerström-Olsson. Birro himself grew up near

Hammarkullen and has a multicultural background (Holm, 1997). *Hammarkullen* is a satirical drama that portrayed the multicultural society in an immigrant dense Swedish suburb, namely Hammarkullen. The series was a “lifelike” illustration of the million-program in Göteborg and reflects the ethnic composition in the suburb. *Hammarkullen* portrays the lives of several of the inhabitants and their daily struggles. The immigrants were thus been given a face and a voice and were not pictured merely as “immigrants”. The suburb appears a bit chaotic and filled with conflicts, as the series’ first scene is displaying a huge argument with the inhabitants screaming racist utterings at each other. In addition, the Swedes in the series were to a certain degree pictured as rather careful about confronting the immigrants, even though they in some situations are pictured as behaving unreasonable. *Hammarkullen* was thought to capture the contemporary multicultural Sweden, and it was mostly praised for its humor and realism. However, the inhabitants from the real Hammarkullen did not find it amusing and did not want such negative attention linked to their home, as they did not think that the portrayal gave a realistic picture (Karsten, 1998).

### ***The 2000s: Individualizing immigrants, and the rising of the strong and successful***

The 2000s showed a blossoming of the immigrant perspectives. In addition, there was a certain focus on globalization, terrorism and the independent and successful immigrant, as well as immigrants playing victims and criminals in crime series.

Following *Hammarkullen* from the 90s and its portrayal of individual immigrants, Swedish television productions increased this portrayal in the 2000s. Starting with *Det nya landet* (SVT, 2000), followed by *Den förste zigenaren i rymden* (SVT, 2002), *Kniven i hjärtat* (SVT, 2004) and *Orka! Orka!* (SVT, 2004-2005). *Det nya landet* refers to both a tv-series and a comprised TV-movie version. The story is about the two refugees, Ali, a 16-year-old Somali boy, and Massoud, a 40-year-old Iranian man. Without a residence permit, they decide to flee from the refugee center where they met and travel as illegal immigrants through Sweden. On their way they meet the Swedish girl Louise, who joins their journey. The film takes a satirical and humorous approach when describing the Swedish society and paints a picture of “Swedish culture” and “Swedes” with the view of an outsider. Throughout their travels in Sweden, Massoud, Ali and Louise encounter different groups of people that approaches them in very different matters, some being hostile and others being friendly. The series also touches upon the growing relationship between Massoud and Louise. In the start of the series, Ali is shown as very positive and optimistic and seems to love Sweden, while

Massoud is the complete opposite. However, when Massoud and Louise become a couple, the roles are reversed. *Det nya landet* are in this way giving two unique immigrants a clear individual identity as opposed to being identified as a “group of people”.

The series *Den förste zigenaren i rymden* and *Kniven i hjärtat* also give different “groups” of immigrants a face. The former is picturing two young gypsies and war refugees from Bosnia, the siblings Valentino and Daphne. Valentino and Daphne live in a living complex with other immigrants in Sweden and seems to have very little contact with “Swedes”. Valentino is tired of Sweden, and one day Valentino and Daphne are leaving Sweden to search for their mother who they lost in the war. As they are leaving Sweden on a ferry, they look back at the land and screams “Fuck you, Sweden!”. As they hitchhike through eastern Europe, they meet several people, all with different backgrounds, whereas some underline the importance of “not leaving one's country”, and Valentino, however, says that he doesn't have a country. The series is about two gypsies who travel through eastern Europe, and hence is a story of two young refugees. The musical drama *Kniven i hjärtat*, follow a group of teenagers, all with different ethnic backgrounds, including Chile, Morocco and Kurdistan among others. The series takes place in one of Sweden's immigrant dense suburbs. The series portray the differentness and otherness that the youths are experiencing with the majority, as well as the generation gap between them and the older people in their families. As such the youths are juggling two identities.

In *Orka! Orka!*, two immigrant families were presented, respectively from Bosnia and Iraq. The family from Bosnia includes the two brothers Goran and Emir. Goran is a taxi driver and speaks fluent Swedish, whereas Emir seems slightly less interested in integration. Emir thus pokes fun with the stereotypical image that Swedes have of immigrants as he sarcastically says to a Swedish car salesman that Goran makes his money off of selling drugs. Goran is looking for a special woman and seems to hold certain traditional view on gender roles, however, he soon falls in love with a Swedish girl that does not match his previous demands. Another central character in *Orka! Orka!* is Schole, a woman from Iraq who provides for two children on her own and can be considered as quite poor, as she cannot buy the children new shoes. Schole has a higher education from Iraq, but she still struggles with getting a permanent job at the school cafeteria where she works. When the school advertises a new job position, Schole applies, but the job is offered to a Swedish woman despite Schole being

seemingly better qualified. Schole later complains to the management about the new employee, as she treats her badly and Schole assumes it is because the new employee is racist.

Towards the end of the 2000s there were several series picturing the independent, successful and strong immigrant. Often the characters were faced with the “racist Sweden”. The three series, *Leende guldbruna ögon* (SVT, 2007), *Kungamordet* (SVT, 2008) and *Familjen Babajou* (SVT, 2008), all show strong and independent immigrants in their own ways. In *Kungamordet* we meet Yasemine, a young woman with a higher education, who does not identify with her family and their wish to send her to Turkey to marry a relative. She stands up for what she believes in and who she wants to be. *Leende guldbruna ögon* portrays the young man Lennart, who wants to be the new “dansbandstjerne” in Sweden. However, because of his color he is rejected admission to the culture by existing members, and he decides to make it on his own, by bringing together a “dansband” of his own. Common for both, is that they are not portrayed as the “stereotypical” immigrant, and they are progressed as being individuals with dreams and issues reaching beyond the ones of being integrated. As implied however, they *do* meet some resistance based on their background. The third example is the series *Familjen Babajou*. In this story the characters face much resistance, and *still* manage to maintain strong and individualized. The series is about a mother, and her four children, and her mission is to give her children the best possibilities that the welfare society of Sweden can give them. The family lives in the ghetto in the start, but the mother works hard for them to get a loan to move to a better area. As the children start at their new school, they are met with awkward and slightly xenophobic comments by their teachers and fellow classmates. The series is picturing Sweden in the 70s and 80s and can hence explain the greater xenophobia and ignorance that they were exposed to.

Simultaneously in the 2000s, Sweden produced several crime series where immigrants played roles, mainly as either victims or criminals. For instance, in the crime series *Beck* (1997-present), *Wallander* (2005-2013) and *Oskyldigt dömd* (TV4, 2008), there has been a mention of the ethnic background of the victims and criminals. The two former are long-running series and whenever a person with ethnic background is the victim, the ethnicity, or “immigrant group”, is always specified to the viewer. In the latter, *Oskyldigt dömd* (Innocently convicted), for instance, there is a portrayal of an immigrant who is innocently convicted for a murder of another immigrant. However, it turns out that a racist Swedish taxi driver is the one

behind the killing. In *Oskyldig dömd*, as well as in both the series *Aspientarna* (SVT, 1998) and *Poliser* (SVT, 2006), actors with immigrant background played investigators and new police officer recruits.

The 2000s also included series with a focus on right-wing extremism, with both *Kommissionen* (SVT, 2005) and *Lasermannen* (SVT, 2005). *Kommissionen* touches upon the desire to stop the immigration to prevent future terror attacks, after Stockholm unexpectedly was hit by an act of terrorism. *Lasermannen* is a dramatization based on the shootings against Swedish immigrants during the early 1990s. The series is based on the book “Lasermannen: en berättelse om Sverige” by Gellert Tamas. The storyline follows the life of the shooter, John Ausonius, also called “Lasermannen”, and the police investigation of the shootings. The actual shootings are dramatized as well, including a portrayal of how different minority groups deal with the fear of Lasermannen. In one of the first scenes a policeman is questioning the first victim in his hospital bed. The policeman gives the victim a long speech about the groups of Iranians, and how they always seem to get in trouble. When the police theorize about who the shooter is, they say that they think he is a “lonely racist who hates immigrants to the extent that he wants to shoot them”. When things escalate and several shooting episodes has occurred, and the police say that there is not much they can do, the immigrant communities take action themselves. The Kurdish association speculate in whether the police are in on it and theorize that there “must be a right-extreme group working within the Swedish police”. To show that Sweden need the immigrants and their workforce, they arrange a demonstration where they stop working for an hour.

*Lasermannen* gives a picture of Ausonius, whose birth name was Wolfgang and he was a German immigrant himself. The only thing he really wanted was to be acknowledged in the Swedish society as a “proper Swede”, thus he changes his name, bleaches his hair and gets blue contact lenses. In the questioning, Ausonius implied that he thought that his entry into the Swedish society was to try to “protect the pure Sweden”, and he was inspired by Ny Demokrati. “Lasermannen” found morally support and confidence from Ny Demokrati and Sverigedemokraterna and got the sensation of having the whole Swedish population in the back (Rønning, 2011). The series is an important contemporary portrayal about Sweden, and the creators did not hide the fact that *Lasermannen* was a political series that takes a clear standpoint of being anti-violence and anti-racism (Forsell, 2005).



### ***The 2010s: Sweden's underworld, crimes and refugee-problematics***

The 2010s is fragmented regarding the presentation of immigration or immigrants, and it is challenging to find a “common ground” for the series portrayals. This in itself can point to the fact that immigrants are generally well-integrated in the society. However, there are still recurring themes that also were present in the previous decades, for instance in the portrayal of right-wing issues, and the portrayal of immigrants as victims and criminals (often related to the underworld and drug-related crimes) and their “differentness”.

The most thematized aspect in the 2010s is the Swedish underworld, and the criminality which characterizes it, pictured in both *Gåsmamman* (Kanal 5, 2014-2019), *Alex* (Viaplay, 2017-2019) and *Innan vi dör* (Before we die) (SVT, 2017-2019). The latter is about the criminal underworld of Stockholm and the contemporary police hunt of trying to uncover the crimes. We follow police officer Hanna, as she is tipped about a criminal operation by an informer who calls himself “Inez”, and who turns out to be Hanna’s son Christian. *Innan vi dör* centers around two criminal groups; the Swedish MC group *Mobsters*, and the Croatian mafia family *Mimica*. The *Mimica*’s are the main antagonists in the series, and we dive deep into the family’s criminal operations. Davor, played by Alexej Manvelov, is the leader of the family and he is portrayed as calm, collected and unaffected. In the start we are led to believe that the crimes are related to drug trafficking. However, the crimes committed by the *Mimica*’s extends when it is revealed that their main mission was to murder several police officers. The series reveals a brutal ending for the mafia family, when their most powerful members are murdered by Hanna, Christian and their associate.

The *Mimica*’s seems to always have the upper hand on the *Mobsters*, and in their meetings with one another they always appear cool and collected. The *Mimica*’s does not go out of their way to brutally murder some of their own family members, as their business is to be protected at all costs. However, this is seemingly true for *all* the characters in the series, and not just the *Mimica*’s. The series does not really picture the family in depth, other than in their business, however, we do catch small glimpses here and there. For instance, Davor has a secret boyfriend, Stefan has his own thing with committing fraud in the sport field, and the mother of the family started a restaurant business on her own when first arriving in Sweden.

Further, crime series with immigrants playing victims and/or criminals continue in the 2010s in Swedish television, for instance with several episodes from *Beck* (1997-), *Arne Dahl* (2011-2015), *Wallander* (2005-2013) and *Sthlm Rekviium* (TV4, 2018). All of the above-mentioned series takes on themes on immigration from time to time. *Sthlm Rekviium* has several episodes devoted to themes relating immigration and immigrants. For instance, the second episode is called *Blodsband* (Blood ties) and is about the murder of older couple running an organization to help refugees in Sweden. The initial investigation is turning towards the assumption that some of the refugees are behind the murders. However, throughout the episode, several of the refugees turn up dead and the investigation changes focus. Some hints are being dropped that the refugees are being exploited by an organized criminal organization. The revelation in the end is that one of the daughters of the murdered couple have been exploiting the refugees for a longer time, and also had some of them murder her parents because they were on the verge of expose her crimes. The third episode of *Sthlm Rekviium* thematizes the disappearing of two Jewish boys, and it is initially suspected to be motivated by racist hate crime. However, it is soon clear that it more likely that the kidnapping is an act of a personal revenge directed towards the boys' parents. The series have several characters with immigrant background casted as police officers and investigators.

A television fiction series that centered around the Swedish election and the growth of right-wing parties, as well as neo-Nazists terror group, was *Blå ögon* (SVT, 2014). Sweden's election day approaches, and on the radio one reporter says, "the voters associate Trygghetspartiet with racism". The leader of Trygghetspartiet, Olle, says that one should not feel unsafe and apologize for being Swedish, and he fears that the Muslims may soon take over Sweden. Olle, adds that he thinks that before too long Sweden will be "invaded" by the Arabs, and to put a stop to that, Trygghetspartiet have be a bit "flexible" to try to win the election. In addition to this, *Blå ögon* presents two Swedish guys from the right-wing extremism group *Veritas*. The two guys from *Veritas* have been called some of the scariest characters SVT has created (Bergqvist, 2014). *Blå ögon* created a heated debate in Sweden. The reason why is because the fictive political party Trygghetspartiet show a clear similarity to Sweden's existing party Sverigedemokraterna. This has generated 18 reports to the scrutiny committee on SVT (Velandar, 2014). The issue was that many felt that it was a form of harassing with the real Sverigedemokraterna, because they were not presented in a good way in the series. However, in April 2015 SVT was freed from the accusations (Selåker, 2015).

Two of the newer Swedish television productions that takes on an immigrant-perspective are *Quicksand (Störst av allt)* (Netflix, 2019) and *Allt jag inte minns* (SVT, 2019). *Quicksand* is a drama series about a school shooting. The series has a total of 6 episodes, and episode 3 and 4 is written by Alex Haridi (Yallahrup Færgeby, Habib, Blå ögon), which are the episodes that contains relevant topics in relation to immigration and immigration politics. One of the central characters is Samir, a second-generation immigrant. He is met with prejudiced attitudes, as well as his own prejudices about Swedes. He is struggling with being accepted for who he is, rather than accepted as Swedes picture of an immigrant.

The series *Allt jag inte minns*, is based on the novel with the same name by Jonas Hassen Khemiri. The series is about the young man Samuel, half Swedish and half Moroccan, who dies in a car crash. Through the series we follow Samuel's mother as she learns more about his son through his friends' stories about him. We are first introduced to Samuels friend Vandad in prison. Vandad is bald and has tattoos on his head. Vandad tells Samuels mother that when he introduces himself to new people, they always ask the same questions: "Where is your name from? Where are your parents from? Do you eat pork? Do you feel Swedish?". However, Vandad also says that Samuel never asked those questions.

Samuel worked at the Swedish migration agency, where he made decisions on whom to give a residence permit or citizenship in Sweden. Through his job he meets Laide, his coming girlfriend, who works for giving one of her coworkers a residence permit. The people around Samuel and Laide seem to care little for refugees and the challenges they are facing with being expelled from Sweden. Not after long Samuel and Laide decide to collaborate on housing illegal immigrants in Samuels grandmothers' old house. The house is soon crowded by illegal immigrants, and problems arises as the residents, among other things, throw a big party in the backyard and thus draws attention towards themselves.

As problems further arises in the house, Samuel asks Vandad to help them control the situation. Vandad struggles with money, and he previously earned money by committing crimes with his friend Hamaz. That all changed for Vandad when he met Samuel, and he wanted to get a proper job. However, later on he is desperate and takes advantage of the refugees living in Samuels house, and tells them to pay rent for living there, and then takes the money himself. The story simultaneously centers around a love triangle with Samuel,

Vandad and Laide, and Vandad blames Laide for Samuel's death. When Samuel is found dead, Vandad is arrested for driving over speed limit. Vandad utters that he is only in jail because he is a "svartskalle" and would not be there if he was viewed as a proper Swede. The story as such does include perspectives on refugees and problematic aspects in how Sweden are handling them. In one of the final scenes, Samuel explains that his father, who was Moroccan, were treated poorly when asking for help at the Swedish migration agency. Samuel had said that he wanted to change the system; and one can only do that from the inside.

## **Denmark: Key developments**

The Danish television fiction portraying themes in relation to immigration is scarce up until the late 1990s. From here on, immigration is presented mainly in relation to political aspects, as well as in the satirical genre. However, some other forms of portraying the matters do stand out as well. The following sections will stress the trends and the portrayals of immigration related topics in Danish television fiction.

### ***The 1980s – 1990s: Discrimination and prejudices towards foreigners***

Like Norway and Sweden, Denmark did not show a great deal of ethnic variety in their television fiction produced prior to-, and in the 1980s, and did not picture or thematize immigrants coming to Denmark to any extent. However, one example of a series that could be viewed in terms of displaying foreigners were *Udvikling* (1982), which pictured Danes in meeting with a foreign culture, and the culture clashes that can arise in that regard. *Udvikling* were broadcasted on Denmark's public broadcaster, DR, and the series is about a group of Danes experts that are sent to Africa to work on a project, namely, to create a large carnation farm for the export of flowers to Denmark. The series was filmed in Africa, and approximately half of the casting where Africans. Several of the Danes keep a skeptical-, as well as a condescending attitude towards the African culture, and the western culture is seen by the Danes as the superior, as they are forcing their modern and urban mindset on the locals. One of the Danes, Bjørn, is about the only one who show some respect towards the people and the society they are encroaching on. Bjørn asks Simon, one of the locals, if he thinks the Danes are ruining their culture and society whereupon Simon answers that he does think so.

Further, some locals ask Bjørn why they grow flowers and not food. Bjørn explains that in Denmark they use flowers in several occasions, for instance in conjunction with funerals. The locals then ask if they would not consider making a small section of the field for growing food - that way the locals would be self-sufficient with food. This particular scene illustrates a civilized and respectful communication between two cultures, that *Udvikling* rarely show otherwise. The series ends with Bjørn, and his family, being integrated with the locals. It can be argued, then, that the series do portray a picture of the "average" Dane as discriminating towards the "inferior" culture and people. However, it also portrays how this meeting can be more positive when Bjørn decides to be curious about their culture and hence gets some of his own prejudices destroyed.

Beyond this, the crime series *Een gang strømer...* (DR, 1987) took on an international theme. The story was about the hunt of criminals and traffickers in Denmark. The series is referred to as the modern crimes' breakthrough on Danish television. The series depict transnational crime and the portrayal of a prisoner with foreign background, yet it does not really focus on thematic in relation to immigration. When approaching the late 1990s, the very successful drama/soap opera series *Taxa* (DR, 1997-1999) were broadcasted on DR. The series were likely the first fiction series to show the Danes and 'the new Danes' in meeting, and to address the growing multiculturalism in Denmark. The story takes place on the small taxi central, *Krone-Taxa*, in Copenhagen, where we follow the day to day lives of the employees and the different customers. *Krone-Taxa* is led by the Boye Larsen family, and the backdrop for the first episodes is that the company is about to go bankrupt. The series show a certain aspect of the multicultural Copenhagen, and several of the drivers are of ethnic origin. The first episode of the series starts out with the Boye Larsen brothers having a meeting with the chairman of the company that wants to rent their taxi services. In the meeting, Preben is determined to accommodate the terms of the company, and one of the central terms are that they prioritize Danish drivers. Verner points out that it is racial discrimination, but Preben is more concerned with getting new customers to save the company from being bankrupt.

Discrimination is presented as a central topic in other situations. For instance, the drivers with ethnic background are forced by Finn, one of the Danish workers, to show their driver licenses for control daily, because one of them had a supersede without license. The rest of the drivers are upset about this and find it very humiliating and generalizing. They are considering relocating to another competing taxi central, because they are sick and tired of the discrimination. Another topic presented later in *Taxa*, are the matter of arranged marriage. One of the Danish workers at the central are seemingly disturbed by the thought of a girl being set up to marriage by her parents. However, Mano rhetorically asks whether the Danish moral is better. Subsequently, Meho goes on to describe every bad relationship that is portrayed in the series and asks whether Tom thinks *those* relationships are better and something one should strive for. Hence, he explicitly points out that the Danish moral are no better in that way, and implicitly tells him that he should not be judging other people's moral and culture.

The Pakistani culture is also addressed later in *Taxa*, represented by the character named Valid, a second-generation Danish-Pakistani. There is a certain focus on the challenges he and his friends are facing when it comes to prejudices, discrimination and xenophobia. The series show that Valid and his friends are met with a suspicious and distrustful attitude, as if they always expect the worst from them to begin with. This is for instance showed by the police officers asking all of them to show identification, even before making trouble. Thus, the way *Taxa* overall handles the immigration theme is related to illuminate the Danes attitudes in meeting with immigrants (Agger, 2005, p. 418). In summary, the television fiction from the 1980s and 1990s mainly addressed discrimination as a theme, when portraying immigration, immigrants and foreigners. Still, at the end of the decades, *Taxa* opened for taking on broader issues related to the increasingly multicultural society.

### ***The 2000s: National security, villains and the rise of immigrant-satire***

In the 2000s, Danish fiction series containing a global and international theme were on the rise, and a growing tendency to postulate immigrants as villains also developed. In addition, several series poked fun with xenophobia, as well as with immigrants themselves.

One of the first Danish series to contain a global theme were *Den serbiske dansker* (DR, 2001). The series is based on a novel with the same name from Leif Davidsen that came out in 1996. The story takes place in Denmark, where journalist Caroline invites the fatwa-sentenced Iranian author Santanda to the country. Meanwhile, Vuk, a Danish-Yugoslavian man, are being hired to perform an assassination against Santanda. The overall themes that the series contains are globalism, international terrorism, and Denmark's place in the international politics. Small pieces of information are being dropped about Denmark being "outside" of terror treats. For instance, a couple of Russians are indicating that they cannot act the way they would normally do in Russia because "this is tiny and nice little Denmark". It is also emphasized by the general idea that Santanda would be safe in Denmark. In *Den serbiske dansker*, Vuk are presented quite ambiguously. In the first two episodes we understand that Vuk only *pretends* to struggle with being half Dane and half Yugoslavian. However, it may also be a real underlying struggle as Vuk has experienced very tragic incidents when he was in Yugoslavia. Vuk is portrayed as clever, emotionless and cold, but also as being capable of showing empathy. In the end Vuk actually spares the therapists life, because he had finally helped him to overcome his own traumas.

*Den serbiske dansker* portrays prejudices and the encounter between Danes and immigrants. Vuk is hence the manifestation of the dangerous immigrant, and certain assumptions about him may be reflecting the underlying assumptions about immigrants in general. For instance, the janitor at Vuks' school believe that Vuk was more prone to end up in trouble of some sort.

At the time when *Den serbiske dansker* were broadcasted, the themes regarding terrorism were highly current. In these lines, there seems to be a certain ongoing theme in Danish crime series about the more dangerous aspects of immigration and globalization, such as terrorism and cross-border crimes. This is evident in *Ørnen* (DR, 2004-2006) and *Livvagterne* (DR, 2009). *Ørnen* became an international success. All the while the story takes place in several parts of Europe, the series has a multicultural aspect and followed a clear global agenda. The series is about the Danish polices international criminal investigation team, led by "Ørnen". Central themes in the series are terrorism and organized crimes. The main character, Hallgrim "Ørnen", are half Dane and half Icelandic, and one of the minor characters in the team are a new Dane named Nazim, played by Janus Nabil Bakrawi. The series' first episode is about the investigation of potential terrorists. When the investigators get a picture of the suspect, one of them says that "there is not a lot of "jihad" over that guy". Two men of non-western ethnic origin are on the plane and are carrying a gun. The panic and prejudice/hate immediately starts to spread within the police forces, and they ask themselves "why the hell those two haven't yet been expelled from Denmark".

The character Nazim is one of the investigators in *Ørnen* with a different background. Nazim experiences prejudices by the press as they have presumed that he is a violent second-generation immigrant, and Hallgrim are annoyed when his colleges are doing the exact same thing. It can be argued that Hallgrim functions as a moral compass in this case, and thus promoting an anti-racism attitude.

In a later episode in *Ørnen*, a terror attack is performed against an Iranian wedding in Denmark. One American investigator visits Denmark to help with the investigation. He says to Michael to shoot him. The man he shot was not the suspect, and the American says "Don't worry it was just a fucking Arab", which the Danish investigators are repulsed by. The phrase "this is sweet, little Denmark" reoccurs in *Ørnen*, and is again used as in the context of the idea that in Denmark bad things don't happen as they do abroad.



One of Denmark's most successful series is the crime series *Forbrydelsen* (The killing) (DR, 2007-2012). The series describes crime on many different levels. *Forbrydelsen* do not have a prominent immigration theme, but small comments on immigration are dropped here and there. There are for instance some political aspects related to immigration as a "inflamed" topic in the political parties. In addition, the second-generation immigrant, Rama, were suspected as a villain at first, as he was lying to the police about what he did the night a young girl was murdered. As the investigation progresses, Rama is exonerated and adding to this, the reason why he lied to the police was that he helped an immigrant girl getting out of a forced marriage by some imams. Rama is hence portrayed as a heroic figure, as he also views force marriage as something immoral.

Further, some additional crime series did devote a couple of episodes to illustrating issues in relation to honor culture, especially the case of honor killings. Honor killings were thematized in both *Rejseholdet* (DR, 2000-2004) and *Forsvar* (TV2, 2003-2004). *Rejseholdet* were created by Mai Brostrøm and Peter Thorsboe. In episode 14, two people are found murdered in a neighborhood, characterized by immigrants. The police suspect an honor killing as the underlying cause. One of the neighbors, Dennis, confesses to the killings, and are being questioned by the police. Dennis later draws his confession, and Yasemin claims that she killed them. However, it turns out to be Yasemins father, Osman, that had murdered the two, because Yasemin had finally told them that Osman had abused her for years.

Seemingly, the crime series in the 2000s in Denmark tend to have an international aspect, and therefore being multicultural and showing multiculturalism, but they don't tend to show a lot of immigration, or aspect related to portraying immigrants' perspectives or cultures - at least not to a great extent.

Another genre in Danish television fiction from the 2000s, that *does* take on the immigration theme, were the comedies and satires. Perhaps the first satirical show to take on racism and joking on behalf of Danes prejudices and xenophobia, and the notion of “stereotypical immigrants”, were the mockumentary *P.I.S – Politiets indsatsstyrke* (TV 2 Zulu, 2000). A second satirical series were *OPS (Oplysning om perkerne til samfundet)* (DR, 2001). In addition, *Åndehullet* (2003) and *Nudellah* (2003) and *Klovnen* (TV2 Zulu, 2005-2018), all joked with immigrants. The latter was from a Danish perspective, whereas the former series is presented from “an immigrant perspective”.

### ***The 2010s: Politics, crimes, satires and the Danish small town***

The series produced in 2010s and forward are directed more towards the political aspect, especially terrorism, when portraying immigrants or immigration, certainly in the genre of drama and crime. However, there are a few series from the perspectives of immigrants, but they are mostly satirical, and playing jokes on both Danish prejudices, as well as on immigrants and their cultures.

The Danish series *Borgen* (DR, 2010-2013), is a political drama that broadcasted on DR in three seasons. The plot starts in the middle of an election where the issue of immigration starts of as a central theme. *Moderaterne*, with Brigitte in front, are changing their program, only three days before the election, when *Arbejderpartiet* deliver the following statement in the news:

Arbejderpartiet: [Asylsøkere] vil ikke bli sløset ut i det danske samfunnet. De skal ikke ta arbeidet fra danskene. Flyktningene skal ikke gi oss arbeidsledighet.

What other calls political correctness - Birgitte calls social responsibility. The second season of *Borgen* also portrayed a politician with immigrant background, played by Dar Salim, whose very well integrated. *Borgen* created debate in Denmark, primarily regarding journalistic ethics, but also about how DR seem to favorize the “red” side of the politics:

DR er i mange år blevet kritiseret for at være 'røde lejesvende' [...] - DR har etableret sig selv som en rød, politisk instans. Derfor falder det mig i øjnene, at der altid har fundet en vis venstredrejning sted i såvel udsendelser som journalistiske indslag (Gregersen, 2010)

Several crime series have immigrants as central supporting roles, such as *Dicte* (TV2, 2013-2016), *Den som dræber* (TV2, 2011), *Kriger* (TV2, 2018) and *Greyzone* (TV2, 2018).

However, in several of them, their immigrant-background is hardly mentioned. In *Greyzone*, the character Iyad Adi Kassar, played by Ardalan Esmaili, is at first portrayed as a dangerous terrorist, however this view changes as the storyline progresses throughout the series.

Another prominent genre that addresses immigration and related topics are the satire. One of the satirical series addressing Danish prejudices and opinions were *Grand danois* (TV2, 2016). The series took on themes such as religion, work life and “Danish-ness”. One of the characters making utterings about the issues are the second-generation immigrant Hamid. *Det slører stadig* is another TV-satire that aired on DR in 2013. The series is focused on four young Danish women with immigrant background and consisted of short skits presenting situations where different cultures meet. The recurring themes, among others, are “ethnic dating”, Muslim sexual counseling, dress codes and marriage. *Det slører stadig* are mocking the “ethnic culture”, as well as the “Danish-culture” and the Danes’ prejudices about immigrants.

*Det slører stadig* provoked some debate on television and in the newspapers. Some argued that the series depicted New Danes as retarded. To see four young women with immigrant background, making fun of themselves and others on television, is not something you come across in Denmark all the time. Some therefore argue that it is not surprising that the series has provoked reactions, especially from young Muslim girls themselves, that reacts negatively to the way their group has been presented and accuse the series for creating prejudices that does not even exist (Karlsen, 2013; Asif and Sadat, 2013). In that regard, there were a debate on Danish radio, DR P1, taking on the issue of whether or not the series depicted Muslim realistically. The participants in the debate were one of the series creators, and a Muslim woman. The creators said they were being misunderstood, and that they are not mocking or harassing Islam, instead they wanted to mock the *prejudices* about Islam:

I gør ikke grin med tørklæder. Hensigten var at gøre grin med opfattelsen af tørklædet og de fordomme folk har om piger som bærer tørklæde, siger Mora Rahgozar (Lindberg, 2013)

Still, the contributing in the program were exposed to death threats by people committing to Islam.

In the fictive documentary, and satire, *Joe Tech* (DR, 2017) we follow Joe, a second-generation immigrant in his day-to-day life, trying to save money and in the weeks before he will become a father. Joe's father owns a local store and it is a certain focus on the shop and the immigrants who work there, because Joe stops by the shop every day before going to work. Joe works as a mover. He has a Danish girlfriend but does not seem to have a lot of other “Danish” friends. Joe is a petty criminal and are somehow dragged into criminal business by his associates. However, Joe still is not portrayed as a “bad character”.

The Danish drama series *Fred til lands*, aired on DR in 2019. The story takes place in a small Danish village, and the plot starts with a throwback to a car accident, where the local doctor Peter's son Aksel, is killed. The car was driven by Mike, and Peter is convinced that Mike intentionally killed his son, and that there was no accident. Mike are repeatedly harassing several of the habitants. The police lack evidence of the harassment and are unable to do anything about the situation. One night, Peter and a group of locals decides that they are going to kill Mike. In the group is Milad, a Dane-Iraqi, and he rejects the proposal at first. He comes across as the most moral and rational of the group. However, when Mike attacks Milad's son, Milad is in on the plan to kill Mike. Another member on the group comes across as racists, and suspects Milad of being familiar with assassinations. When Milad takes control over the potential shooting of Mike, John calls Milad «a fucking terrorist” and one can suspects if this is based on his background and if he would call him this if he were Danish and acted in the same way as Milad does. John also says that he wouldn't even like Milad “even if he was *truly* Danish”.

Milad is presented, at first, as very neat, responsible, fair, well-behaved, controlled and calm. Later in the series, we learn that Milad has killed his friend while being in the army. When Milad visits and old friend she tells him that he has become “very Danish”. Milad then says that he cannot pray or read the Koran anymore because he has taken a life. The series presents Milads struggles with not being regarded as “Danish enough” by the Danes and being seen as nearly “too Danish” by his friends in the Danish minority.

Summarized, there are overall strikingly few Danish productions containing thematization of immigrants' culture and/or individualized aspects of immigrants, where the background story is something other than war/traumas/terrorism/etc. There is also less focus on integration and the portrayal of the "inside" of the minority environments. This feature is far more present in both the Norwegian and Swedish television fiction.

## **Concluding remarks**

The main findings from studying the overall picture of Scandinavian television fiction will be presented in this section, with the goal to highlight the overall tendencies and developments when comparing the three countries.

The 1980s and 1990s are the two decades with the most similarities between the countries. The similarities are first and foremost based off that neither of the three countries seems to have devoted much attention to presenting immigrants on screen in television fiction or addressed issues in relation to immigration. Denmark and Norway addressed issues on the majority's prejudices and xenophobia. Sweden also showed xenophobia and prejudices, but in relation to foreigners and terrorism. However, both Norway and Sweden portrayed the majority as the villains and antagonists of the series.

In the 2000s, it is seemingly difficult to pinpoint overall tendencies, because of the great variation in portrayals within each country and across the three countries. Denmark seem to address immigration and immigrant firstly in the genre of satire, and Norway mostly addressed the minority in both the crime and comedy genre. The Swedish profile stands out in the 2000s, because of its abundance of fiction that addresses immigration and immigrants in this decade. There is great variety in topics and contents, it for instance covers right-wing extremism and the individualizing of the minority and their independence. The latter includes a great variation on nationalities as well as their immigration category, such as refugees and second-generation etc.

In the 2010s, Norway seems to be the country that carries on with the focus on individualizing the minority that Sweden had in the 2000s. NRK has produced several series that tell a story from an immigrant and minority-perspective. It is significantly more series in Norway that

focus on presenting immigrants' culture and viewpoint to this extent. This feature seems to be almost totally absent in Denmark in all four decades, whereas Sweden has several examples in the 2000s, but none to the level of detail that Norway has. Denmark and Sweden seem to integrate and address immigration to a more subtle degree in this decade overall, however, in the genres of crimes and political dramas, immigration and the picture of the minority were present, and more so in Sweden than in Denmark.

Another overall remark worth mentioning is that honor culture is hardly ever mentioned in the Swedish television fiction. It is addressed to some degree in Danish fiction and to a very high degree in Norwegian fiction.

It could also be relevant to look further into and analyze which role the different broadcasters play in portraying immigrants in each country. There seems to be a difference in how for instance NRK and TV2 in Norway portray and address immigration in their fiction series. Another aspect to keep in mind is, of course, how visible immigrants are in Scandinavian television fiction overall. This tendency could perhaps tell us something about how well integrated immigrants are in each country. Without having studied this as the main focus, some initial thoughts are that throughout the 2010, in all three countries there seems to be a rising of people in the cast with a minority background, where their characters are playing normal parts rather than being portrayed as merely "an immigrant".

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